



# Updating Traditional

## FOLLOW THE BUILD IN THREE PARTS

- Planning & Framing
- Envelope & Mechanicals
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In this three-part series, we explore the design and construction of a traditionally styled house in Kentucky.

This installment covers the home's finishing touches, including the exterior details and interior design.



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Modern accents and a monochromatic color scheme enliven the traditional design of this 19th-century-inspired home

BY JASON BLACK

**T**he Kentucky *Fine Homebuilding* House is also a show house in the Norton Commons development's annual home show. For interior designer Gretchen Black and me, this has been an opportunity to both construct a house that incorporates some of our own ideas for gracious living and to build on the rich traditions of Southern architecture. While the front elevation of the house has to conform to the traditional look of the neighborhood and meet all of the design edicts of the town architect, we were able to infuse the town's traditional design language with some modern touches in the interior and the outdoor space at the rear of the house. □

Jason Black is a founder and owner of Artisan Signature Homes in Louisville, Ky. He has updates of the build on his YouTube channel, Building a Better South. Photos by Tim Furlong Jr.



## A WELCOME HOME

The concept of New Urbanism involves building neighborhoods with strong communities. A crucial part of achieving this vision is that each house on these densely developed streets has a front porch within comfortable talking distance from the sidewalk. Our double-decker front porches on the *FHB* House function this way, and they are a reference to a historical, urban southern-home style. Our front facade employs several touches from the 19th-century New Orleans homes that inspired it, including a gas light above the front door and operable shutters flanking 8-ft. windows with the sills set at the floor.



## CONTEMPLATIVE AND CONVIVIAL SPACES



The 1200-sq.-ft. first floor is divided into two parts. The flex room off the front entry is sheltered from the rest of the house and, perhaps, the most formal of the rooms, influenced by the facade. The four tall windows reference homes of an earlier century. The trim here, including the modified celtic-knot border pattern (often found on a hardwood floor, but here visible on the ceiling), adds visual interest and elegance. The monochromatic paint scheme on the walls, ceiling, baseboard, and casing lends a quiet, contemplative air to the room, which can act as a sitting room, a home office, or even a formal dining room. The space is buffered from the open floor plan at the rear of the house by the long hallway and the butler's pantry.

The rest of the first floor is organized around the kitchen. Throughout the house we've mixed modern and traditional elements, and in the



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kitchen, modern accents enliven the traditional. I wanted to amplify the brass cabinet pulls, which we did by framing the island and the range-wall cabinets with thin brass plating—in effect a metal edgebanding. Because of their size, range hoods are always something of a kitchen's focal point, so integrating the brass banding on the hood seemed natural. These brass accents work with the range backsplash tile and brass bar.

The kitchen is open to the family room, so guests and family can be together while prepping food and eating. This room is perhaps the most traditional in the house, with crown molding and backbanded casings, a traditional built-in display cabinet, and a fireplace. We took a playful approach to the fireplace, with a painted mitered surround and stained shiplap installed in a chevron pattern encasing the chimney.



## CONNECTING THE OUTDOORS

Because the houses on each street are an arm's span apart, residents rely on the town's parks and trails for outdoor recreation—yet another opportunity to meet and spend time with neighbors. Yet there are occasions when homeowners want to enjoy the outdoors in the privacy of their own yard, even if it's a small space. We deliberately did not maximize the size of the house on the lot so that we would have a courtyard at the back of the house that can function as an outdoor family room and entertainment space. We framed the garage an extra 6 ft. 6 in. deep to accommodate an enclosed bar on the courtyard side. With a sink, electrical power, a serving counter, and storage, the garage bar and courtyard are ready for entertaining. I like the look of limestone paver patios with trimmed grass growing between the pavers, but that was not in the budget. My compromise was a poured-concrete diamond-grid pattern within a border, with sod laid between the concrete pads.



## MEDIA ROOM GETAWAY

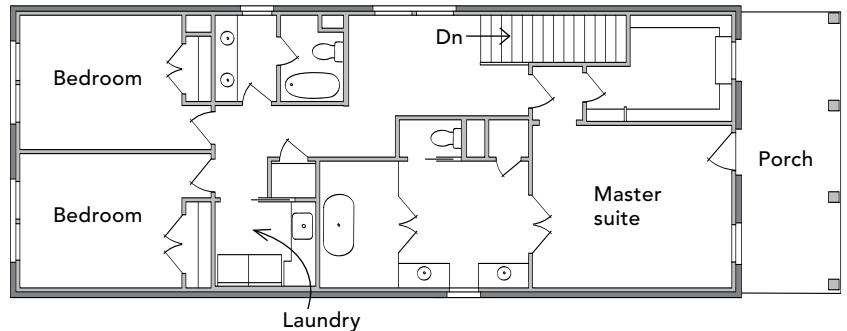
The house has plenty of indoor entertainment space. The basement media room is a place for adults or kids to have fun away from the open plan of the first floor, where noise would filter through the house to the second-floor bedrooms. It includes a wet bar complete with refrigerator drawers and a dishwasher, so there's no need to run up and down the stairs for refreshments during the game or a movie. When the house was being wired, we installed a subwoofer in the wall beneath the stairs and speakers in the ceiling so future homeowners wouldn't have to tuck speakers and soundbars on shelves or behind furniture. I coordinated with the HVAC installer to run the supply and return ductwork around the perimeter of the room so the chases would create a tray ceiling rather than taking the most direct route down the middle of the room.



