NEW YORK

luxe.
interiors + design®

$ 9.95 A SANDOW PUBLICATION | LUXE SOURCE®
10>
0 71486 03366 0
VOLUME 13, ISSUE 4 | DISPLAY UNTIL 11/09/15

ARCHITECTURE / DOUGLAS WRIGHT, DOUGLAS C. WRIGHT ARCHITECTS
INTERIOR DESIGN / MARY FOLEY AND MICHAEL COX, FOLEY&COX
HOME BUILDER / JOHNNY S. DONADIC, S. DONADIC, INC.

RESHAPING HISTORY

THANKS TO A REIMAGINED FLOOR PLAN THAT OPENS TO THE SKYLINE VIEWS, AN OLD-FASHIONED MANHATTAN APARTMENT TRANSFORMS INTO A 21ST-CENTURY FAMILY-FRIENDLY SPACE.

WRITTEN BY MINDY PANTIEL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY BJORN WALLANDER/OTTO

World War I was still being fought when this distinguished Park Avenue building came into being almost a century ago. Although the rambling apartments, each a warren of small rooms, long ago ceased to suit the needs of modern families, the uptown address was just what a young couple with two young children were looking for. Previously living in the husband's former bachelor digs—a converted warehouse in SoHo—they wanted to bring some of that loft sensibility to Park Avenue, a desire that led them to architect Douglas Wright, who devised a plan to help them bring a sense of downtown uptown.

"Those old apartments had lots of discrete rooms that served individual purposes, which is very different from the way people live now," says Wright, who determined early on nothing was worth salvaging and took the 4,100 square feet down to the structural columns and exterior masonry walls. "The clients wanted rooms that opened to each other but they also wanted privacy, which differs from a typical loft where all the rooms are connected but there's not a good separation of spaces." The age of the building also mandated a total overhaul of the mechanical systems and for that Wright called in a consulting team from CES Engineering to design new air conditioning, heating, plumbing, and electrical systems.

With bold conceptual strokes, the home's collection of cramped, dark rooms transformed into multifunctional family-friendly spaces. Three former rooms—the living room, dining room and library—were revamped into a single elongated space at one end of the apartment, sharing a contiguous expanse of windows. The once dark internal kitchen, which served as the only passageway from the public rooms to the bedrooms in back, became an open central space incorporating a new breakfast room and family room. To answer the privacy concern, all the bedrooms are now situated down a hall and feature improved soundproofing. "Though not a square foot was added," says Wright, "the apartment feels so much bigger than before."

According to the architect, the top-floor apartment had the advantage of hovering high above a whole city block of low-story buildings, but with its antiquated floor plan the potential viewscapes were virtually nonexistent. "We took down lots of walls to create these great long sight lines through the apartment toward the views over the city from many vantage points," says Wright. The main living spaces have full 10½-foot ceilings and are now on the perimeter of the apartment, where sunlight and sightings of the Empire State and Chrysler buildings come in.

> "THOUGH NOT A SQUARE FOOT WAS ADDED, THE APARTMENT FEELS SO MUCH BIGGER THAN BEFORE."
>
> -DOUGLAS WRIGHT

It was during weekly meetings with the interior design team of Mary Foley and Michael Cox and the very hands-on clients that decisions were made about the wide-plank walnut flooring, mahogany-stained Zeluck tilt-and-turn windows, stepped moldings and other rectilinear architectural details in what Wright calls a "refined Art Deco aesthetic."

For their part, Foley and Cox were determined to keep things light and young. "We tried to infuse the furnishings with a sense of eclecticism, mixing antiques and contemporary pieces," says Cox. "It's a blend of eras and styles that speaks to where the homeowners are in their lives."

The new main living space, in particular, called for a sensitive balancing act. "It's one room with three different looks," says Foley. "It was a fun challenge to design them separately but have them all work together." They accomplished this by making choices that hewed "a little traditional and a little modern," adds Cox. At the living room end, deep, luxurious wood-back slipper chairs from Christian Liaigre and zebra-striped Billy Haines chairs enliven a classic sofa and neutral carpet. A ceiling fixture with lighting embedded in a series of nickel chain links adds a hint of bling. "It looks like a piece of jewelry," says Foley. Traditional-styled paneling in the library features a lighter-than-usual finish while the Ralph Pucci desk is ultramodern. In the dining area, time-honored wood furniture is playfully juxtaposed with a light fixture resembling a bunch of white balloons—"a happy, charming, cloud-like element," says Foley.

