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HEAD OF THE CLASS

BY JACQUELINE DEMONTRAVEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRUCE BUCK

A HOME'S FLAWLESS INTERPRETATION OF A TRADITIONAL ESTATE TAKES THE BEST FROM THE PAST.

IF *DOWNTON ABBEY* WERE SET IN THE MODERN DAY, THIS GEORGIAN REVIVAL ESTATE IN BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS, WOULD BE THE NATURAL SETTING. BUILT IN 1929, IT IS INFLUENCED BY BOTH 18TH-CENTURY FRANCE AND THE AMERICAN GILDED AGE. "THIS HOME DEMONSTRATES THE REFINED, BALANCED PROPORTIONS FAVORED IN THE GEORGIAN ERA, AND IS REMINISCENT OF THE MANOR HOUSES BUILT IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY," BOSTON ARCHITECT JOHN I. MEYER, JR. SAYS.

This residence, known as 'English Rose,' is a three-story, 18,000 square foot, symmetrical red brick estate. It seems more in sync with European manor houses fully equipped with a working farm and footmen. In a home inspired by European elegance and grandeur, the thought of

dwellers with iPads and morning coffee spouting from a Keurig seems amiss.

Despite the home's enormity, the rooms within are carved into distinct sections. Such layouts were more typical in past times to foster intimate spaces. The scope of this project included the complete interior rebuilding of two-thirds of the house to create a new entry and reception halls, construction of a main stair, master suite and bath and a third-floor bedroom suite. A limestone portico was added on the west elevation, with a stone balustrade railing at the second-floor terrace.

The house was built for Quincy Adams Shaw, a wealthy copper-mining investor. It reflects a prevailing taste that looked to Europe for design inspiration. When the renovation began, the design team prioritized that the original craftsmanship be honored and replicated. This project implicitly proves that quality and designed artistry is not just a relic from the past. The team included the architect, interior designer, master builder and decorative painter, who all brought their distinctive talents and contributed to the home's stunning composition.

In the original construction, only the best materials were used. It was important to the homeowners that such an attention to skill and composition expanded on the authentic details of the home's former glory.

GILDED DOORS WITH ELABORATE SCROLLWORK open to a grand parlor replete with a pedestal table. The Montpellier chairs, in an eye-catching raspberry and toile, stand out dramatically in the almost-all-white room.

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The project team continued this tradition, and all changes that were made to the home simulate the original work.

Interior finishes are done in the spirit of French rococo. Architectural elements are finished in three different gold leafs: 15, 18 and 23 karat. Paintings and murals were done by a renowned muralist and painter. Custom millwork throughout includes coffered ceilings, rooms featuring hand-carved brackets, pediments, chair rails, dados and picture rails. The grand staircase is limestone with a custom bronze railing and a handcrafted, sculptured and lighted feature at its termination. The home is a fusion of attention to such details and exhaustive research.

The architecture and interiors firm, Meyer & Meyer, Inc., which is known for its ability to meld historic design with modern-day living, was responsible for overseeing the conceptual design and managing the project through to completion. And they intentionally did not design the home as a museum piece. While its elaborate opulence may give off the impression of roped-off quarters, the home is livable for a classic way of life. “Consider your lifestyle and let the estate follow your wish list, but maintain elements of style regardless of being classical or modern,” Laura Brooks Meyer, interior designer of Meyer & Meyer, Inc., recommends.

The design firm oversaw a stunning collection of antique and reproduced furniture, lighting, fireplace



THE DORIC COLUMNS and ornate panel work of the walls and ceilings are balanced by the chic simplicity of the Italian marble floors and black accent tiles.

mantels and the dramatic and suitable window treatments; and a master builder known for quality work and attention to detail combined with top-notch engineering specialists worked together to bring this historic property to its current impressive state.

The site is now one of the most prominent in the area, with other outdoor features that include two long lily ponds along the back patio edged with boxwood and a swimming pool, which is hidden in a glade. A wooded landscape on the property provides privacy and views from the main house. Overall, the home is an example of cultivated living for a modern time. **LS**



[ABOVE] FURNISHINGS WERE USED TO PUNCTUATE the grand architectural style of the home rather than compete with it.

[OPPOSITE] THE GRAND STAIRCASE, with its combination of smooth limestone and custom bronze railings, is crowned with an elegant finishing touch: a handcrafted sculptural light post.

