

# A S P I R E DESIGN AND HOME

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## ARCHITECTURE

The home's multi-faceted outdoor space includes this pavilion with hot tub and shower.



**A REVERENT CONSIDERATION FOR AN INDIVIDUAL HOUSE IN BROOKLYN**

TEXT **THOMAS CONNORS** PHOTOGRAPHY **PAUL WARCHOL** ARCHITECT **ANDREW WILKINSON**



The substantial dormer at the top of the house is an open volume that brings natural light into the master bedroom.









**BUILDING ANEW IN AN ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOOD IS OFTEN AN EXERCISE IN ACCOMMODATION. AND BETWEEN ZONING RESTRICTIONS AND COMMUNITY CONCERNS, ARCHITECTS FREQUENTLY GET THEIR WINGS CLIPPED. BUT GRASPING THE LAY OF THE LAND AND KNOWING HOW TO NEGOTIATE IT ALLOWS SAVVY PROFESSIONALS TO CREATE BUILDINGS THAT SATISFY BOTH THE CLIENT AND THE FOLKS NEXT DOOR. CASE IN POINT: THIS STREET FRIENDLY RESIDENCE IN BROOKLYN'S HISTORIC GRAVESEND DISTRICT, DESIGNED BY NEW YORK'S ANDREW WILKINSON.**

**LEFT:** Wilkinson's discreetly layered approach is manifest in this view from the first-floor hallway through the kitchen to the family room beyond.

#### *GRAVESEND, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK*

Built for a young real estate developer and his family, the home's massing and profile were devised to meet local codes, which included a specified setback and a roof configuration that did not cut off a passing pedestrian's view of the sky. While the house will never be mistaken for one of the more conventional homes that have lined these streets for years, neither does it come across as brazen architectural statement. Its stuccoed façade projects a foursquare sobriety, while its detailing – including a compact balcony and a deep dormer – manifests a lively imagination at work. "It's a Rockette wearing a slightly different uniform," suggests Wilkinson.





**THE HOME'S RELATIVELY STRAIGHTFORWARD EXTERIOR BELIES THE FREE-FLOWING SPACES WITHIN. ALTHOUGH THE INTERIOR RIDES ON AN OPEN PLAN, WILKINSON HAS TAILORED THAT WELL-LOVED CONCEPT TO CREATE A CLEARLY PROGRAMMED ENVIRONMENT.**

The banquette-lined dining area of the kitchen is separated from the adjacent family room by a screen that ends just short of the ceiling. In the dining room, the table (solid American walnut slab with live edge) sits on an expanse of solid walnut bordered by Absolute Black granite tiles.

Utterly contemporary, the house is no white box, thanks, in part, to such details as the beamed ceiling and towering bookcases in the family room. In fact, the generous use of wood throughout does much to project a truly *domestic* character. “Modern architecture can manifest very cool,” observes Wilkinson, “but wood and wood veneers humanize spaces, creating a warmth and visual interest, adding another level of texture and pattern.”

When it came to the home’s exterior, Wilkinson had a lot to consider, beginning with the street side elevation, where floor-to-ceiling windows and doors lead to a terrace. To provide privacy, he bounded this outdoor space with a wall of tumbled bluestone from Asia, topped by a horizontal screen constructed of Ipe. “All around this house you see a direct

response to light, privacy, access,” says Wilkinson. Although the property sits on a double lot, one side is fairly close to the neighboring home, so the architect punctuated that wall with tall, narrow, frosted windows that allow plenty of natural light to filter through. “At the rear of the house, we were less concerned about neighbors being very close because we open up to our yard,” explains Wilkinson, “which is well served with terraces and entertaining spaces and the dining room has windows all around it that open to the yard.”

The Gravesend home was a particularly gratifying project for Wilkinson. “Five years ago, I started doing quite small projects with this client, improving existing properties, and to his complete credit, he recognized I was trying to do things a little bit differently,” relates Wilkinson. “He became incredibly interested in the design process and engaged with the idea of being a little more design driven, rather than just simply a utilitarian brushing things up. And one day, he said, ‘I’m going to be building my own house and I can’t think of anyone to do it with but you.’”

**ABOVE:** The spacious living room sports some serious seating – David Weeks Studio Sculpt sofa and Craig Bassam and Scott Fellows’ CB-50 Lounge chairs. **OPPOSITE:** The kitchen millwork – designed by Wilkinson Architects and fabricated by Jonathan Arnold Inc. – is sawn American walnut with charcoal grey powder coated aluminum pulls.



**“ALL AROUND THIS HOUSE YOU SEE A DIRECT RESPONSE TO LIGHT, PRIVACY, AND ACCESS,” ESTABLISHES WILKINSON.**







The elegantly restrained master bed is made of American walnut and features a bench cantilevered on a brass frame. Movable panels on the upholstered wall act as blackout curtains when closed over the windows.



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In the dining room, the architect-designed table – crafted by Birnam Wood Studio – is paired with De La Espada 'Wide Solo' dining chair purchased through FuturePerfect. The art-like treatment over the cerused white oak sideboard is Nyx wallpaper from Trove.