

ODE TO PLACE



Balancing tradition with a modern sensibility, an updated Georgetown gem captures the essence of its environs

Text by CATHERINE FUNKHOUSER
Photography by MAX KIM-BEE



In the entry hall (opposite), new detailing and a rejuvenated stair rail establish a classical note that permeates the house. The dining room's rich-brown, Great Plains silk wall covering and Casamance crushed-velvet drapes (above) envelop guests in warmth.



White trim pops against the living room's graphite-hued wall covering by Phillip Jeffries (above). Sutton mixed updated, traditional furnishings, including the sofa and club chairs from Ferrell Mittman, with unexpected elements such as an Art Deco light fixture found on 1stdibs. Touches of Americana, including the antique, cast-iron eagle hovering above the parlor fireplace (opposite), appear throughout the house. Quarter-sawn, cerused oak transformed the back service stair, which was rotated to address this and other public spaces.



Designer Patrick Sutton loves a good story. And he knows how to tell one through the interiors he carefully crafts. The remake of a 200-year-old Georgetown manse—a collaboration with architect Ankie Barnes—weaves a decidedly hometown tale. “Washington is a classically designed city, so there is a classicism inherent to the location,” explains Sutton. “But Georgetown is also very human in its scale and somewhat informal in its interactions. We layered those two things together as an attitude and made the interiors reflective of that.”

Rooting the design to place honors the home’s—and its past owners’—inextricable link to local lore. “The house has obviously seen a lot of people [live there] over the years, the most storied of whom is Ambassador Bruce and his wife, Evangeline,” notes Sutton. David Bruce held top U.S. posts around the world during his illustrious diplomatic career. Between tours of duty from the mid-1940s to the ’70s, the late couple resided in the Federal-style abode, still known as the “Ambassador Bruce House,” where they famously hosted DC’s elite in grand fashion.

Architecture: **Ankie Barnes**, FAIA, LEED AP; **Wayne Adams**, Barnes Vanze Architects, Washington, DC. Interior Design: **Patrick Sutton**, Patrick Sutton, Baltimore, Maryland. Builder: **Bret Anderson**, Pyramid Builders, Annapolis, Maryland. Landscape Design: **Amy Mills**, DCA Landscape Architects, Washington, DC.



Artisan Brian Duncan executed Sutton's design for the white-oak island and crafted additional cabinets for the perimeter to match the existing ones salvaged during the renovation. The breakfast area boasts a bespoke walnut-topped table with a blackened-steel base from Mitchell Yanosky. The chandelier is from Baker and the stone floor is from Paris Ceramics.

