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BEFORE & AFTER



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Pride of Place

INTEGRITY INTACT, A COLONIAL
FARMHOUSE JOINS THE 21ST CENTURY



Architecture by Grandberg & Associates
 Interior Design by Cullman & Kravis
 Text by Annette Tapert
 Before Photography by Peter R. Peirce
 After Photography by Durston Saylor



For nearly 20 years the couple had lived in the white clapboard farmhouse that sits on 20 acres in a bucolic suburb of New York City. They now had several vacation houses where they could entertain their three grown children, all of whom are married and parents themselves. Another couple might have seen this as a golden opportunity to sell and downsize. But a wealth of happy memories was tucked into

the 10-room house. What better way to carry on with tradition than to expand?

The project had its genesis with the interior design firm of Cullman & Kravis (the late Hedi Kravis was a close friend of the owners'). "The couple hired us to do the interiors before Hedi died in 1997," says Elissa Cullman, "but they realized they needed an architectural solution to the house. We immediately suggested Ira Grandberg, whom our firm has collaborated with



Before

Architect Ira Grandberg and interior designer Elissa Cullman transformed a New York-area house. **TOP:** The renovated secondary entrance. **RIGHT:** The living room, which replaced the porch (above), features an Elizabeth Murray pas-

tel, *Untitled*. Sotheby's wing chair, Mirror, Kentshire Galleries. James H. Galleries brass-and-steel loving cup. Old World Weavers armchair fabric, with Houles trim. Morton & Company pillows. Cowtan & Tout drapery fabric. E.J. Hakimian rug.



After



on numerous projects over the last decade."

The house was built circa 1800, and though some later 19th-century additions were made, it was Colonial in scale and style. The owners did not want to lose the essence of what they knew and loved about the house, and yet they wanted to enlarge the residence to more than twice its size. "It was dark and had low ceilings and cavernous rooms," says Grandberg. "The pro-

gram was to create spaces that would be fully integrated into the scale of the original house while at the same time incorporating new sight lines to show either artwork or views. We had to completely reorganize the flow within the house."

Grandberg and Cullman (above) fashioned a cohesive, organized space that accommodates the clients' English and American antiques and vintage and contemporary art.

The plan for the interior was to expand the wife's collection of American and English antiques. "She'd never worked with a decorator before," says Cullman, who brought in Amanda Marcantonio Reynal as senior project manager. "But when she made the commitment to a traditional Colonial house, she thought it would be too daunting to hunt for all the things she needed, such as carpets, curtains and trims, so she decided to sit back and enjoy the process of working with us."

The wife also collects vintage and contemporary photography. "In the entrance hall, there's a 17th-century Dutch marquetry mirror with an early-18th-century blanket chest, and reflected in the mirror is a 1974 William Eggleston photo of a bathroom," says Cullman. "She wanted to play up an unexpected modern image." In the new central gallery are a series of iconic photographs, works by artists ranging from Robert Frank and Paul Strand to Duane Michaels, serving as a dramatic counterpoint to the Colonial farmhouse architecture.

With the removal of a porch and a playroom at the rear of the house, space was formed for the living room, master bedroom above it and guest suite with garden access on the lower floor. The remaining rear of the house was also removed, which eliminated a series of cellar rooms, and was replaced by living spaces, including a billiard room and a gym. Steps, porches and overlooks were installed for circulation and entry to the newly landscaped garden and meadow.

The previous living room, located behind the old porch, was dark and had low ceilings and limited views. Grandberg repositioned it and added a veranda overlooking the property. "It's now a strong architectural anchor to the site," he says. In keeping with the existing structure, the room is defined by beams, wainscoting and paneling.

Below: The floor plans show "the spatially pleasing sequences," says Grandberg. **Opposite:** In the gallery are photographs by Duane Michaels, Lee Friedlander, Paul Strand, Robert Frank, Charles Sheller and Diane Arbus. Sallee Antiques tea caddy atop Yale R. Burge jewelry box.

BEFORE



AFTER







After

All the floors are antique wide oak boards. These, like the paneling, look as if they had always existed.



Before

The colors were dictated by a late-19th-century Sultanabad carpet "with a celery green in it, which is unusual," says Cullman. "I took that for the walls—it's a perfect complement to the caramel-toned wood." For the fabrics, Cullman used rusty-red and sienna hues found in the carpet. There again, modern art enlivens the traditional décor and antiques.

The library, formerly the living room, is now the main visual axis. From it you can see the living room, the central gallery and the family room at the far end, which has a Colonial-style hearth. Cullman chose to envelop the room in pine paneling that has been hand-rubbed and waxed to a honey color. The floors in the library, as throughout the house, are antique wide oak boards that Grandberg found and had replaned. These, like the paneling, were intended to maintain the integrity of the house and make the additions and renovations look as if they had always existed.

Grandberg moved the dining room to the old kitchen area, increasing its size and

forming a new relationship with the living room, entrance and gallery. The challenge for Cullman was the low ceilings. "Rather than fight the architecture," she says, "I used large objects and overscale furniture. The mantel is tall in relation to the ceiling height, the sideboard is eight feet long, and the chandelier is sizable. Bigger pieces keep the space from looking diminutive."

For more informal entertaining, Cullman and Grand-

berg created a new family room with wood-paneled walls and a skylight above the dining table, which Cullman says is her one architectural contribution.

Upstairs, the new master suite was fashioned to include a balcony with views across the property. "One of the first purchases on the project was a piece of fabric embroidered with red-and-green flowers that I used for a pillow on the chaise," Cullman says. "This was the inspiration for the entire master bedroom scheme."

Other upstairs areas that received overhauls were two children's bedrooms redesigned as guest rooms. In the larger one, a tray ceiling was installed, below which a continuous shelf was intro-

duced.

