

2023 AIA | DC Chapter Design Awards

Project Title: Renovation on Logan Circle

Location: Washington DC

Date of Completion: 8/1/2021

Project Statement:

We cursed L'Enfant many times in the renovation of this house on Logan Circle where our lot, drawn out with the most subtle radius, resulted in no walls standing parallel to another. The effects of the radial lot informed design decisions, providing inspiration for rounded references and other geometric cues. While the scale of this renovation touched every room, our goal was not a remodel but rather a reprogram. Perhaps unexpectedly, we re-center on the rear of the house, originally designed for house staff featuring smaller spaces, lesser materials, and shorter ceiling heights. To adapt to 21st living norms, we've illuminated these areas as the heart of the house. New second-floor skylights send light deeply to the new kitchen, washing original brick and casting shadows across the wood joists like sundials. Reusing and highlighting original materials, both raw and refined, the house lives as an interplay of eras.

Design Narrative: How does this project address Design for Integration, Wellbeing, and Discovery?

Approached as a contribution to the maintenance of the city's architectural heritage, this renovation preserves one of the last homes on Logan Circle remaining as a single family residence. Careful preservation of the front facade and rear proportions maintain its integration into the fabric of the city. Attention to the re-use of materials and exposure of the bones of the home were important to the residents' connection to the history of the house. That fusion of old and new provided a mix of warmth and comfort, combined with modern day conveniences. The technical approaches included the restoration of the 150-year-old facade, as well as interior treatments with unexpected moments of light and delight. The modernizations at the rear of the home are playful, featuring skylight apertures with sculpted bellies in contrast to the steel railings and exposed original wood joinery that share a story of history interlaced with the present.

Community Engagement: How does this project address Design for Equitable Communities and Economy?

This project, located in the heart of Logan Circle, was one of the few remaining single family homes on the circle and we felt it was important to the neighborhood to keep it that way. Many other homes have been turned into condominiums, chopped up and maximized for profitability. While this is not an affordable housing project, the clients made decisions that focused on re-using rather than buying new in many cases, moving around mantles, reusing found materials, keeping hardwood and plaster even though it took longer to complete the project. They built in flexibility to have an accessory dwelling unit in the lower level someday and have preserved as much green space in the rear of the property for a vegetable garden onsite all in an effort to be good stewards to the neighborhood that they love.

Sustainability and Resilience: How does this project address Design for Ecosystems, Water, Energy, Resources, and Change? This site, within walking distance of multiple metro stations and a bus stop at the front stoop of the house, is the perfect walkable urban site. The project returned trees to the area of the site for vehicle parking and established an outdoor space for a vegetable garden. Indoors, radiant heating systems throughout the house were maintained and extended to the lower level through a heated concrete slab. The HVAC solution is a high efficiency system reinforced by a robust insulation package featuring an Aero Barrier envelope sealing system that protects against energy leakage and improves air quality.

