



Twin sofas upholstered in Bennison fabrics, and two shield-back Sheraton mahogany chairs invite great fireside conversation.

GEORGIAN STYLE, BROUGHT TO LIGHT

Written By Joan Lerch / Photography By Alise O'Brien

First on the to-do list? Pull down the ivy! After they purchased this classic Georgian, the new homeowners knew they wanted to transform the 60-year-old house, which had great bones, but dark and dated interior spaces. It would take a dream team of talent to bring their vision to life, but when their builder recommended removing the ivy that enveloped the structure, the husband and wife team truly took matters into their own hands. She remembers, “We cut it down ourselves, and it’s like pulling off glue!”

About one year later, the slate-roofed Georgian beauty was ready for her close-up, with just enough neatly trimmed ivy surrounding the perfectly centered front door. Set at the same level as the paved forecourt in the traditional style of an English country house, and accented with a classic lion door knocker,

it’s a welcoming approach to the beautifully redesigned spaces across the threshold.

The homeowners chose architect Paul Fendler, of Fendler + Associates, to remake the house for more room, more light, and to better accommodate their lifestyle. They had worked with him on two previous homes, and the wife describes him as their “favorite” architect, saying “He’s just so pleasant, and so friendly, and he works well with everybody. And that’s the kind of architect you want.”

Fendler began with a redesign of the west wing, combining a small galley kitchen and eating area to create a stunning new kitchen with garden and front courtyard views. A new breezeway with a separate copper-topped entry connects the kitchen to the garage, a practical convenience seamlessly incorporated into the home’s balanced exterior.



In the living room, antiqued mirrors above the doorway and fireplace reflect light from the double French doors.

The centerpiece of the all-white kitchen, designed by Keith Gegg, of Gegg Design and Cabinetry, is a fabulous center island that is party-ready, with seating for five, and “hanging-out” room for quite a few more. In addition to garage and garden access, the new kitchen is connected to the entrance with a spacious walk-through butler’s pantry, configured to include a new powder room. Tucked behind a pocket door, the new powder room features hand-blocked wallpaper by Farrow and Ball. The butler’s pantry is customized with an abundance of glass-front cabinetry, as well as a coffee bar, and also opens to the formal dining room.

Ken Stückenschneider, of Stückenschneider Decoration & Design, was chosen to bring the new interiors to life, and he developed a scheme from the Chinese Gracie wallpaper in the entry hall, hand painted with birds, butterflies and flowering vines. “The wallpaper design recalls 18th century chinoiserie—

the European and American Colonial interpretation of Asian decorative objects,” he explains. “The elegant naturalism is echoed in the plaster Rococo-style mirror that we freshened up with white flat paint, and then paired with an Art Deco console that relates back to the twisted tree trunks in the wallpaper.” The console table is flanked by two shield-back 18th century English hall chairs from Jules Pass Antiques.

In the living room, twin sofas upholstered in “Pandaranda,” a hand-blocked printed linen from Bennison, create an inviting seating area centered around the fireplace. Two sets of French doors lead to a newly enlarged terrace, where removing an encroaching magnolia allowed abundant sunlight to fill the room. Stückenschneider dressed the newly brightened windows with sheer draperies, edged with wool and grosgrain tapes, granting full access to the light.



Well lit by a window, the new powder room is also illuminated by light sconces from New York's Remains Lighting.

A stunning mural by St. Louis artist Peter Engelsmann takes the formal dining room from beautiful to spectacular. Contemplative herons look poised for flight from the chair rail that is a trompe l'oeil masterstroke, and large pots echo the owner's front porch pots and lion's head door knocker. Planning the mural involved considerable research and lengthy discussions between the artist, the client and the designer. "We brought some of the color palette from the living room, but the homeowner did not want the colors to be too tropical," Stückenschneider says. "The work of 18th-century Italian painter Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, famous throughout Europe for magnificent palazzo frescoes, inspired the final choices," he adds.

Describing Engelsmann's artistry, the homeowner says she was fascinated by the process and thrilled with the results. "I really love his work. It was a real collaboration, and the most fun for me

was watching it happen. It took Peter about six weeks, working eight hours a day." The artist is so meticulous, she explains, that he might spend an entire day painting one tree, only to return the following day and do it over until he's satisfied. "The mural changes colors depending on the light and the time of day," she adds. When the sun goes down, dinner parties are illuminated by a cut-glass Waterford chandelier, selected by the homeowner during a trip to Ireland with her dad.

The home's classic architecture incorporates an "enfilade," where a series of rooms and doorways are formally aligned along a single axis, offering a glimpse into each one. The design was often used in European palaces, Stückenschneider explains, where access through the rooms determined the rank of the visitor. In this house, each room's color palette complements the next, drawing on the theme and colors of the Gracie wallpaper.

A cut-glass Waterford chandelier illuminates the Sheraton style table and Baker Federal-style chairs, centered on a bespoke rug of knotted wool and silk, handmade to the designer's specifications in Agra, India.





Serenity reigns quietly supreme in the master bedroom, dressed in custom linens and overlooking the terrace.







The tiniest member of the family waits patiently by the back door to the newly expanded kitchen.

Tucked away and private, the master bedroom sitting room is a sanctuary decorated in the soft color palette found throughout the home.



At one end of the enfilade, through two sets of double doors, a serene master suite suggests that it really is possible to sleep on a cloud. Here, the homeowner did not want any patterned fabrics or wall coverings, explaining that she has an all-white bedroom in another home and wanted that same serenity. A richly padded headboard and bespoke loveseat are finished with details inspired by the Ferragamo family's Hotel Lungarno in Florence. Room-darkening draperies in a gentle blue open to enjoy a view of the terrace and gardens beyond.

Fendler recreated the master suite's adjoining rooms to give the couple "his and hers" bathrooms, a laundry room, and a private sitting room with a fireplace. While the bathrooms share the same flooring and wallcovering, thoughtful details clearly distinguish "his" from "hers." This was something of a challenge, the lady of the house admits. "It was interesting trying to find a wallpaper that worked in a masculine and feminine space—something that didn't have flowers." Soft grey willow branches work smoothly in both spaces, as does the grey and white tile floor from Waterworks. "And of course, he got the bigger vanity," she

says with a smile. "But I wanted a place to sit when I put makeup on, and I also wanted to have more windows."

The homeowners, along with Fendler and contractor Dan Compton, of P.J. Prifti, were at first puzzled by the windowless bathroom, because the corresponding exterior wall had two. After determining they had been boarded up in a previous remodel, the windows were restored inside, giving the homeowner the light-washed bathroom she wanted.

For a sublime way to begin or end the day, Fendler created a private sitting room from the existing exercise room, completing the master suite. Stückenschneider chose plush seating pieces upholstered in "China on Oyster," an 18th century chinoiserie pattern relating once more to the avian theme and muted colors of the entry hall wallpaper. (The homeowner's love of birds is woven into several rooms of the house, so she is especially delighted when the neighborhood rafter of turkeys—13 total—pay a visit to the garden.)

That abundance of ivy? It's compost. The massive magnolia? Firewood. And every boarded-up window is now opened to the sun—proving there was, indeed, light at the end of the enfilade. **sl**