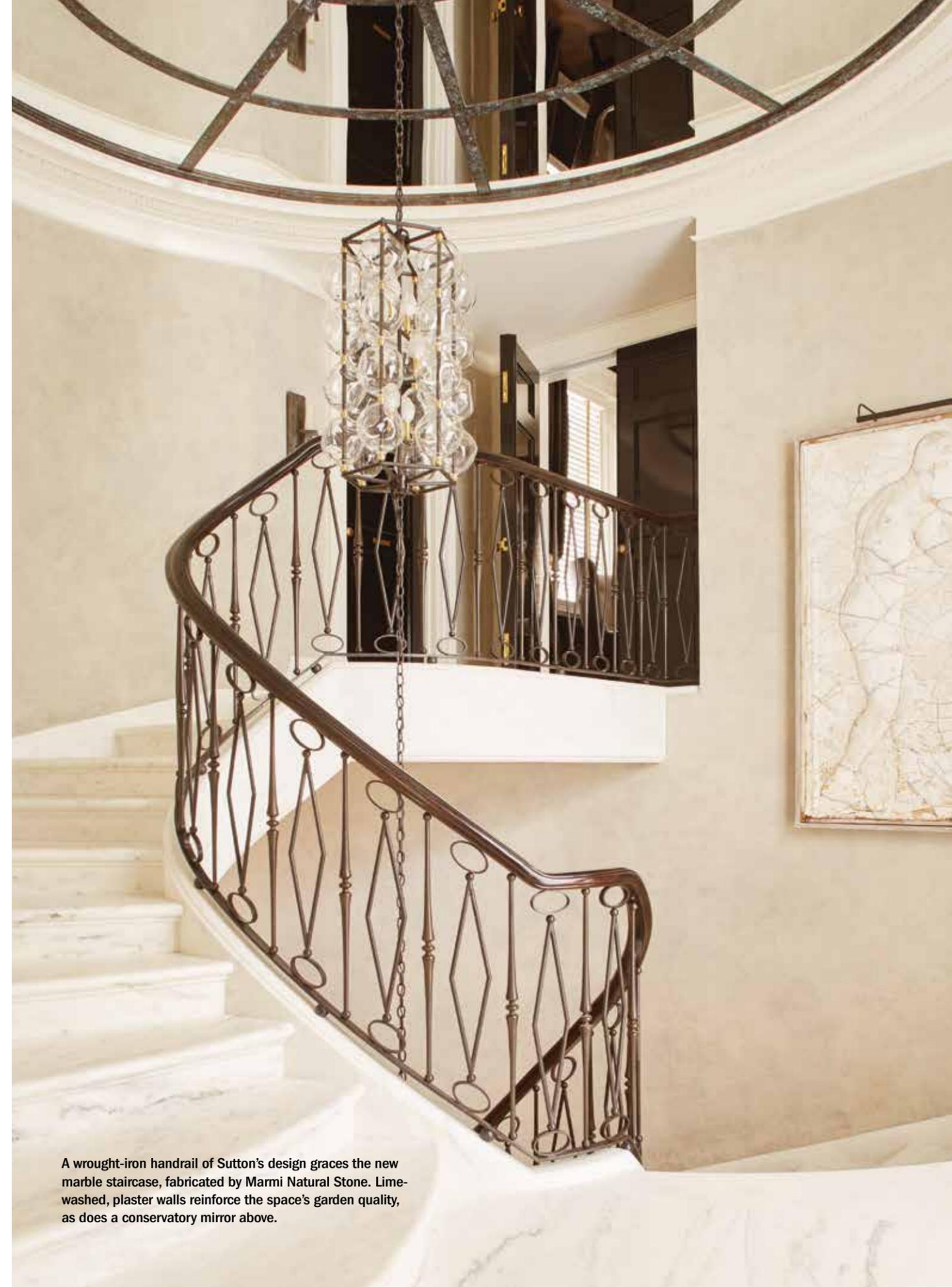


Existing Jeffersonian windows (above) can be raised into the wall above to create doorways, allowing parties to spill from the ballroom addition to the rear courtyard garden, while French doors (right) outside the entertaining space enhance lawn-party flow.

The current owners— Under Armour founder and CEO Kevin Plank and his wife, DJ—enlisted Barnes and Sutton to renovate and redesign the home, the oldest portion of which dates to 1815. (As this issue goes to press, the house is privately listed for sale through Washington Fine Properties.)

The brick residence expanded over time, first with a pair of additions flanking the original side-hall structure. Later, the Bruces added on a ballroom to the right for large-scale entertaining, with a master suite above it. “The whole shell had to remain because it is historic and protected—and we loved it,” explains Barnes, who navigated the historic-approval process before any improvements were made.

The architect drafted a plan to maximize the home’s above-ground footprint and increase the overall square footage by excavating the basement. “The house was charming and generally in good condition, but it had a challenging flow,” he recalls. “We did a tremendous amount of reorganizing, much of which involved moving structural doors and removing structural walls.” In the narrow entry hall, for instance, dramatically widening the opening to the dining room on the left created, as Barnes describes it, “a sense of expansion.”



A wrought-iron handrail of Sutton’s design graces the new marble staircase, fabricated by Marmi Natural Stone. Lime-washed, plaster walls reinforce the space’s garden quality, as does a conservatory mirror above.



“When you mix things that are old with things that are new...you elevate the qualities of both.” —PATRICK SUTTON



New detailing, around that opening and throughout the house, “respects and even heightens the classicism of the trim and molding package that was there,” says Sutton. The substantial, arched pediments that now cap the living-room openings offer proof positive.