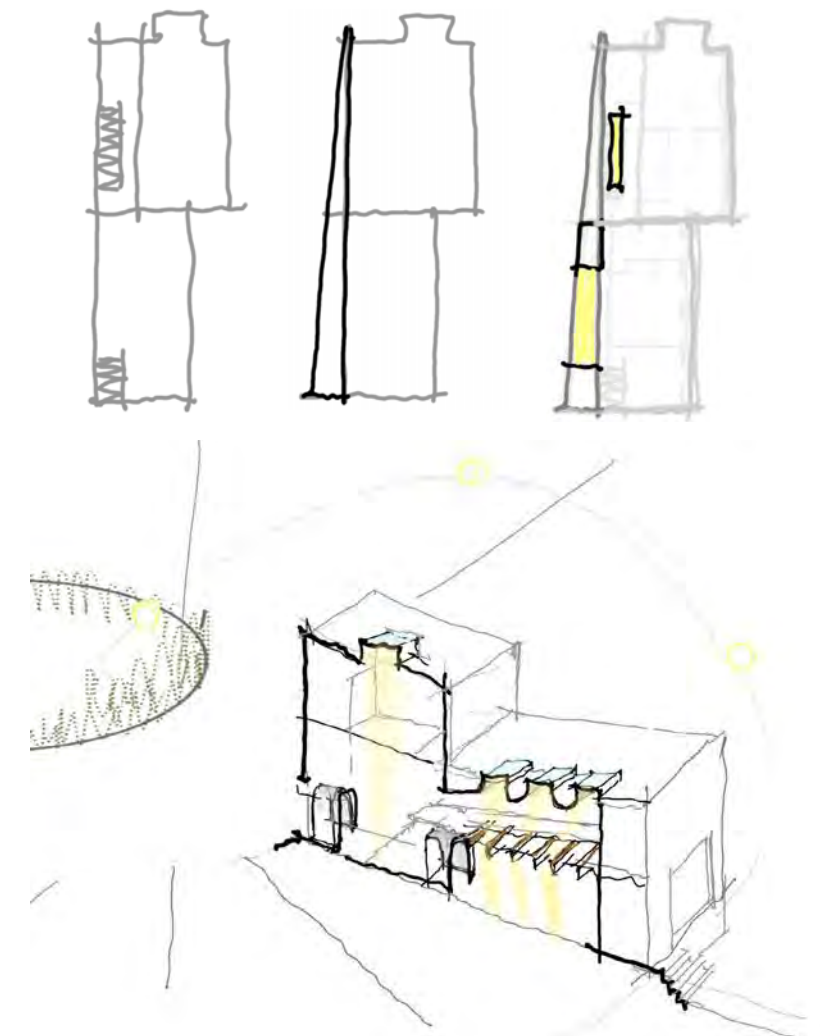


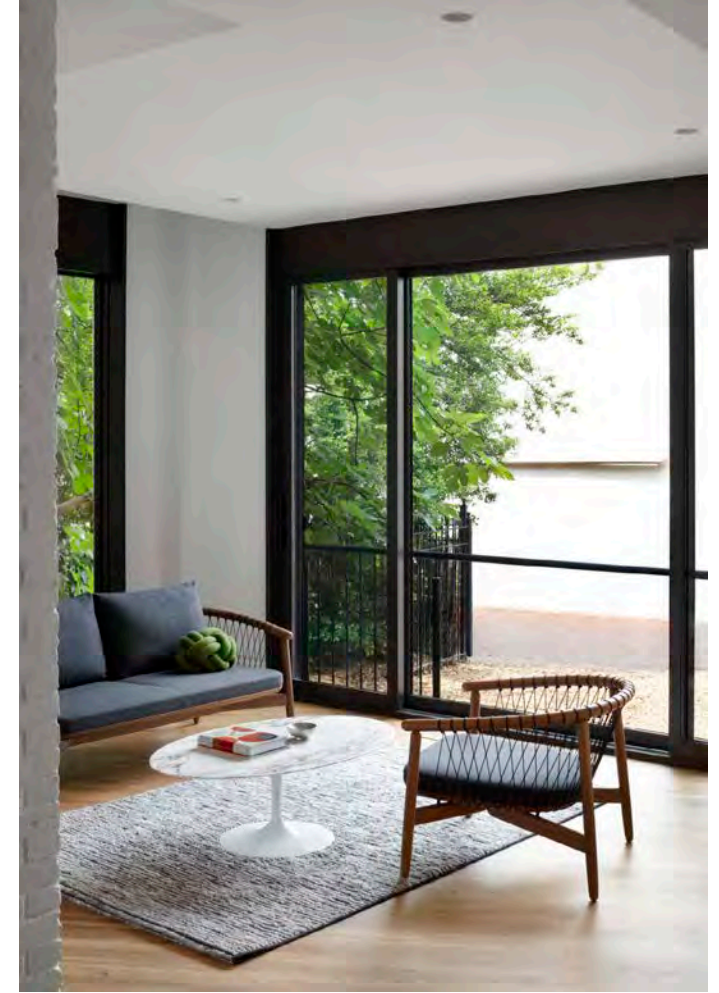
We cursed L' Enfant many times in the renovation of this house on Logan Circle. The house, fronting on the circle and with lot lines on the most subtle radius as a result, had no walls parallel to another. The effects of the radial lot not only informed design decisions, but provided inspiration for rounded references and other geometric subtleties.

The scale of this renovation touched every room of the house, but our goal was not a full make-over. Much of the original elements and bones of the house were in great shape and our clients desired a mix of historic charm and modern upgrades.

