

Beautifully Ordered

PERIOD ELEMENTS GROUND A NEW HOUSE NEAR WASHINGTON, D.C.

Architecture by Muse Architects/Interior Design by Thad Hayes/Text by Wendy Moonan/Photography by Scott Frances





At first glance, this contemporary house in the Washington, D.C., area doesn't look new, surrounded as it is by seven acres of tall, mature specimen trees and lush perennial borders. Nor does it betray the fact that the owners—the husband is a writer, the wife is an educator—are serious environmentalists: You see no evidence of its geothermal heating-and-cooling system.

Only when you step inside and survey its immaculate, light-infused spaces, including the grand entrance hall, living room, sitting room, conservatory and dining room, do you sense that the house is simply too luminous to be old.

The traditional architecture was the wife's idea. She told Bethesda, Maryland, ar-

chitect Stephen Muse exactly what kind of residence inspired her: "I love those rambling old houses on the Main Line outside Philadelphia because they have loggias and porches and add-ons."

Muse, a favorite among writers in the Washington area, including Bob Woodward and Elsa Walsh (see *Architectural Digest*, November 2002) and Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn (see *Architectural Digest*, June 1995), was perfectly happy to design a traditional stucco-and-stone house with generous semicircular bays and a slate roof.

"I've got an ego about our firm's work being good but no ego about where the ideas come from," says Muse. "The best houses result when I can work with one idea and when

Designer Thad Hayes conceived the interiors of a house near Washington, D.C., that was designed by architect Stephen Muse. LEFT: A circa 1820 Japanese screen hangs on a living room wall. Pollack fabric on open-arm chairs. Murano glass lamp from Bernd Goeckler Antiques. ABOVE: The room's fireplace has a French bronze fire screen, circa 1930s, from Jean Karajian.

Two 1920s Moroccan ottomans share the sitting room with sofas and club chairs designed by Hayes, who "kept a lot of air and space around the pieces to let them breathe." The lamp is a converted 19th-century English vase. Sconces and round and nesting tables from Bernd Goeckler.







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Hayes spent about nine months “detailing and designing the entire interior.” (“We probably had more input on the interior architecture than on most of our projects,” he notes.) **OPPOSITE:** The dining room. George III shield-back dining chairs, Kentshire Galleries. Chinese figurines, H. M. Luther. Lee Jofa drapery silk. **ABOVE:** The 1935 chairs in the breakfast area were designed by Lucien Rollin. Clarence House sofa fabric.

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When it came to choosing a designer, the wife called Leonard and Evelyn Lauder to ask who had done their Palm Beach house (see *Architectural Digest*, November 2000), which she admired. They steered her to Manhattan decorator Thad Hayes, and she hired him early on.

Hayes is known for tailored, modern interiors. Here he envisioned a more eclectic look, as he knew the house would serve both as a family residence (the couple have two children and receive frequent visits

from relatives) and as a site for dinner parties with friends and large receptions for charities.

Hayes spent much of the first year of the three-year project creating a floor plan (“I wanted lots of arches and bay windows,” the wife recalls), drawing architectural elevations (the first-floor ceilings are 11 feet tall), designing fixtures and selecting materials, such as the creamy gold limestone used on the floors. All this set the stage for the furniture and works of art.

“My take was keeping it an elegant, stately home that re-

flected a wide range of decades, even centuries, up to the 1960s,” Hayes says. “I wanted it to look like they had inherited things from a great-grandmother. It was about giving a layered notion of possessions acquired over time.”

In fact, the couple brought little furniture from their previous house, giving Hayes *carte blanche*. He often toured New York galleries with the wife, looking for antiques. “She had a lot invested in the project and put in time and energy,” Hayes recalls. “She was very hands-on.”

Some of the more important pieces they purchased are a set of George III shield-back dining chairs; a Jules Leleu inlaid cabinet from France, circa 1948; a 19th-century Japanese lacquered cabinet-on-stand; and a carved and gilded 19th-century Italian starburst mirror.

“I like the notion of putting a lot of antiques from different periods into one house,” Hayes says. “I wouldn’t let any one style or decade determine how the house was going to turn out.”

Hayes started the actual decorating, like Sister Parish and designers the world over, by





The diversity of the pieces gives the spaces “more of an irregular rhythm,” says Hayes. OPPOSITE: A banquette runs along a wall of the conservatory. Landscape architect Sandra Youssef Clinton designed the grounds. Floral fabric, Clarence House. Holly Hunt banquette cushion and shade fabrics. Newel lantern. ABOVE: Joan Miró’s *Femme Mangeant Une Pomme*, 1931, hangs over the master bedroom fireplace. Maison Gerard writing table.

choosing the living room rug. “We began with a floor plan and a single antique carpet for the living room, and everything else followed,” he says, referring to a large rug from Amritsar, circa 1890, whose subtle pattern incorporates motifs in pale dusty pink, beige, spring green and lavender.

These muted tones, in turn, were cues for Donald Kaufman, the New York-based paint genius, who created a custom color for each room, a palette of light shades varying from creamy gold to pinky

beige to a whisper of celadon.

“The warm flooring, luminous wall paint and luxurious upholstery temper the effect of the more dramatic details: the period lamps and chandeliers, custom-designed tables and wall paneling,” Hayes says.

Many of these details have metallic accents that add glamour. One wall of the dining room is lined with hand-painted silver chinoiserie wallpaper. Opposite that are mocha-colored, floor-to-ceiling silk draperies that shimmer with the slightest breeze.

In the living room, two faux-bamboo side tables have been silvered, while the English mahogany armchairs are enlivened with brass inlay. A pair of six-panel Japanese screens depict birdcages on a gold background. Under the starburst mirror and Hayes-designed stone mantel is a gilt-bronze French Déco fire screen.

The master bedroom takes glamour to a Hollywood level, with a 1930s French rosewood writing table, a chaise longue covered in pale silk, a Samuel Marx armchair from the

1950s, a gilt Belgian low table from the 1940s and a colorful antique Tabriz carpet, its pink hues echoed in the pink-limestone-paneled walls of the master bath.

“The wife wanted soft, pretty furniture, nothing too brutal or hard-edged,” the designer points out. “Everything was either antique, custom-made or a copy of something with provenance.”

Asked if she would have done anything differently, the wife replies: “No, it came out just the way I wanted.” □