

H O M E



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Amazing
TRANSFORMATIONS ISSUE

Splendor on the

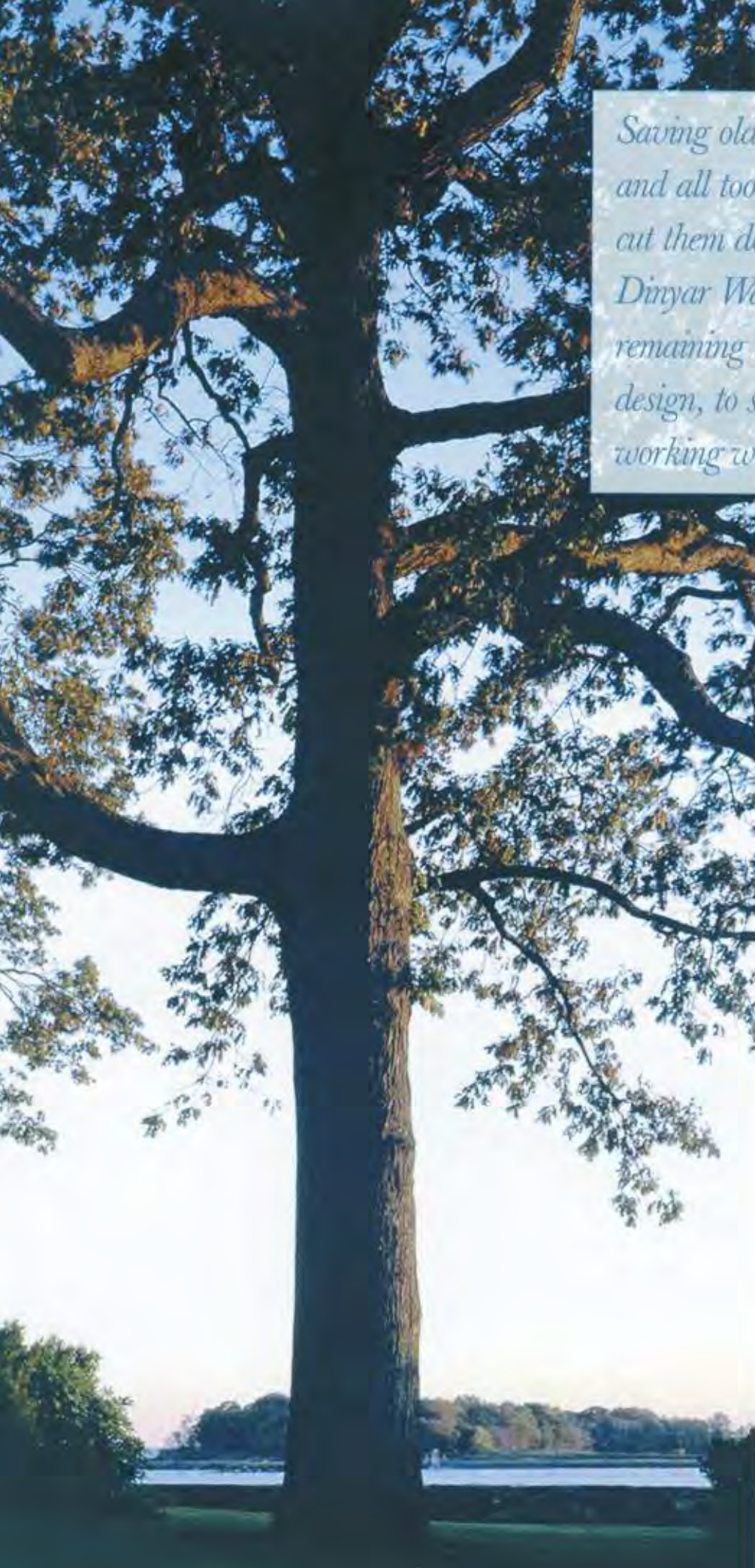
A scenic view of a body of water, likely a sound or bay, with a stone wall in the foreground and trees in the background. The sky is clear and blue. The water is calm, reflecting the sky and the surrounding landscape. The stone wall is made of large, irregular stones and runs along the edge of the water. Behind the wall, there are several large trees with green and yellowing leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. In the distance, a small pier or dock is visible on the water.