The rear of the house, which 150 years ago would have been originally inhabited only by servants and staff had smaller room, lesser materials and shorter ceiling heights. In a response to our more modern ways of living these areas are now the heart of the house. New skylights on the second floor bring light through a new opening in the ceiling of the kitchen, washing along exposed original elements of brick and original wood joists. Sculpted skylights bring light into a previously dark rear hallway. In the primary bedroom, we sacrificed one of the 7 original fireplaces and covered it over and widened it's projection through careful recreation of original plaster details. The new wall serves as an art wall and headboard.

A new finished lower level and existing bathrooms are upgrade with a mix of vintage & industrial charm blending tastes of both clients and using elements original to the house whenever possible.



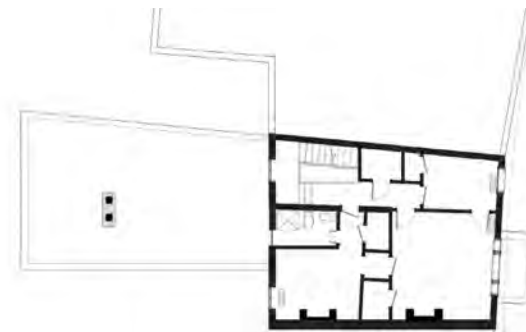


(left) Rear view of new sliding doors to open up the space and the original brick fireplace beyond

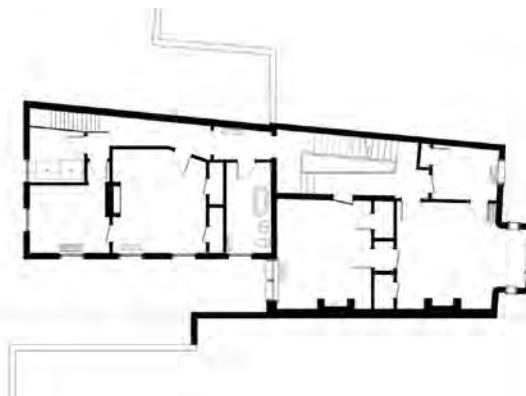
(right) Sculpted skylights on the second floor bring light down to the kitchen below



