



ffects David
and Paul Fiore
ted this East
bridge house
respecting its
ngman's roots.
42.

THEN AND NOW



WHETHER AN OLD HOUSE IS GRAND OR HUMBLE, ELEGANT OR QUIRKY, ITS HERITAGE AND HISTORY SHOULD BE INTEGRAL TO RENOVATION PLANS. TO BRING THE 19TH-CENTURY HOUSES FEATURED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES GRACEFULLY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY, THEIR OWNERS TRIED REFRESHINGLY MODERN APPROACHES WHILE REMAINING TRUE TO ARCHITECTURAL ROOTS.



■ In the kitchen, the island countertop matches a soapstone sink that was found at a salvage yard. Moss-gray walls offset the custom green cabinets.

AN 1830S WORKINGMAN'S COTTAGE
GETS AN UPDATE BY TWO ARCHITECTS
WHO APPRECIATE ITS ECLECTIC CHARM.

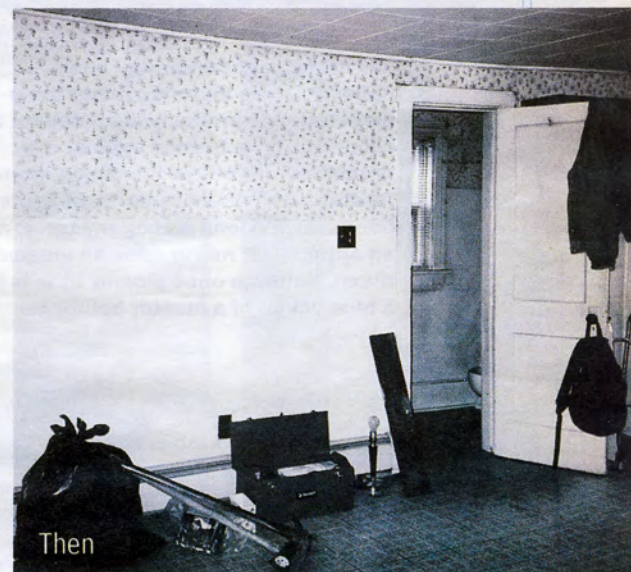
HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

THE FIRST HOME that David Foley designed had a small “baf,” a “ci-chen,” a “chch” (for sitting upon), and a rounded front “boor” leading into the living area. The bedrooms were probably upstairs. He was in kindergarten or perhaps first grade when he did this rudimentary architectural rendering, which he has carefully saved. Architecture “was definitely a calling,” he says. “I always made little houses and 3-D floor plans out of Legos.”

“I didn’t know that. I did, too!” says Paul Fiore of his partner’s revelation. “I used to do drawings all the time and pretend my mother was the client.”

Suddenly, the two principals in Foley Fiore Architecture realize that they both probably wanted to be architects all of their lives. As adults, they have seen that common interest come together to produce a charming home and a successful business.

Five years ago, the architects, both now 35, purchased a small early-19th-century workingman’s house in East Cambridge. In the ensuing years, they have redesigned it into a home and office that meets their needs while retaining most of the original



Then

BY BARBARA CLAIRE KASSELMANN | PHOTOGRAPHS BY SAM GRAY

Now



■ In the East Cambridge home, a balloon-theme Victorian paper tablecloth (above), probably designed for a child's party, is framed against the dramatic red walls of the dining room. Pewter and milk-glass pendant lights hang above a long mahogany table, and an antique gilt mirror adds an elegant touch. Below, a once gloomy attic is now a blue haven of a master bedroom.



Now



Then

structure and its character. "What we like about the house," says Foley, "is that it's an old house, but with a cottagey feel. It's not a precious old house. We like funky old things, and it gave us the freedom to be playful."

The L-shaped building is on a back lot away from the street, tucked behind other houses. A brick path from the street leads to a small courtyard, which in the warmer months Foley and Fiore adorn with galvanized-metal pails of gardenias, a bubbling washtub fountain, ferns, and cushions and spikes of seasonal greenery and colorful flowers.

The house's original clapboards, long masked by brown asphalt shingles, have been restored and are now a sunny yellow. The foundation bricks are painted a contrasting dark gray.

A canopied doorway opens directly from the courtyard into the architects' basement-level office. Here, Foley and Fiore, with their assistant, architect Andrea Morton, design homes and commercial spaces in Boston and Cambridge, Manhattan and Long Island, Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard.

Custom maple-veneer cabinets by Jim Galligan and Chris Keller of Medford line the office walls. "This is real urban architecture," says Fiore. "We fill up every square inch with something, even in the garden." Indeed, throughout the house, Galligan and Keller tucked shelving into every possible nook and cranny – beneath windows, under sinks, and inside closets – to make the best use of all available space.

