



ALEX STEINBERG

Project

# Art Deco Waltz

A RENOVATION AND ADDITION ENHANCE A HISTORIC HOME WHILE CREATING A SENSUOUS, DOMESTIC FAMILY HAVEN *By Linda Shapiro*



*Design team (left to right): Mark Nelson, AIA; David Heide, Assoc. AIA; Brad Belka.*

In 1928, construction magnate Frank M. Groves built a house near Lake Harriet that remains such an outstanding example of the Mediterranean Villa style, it's on the National Register of Historic Places. The second owners, who purchased the house in 1988, were attracted by the pristine condition of its white brick-veneer exterior, red barrel-tiled hip roof, broad terrace with iron rail and use of arch forms. But they especially liked the house's Art Deco interior detailing and craftsmanship.

As with many houses built in this period, however, the separate family and servant

spaces no longer suited contemporary family living. The original kitchen, isolated from the rest of the house, was small with insufficient lighting and layers of dark varnish on the woodwork. The adjoining chauffeur quarters were inaccessible except through the basement-level garage.

The owners wanted to update their historic home by creating a large, user-friendly kosher kitchen and an informal family room that would bring the children's activities in closer proximity to meal preparation. A home office easily converted into a guest bedroom, and an improved



*The historic home's addition includes a stair tower enclosing a formerly open-air space (page 33) that leads to a renovated kitchen with sumptuous Art Deco detailing and cabinetry (above left and top), and which opens into a new family room (above right and opposite) with a classic, streamlined elegance.*

guest entry from the auto court were also important considerations.

The clients chose David Heide Design, LLC, Minneapolis, to lead the renovation, they say, because the firm “struck us as creative, innovative and passionate. At the same time, the design team’s knowledge of and love for historical architecture assured us that they would maintain the historical integrity of the house.”

Extending the Art Deco elements of the house’s interior was a priority. “We looked to the original

house to see how the architect handled detailing and tried to stay within similar guidelines while using our own sensibilities in solving design problems,” says David Heide, Assoc. AIA, director.

“One of the tenets of historic preservation is to not blur history,” Heide says. “You want to leave, in some respects, a clear roadmap, which means making enough of a transition between the existing structure and what you’re adding so that someone looking at the building can understand its natural evolution.”

The design solution involved connecting the main house to the chauffeur quarters by enclosing the open terrace between the two with a two-story stair-tower entrance leading to the main rooms of the house. Directly off the main entrance hall is a mudroom where the basement’s original knotty pine has been extended to drawers, cupboards and cubbyholes for the children’s belongings.

While the stair-tower addition is subordinate to the original building, its scale and massing are compatible. The white brick matches that of the original house. The copper roof contrasts with the tile roof of the main structure, yet copper is a material found elsewhere on the building. It helps to set the new construction apart just enough, leaving a clear understanding of what is old and what is new.

A dramatic spiral staircase connects the entrance hall inside the tower to the kitchen and family rooms above, anticipating the curvilinear character of the renovation. The new kitchen provides modern conveniences while introducing a streamlined Art Deco sensibility reminiscent of 1930s glamour and opulence. You can almost picture Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers waltzing around the glittering granite island, then stopping at the elegant built-in wine service to sip a martini.

The plaster relief on the kitchen ceiling and the elliptical shapes of the island and cabinets recall the original breakfast room, a small oval off the original kitchen. Big-leaf maple cabinets (a wood generally used in musical instruments) with stainless-steel inlay also reference the original birch-plywood cabinets, but offer a spectacular upgrade in materials. The sepia glow of the maple offsets the luminous sheen of the blue-pearl-colored granite counter and island tops, and the periwinkle-blue plate glass of the backsplashes and pass-through doors.





*The two-story stair tower (opposite top right) opens into the breakfast room (above). A classic Art Deco butler's pantry (opposite top left) is conveniently located between the breakfast room and a more formal dining room with chandelier. The office (right) continues the theme with built-ins and Deco-inspired tables.*



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A butler's pantry and wine service are conveniently situated between service doors to the dining and breakfast rooms. The client's need for a kosher kitchen with separate cabinets for dairy and meat dishes, cookware, dishwashers and preparation areas meant the kitchen had to expand. Heide kept the work areas contained within one relatively large space and the client says she can now "move about easily, even when a large crowd has congregated in the kitchen."

Located in what was originally a sunroom, the new breakfast room (which has become the main family dining area) has a set of French

doors opening to the stair tower and a new pass-through with pocket doors into the kitchen. Above the pass-through, glass cabinets with sliding doors relocated from elsewhere in the original kitchen allow in light from the breakfast-room windows overlooking a terrace.

