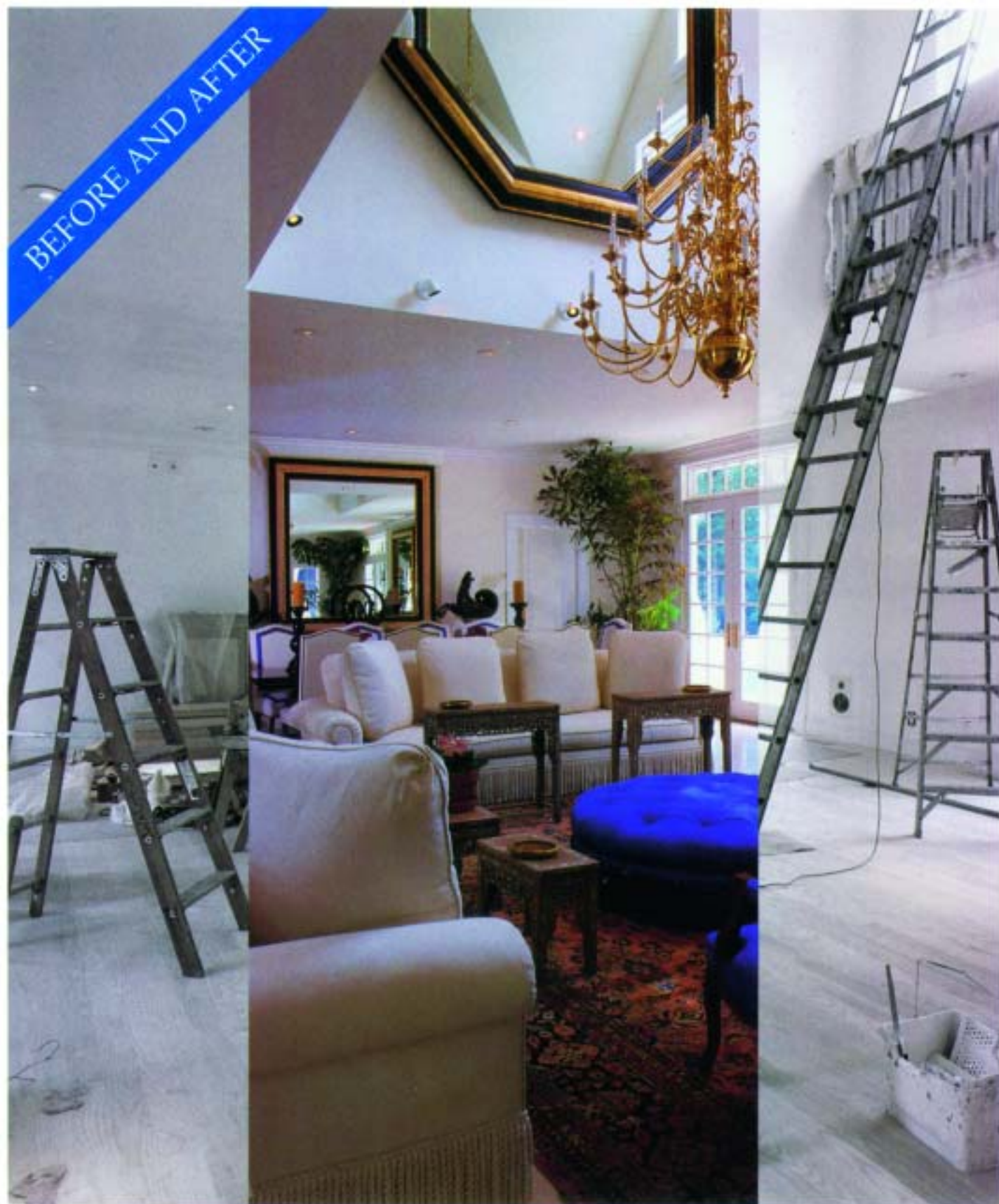


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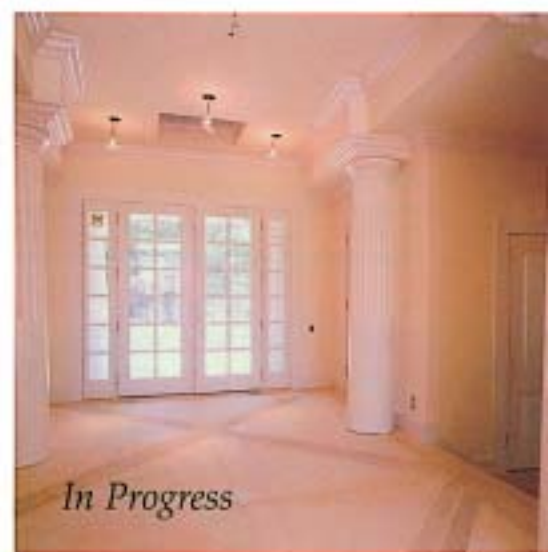
An Architectural Alliance

