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"It was overgrown to the point that the house was hidden from view," Gary Johnson reports. "Some people actually thought we had built the house."

BY PATRICIA POORE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STICKLEY PHOTO•GRAPHIC

a good house uncovered



THE ATTRACTIVE house in northwest Portland's historic West Hills area was rescued from obscurity by its second owners: it had been entirely hidden behind overgrown trees and rhododendrons. Gary and Yvonne Johnson bought the dwelling from the woman whose great-grandfather, a prominent doctor at the turn of the last century, had built it. It was not maintained but sound. "The integrity of the house was important to us; we wouldn't have done anything to ruin it," says Gary. Beyond their intentions, "it's a listed house in Portland, [Oregon]. That doesn't allow much change."

The timeless new kitchen is separated from the dining room by the original butler's pantry—never painted, and still with its copper sink. **ABOVE:** Classical detailing is quiet but exquisite on the 1907 house.





Bathrooms

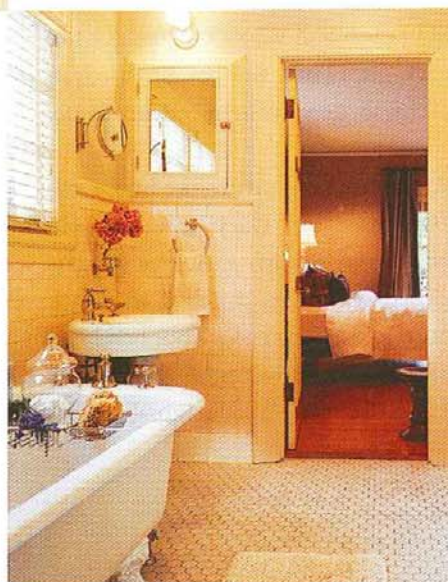
are "absolutely original," says contractor Jeff Jones. "We just rebuilt old valves, replaced washers." The woodwork was unpainted; still-serviceable knob-and-tube electrical wiring remains.

work, wood countertop, and copper sink for washing stemware and china. Sliding glass doors dating to the 1970s were removed, and new windows built based on originals and the transoms still in the pantry. Like the house, the kitchen is well detailed but not fussy. Materials used were consistent with the house. Even the painted cabinets were constructed of Douglas fir, matching existing woodwork.

Furniture is a quiet, comfortable mix of traditional pieces, mostly from Bernhardt, and modern pieces from Herman Miller. "Mixing traditional and modern really works—it's informal but not 'casual.'" Pieces include the Nelson-designed bench (from Herman Miller) that echoes the low lines of the staircase.

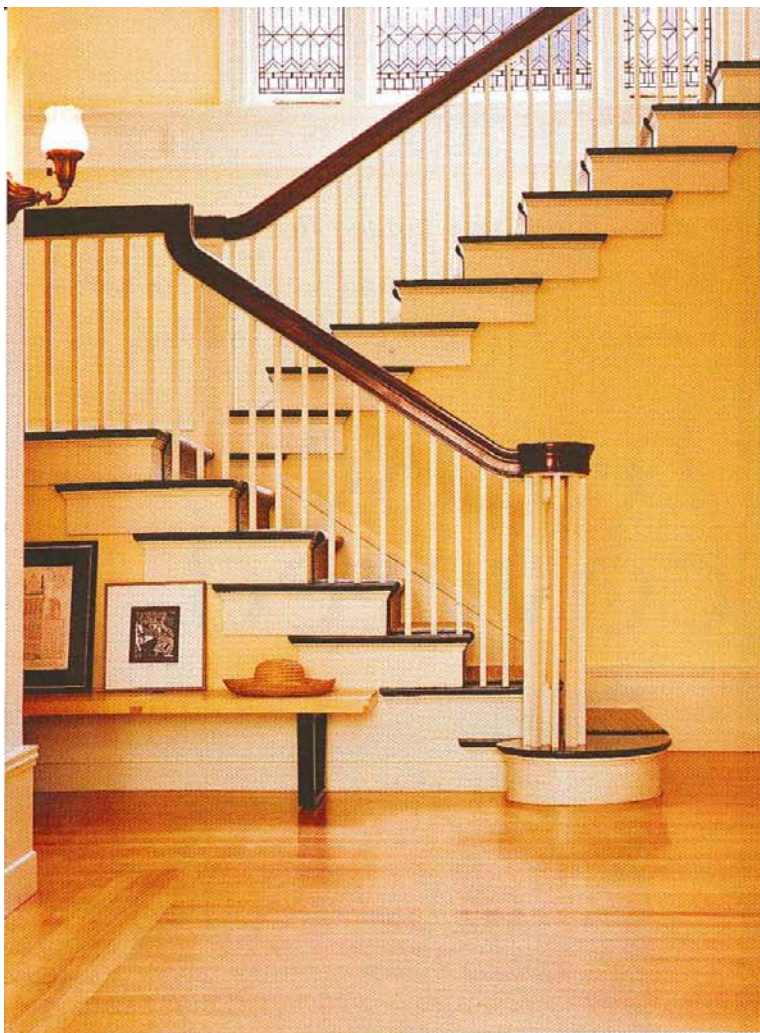
This is the Johnsons first renovation effort. When he was complimented on the exceptional quality of the restoration work that he planned and oversaw, Gary said, "We're pleased, yes, but the house was already a good house." ✦

