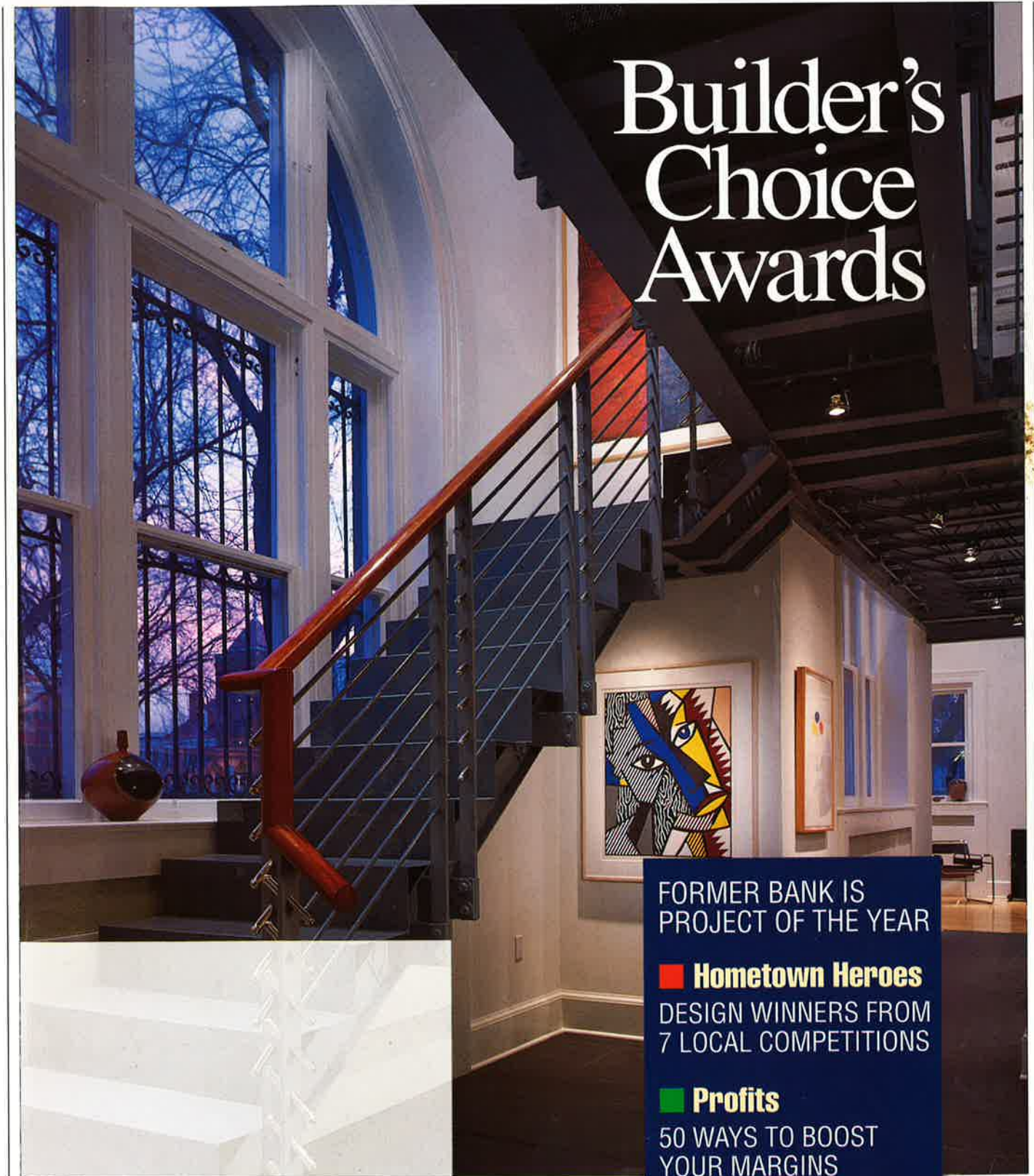


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BUILDER

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Builder's Choice Awards

FORMER BANK IS
PROJECT OF THE YEAR

■ **Hometown Heroes**
DESIGN WINNERS FROM
7 LOCAL COMPETITIONS

■ **Profits**
50 WAYS TO BOOST
YOUR MARGINS

Builder's Choice



Craftsmanship, flexibility, and attention to detail distinguish the winners of the 1995 Builder's Choice Design & Planning Awards.

By Susan Bradford,
Kathy Greet, and
Chad Bishop



The Builder's Choice Design & Planning Awards program is 15 years young and going strong. Sponsored in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects housing committee, this year's contest drew 624 entries from 38 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, and Australia.

Our blue-ribbon jury—builders John Canuso, Jon Fels, Kevin Kalman, and Scott Ward; and architects Thomas Bosworth, FAIA, Steven James, AIA, Margaret McCurry, FAIA, and Alexander Seidel, AIA—narrowed the field to just 37 winners (for more on the judges, see page 157).

Said one judge, "We feel a responsibility to pick winners that send a message to other builders and architects around the country." Among the trends they noted during their two days of judging:

- Smaller houses—both custom and production—showed restraint and superior workmanship.

- But bigger houses tended to be glitzy and ostentatious (in fact, the judges didn't give a single award in the large custom house category).

- "Some of the most exciting, livable multifamily entries we saw were affordable projects, though they looked upper end," said one judge. "It just goes to show that good design and affordability don't have to be mutually exclusive."

- But the judges agreed that the master planned community entries were weak. "We know there's great planning work being done out there," said one. "I wish we'd see it in Builder's Choice."

- The best production houses had innovative, flexible floor plans designed to attract a variety of buyers.

- And interiors showed a trend toward livability rather than "sheer impact," as one judge put it. "They're getting less busy and contrived. There's less volume, for instance, and more interest in fine detailing."

