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# TO THE MANOR REBORN

A modest 1960s house in Greenwich  
is reimagined as a grand stone dwelling  
that would be right at home in the  
English countryside.

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Architect Jeff Kaufman forged space for a floating staircase that winds its way to the top floor. Its dramatic ascent is accentuated with custom-designed railings by Dave Hind of Hamilton, Ontario. FACING PAGE: The bench at the base of the stairs was discovered by the homeowners, who restored it to its natural state by stripping off coats of old paint.





**THE STATELY HOME, COMPLETE WITH A BACKDROP OF MATURE TREES, LOOKS AS THOUGH IT COULD HAVE BEEN COPIED FROM A PHOTOGRAPH**

of the English countryside of a century ago. Passersby probably take turns guessing the building's age. Maybe they conjure images of cricket matches on the generous lawn. Never would they surmise that this glorious Greenwich dwelling is the reincarnation of a 1960s house.

That modest structure was clad in clapboard and totally of the era. This classic stone manor commands its site, exuding character even from afar. For the young family inside, the house is the epitome of comfort. And, as the best British homes always do, it will only grow better with age.

Indeed, architect Jeff Kaufman, who heads a firm with offices in Westport and Greenwich, must have channeled the English architect Edwin Lutyens, a talent he admires, when he accepted the



**TOP:** A granite exterior with custom limestone detailing gives the house presence. **LEFT:** The architect enclosed what had been an open connection to the garage, incorporating beams and stones to create a lofty secondary entry the family uses regularly. **RIGHT:** On the living room wall, an abstract wood sculpture by Jeremy Holmes nods to the fluid movement of the home's central staircase and railing.














commission. Lutyens designed many of Great Britain's finest country houses, and his influence is evident in Kaufman's use of materials and close attention to detail. Still, this being the twenty-first century, Kaufman was tasked with building a house that would be gorgeous while meeting all of today's high standards for convenience and efficiency. Stellar baths, an upscale kitchen, and an exercise room were givens.

On top of that, there were also building constraints mandating that the new design adhere to the existing footprint and wetland regulations concerning the rear of the property. Kaufman, though, seems to have been inspired rather than deterred by the challenges. "It's a magnificent house with a huge amount of quality," he says with obvious and well-deserved pride.

The extensive renovation resulted in a

significant makeover. Restricted from adding onto the back of the house, Kaufman, working with builder Larry Kendall of ACI General Contracting, expanded to the left and forward. By extruding the front facade, they forged space for a grand entry and a bigger living room and library. At the same time, the kitchen was reinvented and the dining room enlarged. Awkward floor levels—leftovers from previous additions—were remedied by minimizing the number of steps, lowering floors, and lifting ceilings. Throughout, scale and proportion were enhanced.

All those life-altering moves aside, though, it's the core Kaufman ingeniously carved for the floating elliptical staircase, with a remarkable custom-designed railing by Canadian David Hind, that's the showstopper. The stairs spiral from the entry to the new third floor. "It was a cool

 Mirrored Urban Electric sconces, a sparkly Arctic Pear chandelier by Ochre, and a shimmering Phillip Jeffries wallcovering give the dining room as much appeal by day as by night. **FACING PAGE:** Nesting tables and versatile animal-hide cubes ensure family-room functionality. Designer Dale Blumberg framed the bookcase "to make it more like a piece of art," she explains.

#### PROJECT TEAM

**ARCHITECT:** Jeff Kaufman, JMKA Architects


**INTERIOR DESIGNER:** Dale Blumberg, Dale Blumberg Interiors

**BUILDER:** Larry Kendall, ACI General Contracting



"I USED **MATERIALS** THAT RANGED FROM MOHAIR VELVETS, **LINENS**, AND **SILKS** TO **OSTRICH-LEG SKIN**, RAW WOOD, **METALS**, HIDE, LEATHER, AND **SHAGREEN**," SAYS BLUMBERG.



 The sunny kitchen serves up a bounty of storage, with upper and lower cabinets and niches in the island. For snacks, the kids belly up to the island; casual meals take place in a breakfast area just off the kitchen. FACING PAGE: Leather chairs and handsome paneling give the billiard room club-like ambience.





installation and probably one of the most modern railings I've ever dealt with," recalls Kendall.

