



level rear of the house is entirely new. Pops of color brighten one of the children's bedrooms, each of which has an attached bath. The 12-foot kitchen island, topped with statuary marble, accommodates casual dining.

Renovation

INSIDE STORY

A landmarked house in Kenwood is reborn as a modern, family-friendly home

BY LAUREN VIERA



THE AESTHETIC VISION WAS SIMPLE enough: warmly contemporary. But for the 100-year-old Kenwood mansion, whose move-in condition was closer to coldly decrepit, the vision wasn't easily achieved—a gut rehab was necessary. “The only reason we didn’t

raze it to the ground,” says Robert Berg of Foster Design Build, “was because it’s landmarked.”

As it happens, the house is right next door to that of Kenwood’s best-known residents, the Obamas, on Greenwood Avenue. With the First Family as next-door neighbors, security was an issue throughout the proj-



In the family room, a linear fireplace is set into a wall faced with limestone. Petrified-wood stumps serve as end tables. **ABOVE RIGHT** The architect refreshed the home's century-old façade with precise replications of the portico's columns and balusters. **RIGHT** The homeowners' wine collection is dramatically displayed in the dining area.

ect, with every subcontractor and delivery needing to pass muster with guards before proceeding. But the greater challenge was architectural—to preserve the historic façade of the four-level house while scrapping virtually everything else and constructing a spectacular new interior and rear face.

The clients, a couple looking to relocate from Lincoln Park, had two priorities: clean lines and plenty of growing room for their three young sons and toddler daughter. Deerfield-based Bella Maison was contracted to design a floor plan; Leo Designs picked up where Bella Maison left off, finishing the interiors with everything from plumbing and built-ins to fixtures, fabrics, and furniture.

“They did not want a home that looked overly ‘done’ or fussy,” says Leo Designs partner Stephanie Wirth, who adds that her clients were “refreshingly decisive.” The ability to entertain many adult guests at once (the parents are active in their community and also in their children’s school) was as important as hosting play-



The homeowners “did not want a home that looked overly ‘done’ or fussy.”



Renovation

A chevron-patterned wood credenza provides storage in the entry; the custom railing was created by Milk Design.

dates, considerations that led to practical and versatile design elements such as a supersize kitchen island. And when work and play are done, every member of the family has a private space to escape to; each child has a bedroom with an en suite bath. There's even an elevator—smartly anticipating the needs of aging grandparents.

In the end, a handful of original details were salvaged, including an elaborately framed 110-year-old mirror that was restored and installed in the master suite. The look throughout is invitingly contemporary but not cold—sleek but also comfortable and practical. And with a mudroom that has lockers for the children, a backyard with a basketball court, an indoor sports area on the lowest level, and an extra-long driveway that doubles as a skateboarding ramp, the house is seriously kid-friendly. “The clients truly prioritized the happiness of their children,” Wirth says.

Resources: See Buy Guide, page 30.



DETAILS



1 Each child has a locker in the mudroom; a sliding ladder makes upper cabinets easy to reach. **2** In the master bath, a freestanding tub sits on a floor of herring-boned porcelain tile; the wall behind the tub is clad with marble. **3** A 110-year-old mirror that came with the house was restored and hung in the master suite.

Renovation



Vision freestanding double-sided **fireplace**, \$6,595, at EcoSmart Fire. Hamlin **sofa with chaise**, \$3,998, at Room & Board. Natural tree stump, \$199, at West Elm.

GET THE LOOK *Quiet colors and clean-lined furnishings contribute to a design that's as sophisticated as it is practical.*



Be Collection BBE 02 freestanding **tub**, about \$6,000, at Wetstyle.



A mix of textures makes a neutral palette interesting.

Hubbardton Forge Exos **lamp**, \$424, at Lightology. Meditations Ohm handwoven **wallcovering**, price on request, at West Romanoff. Starflower wool and silk **rug**, \$188 a square foot, at The Rug Company.

HUE NEWS

In the Kenwood home, vivid colors are used as accents rather than on walls or large pieces of furniture. Green panels on a vanity brighten a child's bath; in the dining area, a wall of wine is an important design element.



Clark **table** by Rodolfo Dordoni, from \$8,445, at Orange Skin. Luna **banquette** in leather, \$5,925, at Holly Hunt.