



From the front, the home looks completely traditional. But wait until you see what's around back.

A HOME FOR ALL SEASONS

A neoclassical Brookline manse gets a major renovation—and three unique copper-clad additions.

BY ERIN BYERS MURRAY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENT DAYTON

WALKING THROUGH THIS BROOKLINE RESIDENCE FEELS MORE LIKE A JOURNEY THAN A STROLL. FROM OLD-WORLD TRADITIONAL TO CLASSICALLY MODERN, THE STYLES CHANGE FROM ONE ROOM TO THE NEXT, REFLECTING THE OWNERS' ECLECTIC TASTES AND WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RISKS.

It's hard to imagine that parts of this dwelling were structurally questionable when the owners bought the 7,350-square-foot neoclassical home in 2004. A 1950s addition had begun to rot years ago; out back, a dilapidated carriage house was connected to the main house by a low, covered, bridgelike construction that blocked views and access to the backyard. Meanwhile, though the house sat proudly atop a steep hill, little consideration had been paid to the landscaping; the huge yard was a wasteland.

The couple, who has four children now ranging in age from six to fourteen, asked their friend, architect Joseph Kennard, to transform the neglected property into a family-friendly home. Over two and a half years, Kennard worked alongside general contractor Moss Keane of Cambridge's M. F. Keane Contracting to reconfigure the space; remove or restore problematic elements (including a fireplace in the foyer that disrupted the flow between



The guesthouse, with its decks and staircases, complements the multi-terraced landscape.



From the finely detailed Gothic-inspired windows to the Vladimir Kagan table, the living room is a study of genres.

the kitchen and the connection to the rear yard); and then design three new structures: a guesthouse to replace the carriage house, a sunroom, and a two-story kitchen/family room.

Because the owners wanted the first floor to have the same detailing as the original house, Kennard and Keane became an architectural forensics duo. After peeling back wall-to-wall carpeting in the entry hall and living rooms, they discovered beautiful but damaged parquet flooring, little of it salvageable. Kennard worked with Oshkosh Designs of Wisconsin to re-create the intricate inlay. The same attention went into the stained-glass windows in the living and dining rooms, several of which had to be completely restored by Michael Willard of West Roxbury's Stained Glass Works.

The couple also commissioned interior designers Heather Wells and Janine Dowling, now of Wells and Fox Architectural Interiors, to reconcile the Victorian house with their contemporary leanings. Wells and Dowling curated the pair's collection of vintage furnishings and complemented it with midcentury pieces like a Vladimir

Kagan coffee table (from Ralph Pucci International in New York) and a George Nelson saucer lamp (from Chimera). They also added a few whimsical pieces, such as the enormous fire-engine-red David Weeks chandelier that presides over the kitchen. In the dining room, a multi-orb light sculpture features handblown glass by artist Deborah Czeresko. Wells and Dowling created a children's paradise upstairs with bright accent colors and plenty of built-in shelving and cubbies for storage. "With

four kids," says the wife, "we wanted everything else to be simple."

To address the backyard's challenging 30-foot grade, Kennard introduced the owners to Keith LeBlanc, principal of Keith LeBlanc Landscape Architecture. "We thought we'd make it almost like Central Park, with rocky outcroppings and ferns throughout," says LeBlanc. "It gives the kids plenty of terrain." Working around two linden trees as anchor points, he created several areas: The house-level and garden terraces are



The master bath showcases a Japanese soaking tub and a wood-paneled washroom.



Pocket doors separate the entry hall from the music room, which features a new coffered ceiling, parquet floors, and a restored mantel.

