



weathered BEAUTY



Farmhouse details and a collection of American antiques and folk art infuse a Washington home with rustic, refined simplicity

Text by TINA COPLAN
Photography by GORDON BEALL

Despite its urban locale, the whitewashed home (above) nestled in lush greenery recalls a country abode. The custom-blue hue on the front door (opposite) inspired the interior palette.



Living in surroundings with the aura of a calm country retreat isn't generally associated with a city address. But when one Washington couple found a 1930 home on an acre of land across from Battery Kemble Park in the heart of Northwest DC, they seized the chance to realize their hopes—hers to remain in the city where she was raised, his to enjoy a sense of wide-open space that he had experienced growing up in southern Virginia. “This was such a beautiful property, where we could maintain a country feel and bring the outdoors in,” says the husband, who works in commercial real estate. “It was the perfect city and country combination,” adds the wife, who helps educational nonprofits in urban communities.

The two shared another vision. “First and foremost, we wanted a family home for our children, and we wanted to bring them up in a beautiful space,” she says. To make that happen, they called on Paul Sherrill, a principal in the design firm Solis Betancourt & Sherrill, Washington, DC. Landscape Architecture: Richard Arentz, Arentz Landscape Architects LLC, Washington, DC.

Renovation Architecture: Matthew W. Fiehn, AIA, LEED AP, Barnes Vanze Architects, Washington, DC. Interior Design: Paul Sherrill, Solis Betancourt & Sherrill, Washington, DC. Landscape Architecture: Richard Arentz, Arentz Landscape Architects LLC, Washington, DC.



Throughout the residence, designer Paul Sherrill helped select new and antique furnishings; he also reupholstered pieces from the owners' former home in soft shades of blue and green that complement paintings with rural themes. In the living room, a painting by Grandma Moses (above) hangs over the refinished antique mantel. Canvases by Wolf Kahn (opposite) and John Borden Evans (above, left) celebrate nature.



Outside the new family room, an outdoor aerie awaits. Landscape architect Richard Arentz created a private terrace perfect for al fresco soirées. Low brick walls echo the home's whitewashed façade.



A chandelier from Marston Luce Antiques hangs over a Richard Mulligan table in the dining room (above). A landscape by John Borden Evans commands one wall while on another, a found architectural object (opposite) balances the painting's bold colors.

American antiques, folk art and paintings, acquired over decades, provided a running start. "I knew the direction they wanted for the interiors—they like the aesthetic and simplicity of a traditional old farmhouse," says Sherrill.

The home held several timeless attractions. Its whitewashed brick exterior had a weathered beauty. And there was an easy flow of well-proportioned rooms—from the entrance to the back, and from the living room on one side to the kitchen on the other.

Sherrill introduced fresh design elements, beginning at the front door. Its subtle blue shade, inspired by a book on American farmhouses, blends six paint hues with a distressed finish. That understated color continues on garden gates and other exterior doors, as well as on panel doors inside the house. "The color gave us an opportunity to play up the architecture," says the designer. The same tempered hue, repeated on furnishings inside, ties together old and new parts of the house.

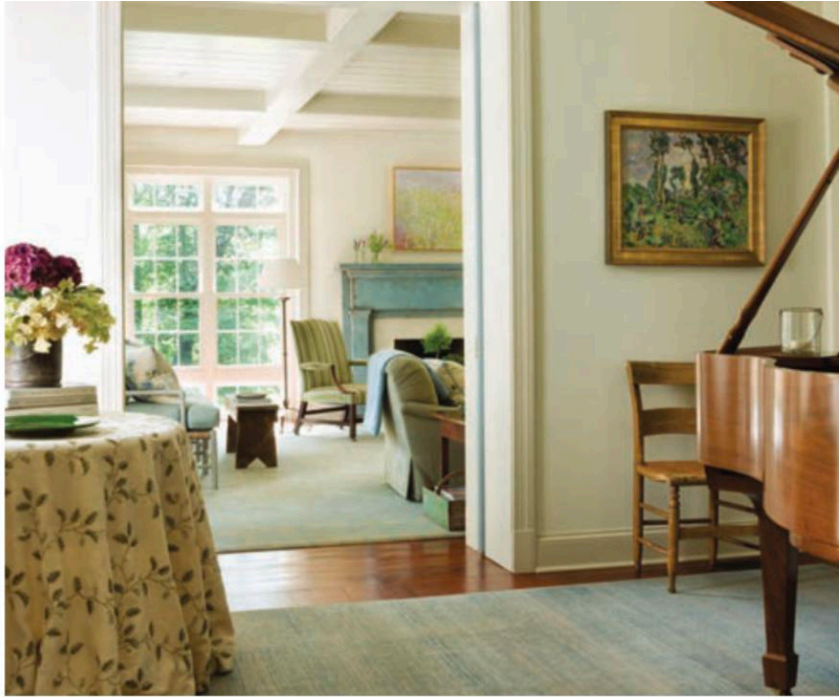
Renovations included a thorough infrastructure upgrade, accompanied by a thoughtful four-story addition on the back by Matthew Fiehn of Barnes Vanze Architects. Unassuming in appearance and clad in whitewashed brick to match the original exterior, the

