



1ST PRIZE URBAN HOME Change comes to a brownstone, before, inset, and after.

## 1st The Urban Home

*Richard J. Urowsky  
New York, New York*  
PROFESSIONAL APPLICANT:  
*Mark Alan Hewitt, AIA  
Hewitt Architects  
Hope, New Jersey*

This 1866 Greenwich Village brownstone designed by noted New York architect Robert Mook had fallen victim to the architectural equivalent of grand larceny. Its graceful front stoop had been lopped off in the 1940s when the house was converted into an apartment building. A crudely designed kitchen addition bulged out where an elaborate doorway had once greeted visitors. And in perhaps

the ultimate indignity, the house's defining feature, its glorious brownstone facade, had been covered with several layers of paint.

That was the sorry situation facing architect and preservation specialist Mark Hewitt when the new owner hired him to restore the house. The project, while difficult, did benefit from one major stroke of luck: Research confirmed that the house next door, which retained most of its original features, was an identical Mook-designed twin. It was used as the model for the rebuilt steps, doorway, foyer, and cast-iron balustrade.

Once the paint was stripped from the facade, it became clear that the original brownstone was too far gone to restore. Hewitt

refaced the exterior using a brownstone "recipe" developed in conjunction with Columbia University's Center for Preservation Research.

The house's interior was also completely restored by Hewitt and Lynn Bensel Hewitt. The woodwork was repaired and refinished, walls were replastered, and new plaster moldings were run to match existing profiles. A small kitchen was added to the rear of the parlor floor and constructed with brick chosen to match the surrounding nineteenth-century buildings. Although only six feet deep, the new kitchen has a dramatic glass roof that makes the modest space feel significantly larger. "The kitchen addition was designed to evoke a nineteenth-century carriage house," explains Hewitt.

"A restoration like this improves the entire streetscape, not just a single building," notes juror Lay. The truth of this observation has already been proven on Perry Street. According to Hewitt, the brownstone's dramatic reversal of fortune has

inspired other homeowners on the block to re-create their long-lost stoops, too.

## 2nd The Urban Home

*Miriam Gilbert  
Brooklyn, New York &  
Julia Hudson  
Brooklyn, New York*  
PROFESSIONAL APPLICANT:  
*New York City Historic  
Properties Fund, Inc.  
New York, New York*

Both of these mid-nineteenth-century houses in the historic Fort Greene neighborhood were restored through an innovative loan program administered by the New York Landmarks Conservancy. Since its establishment in 1982, the New York City Historic Properties Fund has made dozens of low-interest loans to homeowners with limited access to other sources of financing. Additionally, the program helps guide the restoration plans, which in both of these award-winning projects were developed by architect Judith Saltzman.

3RD PRIZE URBAN HOME The Presiders' town house was designed by Waddy Wood.





2ND PRIZE URBAN HOME: The Gilbert, left, and Hudson, right, houses were restored with help from an innovative loan program.

Miriam Gilbert's wood-frame house had been covered with layers of asphalt siding. These were carefully removed, and the original clapboards and cornice were restored. Missing casement surrounds were reconstructed, and aluminum windows were replaced with historically accurate models. To keep within budget, Gilbert scraped the second-floor door and first-floor window frames herself. By far the most dramatic aspect of the project was the reconstruction of the beautifully detailed porch, which had been removed around the turn of the century.

Like the Gilbert house, Julia Hudson's Greek Revival town house is one of the few wooden structures left in the area. The restoration included removal of a 1920s parapet wall and reconstruction of the porch's dentiled cornice, columns, and railings. Clapboard siding was replaced and new window surrounds were constructed based on imprints on the facade.

"Both of these homeowners deserve a lot of credit," says

Karen Ansis, the manager of the Historic Properties Fund. "They could have done much less to maintain their buildings, but instead they decided to go the extra mile aesthetically. We were greatly impressed by their commitment to the projects."

### 3rd The Urban Home

*James & Margaret Pressler  
Arthur Keith Residence  
Washington, D.C.*

James Pressler knew that the turn-of-the-century house he had bought in 1989 was an architectural gem, but it wasn't until his wife hired a historian to research the property (as a surprise birthday gift for him) that he found out just how special it really was. A copy of the 1898 building permit revealed that the architect had been the influential Waddy B. Wood, whose later designs include the Woodrow Wilson House, a National Trust museum property.

After learning about the

house's notable pedigree, Pressler conducted his own extensive research into Wood's life and works. He discovered that the house is Wood's oldest surviving house and located an illustration dating from 1899, just one year after it was built. The illustration, as well as a photograph found among Wood's personal papers at the University of Virginia, provided the homeowners with a clear blueprint for

restoring the exterior. This included stripping paint, cleaning the brick, replacing all of the windows, restoring the wood and metal trim, and reconstructing the original portico.

In a final nod to the great architect, James Pressler commissioned a limestone likeness of Wood and had it installed above the front entry. "It seemed only fitting to do something in his honor," says Pressler.

### The Jury

The 1994 jurors were: L. William Chapin, FAIA, the 1994 president of the American Institute of Architects; Roger Courtenay, ASLA, landscape architect, EDAA, Inc., Alexandria, Virginia; Bruce Judd, AIA, Architectural Resources Group, San Francisco; K. Edward Lay, professor, School of Architecture, University of Virginia; Sharon Park, Senior Historical Architect, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park

Service; William Seale, architectural historian and preservation consultant, Alexandria, Virginia.

### Next Year

For entry requirements and an application form for the National Trust's 1995 Great American Home Awards competition, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Home Awards, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.