The kitchen also opened up under the reorganization. The previous owners had renovated the space a few years before, but the floor plan remained choppy, with a separate butler’s pantry, working kitchen and breakfast room. Combining these distinct areas created a continuous eat-in kitchen with space for an ample island.

Three sets of stairs, including those in the front and back halls, received makeovers of varying scope. The *pièce de résistance* is an elliptical staircase crafted of Imperial Danby marble from the Vermont quarry that supplied the Jefferson Memorial.

Before, a half-story, wooden stair connected the living room to the sunken ballroom. When Barnes and Sutton decided to extend that stair to the newly expanded basement, they reimagined it. “The new stair is made out of self-supporting, solid marble,” notes the architect, “the way it might have been done in Roman times.”

The George Washington-inspired master bedroom (above and opposite) offers tradition with a twist. A linen-covered sofa from Bradley anchors the relaxed sitting area at the foot of the gilded Alfonso Marina Louis XVI bed. The wife’s bathroom (left) marries a cerused-oak vanity with a floor from Marble Systems featuring a water-jet mosaic design.



With its brooding palette, the Lincoln-inspired bedroom (these pages) juxtaposes an RH bed with rarefied antiques, including a walnut “ear” chair Sutton scored on a Paris buying trip. The designer mixed motifs with ease: Modern, geometric Samuel and Sons trim adorns the custom window panels, while the Eliko rug features an Oushak pattern. Glossy black paint highlights the new millwork and updates the existing fireplace.



Clockwise from left: A bronze wall covering from Elitis and jewel-toned décor lend a speakeasy aesthetic to the lower-level lounge. A mirrored backdrop creates the illusion of space in the diminutive bar. Stone steps off of the lower-level landing lead to the powder rooms and the whiskey/wine cellar, housing custom barrel racks of Sutton's design.

At the top of the stair where the ceiling barely reaches seven feet, a conservatory-style, mirrored ceiling tricks the eye, creating the illusion of height. "A conservatory [mirror] makes sense because the landing is right off the garden," explains Sutton. "We were able to solve a functional problem with an aesthetic solution that was on-message." French doors on the landing open onto the stone terrace.

Upstairs, each of the six bedrooms takes design inspiration from a past U.S. president. In the master suite (which boasts his-and-her bathrooms), George Washington's influence is evident, from the portraiture to the period-style furnishings. The Lincoln chamber features a somber palette, befitting a wartime president.

Previously, the lower level comprised a staff apartment and storage/service space. "Digging out the basement essentially created a whole new floor below grade, which added wonderful amenities to the house," remarks Barnes. These include a recreation/lounge space, bar, whiskey-and-wine cellar and two powder rooms.

Sutton exercised poetic license in these spaces. Take the lounge area: A brick-and-steel, vaulted ceiling creates a catacomb effect, while a chenille-covered sectional and mohair-covered chairs—not to mention the metallic cork wall covering—impart a speakeasy vibe. "You have this contrast between luxurious and playful materials and the ancient character created by the brick arches," the designer notes. "When you mix things that are old with things that are new—or take an old space and put new furnishings in it—you elevate the qualities of both."

Employing a combination of found objects, fine antiques and comfortable, modern furniture, Sutton lent each room a distinct identity. As he explains, the classical detailing, though "rendered in different materials and different levels of refinement or rusticity," creates a sense of unity. "A thread of classicism knits it all together. We respected tradition and then layered in soft things that feel tactile, engaging and warm."

Sutton's upcoming book, *Storied Interiors* (Images Publishing; October 2018) will feature the Georgetown residence and highlight the designer's narrative-building approach.

This house, it turns out, has much to say. "Through its decoration, it tells a broad story of varied interests," Sutton reflects. "Each room is a different chapter in the overall story." ■

SOURCES OF NOTE

Paint: benjaminmoore.com. Living Room Sofa and Armchairs & Lincoln Bedroom Bench: ef-1m.com through hinescompany.com. Living Room & Master Bedroom Coffee Tables: salvationsaf.com. Lincoln Bedroom Drapery: duralee.com. Master Bath Flooring: marblesystems.com. For a complete list of sources, see homeanddesign.com.

