Civilized 1 Approach

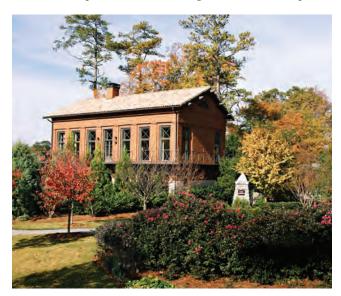
Clever architecture blurs the boundaries between public and private space, producing a unique home with a distinct point of view near downtown Atlanta.



streets is an unusual place to find a private home. But the challenge of creating a family residence in a civic area is exactly what appealed to Don Donnelly and builder Pam Sessions about a small, sloped property poised between the charm of Atlanta's historical Buckhead district and the modernity of the city's high-rise office buildings.

Building designer Lew Oliver understood the couple's desire for a singular home, and he delivered with an adaptation of a brick Roman Revival that passersby commonly mistake for a civic monument. Borrowing elements from ancient Italian architecture, Oliver created a long, narrow home that mimics a temple in form.

At about 3,000 square feet, the home isn't large, but it's full of function. The upside-down design positions the home's public areas on the top level to take advantage of the views; the private



rooms are located on the ground level. Echoing the style of an old ballroom, the top level is a single large room, but it serves multiple functions, and each area has its own sense of place. A 14-foot-high cove ceiling and tall windows define the living/ dining area. A fireplace anchors the living area and creates a spot for conversation; it also separates the lofty space from a more intimate study and television room. At the opposite end, the space makes a slight L to the kitchen, where the ceiling height drops to about 10 feet. "There's a nice balance, with the kitchen appearing slightly tucked away," Pam says.

Plaster walls add a classic finish to the space and reference the solidity of an old building. Oliver picked up on that theme in the ground-level bedrooms by covering the walls with 1×8 tongueand-groove planking. "When people see it, they're so delighted with the texture and the look that they forget the rooms aren't large," Oliver says. "It turns a small space into an asset, and it's a very durable material that will take on a patina. When that happens, it will give the home a sense of history."

Interior designer Janie Hirsch enhanced the notion of an established home by flanking windows with generous folds of silk and upholstering classic chair silhouettes in touchable velvets and linens. Overscale pieces of artwork showcasing contemporary motifs add modern zing to the otherwise traditionally styled rooms. "It was important that our home be as comfortable for a large party or intimate dinner as it is for the most casual times with just our family," Pam says.

Repeating materials throughout the house creates the illusion of a larger space. Tall, uniform windows enhance the effect so that Pam and Don have never felt they lacked for room. "I'd much rather spend time in a room I truly love and use than to move within a home from place to place if those places don't delight me," Pam says.