Collaborating from Blueprints to Polished Interiors in New Jersey

ARCHITECTURE BY SHOPE RENO WHARTON ASSOCIATES
INTERIOR DESIGN BY THOMAS BRITT, ASID
AND MALCOLM MCKINSTRIE II
TEXT BY SUZANNE STEPHENS
BEFORE AND IN-PROGRESS PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILLY CUNNINGHAM
AFTER PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAIME ARDILES-ARCE



ABOVE AND BELOW: "Details such as moldings add to the appeal of the entrance hall," says Wharton. "We introduced fluted columns, an element we used elsewhere in the house."



In Progress

BELOW: A French-limestone-and-bleached-hickory floor, which was designed by Britt, heightens the dramatic impact of the entrance hall. The quartet of chairs are French style.

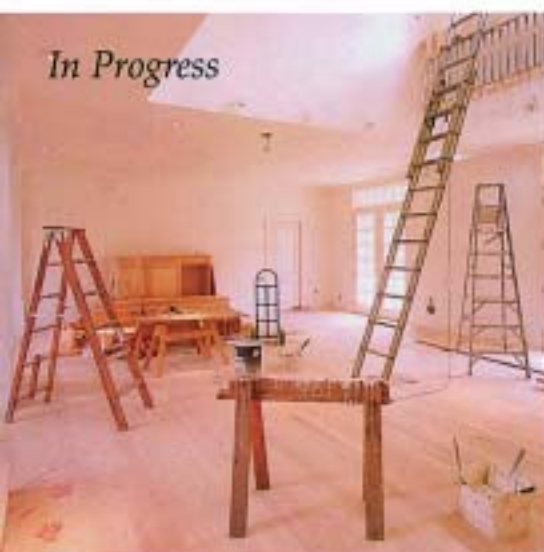
"The house was truly a team effort," says architect Bernard Wharton of a Shingle Style residence in New Jersey designed by the firm Shope Reno Wharton. The rear façade is distinguished by overscale piers, Doric columns and a gabled roof. INSET: From left to right, Wharton, Malcolm McKinstrie II, Allan Shope, Thomas Britt and contractor Russ Cooper.





Before

ABOVE: A high gable forms an atrium in the double-height living room. Clerestory windows allow natural light to flood in. The French doors were installed to offer access to the garden.



In Progress

"The house has two axes that cross through the entrance hall," says Shope. ABOVE: "The balcony above is like a ship's bridge," adds Wharton. "It serves as an overlook for the room."



Britt punctuated the space with large framed mirrors to give a sense of weight and presence. Deeply hued chair and ottoman fabric from Manuel Canovas. Sofas are upholstered in Schumacher fabric.



ABOVE: "The residents didn't want a separate dining room," says Wharton, "and so we laid out an area in the living room." Britt paired a tortoiseshell-finished table with French-style side chairs. The stone side table has a plaited motif across the lintel.

"ARCHITECTS AND interior designers are famous for hating each other," says Allan Shope. "This project worked because of a nice synergistic relationship between us all. And we had loads of fun in the process."

The house in question was designed by the architectural firm Shope Reno Wharton Associates of Greenwich, Connecticut, and interior designer Thomas Britt of New York City. It was for a couple who had lived in the New Jersey area for a long time and whose children were almost grown.

Before

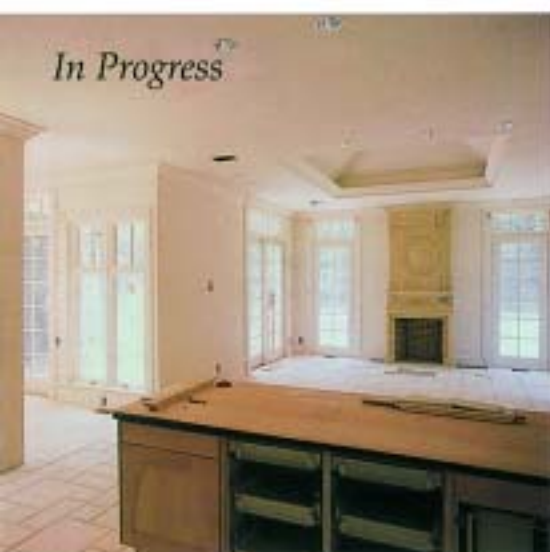


ABOVE: "We definitely desired a flow between outside and inside," says Wharton of the kitchen and study. "We put in lots of windows and French doors to reinforce that effect."



