



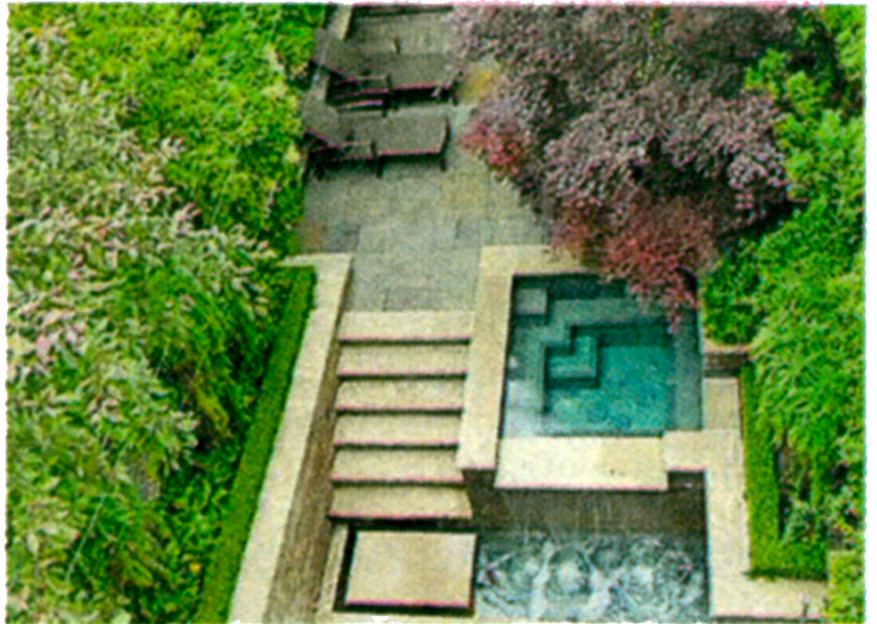
SECTION G FRIDAY, APRIL 3, 2009

Globe Real Estate

HOME OF THE WEEK

Architect Wayne Swadron gives an Annex Victorian a New York brownstone twist.

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HOME OF THE WEEK

Outside Victorian, inside contemporary

Architect Wayne Swadron creates an interior that's simple and comfortable but not stark

43 ELGIN AVE.

WHAT: A two-bedroom, four-bathroom Annex house redesigned by architect Wayne Swadron with a New York brownstone in mind.

LIVING SPACE: 3,000 square feet

LOT SIZE: 21 by 138.2 feet

TAXES: \$13,168 (2008)

AGENT: Eileen Farrow, Chestnut Park Real Estate Ltd.

BY CAROLYN IRELAND

To passersby on Elgin Avenue, the unassuming and rather narrow house at No. 43 blends in with most of the others on the street.

Step to the rear and look back, however, and four storeys of glass rise above.

"The spectacular aspect of the property is the southern front, where you get the garden, the walk-out and the south light," Toronto-based architect Wayne Swadron says.

When Mr. Swadron took on the renovation of the property in 2001, he was handed a house with a façade reminiscent of the Victorian era, a layout remaining from the 1970s and paint finishes from the faux-loving days of the late eighties.

It was Mr. Swadron's task to turn that raw material into an urban house suited to this



The heritage façade of 43 Elgin hides a contemporary reno inside. CHESTNUT PARK REAL ESTATE LTD.

millennium.

The conservative façade remained virtually unchanged because the house falls under the heritage district rules that govern the neighbourhood near Avenue Road north of Bloor Street.

The seventies structure, meanwhile, was still in pretty good shape.

"It wasn't old - it was not rundown or falling apart," Mr.

Swadron says. "But the layout was poor and the design itself was already quite dated."

The faux limestone and other trendy paint techniques were looking very tired when the owner turned to Mr. Swadron.

But in the style of the house and its urban setting, the architect was reminded of the brownstones of New York, which often maintain their

traditional façades at the front while giving way to a wall of glass at the rear.

The client asked for a modern interior that would take full advantage of views to the garden, which was undergoing a transformation of its own.

One of the challenges in working with the clean lines of a modern house, Mr. Swadron adds, is to make the interior feel simple and

comfortable but not stark. To do so, he used neutral colours and natural materials such as stone and wood imported from Brazil.

"Our client was interested in something contemporary but very warm, that would flow from front to back, top to bottom," Mr. Swadron says.

Throughout the project, he collaborated with landscape architect Egils Didrichsons, who created tiered garden beds, stone terraces and a waterfall at the rear.

Today, visitors arrive to a foyer with honed limestone floor and custom-built walnut cupboards and drawers. Beyond, the kitchen also has walnut cabinets as well as an island and countertops of stone.

To achieve a more open space at the rear, the architect moved a staircase at the centre of the house toward the front. The client had no wish for a formal dining room, so Mr. Swadron created a space for dining and entertaining beyond the kitchen.

"The dining area was as formal as it would need to be."

A glass railing provides a transparent barrier and creates a gallery effect overlooking the two-storey living room below.

By putting the living room at grade, Mr. Swadron says, he was able to take advantage of the largest available space.

The living room enjoys double-height glass with views to

the garden and large doors that allow for a seamless transition between indoor and outdoor living.

On the second floor, a guest bedroom overlooks the street at the front. The large home office is located at the rear.

The third floor is entirely taken up by a master bedroom and bathroom. A walk-out from the bedroom leads to a balcony with views over the garden.

Mr. Swadron, in architectural practice for about 20 years, has done projects throughout North America and the Caribbean. He is also trained in interior design and his office provides landscape architecture as well.

"I have a strong belief that you can't consider any one of those areas without considering all of them."

Mr. Swadron says that he aims to create a timeless design through his attention to balance, scale and proportion. When those elements come together well, he says, the space feels right, regardless of changing trends.

Until recently, the current owners of 43 Elgin Ave. had the house listed for sale with Eileen Farrow of Chestnut Park Real Estate Ltd. with an asking price of \$2.995-million.

But with sales remaining slow for the slice of the market at \$2-million and higher, Ms. Farrow says, the owners have decided to take the house off the market while they consider their next move.

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