Interior designer Dale Blumberg took one look at the masterful staircase and couldn't wait to come on board. "I was smitten and excited," she says. The breathtaking railing became the architectural detail that inspired the rest of the decor.

From day one, Blumberg and the homeowners shared a mutual admiration and synergy. They were a team, Blumberg says, with a confident, clean-lined vision

of how the special house should unfold. There was already a sense of history due to the solid chestnut baseboards, doors, and trim Kaufman salvaged from a nearby historic mansion. Blumberg's neutral palette and textural mix complement the strong architecture and heighten visual interest. "I used materials that ranged from mohair velvets, linens, and silks to ostrich-leg skin, raw wood, metals, hide, leather, and shagreen," she says.

The dining room stands as an example of the designer's astute juxtapositions.






Raw, burlap-like, open-weave window sheers (with just a shot of gold) play off a glossy Phillip Jeffries wallcovering. Above the pale limestone hearth Blumberg devised to take the place of a traditional mantel hover mirrored sconces. In contrast to the stone, the Julian Chichester table is as dark as fine chocolate. The color is so rich it almost looks like it might melt beneath the glow of the dazzling chandelier.

The library and family room have a similar elegant ambience. The former sports a Julian Chichester desk of oak and vellum, animal-hide cubes, and linen window shades. The latter contains a vintage kilim along with a custom-designed bookcase as artful as the vases and pictures it holds.

Not to be outdone, the bright kitchen—in addition to being super functional for the wife, an accomplished cook—displays its own intriguing blend

 ABOVE: The second-floor master suite opens to a terrace providing a heavenly respite for parents. LEFT: A generous bluestone terrace also runs along the kitchen, easily accessible for al fresco dining and entertaining. FACING PAGE: A Bourgeois Bohème chandelier with hand-blown globes—hung at precisely the right point—illuminates the stairwell. The landing's quiet reading spot includes an Oly Flowerfall chandelier.







The ornately framed mirror hails from a previous residence. Paired with a graphic Stark carpet and Holly Hunt chairs, it adds an elegant note to the master suite's sitting area. FACING PAGE, TOP: Gray-blue makes a serene palette for the master bedroom; the tiered chandelier is by Oly. FACING PAGE, BOTTOM: The master bath incorporates a sculptural tub and limestone floor.





of textures. Marsia Holzer wood bar stools with blackened steel bases line up at the granite-topped island. Overhead, hand-stitched burlap pendants by Bobo dangle from raw-rubbed rope in lieu of chain. Offsetting the warmth of wood and burlap, the countertops are cool marble and the floor is hard-wearing limestone.

Understated but stylish is the theme right through to the breakfast room, where a fabulous photograph of French graffiti on a corrugated door, by Nick Microulis, claims the wall. The blond dining table is surrounded with metal chairs by Casamidy. "I absolutely love them," says Blumberg. "They're like deconstructed Louis XVI chairs."

**INSPIRED BY THE  
PEBBLED WALL IN  
THE COUPLE'S BATH,  
BLUMBERG FOUND  
OTTOMANS THAT  
REFERENCE STONES  
FOR THEIR  
SITTING ROOM.**

Back in the day, no self-respecting English house of similar stature would have been without a billiard room. And thanks to Kaufman's skillful choreography, there's one of those here, taking over a space that once stood as a sunroom. Complete with coffered ceiling, the paneled room is cozy but also contemporary. Visitors note the floor lamp's chain-link base and the organic African side table.

Most likely, they also observe they're picking up a somewhat organic leitmotif, from the living room's amazing wall sculpture to the staircase's sweeping handrail and right into the master bedroom. Inspired by the pebbled wall in the couple's bath, Blumberg found ottomans that reference stones for their sitting room. Holly Hunt wool-sateen drapes fall like water alongside their windows.

The homeowners have nature on demand with a private terrace just off the master bedroom. It's just one more perk Kaufman so adroitly integrated into this lovely home—one that, surely, rivals many we might find across the pond. •

**RESOURCES** For more information about this home, see page 140.