Bathrooms in the house needed nothing but a good cleaning. **TOP:** Picture rails throughout allow art to be hung without damaging original canvas that lines plaster walls. **ABOVE:** The butler's stair is fir, as are doors throughout.



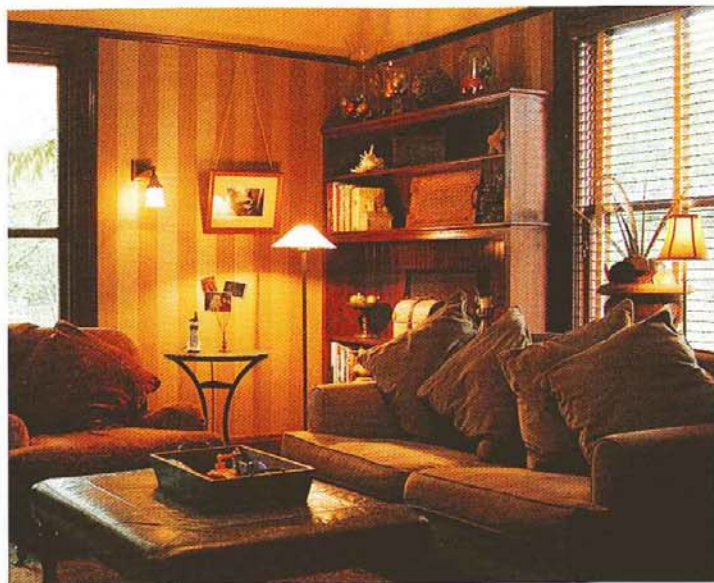


Seen beyond the old pantry, a kitchen seating area took the place of the old butler's porch, enclosed long ago. The flooring is Marmoleum, and this reproduction ceiling fixture is from Rejuvenation.



The main staircase,

which had been painted, has easy-climbing low risers. After stripping, treads were once again painted black and the woodwork ivory. The effect is dramatic—and, like other details and furnishings in the house, traditional yet modern.



ABOVE: Like the rest of the house, the stair has a comfortable grandness. **RIGHT:** Traditional furniture suits the young family. **BELOW:** Family portraits and original wall lighting add character in the living room.

The Johnsons bought the 1907 Colonial Revival house in 2002. Its primary façade is the long wall with a Greek portico over the entry door. A classical porch with robust details extends the lovely side façade, where a Palladian window ornaments the shingled gable-end pediment suggested by cornice returns. Inside, a center-hall plan and symmetrical room arrangement have been complemented by traditional furnishings.

The house was designed by architect A.E. Doyle, who also built Portland's Central Library and other city buildings; he was considered at the time a "modern" architect who preferred clean design and classical motifs. Beautifully detailed, in no way





ornate, the house “is so easy to design around,” Gary says. “The layout is traditional but not formal.”

IT WAS IN “REASONABLY historic—original—condition,” says contractor Jeff Jones, whose company Olson and Jones Construction is regularly recommended by the Portland Historical Society. “Only the kitchen became a major project. It had the ‘avocado’ 1970s remodeling—cheap laminates, indoor-outdoor carpet. We rescued a couple of base cabinets but it’s essentially all new.” Elsewhere, floors are the original 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ” face-nailed boards of quartersawn oak. The John-

sons rehabilitated existing wood window sash, rehanging the sash weights.

Fir woodwork had never been painted, and Jeff Jones says they didn’t use harsh strippers. “We rubbed it down,” he says; “it had the usual old polish and wax—we just got the gack off.” Then the painter used an oil finish, no varnish or polyurethane.

WHEN THEY BOUGHT IT, the house was “shuttered in,” Gary says, its main porch and upstairs sitting porch enclosed with glass panels. The Greek portico over the entry door had been extended and widened during the 1920s, so that “the original owner

Tone-on-tone wallpaper designed by William Morris, original Colonial Revival lighting, antique Persian rugs, and contemporary classic furniture contribute to the pleasant atmosphere that feels like 1910, 1925, or 2006.

could get out of his car and not get wet,” Gary says. The house was given definition when the Johnsons reopened the porches, restored the portico’s original dimensions, and gave the house a paint color scheme that draws attention to shingled gables and beveled clapboards.

For the new kitchen, everything that could be saved, salvaged, or copied, was. The butler’s pantry remains, with its never-painted wood-