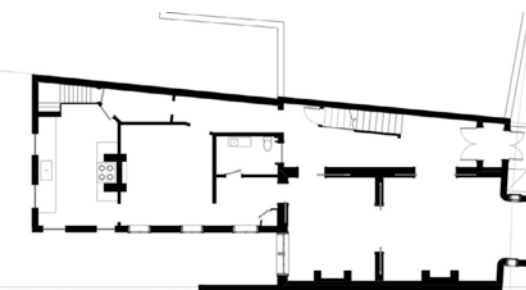
Before



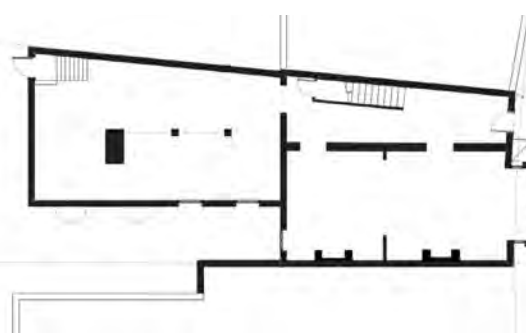
Third Floor



Second Floor

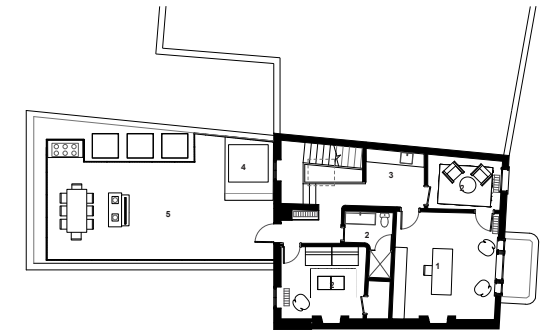


First Floor

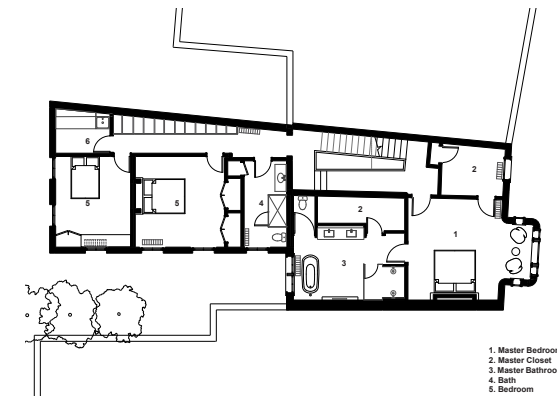


Basement

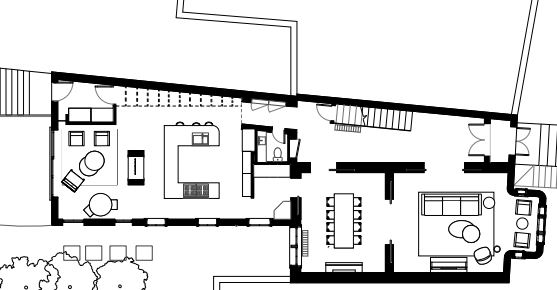