*Set amid mature oak trees, a
Queen Anne surveys the Sound*

In some rooms of this exquisite Greenwich home, you can reach out and practically touch the old trees. The mature plantings very much figure into the design and are as close as five feet away. This is nothing new for Wadia Associates, the New Canaan-based architectural firm, who had to protect the roots during the construction process and build them into the design plans in order to save them. "Many people think design is just design," says Dinyar Wadia, "but the old trees are as important as the design of the house." He adds, "A house like this without landscaping is useless."

BY SUSAN FAREWELL





Saving old trees is generally not easy and all too often the easiest route is to cut them down. It takes someone like Dinyar Wadia, who prides himself on remaining loyal to traditional classical design, to see the priceless benefits of working with them.

Wadia, who was brought up and educated in his native Bombay, moved to New Canaan after receiving a Master's degree in architecture from Columbia University. He was very drawn to the beauty and charm he found in the New England buildings throughout Fairfield County.

His unwavering commitment to particular vernaculars is apparent in every square inch of this house, which is actually a new old house. "Our objective was always to make the house feel as if it was built in the early 1800s and that it has been meticulously maintained." While many designers use distressed woods and techniques to create aged appearances in their buildings, Wadia feels this is not necessary unless one is building a log cabin or some other rustic type property. The details are what give buildings their historical look. By using fine materials and exceptional workmanship, this can very effectively be achieved.

Turning back the calendar, the house that originally stood here was built in the late 1800s, early 1900s. "The design was very poor," Wadia explains. "It did not take advantage of the [water] views." In fact, when you walked into

PREVIOUS PAGE: Set on a peninsula, this stunning new Queen Anne looks as if it has been here since the late 1800s.

THIS PAGE: Great efforts were made to save the mature oaks that surround the house including some that are within five feet of the building.

The house that stood on this waterfront property before was quite forlorn with small windows, an aging asphalt shingle roof, and dormers that were out of proportion. Here you see the transformation.

FRONT BEFORE COMPLETION



- A** Rebuild chimney above roof
- B** Add tower to include new staircase and sitting room
- C** Rebuild chimney above roof
- D** Remove asphalt shingle roof and reinforce structure to accept a heavy slate roof
- E** Remove old windows and replace them with leaded windows
- F** Add a sunroom and office above (see after picture)



FRONT AFTER COMPLETION

- G** New slate roof and custom windows. Added a tower to include staircase and sitting room
- H** New custom windows
- I** Older cedar shingles replaced with new ones. New stone work to match the existing stone work
- J** Refurbish half timbering
- K** New leaded glass windows. Removed loose mortar and repointed stone work

RIGHT: High ceilings, lots of glass and windows, finely crafted built-ins and other architectural details make this home office an especially beckoning space.

the entry, rather than see right out to the Sound, a fireplace blocked the view. There were also many small windows and the kitchen didn't even have a view of the water. On top of that, the house had dormers out of proportion and an aging asphalt shingle roof.

The present day owners wanted to maximize the view and very briefly considered building a contemporary in its place to achieve that. After some consideration however, they chose not to and instead decided they wanted a Queen Anne. The original house was extensively gutted and renovated by Wadia and his team, having to conform to extensive regulations in keeping within codes (the house is within one hundred feet of the water). Except for the living room and portions of the front façade, most of it is new construction. They worked with the existing foundation.

The house today, which sits on a peninsula just a stone's throw from the Belle Haven Yacht Club, is designed to be deliberately asymmetrical. On one end of the front of the house, there is a tower that encloses the main entrance on the first floor and a reading room on the second. The opposite end of the front façade features a projecting gable, with oriel windows set above the living room's ornately detailed leaded glass windows. A slate roof replaces the original asphalt shingle and old cedar shingles on the siding were replaced with new ones. New stonework matches the existing stonework.

All of the rooms in the house face the water and have expansive, unencumbered views. To achieve this, Wadia incorporated huge sheets of glass into the design, rather than traditional windows divided by panes. On the rear side of the house (which is the waterfront side), there are large verandas wrapping around the side offering wonderfully private nooks for dining and relaxing al fresco. The decking is all ipe hardwood, which allows it to stand up to the harshest of elements.



