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INTERVIEW WITH ELENA PHILLIPS, ELENA PHILLIPS INTERIORS | PHOTOGRAPHER JANE BEILES

Great Addition

A **SEAMLESS** extension and an **ELEGANT** aesthetic create a family's **FOREVER HOME**



This home is beautiful—what can you tell me about it? The house is an English country Tudor in Fairfield County, and I believe it was built in 1910. Previous owners had done some work on it, and the owners prior to my clients had renovated the kitchen, but nothing else had been revamped. On this project, we renovated, added onto or refreshed almost every space in the house.

left: The home's new addition offers a separate entrance through a small inner courtyard.
above: The addition (on the left) blends seamlessly with the original part of the century-old home (on the right).



“For the addition, we **MATCHED** the hipped gable rooflines and materials of the **ORIGINAL** house. Casement windows were installed throughout and painted to match the original color.”

—JAMES SCHETTINO ARCHITECTS

opposite: The airy screened porch is furnished with a settee, chairs and bar from Palecek. A Clarence House fabric covers the cushions, a Crosby Street Studio rug covers the floor, and The Urban Electric Co.'s Stamp pendants and a ceiling fan from Ann-Morris are above. The fern is from Diane James. **below:** The rear of the new pool house can be glimpsed across the property. **right:** In the addition's inner courtyard, a cafe table and chairs from Munder Skiles are set up for breakfast or a cocktail.



How did your clients find you? I had completed a project for previous clients, and that house was later for sale. These clients went to go see the house, and while they didn't end up buying it, they loved the design of it. The broker told them who I was, and they then contacted me. They found out about me from a listing, which was great!

What were your clients looking to do? The project was completed in several stages over five years. The first stage was doing the entire master suite, which included renovating the master bath and sitting room. They really wanted to do an addition to gain more space and to create a generous mudroom, a three-car garage and a workshop for the





opposite: In the main entry, a custom hand-tufted stair runner from J.D. Staron adds a touch of green to the space, and the round Art Deco mirror and Art Deco console are from Karl Kemp Antiques. Accessories include a green ceramic Christopher Spitzmiller lamp and a 19th-century ebonized chinoiserie box from 1stdibs, and a walnut hexagonal-top table from Bernd Goeckler Antiques displays books. A custom Chisholm Clean pendant from The Urban Electric Co. crowns the space, and artwork by Shahzia Sikander from the Sean Kelly Gallery is an arresting focal point. **left:** The dining room is clad in hand-painted custom Chatsworth silk panels by de Gournay, and a Stark bamboo silk area rug is underfoot. The New Traditionalists dining chairs are covered in a Schumacher velvet and pulled up to a Keith Fritz dining table. The modernist sideboard is from Karl Kemp Antiques, and the neoclassical crystal-and-bronze chandelier is from Avery & Dash. Curtains fashioned from a Schumacher silk taffeta with Samuel & Sons tape trim were made by Classic Upholstery. **below left:** Sconces from Circa Lighting frame a straw marquetry mirror from Karl Kemp Antiques. The table is dressed with table linens from Leontine Linens, wine and water glasses from Baccarat, china from Marie Daage and candlesticks from Remains. **below right:** While traveling up the stairs, a large photograph by Candida Höfer from the Sean Kelly Gallery captures the view. The modernist bronze bench is from Karl Kemp Antiques.



below: The living room's primary seating area features a green Loro Piana silk fabric and a blue Nobilis silk fabric and a blue Nobilis velvet fabric on the sofas. A Lawton Mull coffee table from 1stdibs sits in between, and a J.D. Staron hand-tufted rug grounds the space. Above the étagères from Paul Ferrante are a painting by Wolf Kahn (left) from the Miles McEnery Gallery and a photograph by Candida Höfer (right) from the Sean Kelly Gallery. The glazed strie walls are by Uriu Nuance. **right:** A cabinet from BK Antiques, set up as a bar in the living room, displays a bronze tray from Lucca Antiques. A painting by Nicky Broekhuysen from the Davidson Gallery completes the vignette.