After



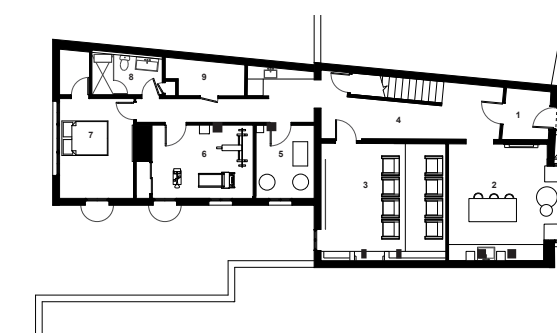
Third Floor



Second Floor



First Floor



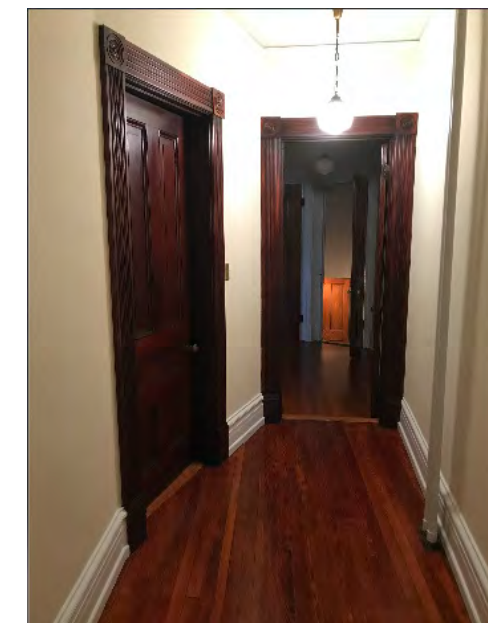
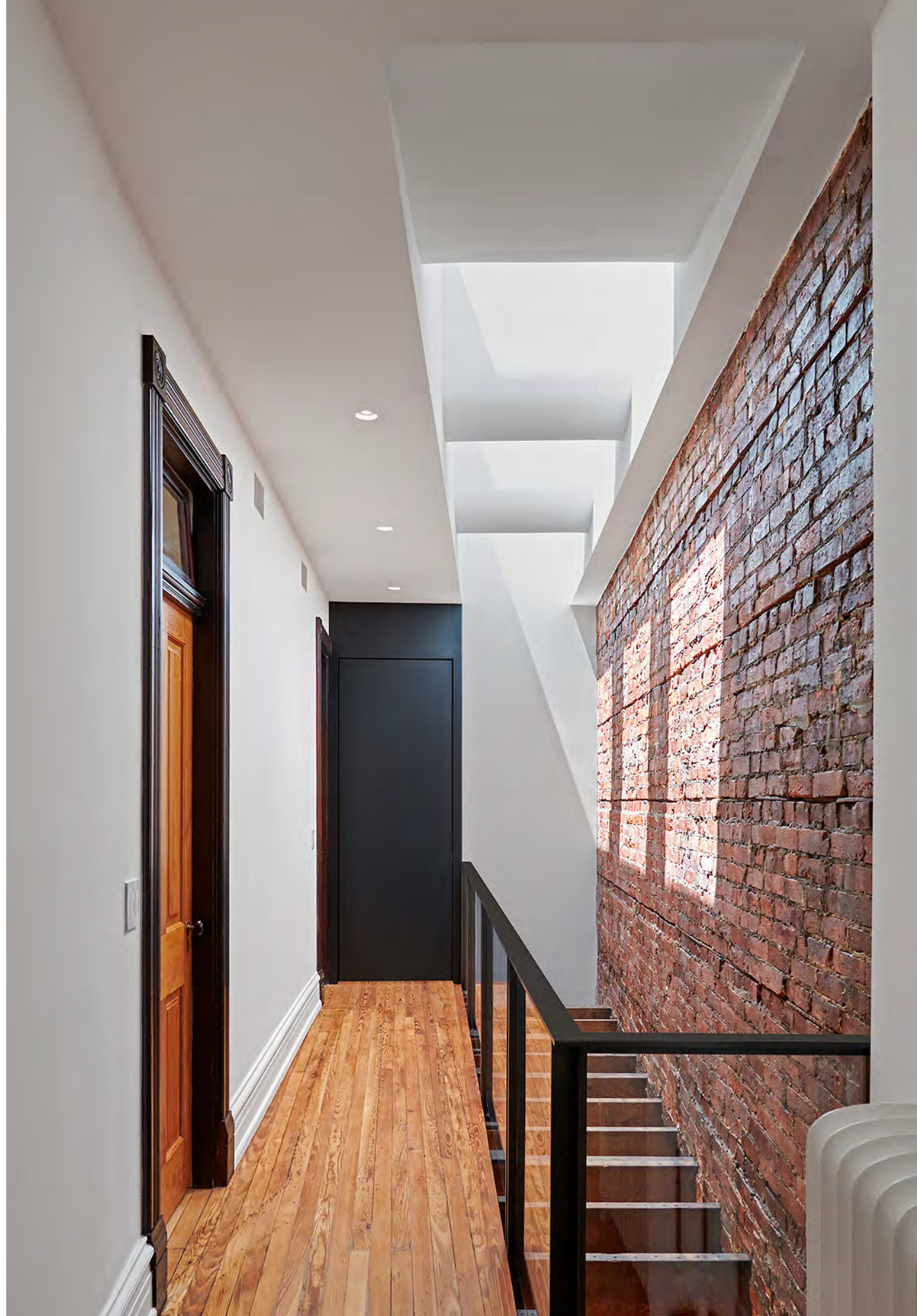
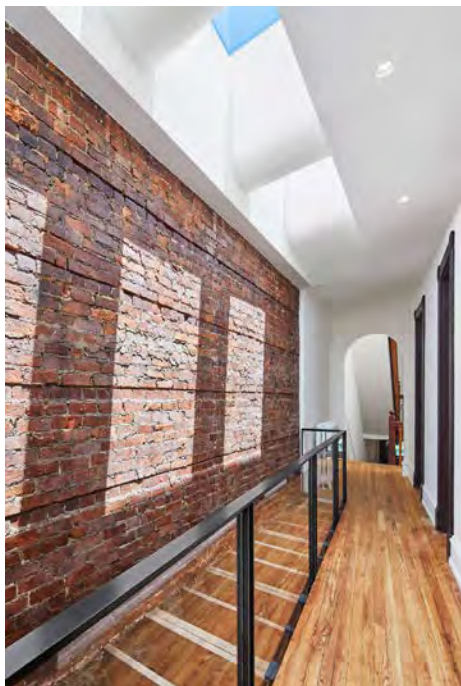
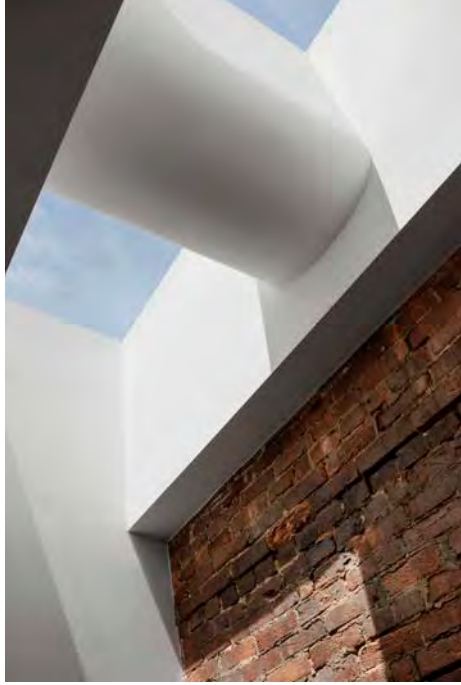
Basement

