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PHOTO BY KAREN MELVIN

# HISTORIC CHARM WITH MODERN AMENITIES

By Edward S. Pell

**Four smaller rooms in a Gilded Age mansion that had been converted to apartments were combined into this elegant bed/bath suite designed by NKBA member David Heide, Allied ASID, AIA Associate, of David Heide Design Studio in Minneapolis. The project was part of an ASID showhouse and construction work was done by Stephenson Construction of St. Paul.**

The house is located on Summit Avenue in St. Paul; its Victorian-era neighborhood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built in 1893 for a prominent local attorney by famed architect Cass Gilbert, renowned for his designs for the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C., the Woolworth Building in New York City and the Minnesota State Capitol Building, among others.

It had been converted to apartments in the middle of the past century, and then reconverted to a single home in 2006. Heide took two relatively small bedrooms, a "cramped" bathroom and a porch to create an elegant suite with a spacious bath area, a sitting room and a sleeping chamber leading to the revamped porch.

"My philosophy is that each building has its own design vocabulary that a designer has to comprehend," Heide said. "When you can 'speak the language of the house,' then you can bring a more modern sensibility to the project. We tried to pay homage to the historic character of the home, while simultaneously incorporating contemporary conveniences and comforts. I'm a big believer in honoring the past while planning for the future."

The resulting master suite is the largest space in the showhouse and is valued at more than \$200,000.

"The design goal was to create a space that was at once refined and eclectic, using cues from the residence's original details as a starting point," said Heide. "New art glass throughout the suite, made by local custom artisans Monarch Studios, echoes motifs found elsewhere in the residence."

An arched art glass opening between the sleeping chamber and bath provides light to the bathroom and serves as a headboard for the custom-made bed. Lighting throughout the suite is historic, and the chandeliers and sconces were researched and restored for the project or created by Lightworks and Zachary of Minneapolis.

The new bathroom is twice the size of the original. It features a basket weave patterned Carrera marble tile floor from Rubble Tile of Minnetonka, Minnesota. Wall tile for the wainscoting is also Carrera marble from Rubble, and the wall paint is a custom color. ▶▶





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The original bathtub was refurbished and installed in a new arched alcove, with faucets and fittings from Kallista. A shower stall was added with a frameless

lavatories, faucets and fittings flanking the door. The mirrors over the lavatories front recessed medicine cabinets fabricated on site.

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clear glass double-acting pivot door on polished nickel hinges, fabricated for the project by Great Reflections of Plymouth, Minnesota. The shower has an art glass window, and the window and door casing are marble. Showerheads and fittings were also from Kallista, as are the two Michael S. Smith Town pedestal

The bathroom has a separate toilet compartment for privacy; the toilet is original with the house and was manufactured by the now defunct Ordway company.

The cabinetry and millwork were fabricated on the jobsite by Stephenson,

including radiator covers and paneling designed to match original areas of the house. The furniture for the sitting room, sleeping chamber and porch was also all fabricated onsite.

The porch is in the original location, but was completely rebuilt during the remodeling, since it was falling down into the main floor porch below it. The windows are in a different configuration from what was there. “We believe what was constructed is more in line with the original porch,” said Heide.

Before his career began, Heide had an interest in architectural history. He received a bachelor of architecture degree with an emphasis on architectural and interior design history from Drake University after studying classical