this page: The steel-and-bronze Constellation screen from Liz O'Brien fronts the fireplace, and two Swedish birchwood stools from Evergreen Antiques are cozy perches. Sconces from Circa Lighting flank a painting by Jacob Collins from Adelson Galleries.



this spread: A pair of Paul Frankl-designed modernist side tables from Karl Kemp Antiques bookend the sofa, and Avery & Dash rock crystal lamps rest on top. The striped pillows on the blue sofa are covered in a Jasper silk, and the 19th-century Chinese vases are from Newel.









opposite: An antique brass-and-bronze Globus pendant from The Urban Electric Co. crowns the mudroom. Two walnut “X” benches from Paul Ferrante sit on either side of a chest of drawers with painted faces from The New Traditionalists, and a round “gear” mirror from Paul Marra Design hangs above. A console, also from The New Traditionalists, leads into the addition.
above left: In the library, a Malbec sofa from Hickory Chair is covered in Rose Tarlow’s Dark Chocolate mohair and topped with pillows in Claremont’s Alhambra fabric. Two Perlin bergères from David latesta sit on the other side of the James Duncan lacquered coffee table. Lighting includes CHP pendants and Allen sconces from The Urban Electric Co., and the hand-tufted area rug is from J.D. Staron. **above right:** In the powder room, a 22K gold frame custom mirror from Charles Michael Gallery is set against lacquered walls by Uriu Nuance. Urban Archaeology’s antique brass Paris sconce is paired with a brass faucet from D&D Homes.

husband, and a proper guest wing upstairs with two en suite bedrooms and a small sitting area. To do so, we reworked the kitchen area and created access to the left of the house, so there is a continual flow. This expansion also created a nice outdoor area with ample seating, which was a great addition to the property, and a courtyard with a water fountain, where the clients can have breakfast. The architect was James Schettino Architects, and what they did so beautifully was make the addition look like it’s been there forever—it really ties into the main house in such a seamless way, both inside and out. It bridged the old with the new very successfully.

What updates did you make to the original part of the house? The wood-paneled library was a ’90s mahogany room, and we completely changed it with a custom walnut. Clerestory lights are hidden up high, and we did the light fixtures and wood trusses. This room was a big

project, as the clients love books and needed space to house their collection. We did cosmetic work in the dining room, and in the living room, the bones of the room are relatively the same, but the entire fireplace elevation is new. We refreshed the outdoor porch to make it a livable space—it was just collecting dust before—and now family and friends can actually spend time out there. The octagonal family room was existing, but it was dark and heavy. The fireplace elevation in that room is new, as is the bookcase elevation to the left of it. We also renovated and added bathrooms.

Was the pool house part of this project? Yes—there was a pool but no pool house, so we built the pool house and redid the pool. We worked together to make sure the pool house looks like it has been there forever since it sits within the property. The sightline isn’t jarring to the eye at all; it’s integrated so nicely.



above: The Urban Electric Co.'s polished nickel Altamont pendants hang above the island in the kitchen. The cabinetry is by Deane, Inc., and the window treatments by Classic Upholstery were crafted from an Amanda Nisbet fabric from Holland & Sherry. **opposite top:** In the eating area, Eames wire chairs from Design Within Reach are pulled up to a Dakota table from Julian Chichester. The Elias polished nickel chandelier is from Remains, and the curtains by Classic Upholstery are made in an Amanda Nisbet fabric from Holland & Sherry. **opposite bottom:** The family room fireplace is adorned with tiles from the Rookwood Pottery Company. On top of a hand-knotted area rug from J.D. Staron, the sofas and custom swivel chairs, all from The New Traditionalists, are gathered around a custom walnut two-level coffee table from Beam Custom.

The last stage was the third-floor renovation—what did that entail?

There was an existing office, conference room, screening room, guest bedroom and a really bad kitchen up there, and the whole floor was dark mahogany. We changed the entire floor and updated the office and conference room, turned the screening room into a family-friendly puzzle, game and TV room, and refreshed the guest bedroom. There are two bathrooms up there as well, and we redid the kitchen and workspace for the employees who work for the clients.

Did you work with a design team from the beginning? It was a collaborative project from day one. The clients are lovely and very hands-on, and the architect, contractor, landscape architect and I sat down every month in the dining room. It was a great project to work on in that regard.

