



Best of both worlds

Edwardian charm meets modern sensibilities – the character facade of this restored San Francisco mansion belies a pared-back interior remodeled by Monsef Architecture Design

San Francisco is a city renowned for its historic architecture. Not surprisingly, many of the houses have interesting tales to tell, including the mansion featured on these pages.

The Colgate mansion, as it is known, was designed in 1903, by architect Frank Van Trees for Joseph Colgate-McQueen of the legendary toothpaste company.

Fast-forward a century, and the house was in a state of serious disrepair when designer Maryam Monsef of Monsef Architecture Design was commissioned to



Facing page: Ornate plaster and ironwork enhance the character of this restored Edwardian house, which was originally built for Colgate millionaire Joseph Colgate-McQueen. The house has been extensively remodeled by Monsef Architecture Design, to better suit the needs of a young family.

Above: Wide openings allow an easy flow between living areas on the main floor. Frosted glass doors conceal storage space within a thick structural wall in the center of the house.

Left: The carriage house at the rear of the property has also been restored and is now a guest house.



redesign the house to better suit the needs of a young family.

"It was no longer an ornate family home – it had become a run-down boarding house with a clutter of small rooms on every floor," Monsef says. "But although there was nothing to salvage inside, the house was of historical significance and it did have potential."

Monsef says the classical front facade was restored to capture the beauty of the original plasterwork, rusticated stucco and ornate cast ironwork. The interior,

however, was gutted and extensively rebuilt to provide a spacious, six-bedroom home better suited to modern living.

"It was important to keep the integrity of the old building, and not take too much away from it," says the designer. "But at the same time, the owners wanted a pared-back modern interior."

The building's foundations, plumbing, electrical services, heating systems, walls, lighting and roof were all replaced.

A grand entry was provided on the ground floor, along with a home office or

nanny room, bathroom, kitchenette and large home theater room. French doors lead out to a picturesque courtyard featuring a Roman-style brick retaining wall and reflection pond. The original carriage house facing the courtyard has been transformed into a guest house.

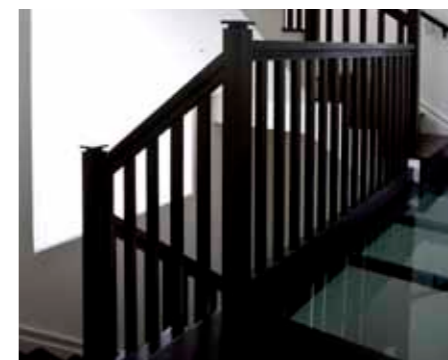
The main floor of the house includes a formal living room and central kitchen within a spacious great room that leads out to a patio.

"We specified two sets of folding glass doors from NanaWall Systems – a

company that specializes in high-end architectural glass doors," says Monsef. "The doors allow an easy indoor-outdoor flow. NanaWall doors also feature in the master suite, which opens to a balcony."

To balance the extra-high ceilings, the designer chose 6in-wide hardwood flooring, which was resurfaced by specialist flooring company Tree Lovers Floors.