ABOVE: "The clients like to entertain and very much enjoy preparing food," says Wharton. "They asked that the kitchen and study be comfortable and livable." Britt furnished the study with oversize chairs and an L-shaped banquette to create an inviting conversation area before the fireplace. Bronze candlesticks rest on the mantel.

In Progress



ABOVE: Rough plaster walls, a French-limestone floor and polished wood cabinetry underscore the textural variety in the kitchen. The fireplace was inspired by a French design.

They wanted a large, "warm and comfortable place," the wife explains, that would make entertaining family and friends easy. "She had a house in mind that looked like an old Scottish stable," recalls Shope. He and his partner, Bernard Wharton, conjured up a rambling 8,500-square-foot cottage clad in cedar shingles and siding.

The picturesque house is punctuated with a many-gabled roof hovering over an assemblage of rooms. "Their varying shapes break down the scale,"

says Wharton. A towerlike structure signals the front entrance, and a pair of thick round columns frame the door. The columns give way to wide white buttresses along the porch, "like fingers grabbing the landscape," notes Wharton.

The new residence is full of character, the overall effect vaguely reminiscent of the often idiosyncratic houses Edwin Lutyens built in England at the turn of the century. Yet it reflects contemporary needs: The cou-

ple occupy the ground floor, where the living room, dining area, library, breakfast area, kitchen and study, as well as master bedroom and exercise room, all form distinct zones. The children have the upstairs bedrooms and games room all to themselves.

The architects have given the diverse interiors a focus by organizing them around a dramatic double-height living room and stair hall. The living room's atrium provides the sense of orientation. "You can look up at it and



ABOVE: The architects constructed an apse-like curved wall and a pair of niches off the kitchen to define the more informal breakfast area. Sunlight streams in through a skylight.

see all the parts of the house," Shope points out.

Yet a successful architectural effect depends on how the space is finished. It wasn't quite complete until Britt arrived on the scene. "I looked at the atrium," recalls Britt, "and said, 'What the devil do you do with that? The walls even slope.'" He then suggested placing large mirrors of the type found in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Portuguese and Dutch interiors on the atrium's upper walls, where they add substance to the room.

The architects had originally designed the main stair to be rectilinear. "Ours was more rigid and less flowing," says Shope. "Tom said, 'Let's do something more gestural and wistful.'" It soon became a curving stair that swoops up to the landing, which overlooks the living room. In the middle of the atrium is an ample, gracefully contoured chandelier, "like the kind you see in Charles de Beistegui's interiors," says Britt, referring to the eccentric Paris-based collector and designer who lived in the early part of the century. The stair rail and balustrade were also designed by Britt. "The atrium was there," says Shope, "but now it has personality."



ABOVE: To further the breakfast area's conservatory atmosphere, Britt had it paved with French limestone and used shell-motif limestone bases as supports for the blue-stone-topped table. A series of Neoclassical engravings, colorful North African jars and streamlined leather chairs enhance the interplay of the elegant and the casual.

Clearly, the architects viewed Britt's intervention as a reinforcement and dramatization of their work. His approach was to punch up the architectural character, not conceal it. "Tom brought in his sense of scale, force and momentum," says Shope. "He likes things bold and large. But he looked at every room objectively."

The dining area is not a room but is part of the living room. "We wanted to keep the living and dining areas together so that when we were en-

tertaining, everyone wouldn't be separated into different rooms," the wife explains. Paired double columns visually distinguish the living area from the dining area, where Britt gathered large French-style chairs around a refectory table.

Since the entrance hall is the first encounter one has with the house's interior, Shope and Wharton wanted it to combine exterior and interior architectural motifs yet maintain a connection to the outdoors. Accordingly,



Before

ABOVE: With its own small gable, the master bath fully utilizes the sweep of the peaked roof. A large casement window was strategically positioned to maximize the natural light.



In Progress

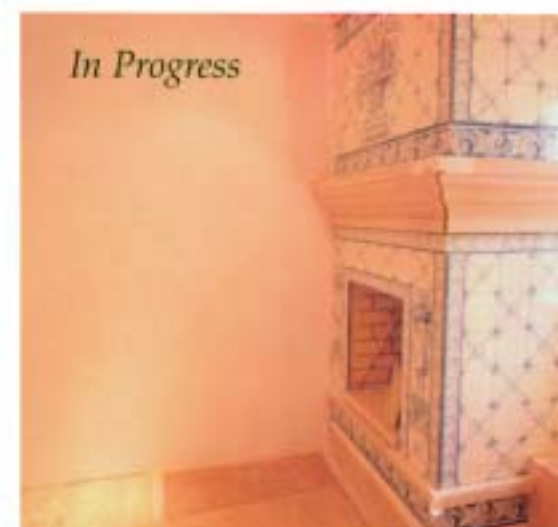
ABOVE: "We wanted the master bath to be very exciting and three-dimensional in feeling," says Wharton. The marble walls, floor and tub surround emphasize the space's symmetry.