- Across the board, the judges saw evidence that builders and developers are seeking to create stronger neighborhoods by relating buildings to the street, avoiding the cookie-cutter look, and handling garages in creative new ways.

The 1995 Project of the Year (cover, left, and the next four pages) exemplifies these trends. A bank-turned-private-residence, it respects its urban neighborhood while giving its owner a home that is elegantly crafted and detailed.

Turn the page for a tour of this year's Builder's Choice winners. For a sampling of design details from the winners, see page 80.—S.B.



Category
Adaptive re-use project

**Entrant/Architect/
Interior designer**
Brawer & Hauptman
Architects, Philadelphia

Builder
Glass Construction,
Washington, D.C.

Landscape architect
Oehme, van Sweden &
Associates, Washington,
D.C.

Kitchen designer
Blue Bell Kitchens,
Spring House, Pa.

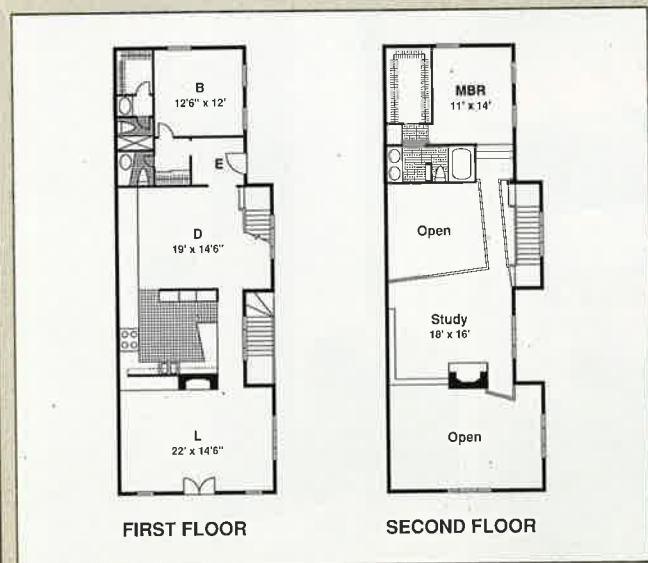
PRIVATE RESIDENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

1995

This project sends a message about getting people to move back to Main Street America," said one judge. That message, plus bold design and attention to detail, is what won this bank-turned-private-residence the Builder's Choice Project of the Year award.

"I have always been interested in adaptive re-use projects," the owner notes, "and was looking for a nonresidential building to remodel into a home. It could have been an old firehouse—anything really." When a Realtor told him he had the perfect building, it turned out to be an historic, circa-1910 bank building located in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol. "The building had become an eyesore in an otherwise residential neighborhood," says the owner. "It had been vacant for several years prior to my acquisition, and was covered with graffiti." The renovation construction began with the neighbors' full support. "I think they were fearful it might be turned into a restaurant or maybe a 7-Eleven," he says.





Cleanup was the first order of business. Although the 1,600-square-foot building appeared dilapidated, structurally it was sound and architecturally quite beautiful. "We pressure-washed to remove the old layers of paint and rust, and to restore the original limestone exterior cornice work and walls," says Tom Glass, the renovation contractor. "As for the interior, we replaced about 50 percent of the moulding and replastered virtually the whole building."

The architect designed a steel mezzanine above the kitchen to house the owner's study (large photo, page 88). The floor is made of 16-gauge perforated steel and is supported by two C-beams epoxy bolted into the masonry walls. "We knew we wanted a transparent material so we wouldn't lose the impact of the 20-foot ceilings," says architect Michael Hauptman. The one regret shared by all who worked on the job is that the perforated steel is not a thicker gauge. As Hauptman puts it, "When you first walk on the floor you feel a little unstable, but after a while you get used to it."

Stability was not a problem for Tom Glass. His greatest challenges occurred with objects that were too heavy, not too

light. "Moving the 3,500-pound safe door outside when the ground was covered with ice was extremely difficult," says Glass. The soapstone countertops, which the client selected for their durability and beauty, also posed an unforeseen difficulty. Not only were they extremely heavy, but Glass had to sand and oil them once they were in place. "We had to apply about four or five coats of mineral oil to get the desired finish," he recalls.

Even the professional relationships associated with this project were winners. "It was an entirely pleasurable experience. I was almost sad when it was finished," says the owner. "Everyone went out of their way to help each other." Says Hauptman, "I would love to work with either of them [the owner and Glass] again. It is rare that the builder, client, and architect get along as well as we did."

Overall, the judges liked the combination of the neoclassical exterior and the modernist interior. "The renovation took a good old building and made it into a great new building—with a history," said one judge. Another said, "Now every time I walk into a bank I am going to ask where the master bedroom is."

Costs were \$250,000 for the property, \$310,000 for the renovation, and \$60,000 for the landscaping.—C.B.



Photos: Barry Halpin

WINNING IDEAS

■ New entrance placement, on the side of the house, avoids the problem of walking directly into a room.

■ The architect and builder retained original mouldings and window openings where possible.

■ Wiring for the home is in conduits that run along cutouts in the brick wall.

■ Frosted glass, like that used in the front door and shower enclosure, is a good way to let light through without sacrificing privacy.

■ A drywall partition separates the dining room and kitchen without closing off either one and adds cabinet space to the kitchen.

■ The custom cherry cabinets in the kitchen, bathrooms, and bedrooms give the home uniformity.

■ The custom kitchen sink is made of the same polished soapstone as the countertops.

■ The built-ins in the upstairs study are made of the same perforated steel as the mezzanine floor.

■ The bank's night deposit box now serves as the home's mailbox.



BEFORE