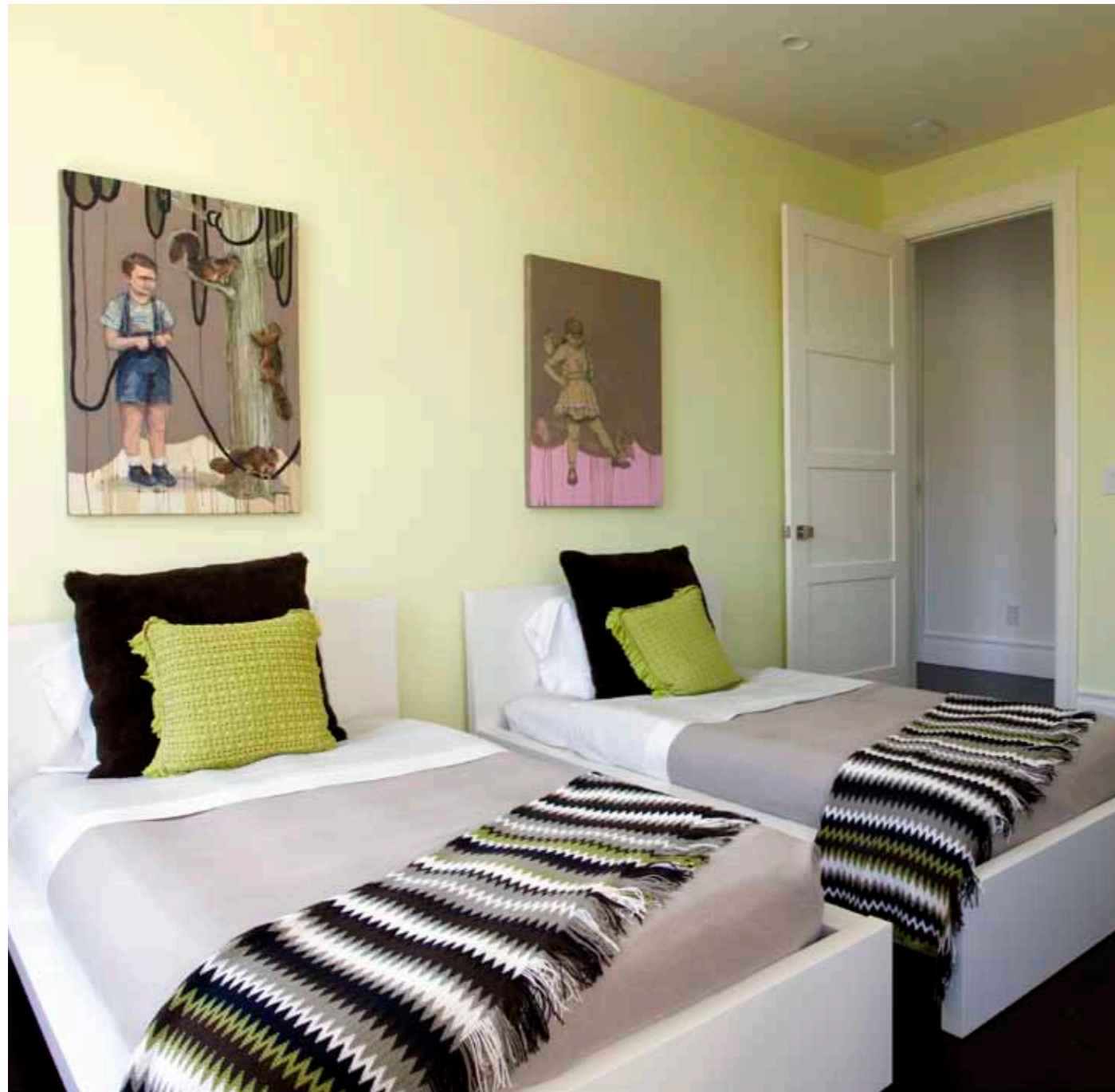
"Brazilian walnut planks have rather pronounced color variations," says Monsef. "Tree Lovers resurfaced the flooring, staining it in a dark shade that works



Facing page, top, and above: Monsef Architecture Design retained the traditional bay windows within the great room. New Brazilian walnut hardwood floor planks were resurfaced by Tree Lovers Floors to provide an even, dark appearance. The kitchen has lacquered cabinets, CaesarStone countertops and pendant lighting by Le Klint.

Facing page, lower: Two sets of folding glass doors from NanaWall Systems open up the great room to the outdoors.

Left: A glass floor on the third floor provides a visual link to the main living floor below.



Above: Fresh citrus colors enliven this bedroom – one of six in the 5100sq ft house.

Facing page, top: The master suite on the top floor is a private sanctuary for the parents. French doors open to a new deck and views of the city skyline.

Facing page, lower: Skylights bring extra light into the master bathroom, which has a contemporary aesthetic in keeping with the rest of the interior. Monsef Architecture Design specializes in remodels, additions and new construction projects. The company works with clients to create simple, sustainable and functional interiors.

well with the interior’s modern aesthetic.”

A distinctive feature of the third floor is a new glass bridge that leads to bedrooms. “The glass provides a visual link between the floors, creating an important sense of connectivity,” says the designer.

The top floor is the parents’ sanctuary. The master suite includes a fireplace, private deck with expansive views of the city skyline, spacious closet, meditation room and a contemporary bathroom.

Monsef says the project is typical of the company’s work. But the firm also

specializes in new construction.

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