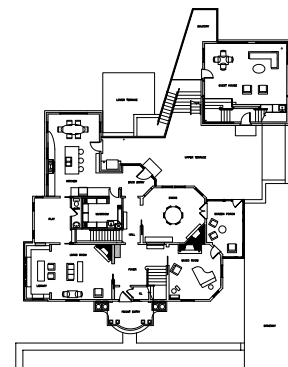
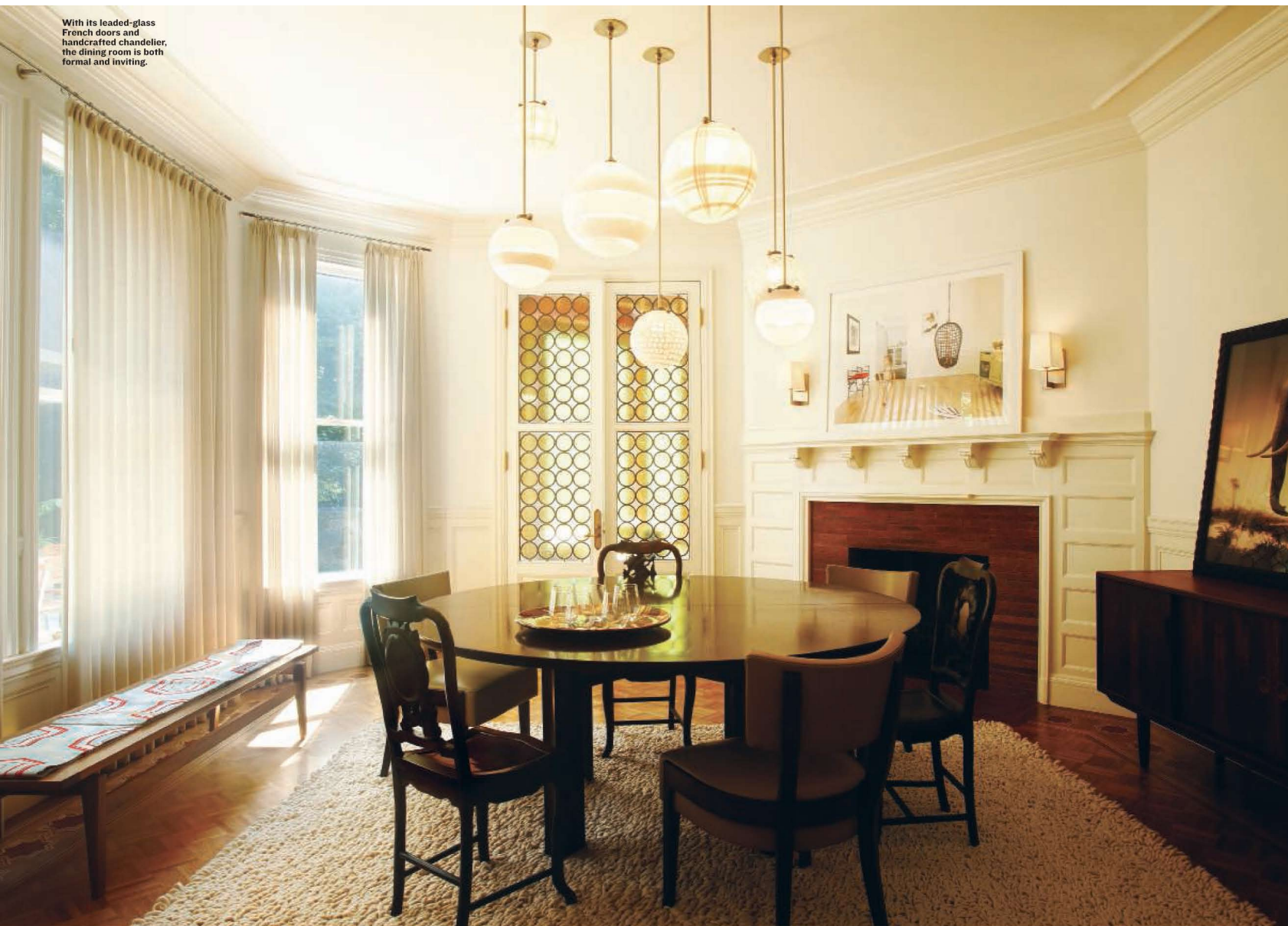
From the generous patio and deck to the grassy play area, the backyard now has many spots for fun.



Above, playful furniture and a huge sculptural light in the kitchen demonstrate Wells and Dowling's creative touch. Below, wall-wide drapery allows light into the master bedroom but obscures views of the house next door.



With its leaded-glass French doors and handcrafted chandelier, the dining room is both formal and inviting.



made of lilac-hued bluestone, a lower-level deck was done in teak, and the hill ends in a generous lawn where the kids can play. LeBlanc interspersed ground-cover plants, climbing hydrangea, and green hakone grass with more-manicured shrubs like boxwoods and rhododendrons for a textured woodland escape.

With the surroundings in mind, Kennard was inspired to dress the building additions in copper. "I like the material juxtaposition against the existing clapboard house," he says. "I like how it receded from view, and how it's going to evolve over time with the house. The whole thing will change its patina from dark brown to light green in varying degrees over the next 30 years."

Understanding that functionality and privacy are a constant balancing act, LeBlanc designed the front lawn as a final flourish, offering the kids one more grassy play space but concealing it from public view with a frame of flowering hedges, thus tying elements of the front to the multilayered back.

The effect suits the family's needs perfectly. "We always said we weren't scared of fixing up a house, but this was a big project," says the wife. "In the end, I think it was all worth it. I don't need to buy another house or any more furniture. My grandkids are going to come visit me here." ■

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