With all of these changes, what design aesthetic was the driving force? The clients wanted their home to feel very elegant yet comfortable, and

there was some Art Deco inspiration from all of the antiques we purchased for the living and dining rooms. They really liked the feel of a sophisticated space where they could entertain. The house is grand—the ceilings are high, the rooms are gracious—but it's also welcoming, so we were playing up that idea with the mix of antiques with the upholstery and the warmth of the colors within the palette. Blue is my client's favorite color, so a vein of blue runs throughout the entire house, and we worked in other colors like pale green, soft cream and, in some instances, a little coral. In the dining room, for example, the chairs are deep, deep blue, but the walls are a soft green, and the grays and browns in the space provide a bit of richness. We added a little pattern in rugs and in the fabrics on pillows and chairs. We also worked extensively with a wonderful art consultant, so it was a collaborative effort with the art as well. The clients are drawn to landscapes and seascapes. The yellow painting in the living room is by Wolf Kahn, and that was balanced by contemporary photography on the other side. The palette of the rooms drove the art, but the clients also knew exactly what they wanted.



“There was no **DETAIL** left untended making this home **PERFECT** for them.”

—ELENA PHILLIPS



“While they have other properties, this is their ‘HOME’ HOME,
and we made sure it fit the bill for **EVERYTHING THEY WANTED.**”

—ELENA PHILLIPS





opposite left: A Holland & Sherry wool fabric wraps the walls in the master bedroom. A Hwang Bishop blue ceramic ginger lamp sits on a walnut bedside table from The New Traditionalists. The bed linens are from Leontine Linens.

opposite right: An Avery Boardman daybed, a Danish mahogany armchair from Evergreen Antiques and a two-tier linen coffee table from Matthews & Parker furnish the master sitting room. Holland & Sherry's Huron is on the walls, and a flat-weave area rug from L&M Custom Carpets is on the floor. The chevron bouclé throw is from Rosemary Hallgarten, and the print is by Sze Tsung Nicolás Leong from the Yossi Milo Gallery.

above left: In one of the new guest bedrooms, a woven rattan table from Made Goods is seated next to a bed from Redford House. The celadon ceramic lamp is from Hwang Bishop, and the natural grasscloth wallcovering is from Sonia's Place.

above center: The en suite shower is clad in geometric and mosaic tiles from D&D Homes. A teak bench from Horne offers a perch, and the wallpaper is from Stark.

above right: The view from the guest bedroom is framed by a Roman shade valance by Classic Upholstery in a Michael Devine fabric from Studio Four. The green-and-white area rug is from J.D. Staron.



Did you have a particular launching point? The master suite was the first part of the renovation, and we started from that bedroom with the blues and pale greens, which set the tone for the rest of the palette throughout the house. One example where we strayed from blue is the library—it has various shades of green, brown and cream. The main stair runner is a green pattern, and there is a bench in the entry with a fabulous green mohair on it. Those are the only three spots in the house where we don't have blue. The house has green trim, there are so many windows, and nature is all around you on the property—it was nice to pull from nature with the green.

Where did you begin with furniture? We started fresh, and as this was a five-year project, we had plenty of time to accumulate pieces. Everything

was custom or antique. It was all sourced from the States and a little from Europe, and we made a lot of furniture when we couldn't find what we wanted. Much of the lighting is Urban Electric; the wallpaper in the dining room is de Gournay; much of the outdoor furniture is Janus et Cie. We bought the bar in the living room on a shopping trip last spring, and I love the cool piece of art above it—it looks like a painting, but it's actually composed of fine zeros and ones, and we found that in Chelsea. It was about finding little treasures like that. There was no detail left untended making this home perfect for them.

The living room looks fairly large—how did you approach this space?

There are three seating areas. I wanted to have symmetry with the





left: The new pool house features outdoor furniture from Brown Jordan. **above left:** A sisal wallcovering from Thibaut surrounds the pool house's main living space. A dining table and chairs from Kingsley Bate is set up for entertaining, and a moss planter from Mecox and topiaries from Diane James add touches of green. Pendants from Circa Lighting brighten the space when needed, and the blue-and-white area rugs are from Serena & Lily. **below:** The changing room beckons with Lucky Dive In wallpaper by Mitchell Black. Rustic wood starburst mirrors from Dovecote hang above a small bench from Made Goods.



