



Urban Renewal

The town house seemed beyond repair, but an architect restored it to its former glory and made his family a home

AFTER

Princess Red limestone floors in the entry echo the terra-cotta color of the exterior and stand up to a family's wear and tear. A full wall of closets keeps clutter from coming upstairs.

By eliminating the service entry, Gleicher doubled the width of the foyer. A tall arch, placed perpendicular to the house's north-south axis, and the shortened column help create the illusion of space. The stairway leads to the living room, dining room, and kitchen on the parlor floor.

BEFORE



THE BUILDING WAS SCARY when we bought it," says architect Paul Gleicher, who faced peeling plaster, burst pipes, and seven horrible kitchens and bathrooms in chopped-up apartments that he hoped to consolidate into a single-family home. But the location—Manhattan's Upper West Side—was ideal, and since restoring houses is his stock-in-trade, Gleicher took the plunge.

The house's challenges included its narrow, 13-foot-wide proportions. Gleicher closed off the service entrance to create a full-width foyer and relocated the kitchen to the parlor floor for a wide-open space with 11-foot-plus ceilings that flows from living room to dining room to kitchen.

Gleicher retained what little detail was left, like a tarnished onyx fireplace and inlaid oak floors in the living room, and re-created classical details, designing intricate moldings, wainscoting, and arches. White paneling and trim, buttery walls, and a continuity of palette all helped this sliver of a town house think big.



HB OPTIONS Far right: Gleicher had the front door custom-made from English white oak based on what the original would have looked like. Glass panels and sidelights invite in light. Above: Other options include a JELD-WEN walnut door, right, that incorporates a similar radius top, wraparound sidelights, and transom. The Victoria Collection door, left, from Pella, features an arched transom and half-light sidelights.



Makeover

FLOOR SAMPLE PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIRAGE PREFINISHED HARDWOOD FLOORS

Black metal windows were replaced with white to match the new and restored casings throughout the house, and a built-in window seat provides a perfect street-side view while concealing the radiators. Gleicher's wife, Lisa Sharkey, spent hours polishing the onyx fireplace mantel with vinegar and steel wool.



BEFORE



AFTER



FLOOR SHOW Hundred-year-old oak floors with intricate inlaid borders in the living room inspired Gleicher to install similar versions elsewhere. To add some character, from left: red oak floors with natural oak inlay; natural red oak with Beaujolais dot inlay; and maple with Beaujolais finish and natural inlay with corner detail, all from Mirage Prefinished Hardwood Floors.



Architect Paul Gleicher, Lisa Sharkey, and their daughter Casey enjoy the outdoor terrace. Their two older sons, Gregory and Douglas, were "petrified" by the original house until Gleicher gave them a sledgehammer and let them start demolition.



COUNTER INTUITIVE

Gleicher chose earth tones for the kitchen counters and backsplash to complement the wood floors and cabinetry, as well as nature's palette outside the windows. While he opted for natural stone, solid surfacing offers a similar look with durable, nonporous, and easy-to-maintain materials inspired by nature. Above, from left: Avonite solid surface in Cairo and Pinon; DuPont Zodiaq quartz surfacing in Mystic Black and Mosaic Gold.

In the galley kitchen, Gleicher expanded the architectural vocabulary with mahogany cabinetry that has raised panel doors and dentil molding. He extended the neutral palette with a tumbled marble backsplash and champagne granite countertops.



BEFORE



AFTER

By placing slim 12-inch-deep pantry cabinets on the right-hand wall, Gleicher was able to maintain four-foot clearances in the kitchen. The perpendicular peninsula helps visually broaden the space.