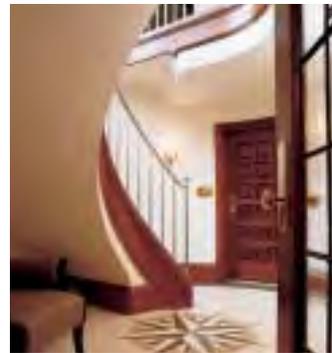
A wide proscenium-style arch connects the kitchen and family room. Occupying the site of an original outdoor terrace, the family room is lined with Deco-inspired wenge and mahogany cabinetry housing electronics, a computer workstation and a television. A variety of wood grains and creamy leather and fabric upholstery add texture and warmth to the streamlined simplicity of the furniture, woodwork, fireplace and Jerusalem-stone floors.

The adjacent home office, which also functions as a guest room, carries on the themes of the family room through built-ins with ebony inlays and Deco-inspired drum tables. Originally two servants' bedrooms, the area also includes a small bathroom with heated-tile floors, and glittering mosaic-tile walls that slyly reference the blue-pearl granite in the kitchen.

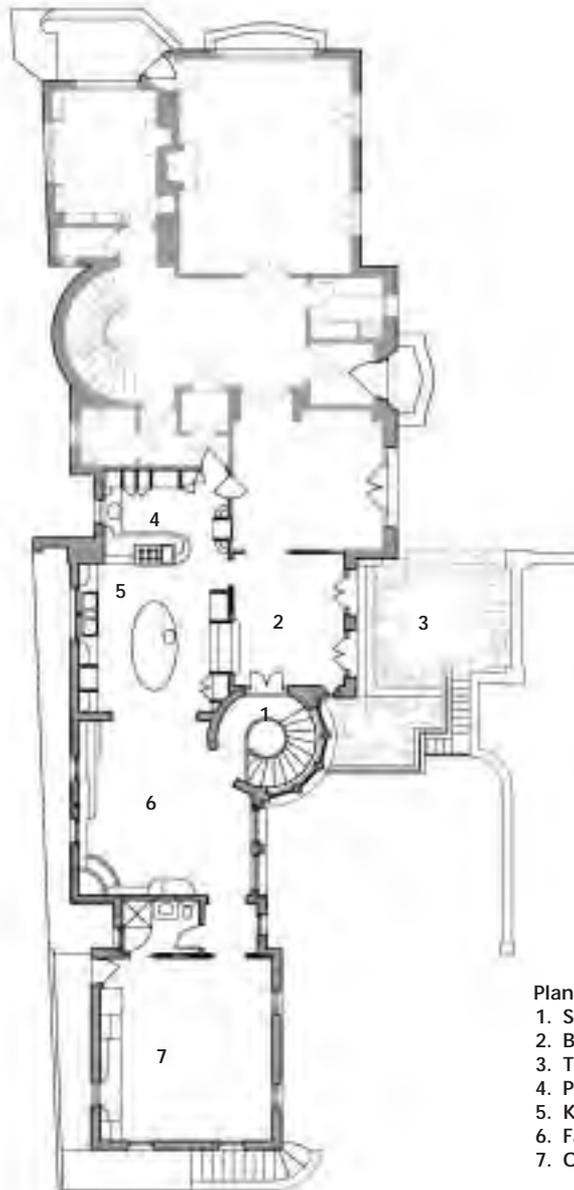
The 2,630-square-foot renovation's interior details, including furniture, cabinets, molding profiles, casework and interior finishes, were designed or chosen by the design team to orchestrate the relationship of traditional to contemporary. "The woods and glaze mix throughout the renovation so they don't conflict with the rest of the house," Heide says. "It's about the graphic quality of things—what should step forward and what back. Where are the silent parts and where is the music?"

Blending the streamlined pizzazz of a 1930s luxury ocean liner with the sensuous warmth of a domestic haven, the design team's renovation is both stylish and livable. "We knew the renovation would be beautiful," the clients say. "What surprised us was how comfortable it is. It feels like home, even to the children. And we achieved what we set out to do without compromising the historical aspects of the house."

Lake Harriet Residence  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota  
 David Heide Design, LLC  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota



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- Plan
- 1. Stair-tower entrance
  - 2. Breakfast room
  - 3. Terrace
  - 4. Pantry
  - 5. Kitchen
  - 6. Family room
  - 7. Office