- SECOND FLOOR PLAN
- 1. Master Bedroom
 - 2. Master Closet
 - 3. Master Bathroom
 - 4. Bath
 - 5. Bedroom
 - 6. Laundry

- BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN
- 1. Basement Ent
 - 2. Lounge
 - 3. Media Room
 - 4. Basement Hal
 - 5. Mech. Room
 - 6. Gym
 - 7. Guest Room
 - 8. Bathroom
 - 9. Closet



Living Room
View looking out onto Logan Circle with new
custom Deco /Modern inspired fireplace

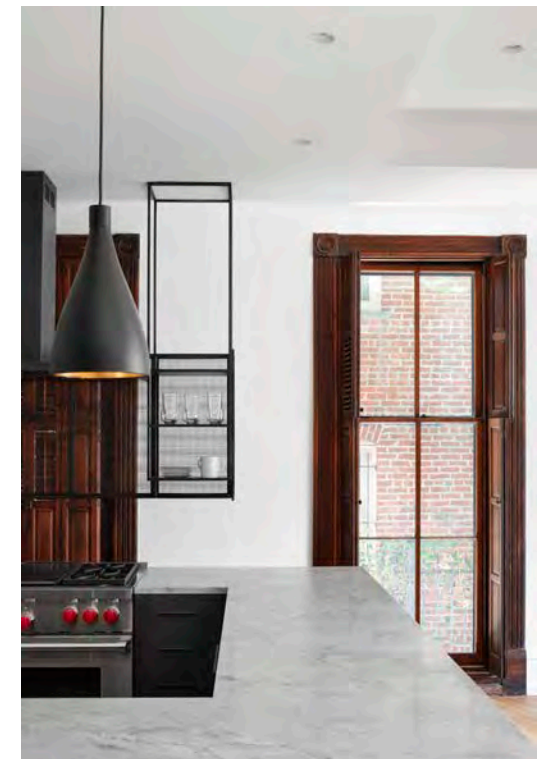


Before shot of second floor hallway



In the rear of the house, since no walls are parallel to each other, we decided to run the floor boards diagonal. A quartzite natural stone countertop creates a large U shape in the middle of the kitchen. A full wall of storage and custom metal hanging shelves that wrap both sides of the hood take the place of standard wall cabinets.

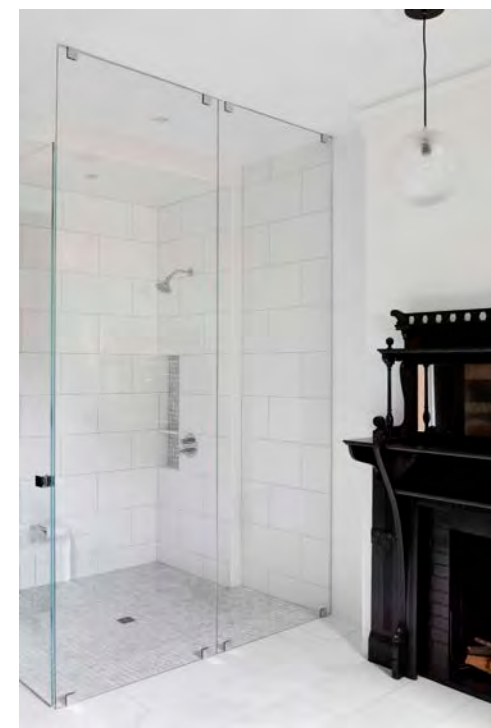
The original ceiling joists are exposed above - and are open to a skylight at the roof - metal support brackets for the handrail at the walkway above show hugging both sides of the exposed joists for support. The brick party wall is exposed for two levels letting light wash down from above along the textured surface. At the rear a new "mud-room" for access from the backyard holds storage closets



The new rear of the house is entered through an original archway that was extended 10' with a new plaster archway. A powder room and additional storage are carved into the arch. Coming through this new tunnel original wood floor joists are exposed above and light streams down through a second floor skylight above. A new garden room and kitchen occupy the back of the house with an existing brick fireplace (reconfigured to be see-through and gas fired) defines the two spaces



