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CHARLESTON STYLE & DESIGN

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*A modern home is a
standout in Charleston's
historic district*

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HARLESTON'S FAMED SOUTH OF BROAD neighborhood harbors an anomaly: one super-contemporary home nestled amidst dozens of antebellum mansions. Once merely a brick garage hidden away in the shadows of an exclusive residential district, this run-of-the-mill outbuilding slowly chronicled a modern history so compelling that it ultimately earned a nod from several of the city's staunchest preservationists—and it recently nabbed a Carolopolis Award for historic preservation. So begins the story of a truly unique renovation by Renaissance South Construction Company and the design team at Christopher Rose Architects.

Local legend has it that a second story was added to the original structure to accommodate getaway visits to Charleston by first lady Eleanor Roosevelt sometime during the early 20th century. Then, in 1974, the structure was purchased and separated from its original colonial King Street house, thereby establishing its own unique address along a seldom-traveled alleyway. That's when the owner turned to his college roommate from the University of Virginia to transform the building into a home befitting the neighborhood.

It just so happened that the owner's roommate was architect W.G. Clark, who would eventually earn national acclaim for his work on such local endeavors as the Inn at Middleton Place, considered one of the area's architectural triumphs of the late 20th century, and his collaborations with Charleston-born architect Charles Menefee on both the Reid House on Johns Island and the Croffead House on James Island. All three projects



A bank of high-sheen orange cabinetry, with granite waterfall countertops, lines the back wall facing the island's walnut cabinetry with waterfall edge, all designed by Charlotte Reeves and custom-crafted by Robert Paige Cabinetry of Johns Island. Upper cabinets were fabricated in steel and glass to mimic the Hope's windows featured throughout the home.

previous:

Flanking Hope's windows provide the illusion of a seamless indoor/outdoor living space. A ceiling of shiplap and beams cap a posh interior of light and dark tones and numerous inviting textures.





Curved walnut walls handcrafted by Renaissance South frame a large staircase window. The light fixtures feature an operational pully system that makes cleaning and changing bulbs quick and easy.

opposite:

The main living and dining area is one of two large living spaces in the home. Large new Hope's windows, which flank each other on either side of the space, were installed.





received National Design Awards from the American Institute of Architects.

More than a decade before Clark became a household name in the city's building and design community, he was a youthful transplant who had just opened his own architectural firm and took on the job—likely the first of many creative fingerprints he would eventually leave on the Charleston Lowcountry. Amazingly, Clark's bold stroke of 20th-century modernism stood harmoniously alongside its much older neighbors for 45 years.

That's when the current owner determined it was time for an update. "To finally get a closeup look at this modern house from inside its brick courtyard walls was really exciting for me," says custom homebuilder Rob Crawford. "We've completed substantial renovations on a number of homes in this neighborhood, but this is the only one that combined a historical brick structure with a contemporary addition."

Crawford, who founded East Cooper-based Renaissance South Construction Company in 2008, says that it is his understanding that Clark's original renovation also converted the downstairs garage space into living space. "However, the inside of the home was divided into small rooms that no longer met today's modern living standards," he says. "Figuring out exactly how to open up the interior space to make it more livable while respecting the underlying fabric of the building was one of this project's biggest challenges."

That amazing renovation/repair plan came from Christopher Rose Architects and project architect Shelley Clark-Glidewell. Rose's body of work has received 17 local, regional and national design awards throughout his 25-year career as both an architect and interior designer. Like his predecessor Clark, Rose is a recipient of an award from the American Institute of Architects—the National Honor Award for his "Charleston Cottages" design, a prototype for housing the homeless. With this impressive résumé, the firm wasn't a bit shy about kicking up the modern ambience of this South of Broad home a few notches.

"One of the most striking features of the 1974 renovation was its two side-by-side two-story glass wall units by Hope's Windows," notes Crawford about one of his favorite features of the home. "That's over 350 square feet of glass, which serves to link the interior of the home with the exterior courtyard almost seamlessly. The visual effect is stunning."

According to Crawford, Hope's is the

A curved copper wall encloses the stairwell addition and ties the original structure in with the 1974 addition within the smaller courtyard.





quintessential name in handcrafted steel and bronze windows and doors and has been for over a century. “We carefully removed the original windows and shipped them back to a specialty restoration company in Delaware, where they were completely restored,” notes Crawford. “Then we reinstalled them to their original places in the home.”

The latest architectural plans for the home called for the

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1974 addition, as well as the original garage, to be completely opened up to create two large living spaces. “One living space is the kitchen that overlooks the courtyard through the original Hope’s windows,” explains Crawford. “The second is the main living and dining area, where we installed large new Hope’s windows that flank each other on either side of the space, creating a truly indoor/outdoor feel.”

The Renaissance South team was also tasked with removing the central stairwell in the back of the existing kitchen. “It really cut up the space, but in order to take it out, we had to suspend the ceiling and second floor systems from the roof beams with saddle brackets,” Crawford says. “That was the only way we could achieve the huge span in

The original Hope's windows, selected by architect WG Clark for his 1974 design, remain the hallmark of this singular 3,000-square-foot South of Broad modern marvel. The renovated courtyard by Wertimer + Cina Landscape Architects includes the addition of a pool with a linear fountain feature, as well as plenty of seating for family and guests.





the kitchen that the owner wanted.”

A second exterior staircase was also removed. In its place, Renaissance South built a spectacular curved addition of standing seam copper running top to bottom; then it installed a walnut staircase inside that perfectly follows the curve of the walnut-covered wall. An additional wall unit of Hope’s windows was installed to allow natural light to flow into the space.

The project wasn’t complete until the exterior of the 1974 addition was coated in a fully lime-based stucco; the brick of the original structure was repaired and painted to blend naturally with the addition. “We had to carefully rebuild the brick courtyard walls that had been removed to accommodate construction,” notes Crawford. “That’s when Wertimer + Cline Landscape Architects stepped in. Their design truly maximized the beauty and livability of the original courtyard. Additionally, they completely redesigned the courtyard on the other side of the home to incorporate sitting areas, dining areas and a linear pool/fountain feature. The courtyard walls and the landscaping provide this home with much-needed privacy.

“It was an amazing experience to create an ultramodern architectural marvel right in the heart of one of the nation’s most historic cities. It is definitely a totally different aesthetic than its neighbors, but it is an equally important piece of historic Charleston architecture.” *

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