“The design was inspired by the **ENGLISH ARTS & CRAFTS** architects, specifically C.F.A. Voysey, of the period.”

—JAMES SCHEITINO ARCHITECTS



fireplace, so we centered the primary seating area on that elevation. When you're standing at the fireplace looking toward the dining room, you have a view all the way through the dining room to the French doors that lead to the family room—that was an important focal line to capture. Another seating area, where the bar is, mimics the primary seating area. We wanted people to have the ability to look at the person playing the piano that is in the room, to see the fire and to see the front door, while still engaging with the people around them. For a large space, we needed ample seating. You have seating for at least nine people with the sofas, and with the chairs, the rooms seats fifteen, so it's generous in that sense.

How did you rework the kitchen? This is definitely the home base of the house. The clients are in here all the time, and they do cook. The kitchen originally had an enclosed banquette where the table is now. We removed

that and created that small inner courtyard with the addition, and we put a table in that interior sitting space. The clients wanted a working island without any stool seating, and the kitchen is open to a butler's pantry and a bar, which connects to the family room. We also added a huge walk-in pantry with the addition.

Heading outside, how did you ensure the pool house fit into the scheme?

We wanted to maintain the feeling of the main house by using blues and greens and accenting with turquoise. The clients entertain a lot here with birthday parties and gatherings with friends, so we put a grasscloth on the walls and used practical fabric that can easily handle wet swimsuits, so it's user- and kid-friendly. There is a series of four doors that lead to a bathroom, a shower, a changing room and a laundry room, and we included an entire kitchen elevation with drink drawers and a dishwasher.



opposite: The pool house kitchen is primed for pool parties and family gatherings. The color blue was carried over from the main house in several elements, including the dining chairs covered in a DeLany & Long fabric. **above left:** The shower is covered in navy blue penny floor tile and gray ceramic wall tile, both from D&D Homes. **above right:** A fiberglass-and-stained-glass mirror from Serena & Lily, lit by a horizontal sconce from Circa Lighting, is glimpsed in the bathroom. In the living space, a woven wicker resin chair from Serena & Lily, with cushions in a blue DeLany & Long fabric, is topped with a pillow in Schumacher's Jelly Bean fabric. The pieces of art on the wall are by Matthew Shlian from the Maxwell Davidson Gallery.

With such a big project, what pieces stand out to you the most? I love so many of the antiques we purchased; we bought some fabulous pieces for this project. I love the bar in the living room; I love the six-sided table in the entry; I love the geometry of the foyer—there's a lot going on yet it still feels calm. And in the dining room, who doesn't love a de Gournay wallpaper? It's so elegant and pretty. The client doesn't like birds, so we added butterflies and dragonflies to the design. Then the husband said he wanted a squirrel, so on one of the walls, there's one small squirrel sitting there. It's so fun what you can customize!

What is your favorite memory from this project? This is my clients' forever home. While they have other properties, this is their "home" home, and we made sure it fit the bill for everything they wanted. Having a room installed is the best feeling, and then seeing your clients walk in for the first time afterward is amazing—it sounds cliché, but it's so true. It's

always a positive and wonderful feeling when they're happy with it. Over the course of the project, having those installation days and seeing the clients' reaction was so rewarding. —**INTERVIEW BY LAUREN FETTERMAN**

Resources:

- Interior designer: Elena Phillips Interiors, 203-295-8554; elenaphillipsinteriors.com
- Architect: James Schettino Architects, New Canaan; 203-966-5552; schettinoarchitects.com
- Contractor: Country Club Homes, Wilton; 203-762-0550; countryclubhomesinc.com
- Contractor: Hobbs Care, New Canaan; 203-966-0726; hobbs-care.com
- Landscape architect/designer: Highland Design Gardens, Pound Ridge, NY; 914-764-5480; highlanddesigngardens.com
- Art advisor: Annabelle J. Verhoye, 917-685-7550; artadvisory.com