addition spans the width of the residence. In his approach, Fiehn set out to "marry the new work to the existing house, which was quite lovely. The clients were respectful of its good bones."

On the main floor, a new family room opens the interiors to light and the lush greenery of orderly gardens, a formal lawn, seating terraces, an allée and themed plantings designed by landscape architect Richard Arentz. On the sloping site's lowest level, the addition accommodates a new wine room and guest suite, which connect to the children's playroom and outdoor pool. Two daughters' bedrooms and baths were added to the second floor, along with an airy new office above.

Throughout the interiors, Sherrill applied a sophisticated toolset to evoke the character of a simple farmhouse. In the family room, painted ceiling beams and wide bead board create a barn-like aesthetic. A section of those planks swings open, allowing a hidden projector screen to drop down. At the push of a button, blackout shades cover the tall, unadorned windows—turning the commodious family room into a comfortable theater space. Twelve speakers located in the room's chamfered corners are masked with fabric "to make it a little more seamless," says Sherrill.





Clockwise from above: The music room displays a landscape by Édouard Vuillard. In the kitchen and breakfast room, wide bead-board detailing conveys farmhouse style. A soft, custom-blue shade visually connects the casual, rustic breakfast area to the home's front door.





On the main floor of the addition, the family room captures sweeping outdoor views. It boasts a David laSteuta settee and an ottoman covered in Cowtan & Tout fabric. A Wolf Kahn painting above the mantel depicts a pastoral landscape.



An atmospheric scene by Wolf Kahn makes a restful statement in the second-floor master bedroom. A floral fabric on the bed and shades recalls wisteria that once covered a trellis outside the room's window.

“We really made an effort to fully integrate the feeling and materials of a simple farmhouse.” —PAUL SHERRILL

Boards and beams are repeated overhead in the breakfast area and kitchen, while reclaimed heart-pine flooring extends the refined rusticity of existing floors into new parts of the house. Sherrill also replaced the home's traditional bright-white moldings with tan, simple-plank crown “that make it a little more toned down and casual,” he notes.

A soothing, monochromatic palette on walls and ceilings is modulated by sky blue on the family-room mantel, a found antique that now replicates the front door's color and finish. Soft blues and greens also appear in fabrics on the comfortable seating, much of it brought from their previous home and reupholstered, then complemented with new pieces. Additional antiques arrived as gifts from family members or were searched for as needed—some discovered at Marston Luce Antiques in Georgetown. New bluestone on fireplace hearths “is another unifying element,” says the designer. “We really made an effort to fully integrate the feeling and materials of a simple farmhouse.”

Cheerful colors of nature appear as well in paintings that intermingle or command entire walls. Multiple canvases illustrate different approaches to rural themes by the couple's favorite artists including luminous colorist Wolf Kahn, folk artist Grandma Moses and John Borden Evans, a family friend whose vernacular style interprets the countryside around his Virginia home. A landscape by renowned French artist Édouard Vuillard hangs in the music room.

“We are about embracing the outdoors,” observes the wife, an enthusiastic gardener who enjoys beekeeping and tending to their vegetable and butterfly-friendly perennial gardens. “There's a feeling of being at peace here,” she continues. Reflecting on the harmonious environment they have created by connecting their city home to nature and a simpler style, she concludes, “It's a real privilege.” ■

SOURCES OF NOTE

Living Room Sheers & Red-and-White Chair Fabric: rosetarlow.com. Living Room Corner Chair Fabric: nancycozine.com. Dining Room Host Chair Fabric: robertallendesign.com. Family Room Settee: davidiatesta.com. For a complete list of resources, see homeanddesign.com.