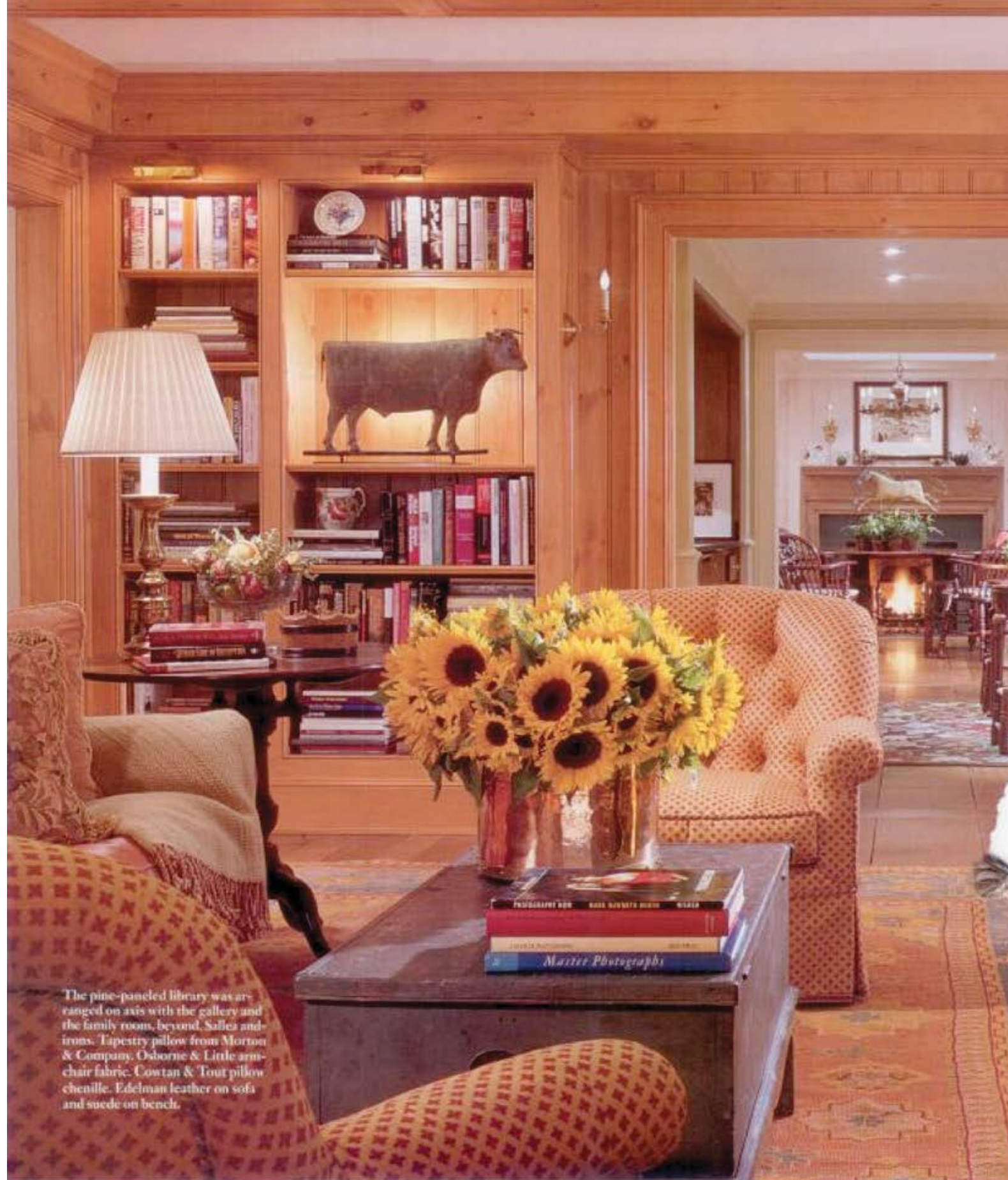


Before

duced. The original living room, which became the library, "was dark and had limited exposure to exterior views," Grandberg says.

The remodeling formed new sight lines throughout the house, "creating a layering of texture, light and material," notes Cullman.

After



The pine-paneled library was arranged on axis with the gallery and the family room, beyond, Salter and Irons. Tapestry pillow from Morton & Company. Osborne & Little armchair fabric. Cowtan & Tout pillow chenille. Edelman leather on sofa and suede on bench.





OPPOSITE: The master bedroom is now above the living room. Chandelier from H. M. Luther Antiques. Sotheby's mirror. Marvin Alexander lamp. Sallee tea caddies. Houliès cord on chair, ottoman, bed skirt and bed-covering. Brunschwig & Fils taupe drapery fabric and wallcovering.

The owners did not want to lose the essence of what they knew and loved about the house, and yet they wanted to enlarge it.

duced to bring the eye down. Displayed on it are assorted 19th-century French ceramic pitchers. "For that room," says Cullman, "I used stenciling inspired by Sturbridge Village. It has all the traditional American patterns, like weeping willows and pinwheels."

The successful transformation of the residence is, in large part, due to the working relationship between Cullman, Grandberg and the clients. "Ellie and Ira approach issues in an intelligent way," says the wife. "Usually the

client is mad at somebody, but I never was."

"For the family house she envisioned, the wife wanted a home run in every room," says Elissa Cullman. "So I thought it was only appropriate that she be involved in fine-tuning every last detail." □

RIGHT AND BELOW: The additions are apparent from the rear of the house, where the structure was expanded into the garden. "The stone walls, wood fences and gates are in keeping with the nature of a New England farmhouse," says landscape architect Jeffrey A. Charlesworth.