Before Image Collage of Kitchen and Dining room



Primary Bathroom

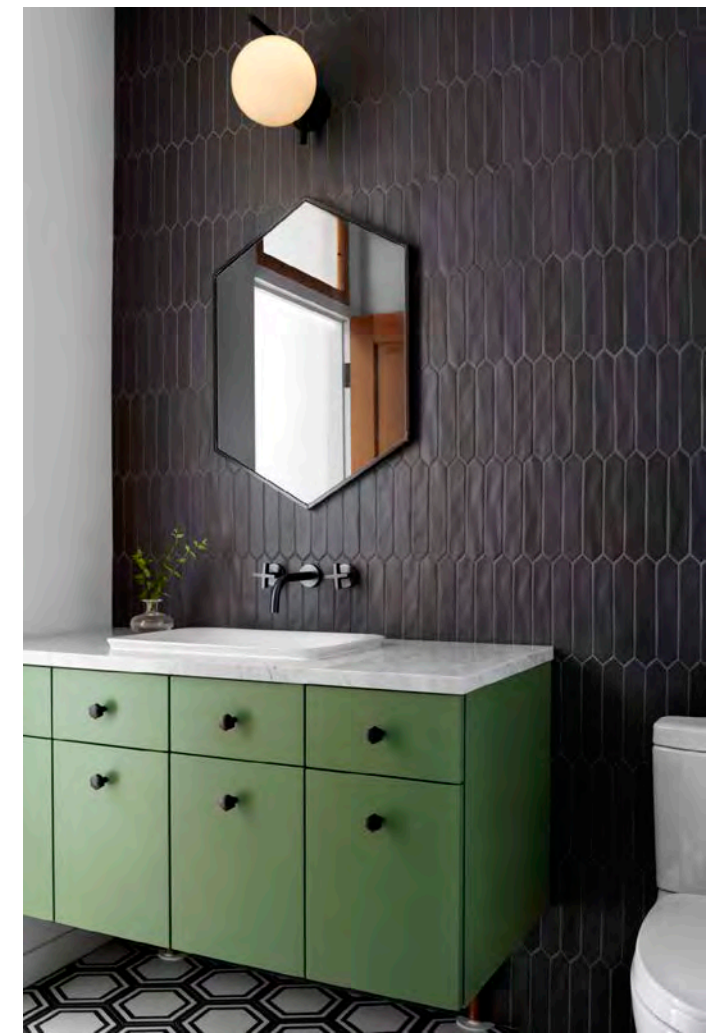
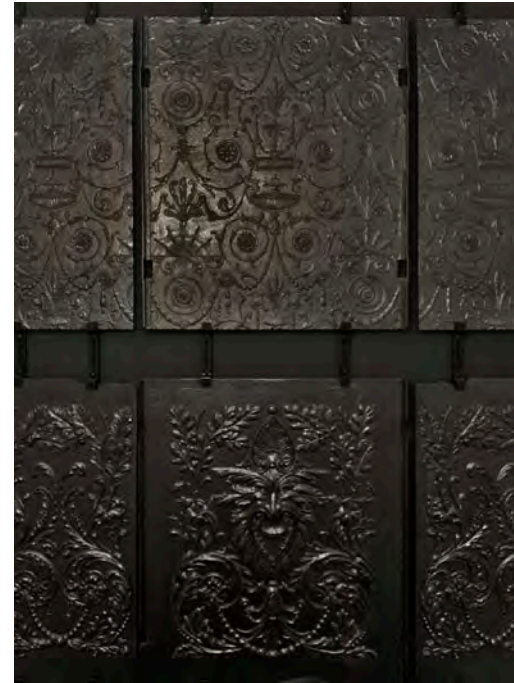
A tub from another bathroom was re-used here along with an original fireplace moved from the living room and painted. A new modern vanity and finishes compliment the original windows. Reeded glass doors lead into a toilet room and primary closet on either side of the vanity



Primary Bedroom

The fireplace mantle was removed and infilled and the left hand side of the firebox was extended to create a wider headboard wall. Plaster details on the left hand side of the bump out were re-created to match the right hand side. A new dark stained ash cabinet spans the length of the wall to provide storage and a continuous headboard element

Iron plates used for lining the inside of fireboxes were found in some of the existing fireplaces. In places where they were no longer needed, we brought them back to life with a new blackened finish and panelized them on the powder room wall for display





View from Backyard

The rear elevation was selectively changed as the site falls under historic preservation review. A new enlarged sliding glass door can open up the rear of the house to the garden, new basement windows bring light into the lower level and a new door and deck down lead toward a future patio, carriage house/garage and green roof garden

