



NEW OLD HOUSE

*Starting over in
Buena Vista.*

BY COY ARCHER / PHOTOS BY J. SINCLAIR

Architect Quinn Pillsworth was determined to talk his clients out of tearing down the 75-year-old home that had captured their fancy. While Pillsworth considered the home “a beautiful...grand old house,” he confesses in retrospect that “it needed a lot of work.”

Despite Pillsworth's preservation-inspired pleas, the home's awkward lot orientation, low ceilings, and antiquated floor plan conspired to compromise his clients' vision. As lovely as the old house was, it had become outdated. When the homeowners received the initial estimates for the architect's proposed renovation plans, they decided to tear the old house down and build anew.

“What a decision that was!” says Emily Taft, the interior designer tasked with enlightening the home. Looking back, she says the clients' confidence in Pillsworth's “amazing preservationist acumen” was a major factor in their decision. Still, Taft was hardly the neophyte when it came to making the new look old again.

“Understandably, new construction can be daunting to a historical neighborhood,” Taft says. And highly visible projects are sure to have their share of skeptics.



TOP: The kitchen's floating glass cabinets help bring the outdoors inside. ABOVE: Sidelights and transom glass give the kitchen and family room a sense of separation while allowing for interplay.

"I was worried about my reputation," Pillsworth recalls, "of being associated with a potentially controversial project."

There's no doubt that by starting over, the homeowners were guaranteed to get exactly what they wanted in terms of space and layout. "There was the added benefit of eliminating the musty old basement and a leaky roof," says Pillsworth.

Whatever misgivings Pillsworth might have had as an architect, he is grateful to the owners for their trust in allowing him to use high-end, quality materials including slate for the roof and real working shutters and shutter dogs. Incorporating original details like deep window sills and a dovecote cupola over the garage, Pillsworth's designs for the new house employed a traditional architectural vocabulary in the contemporary language of new construction.

"I figured that if the owners liked the details of the old house enough to buy it, they would like them on a new house as well."

Taking advantage of the southern exposures created as a result of the home's new site orientation, Taft's interior designs accentuate the light and warmth of each space. As beautiful as these interiors are, it is the kitchen where Taft's