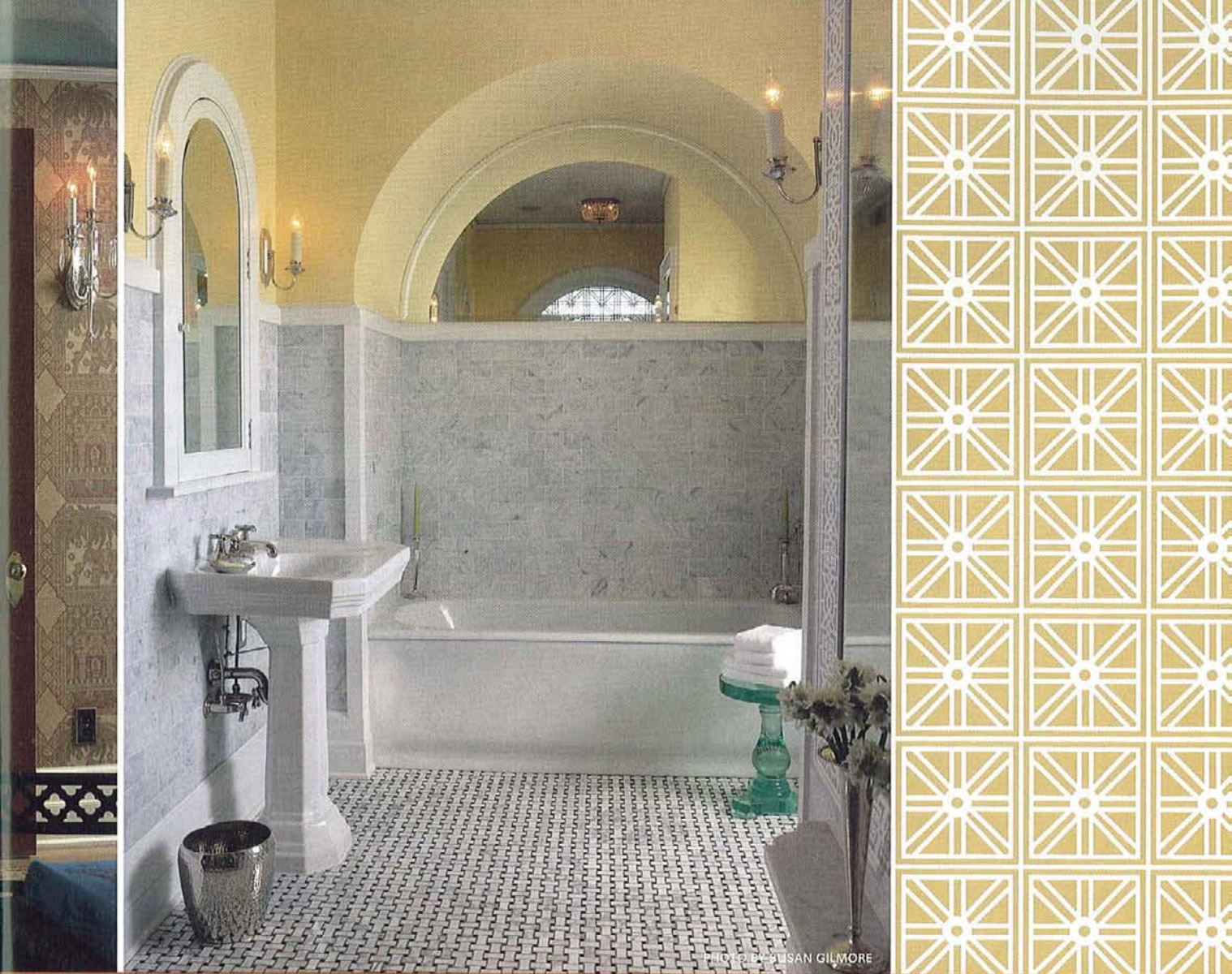


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languages at Macalester College. He performed post graduate studies at both the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. This extensive educational background has provided David with extensive knowledge of late 19th and early 20th century decorative arts, furnishings and finishes.

"I didn't finish my architecture degree because I lucked into a chance to design a house from the ground up in California in the Arts & Crafts style of Greene & Greene," said Heide. When he finished that, he embarked on decade-long work in historic preservation for MacDonald & Mack Architects of Minneapolis, working on projects for the U.S. Park Service, churches and even a lighthouse.

"I always preferred residential," Heide said, "and when I got a house I designed on a house tour, I decided to quit where I was working and start my own design studio about ten years ago. Today we have 12 people on staff, including a registered architect, and we've worked on projects in Palm Springs, Fargo, Des Moines, Detroit and other spots all around the country."

He served for five years on the Saint Paul Heritage Preservation Commission and chaired its design review committee for three years. He founded Saint Paul's Grand Avenue Design Guidelines Task Force, prompting the mayor to add him to the Neighborhood Honor Roll in 1996. Until recently, he also sat on the board of the Historic Saint Paul Foundation.

"We work mostly on referrals and try to participate in showhouses like this whenever we can," Heide said. "They're a great way to get the word out. We do both period and contemporary design and we try to cultivate a specialty niche of historically informed projects."

"We've been members of the NKBA for a couple years now and find the Association serves us well," said Heide. "I love to enter design contests." He's done well in design contests, too, winning more than 25, including the 2007 ASID Residential Kitchen Award, 1995 and 2006 Sub-Zero/Wolf Kitchen Design Awards and a 2001 National Qualified Remodeler Kitchen Design Award, among other honors. ■