Previously, the interior layout did nothing to take advantage of the view and if anything, blocked it. Today, every square inch is designed with the view in mind.

REAR ELEVATION BEFORE



A Increased size of dormer to add third floor guest bedroom

B Added a breakfast room and conservatory for the bedroom



REAR ELEVATION AFTER

C New larger windows at the gym to enhance water views

D New walk out balcony at master bedroom

E New pocket doors at living room and master bedroom above. On the first floor, the pocket doors seamlessly connect the living room to the outdoors

F New window at study

G New window at library

H Increased size of dormer to add a third floor guest bedroom

I New entry hall door opens up the view to Long Island Sound

J New conservatory over breakfast room

K Added porch and new breakfast room

PHOTO: CREDIT: LUISIANA SAILOR







The details throughout the interior are exquisite. Ceilings are high and either beamed or coffered and vaulted, keeping it all very dramatic but tasteful. The wainscoting pattern is a very English pattern that is typical in Queen Anne and Georgian-style homes. All built-ins are finely crafted and constructed of rich woods.

The front entry, which opens up to a view of Long Island Sound, has ash-wood beams that have been decoratively painted on the ceiling. The floor is a very hard limestone from Algiers. So durable is it, explains Wadia, that it can be used in or outdoors. Indeed, the same stone is used in the front exterior porch, allowing it to continue through rather than be delineated with another stone. The hand-rails leading upstairs in the entrance way were custom made and painted with ten to eleven coats of hand-finished lacquer. "It looks very polished and old, but not in the sense where it has all sorts of nicks and distressed marks," he explains.

The original mantel that was in the entrance way has been moved into the living room. Made of a Vermont green marble, it was worth saving. The living room has twelve-inch walnut floors and an English wainscoting. Detailed leaded glass windows that had been in the original living room were restored and returned to the room.

The kitchen is a fabulous room, also with a far-reaching view of the Sound and areas not only to cook and eat in but to relax in. The design is very pristine and simple with stainless steel

PREVIOUS PAGE: The master bedroom, which was inspired by the owner's visit to the Doge's Palace in Venice, has a plaster vaulted and coffered ceiling and a three-arch motif with a sleeping porch. The rooms are seamlessly joined by glass pocket doors.

LEFT: Detailed leaded glass windows that had been in the original living room were restored and returned to the room. To the left, you can see part of the wainscoting, which is a very English pattern that is typical of Queen Anne and Georgian-style houses.

RIGHT: Here you see the master bedroom and its adjoining porch in daylight. The house was designed to have many nooks and crannies for reading and relaxing within sight of the water.



PHOTO CREDIT: JONATHAN WALLIN





PHOTO CREDIT: DURSTAN SAYLOR



PHOTO CREDIT: JONATHAN WILFEN

LEFT: With the use of huge sheets of glass instead of traditional windows with panes, the fabulous view is always part of the room's design.

ABOVE: A glorious place to have a meal, gazing out at the Sound. The decks are ipe hardwood, which can stand up to the harshest of elements.

countertops, white painted cabinetry and wide plank pine floors. A skylight above the island adds to its wonderful lightness, making it an especially pleasant space. The light fixtures are all nautical, styles you would find on ships. A breakfast room and sitting area with a TV and fireplace adjoin it.

One of the most exciting rooms is the master bedroom that was inspired by the owner's visit to the Doge's Palace in Venice. He [the owner] liked the idea of being right on the water, as if on a houseboat, and wanted more glass than a traditional home. Wadia was able to achieve this in the master bedroom by incorporating a three-arch motif in the room with a sleeping porch and sliding glass

pocket doors. Pocket doors downstairs as well, seamlessly connect the living room to the outdoors.

The library is a masterpiece of its own. Constructed of exquisitely-crafted walnut from floor to ceiling, it is every inch handsome. The fireplace mantel was rescued from the original house.

Whether you see it from the sea or by land, this Queen Anne--along with a carriage house with a greenhouse connected to it and a little summer cottage--deserves its magnificent setting, on the water framed between huge oak trees, forever holding its place in history.

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