There is also an abundance of built-in storage, some hidden, as in the walnut-paneled hallway that contains concealed closets all along its length between the dining room and the breakfast room. All of the cabinetry was designed by Wright and custom-built—from the leather-lined anigre (an African hardwood) bookshelves in the library to the white-painted kitchen cabinets with frosted-glass panels.

Behind the scenes, builder Johnny S. Donadic handled the intricate details. "We did a 6-by-6-foot mock-up of the walnut floors to get the wood species just right and sent a guy to the quarry in Italy to select marble for the master bath," says Donadic, who went on to create a three-dimensional computer rendering from his photos so the client could see exactly how the veining would look. "The apartment is an amped-up version of your typical Upper East Side prewar loaded with modern-life luxuries."

The result is a residence that acknowledges its traditional roots without ever losing sight of its current occupants. "There are no heavy moldings or anything stuffy here," says Cox. "The space is respectful of its classic Park Avenue location and prewar traditions, but it is updated to reflect a new generation."

A pair of corner seats from Richomme topped with embroidered pillows from Holland & Sherry establishes a sense of arrival in the foyer. A Lipstick console from Hudson Furniture and Octavia mirror by Mattaliano from Holly Hunt, visible through the doorway, complete the entry statement.

In the living room, designers Mary Foley and Michael Cox used a blue velvet Palmer sofa from Roman Thomas, a natural-bronze cocktail table from Silas Seandel and a jewel-like chandelier from Hudson Furniture to establish their downtown-meets-uptown theme. To that they added zebra-hide chairs from Art by God in Miami; a Newman sofa from Richomme, wearing Made in the Suede by Holly Hunt; and a silk area rug by Fort Street Studio.

Architect Douglas Wright rearranged the existing floor plan to create a more functional kitchen that serves as a family gathering space. The woven-leather counter stools are by Mark Albrecht Studio, and the suspended light fixture is from Charles Edwards in London.

To maximize space in the breakfast nook, Foley and Cox tucked a banquette wearing leather by Lance Wovens in the corner. The rectangular yacht table is from Soane in London; the Mattaliano dining room chairs from Holly Hunt sport Perennials fabric from David Sutherland.

"THE DESIGN IS A BLEND OF ERAS AND STYLES THAT SPEAKS TO WHERE THE OWNERS ARE IN THEIR LIVES."

-MICHAEL COX

Above: A whimsical custom Cloud chandelier by Apparatus illuminates an extendable split bamboo table from Wyeth in the dining room. Berman Rosetti Grid chairs from Edward Ferrell + Lewis Mittman wear Holly Hunt fabric on the seats and inside backs, while Paul Smith's Bespoke Stripe in Navy, from Maharam, covers the outer backs. The draperies are made of a Holland & Sherry fabric.

Opposite: A child-friendly environment, the family room has an Omnia sectional from B&B Italia that is optimal for watching movies and playing games. The Galet cocktail table, upholstered in Moore & Giles leather, is by Christian Liaigre, and the Trianon ceiling fixture is from Modulightor.

Left: Positioned off the foyer, the powder room features walls covered with handmade Folio wallpaper by Cannon/Bullock. The custom Emmerson Flatbar mirror is from Ralph Pucci.

Opposite: Detailed in a warm wood, the library millwork provides the backdrop for a Ralph Pucci desk. The Rue De Seine bench from Holly Hunt is upholstered in natural shearling by Keleen Leathers; the rotating four-arm Serge Mouille sconce is from Guéridon.

Pocket doors close off the adjacent master bedroom from the bathroom, where the architect designed the Thassos marble vanities. The satin-nickel faucets are by Dornbracht, and the Beacon flush-mount light fixtures are from Urban Archaeology

Shades of gray define the master bedroom sheathed in Amethyst Empire wallpaper by Phillip Jeffries from Holly Hunt. An antique chandelier from Thomas Gallery hangs over the space, which includes an Ovington bed with a woven-leather headboard from the Foley&Cox Collection, a Helene Aumont vanity table from Profiles and a boudoir chair from Blackman Cruz in Los Angeles.