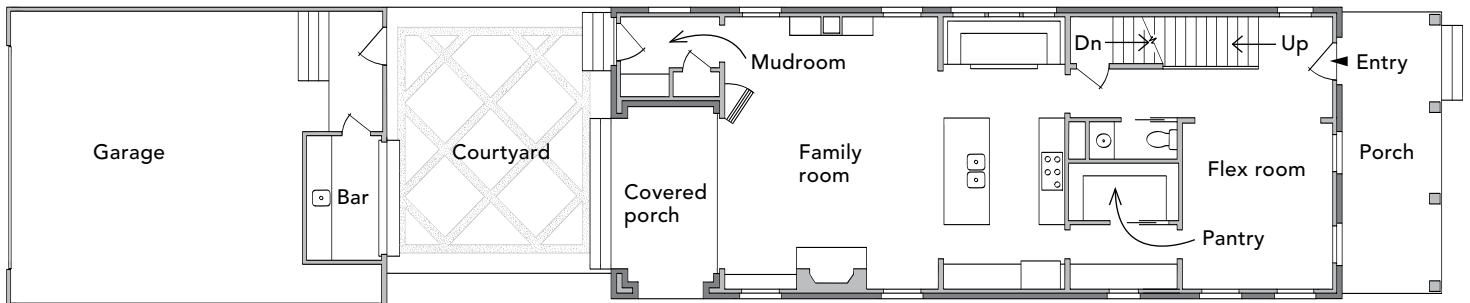
## GATHERING SPOTS FOR FEW AND MANY

Working within the confines of a very narrow lot, the FHB House delivers three different entertaining spaces that allow gatherings to involve the whole household or be held at a degree of separation from the home's quieter areas. Despite the small footprint, the family-oriented second floor includes a master suite and two additional bedrooms, and there is a guest bedroom in the basement.

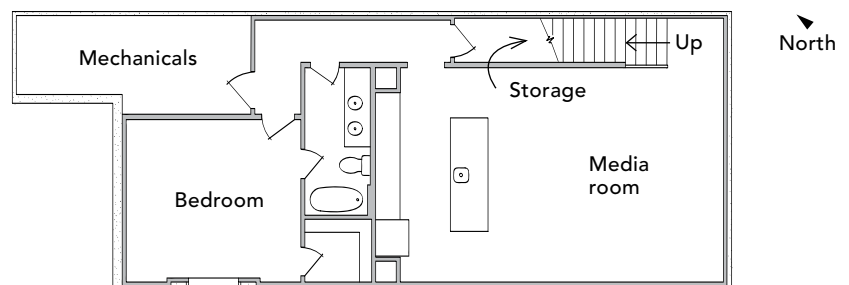
Second floor



First floor

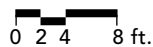


Basement



### SPCS

- Bedrooms:** 4
- Bathrooms:** 3½
- Size:** 3,485 sq. ft.
- Location:** Prospect, Kentucky
- Architect:** C3 Studio
- Designer:** Grey House Design
- Builder:** Artisan Signature Homes



## A SWEET SUITE

The second floor is the private area of the house. There are two bedrooms served by a bathroom, in which both the toilet and the shower can be closed off from the vanity to maximize usability. The laundry room is located on this level, so clothes can be washed near the location where they are removed and stored. The master suite, though, is the highlight of the second floor. The bedroom itself isn't especially large; it fits a king-size bed and night tables. There's additional space on the private second-story porch, and the lower-than-typical windowsill height visually lends the space of the porch to the room. The bedroom is supported by generously sized spaces dedicated to the other needs of a master suite, including the large walk-in closet and dressing area. The master bath is meant to be the focal point of the suite, with double doors connecting it to the bedroom. The toilet area is set off behind a pocket door for privacy, and the his-and-hers vanities, showers, and bathtub dominate the space. The unlacquered brass DVX fixtures and large-format, marble-like porcelain tile make a statement. The division of spaces in the bathroom and layout of the master suite offer space for two to begin and end their day and also to retreat from the hubbub of other areas of the house either to the bed or to lounge above the street on the porch.



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