

Brownstone.

Irish architect creates three bedroom Brooklyn home

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Location
Park Slope,
Brooklyn,
New York

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Photography

This spacious New York home is located in the Park Slope historic district of Brooklyn. The house is an early neo-Grec brownstone, dating from approximately 1876. It is one of many identical row houses forming the street, which gives the neighbourhood its rich distinguished architectural character. The brownstone consists of an underground cellar, a ground floor level, a parlour level and two bedroom levels. It has front garden with a typical stoop providing the main entry on the parlour level and a lush rear garden facing south.

When our clients purchased the house in 2013 it was configured as a two-family house. The ground floor and parlour levels were one unit and the two upper floors constituted the second unit. Their desire was to convert it back to the original single-family house layout for use by them and their young family.

The new layout consists of family rooms on the ground level, kitchen, dining and living spaces on the parlour level, and bedrooms and a dedicated laundry room on the upper floors. The owners wanted to bring more light into the rooms at ground and parlour (first) floor level, which was achieved by opening up the rear façade. Also on their wish list were a new kitchen and bathrooms for the modern lifestyle. For cosy winter nights, they wanted a working fireplace on the parlour level. In the rear garden, a new deck was to make a new "outdoor family room".

Our design challenge concerned the space planning, including providing an open and enlarged kitchen with a separate dining and living zone on the parlour level. We also had to create a new master bedroom suite with a private bathroom and generous walk-in closets, while still maintaining three bedrooms on the second floor. Additional challenges included implementing a central air conditioning system without disturbing original ceiling details or installing drop soffits not consistent with the period design language. At the back of the house, we had to remove the majority of the rear facade at the ground and parlour levels, while maintaining the structural integrity of the wall above. In addition, we had to meet a tight schedule – the completion date was set by the client and required an expedited construction schedule of just 9 months.

The design language and materials we chose for this refurbishment focused on both the restoration and replication of the dark-stained wood mouldings on the parlour level. We also restored and replicated plaster mouldings and painted wood trim throughout. We refurbished the original wood floors and added new period-style bathrooms with natural stone and ceramic tiles. The new kitchen is both contemporary and classic in style – white lacquered cabinets and contrasted with natural stone counters and backsplash. This Brooklyn Brownstone has been returned to its original family use and combines the proportions and styling of the original design with a stylish contemporary garden extension.



01. A bespoke new kitchen combines a contemporary feel with classic detailing
02. The rear façade has been opened to create a connection with the garden

03. The refurbished living room at parlour level features stunning period details (furniture by Nicole Gibbons Studio LLC)
04. A classic look has been chosen for the new bathrooms
05. The bar in the family room uses salvaged materials