RIGHT: "The scalloped chandelier reminds me of a Diégo Giacometti design," says Britt. The round tub echoes the shape of the master bath's oculus. Neoclassical tufted leather stool.



as one comes into the hall, one sees a door directly ahead opening onto an expansive view of the garden. To reinforce the feeling of passage, however, the architects angled the walls slightly inward, foreshortening the perspective and making the hall appear longer than it actually is. Although they designed fluted columns with Doric capitals to line the hall, and proposed the same light pickled floors that were going to be used in the living/dining room, Britt went for more oomph. The French limestone was crisscrossed with strips of hickory, and the columns' entablature took on heftier, more manneristic proportions.

ABOVE RIGHT: Malcolm McKinstry II drew upon the motifs of 17th-century Portuguese stoves for his decoration of the powder room's tile-faced fireplace. The floor is bleached hickory.



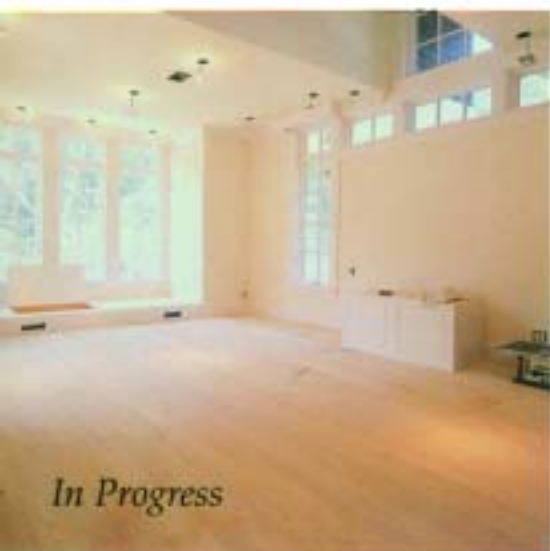
In Progress

BELOW: "The powder room is a little hidden treasure in the house," says Wharton. A pair of North African jars and a four-lapis-framed Neoclassical print enliven the boldly painted space.





ABOVE: "We designed the master bedroom to take full advantage of being near the garden," says Wharton. "That's why there are so many interesting windows and the French doors."



ABOVE: "The master bedroom should be a refuge and at the same time have a certain vitality and an unpredictability in it," says Wharton. "It should have some surprising details."

RIGHT: Clerestory and casement windows frame the headboard. "We used only Roman shades," McKinstrie points out. "There are no draperies." Striped silk by Brunswick & Fils.

The breakfast area offers another example of interior design elements playing off the architecture to heighten the sensation of a combined outdoor and indoor space. Shope Reno Wharton had terminated the area with an apselike curved wall and paired niches, all of which are illuminated by a skylight and face an open court. Britt placed French limestone on the floor and a rough finish on the walls, and installed shell-shaped limestone bases for the bluestone-topped table. The effect is solid and simple, yet definitely grand.

As one moves from the breakfast area to the adjoining kitchen and study, one has a sense of coming into the heart of the house, where large plump chairs and L-shaped banquettes are grouped around a fireplace modeled after a Louis XIII design. Floor-to-ceiling French doors and a ceiling trough lit by cove fixtures give the study, which opens directly onto the kitchen, a particularly warm and informal atmosphere.

The more private spaces of the house, the master bedroom and bath, are located in a separate wing, where the bedroom is given ample light and views of the grounds through clerestory windows, French doors and casements. The latter are hung with striped Roman shades.

In the master bath, the architects positioned the tub symmetrically between the paired sinks. Britt covered the tub's surround, walls and floor with a rosy marble. The architects designed an oculus for the upper reaches of the vaulted space, which suffuses the room with a luminous natural light. It is supplemented by the scalloped chandelier that Britt put in for a luxuriously surreal accent.

The colors employed throughout the house are for the most part neutral, alternating between creamy white and true white for the walls. In a few of the rooms, however, particularly the library and powder room, a vibrant sapphire takes over. "Blue is my favorite color," says the wife. Britt and his team added blue-and-

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