The house is on Fifth Street, in a neighborhood that has always been primarily working class. The architects have traced the house's history back to 1832. They note that its position on an "interior lot" indicates it is older than the houses closer to the street. Adding another home in front as relatives moved in to join their families was a common practice, according to Fiore.

The previous occupants raised a family with three children here, despite limited and rather inconvenient



Now



Then

David Foley (seated) and Paul Fiore with their assistant, architect Andrea Morton, in their basement-level office. Photos of their projects hang on the wall above the exposed stone of the original foundation.

Continued on Page 60

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Humble beginnings

Continued from Page 45

bathroom facilities. When Foley and Fiore bought the property, the only washbasin was the kitchen sink, the toilet was off the kitchen, and a bathtub was upstairs under the eaves.

In the redesigned structure, the lower level includes, in addition to the office space, what Foley and Fiore whimsically refer to as a "secret" back hall. It is lined with a row of doors, numbered one through five, that lead to closets, the basement, a bath, and washer and dryer.

At the end of the hall, stairs lead to the main living area, where a homey kitchen blends into a fireplaced dining area. The large kitchen island has a countertop designed to match an old soapstone sink that Foley and Fiore found at a salvage yard. Moss-gray walls and green cabinets lend the kitchen an earthy, relaxed look.

French doors open to a small, west-facing porch from which Foley and Fiore

Barbara Claire Kasselmann is a freelance writer. She lives in Boston.

can appreciate a view of East Cambridge that is Old Worldy, especially at sunset.

Dramatic red walls set the dining area apart from the kitchen. Three pewter and milk-glass lights hang above the long mahogany table, and an antique gilt mirror adds an elegant touch. Images of San Francisco, where Foley and Fiore lived for several years, are abundant, particularly in Fiore's black-and-white photos in the dining and living rooms.

When family ties brought them back to Boston, they continued pursuing separate careers. "Our business just kind of happened," Fiore says. They were asked to design a friend's house, a project they took on together, and before long, "we had two jobs before we even had a business or a name. And both jobs spawned more jobs here and in New York."

Gleaming antique floors of wide heart-pine boards, mellow north light streaming through four big windows, creamy-yellow walls, and a natural sisal carpet give the living room an airy feel and set off the eclectic furnishings and memorabilia. Purple, red, orange, and yellow pillows accent the gold couch and rose chairs, while another chair and matching ottoman have

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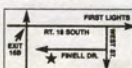
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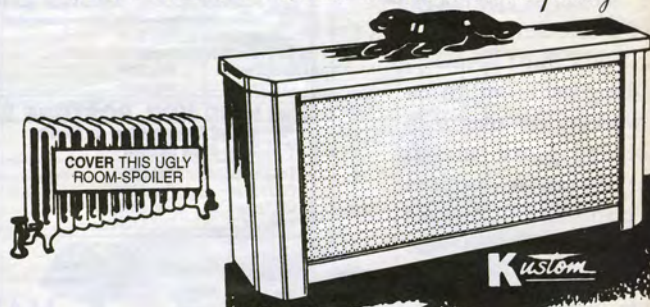
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An antique demilune table and blanket chest, from European Country Antiques in Cambridge, accent the living room.

been elegantly reupholstered in olive-toned satin and velvet. Adding a playful note to the room are Foley's toddler-sized leopard-print footed pajamas. "My sister had them framed for me," he says. "We call them the dancing PJs."

Upstairs under the eaves, Foley and

Fiore have fashioned a master bedroom suite in what was once a gloomy attic. The walls are painted a lavender-blue while the wood trim, ceiling, carpet, curtains, and bed coverings are white. Mementos and family treasures decorate the walls. The white-and-blue theme continues in the bath, pumped up by accents of cobalt tile on walls and floor.

Top to bottom, the Foley-Fiore home is an effective blend of old and new, fine and quirky. The architects have not only fulfilled their individual destinies, but have found a team approach that allows them to work daily in the same office, have fun in the process, and keep the clients happy.

"This place," says Fiore, "was small enough and manageable enough for us to start from scratch. Now that we've done this, maybe eventually we'll want more room." Sounds like another renovation in the works. □

RESOURCES

Foley Fiore Architecture, Cambridge, 617-547-8002 or www.foleyfiore.com. Jim Galignan and Chris Keller, Medford, cabinet-makers, 781-396-9393.

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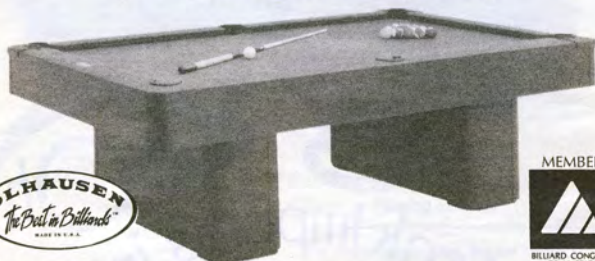
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