

PACIFICNW

A Seaport Navigating a Sea Change

As a historically seafaring town that's also way ahead of its time,
picturesque Port Townsend hopes to grow respectfully,
responsibly and authentically offbeat

The Seattle Times
OCTOBER 6, 2019

A Capitol Hill family approaches the remodel of its classic home with an appreciative sense of stewardship



Scott and Katie worked with the team at J.A.S. Design Build — including creative director Kim Clements, project architect Nick Robertson and designer Kaitlin Tripp-Addison — to update their historic 1904 home on Capitol Hill, bringing its 20+ rooms to a more-personal scale and honoring the legacy of all the families who lived here before.

HISTORY in the REMAKING

THIS IS DEFINITELY not a story about numbers. A few key figures, though, serve quite usefully as scene-setting context:

- The majestic Bordeaux House, designed by architect William D. Kimball, was built on Capitol Hill's bygone "Millionaires' Row" in 1904 for timber baron Thomas Bordeaux, his wife and their sons. It is now 115 years old.
- This historic home encompasses 8,000 square feet, with two dozen or so rooms over five levels.
- And 150 light fixtures.
- It takes 50 cardio-hardy steps to ascend from the main-level kitchen to the tippy-top-floor media room — and that's not counting the *other* stairs down to the fabulous indoor pool, workout space and secret Speakeasy-ish room in the basement.

Here is the number that really counts: Scott and Katie, their teenagers and their portable pupster Henry are the sixth family to call this grand masterpiece home. ►





FAR LEFT: The Juliet balcony outside the sitting area on the second floor is original, says Clements. Hanging on the wall are two framed pieces that also honor the history of the home, says Scott: Its bill of sale (\$12,917.70), and a photo of the five daughters of Gordon and Fredericka Shaw, who lived here from 1935 to 1962.

LEFT: Not much was changed in the formal entry, says Scott. "Just the paint, and we moved some lights." The grand staircase, of intricately carved tiger oak, was created during a 1913 remodel.

Structurally, the 505-square-foot living room "was mostly like this," says Clements. "We added the cabinetry to anchor the room. The perimeter was intact. The doors were repaired, and all the windows replaced." In the background is a restored piano that had belonged to a previous owner.



This is their story — and it is infinitely, intentionally interconnected with all the people who have ever lived here, and all the people who ever will.

“We have met members or descendants of every family,” Katie says. “Aggie Shaw grew up here in the '30s and '40s; we met her when she was in her 90s ... A book with random things about the house is passed to each owner. Aggie had written her memories and left a copy in the house. One chapter was the parties they had, and what it was like to grow up here.”

Scott and Katie’s experience will continue the story, but in a completely revamped setting.

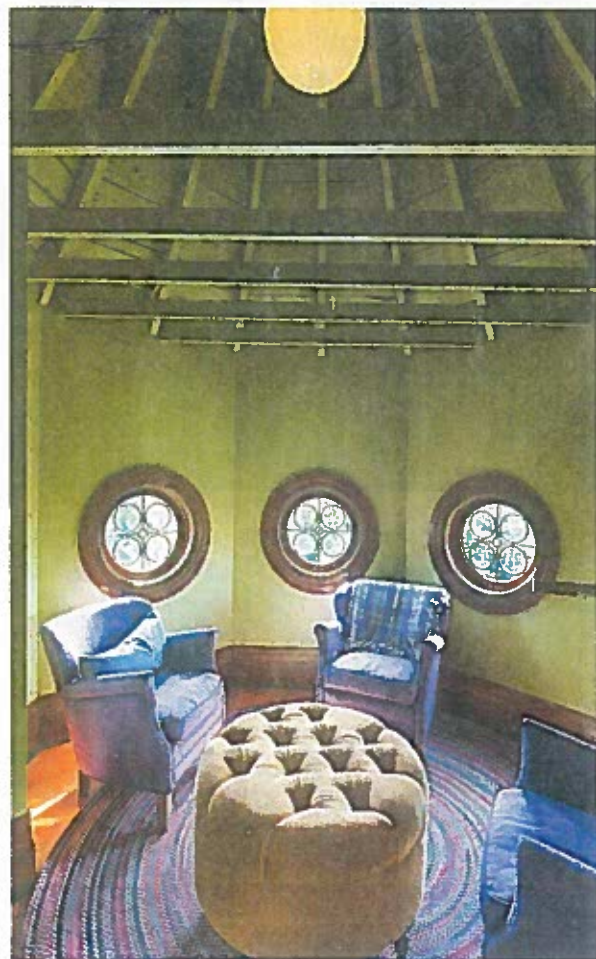
They worked with J.A.S. Design Build to thoughtfully modernize their significant home by celebrating, rather than rewriting, its legacy.

“The concept of this house is that Scott and Katie felt it was important to be good stewards — of the personal history of the house and the people who lived here,” says firm owner/creative director Kim Clements. “Part of our job was to do this in a way that’s really authentic. There’s so much love and care in this home.”

We’ve established numerically that there also is a lot of space here (with nearly 6,000 more square feet than their previous home, “It was a big leap,” Katie says), so it follows that its update also was extensive (“Everything was touched — art, textiles, furniture,” says Clements).

Yet this newly remodeled big old home does not overwhelm or intimidate. It simply welcomes. And flows. And works.

“Part of what keeps it feeling smaller is that each floor has its own flavor,” Scott says. “It goes up rather than out, so each floor feels manageable.” ▶



The hexagonal turret room had a “flat sheetrocked ceiling,” says Clements. “The windows are original; that pattern shows up again in the master bathroom.” Now a serene sitting area off the billiards room, “We think it was originally a place where you play cards and drink and smoke cigars,” says Scott.



The kitchen was “a complete redo,” says Scott, including the rebuilt, and now curved, back stairway. “The kitchen is the room that fools everyone. It’s been remodeled five or six times. People see some of these details as so authentic, they must be part of something older, but everything is new.”



Two bedrooms and a bathroom were merged into a master suite, says Clements, with an existing window seat and a newly painted fireplace. “This is one of my favorite rooms,” says Katie.

EXCEPTIONAL DAYS

October 12 - 20



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THE SEATTLE TIMES • OCTOBER 6, 2019

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The pool in the basement “was existing, and a pretty big topic of conversation,” says Clements. “The kids wanted to keep it. We thought: ‘What would Teddy Roosevelt have done? Let’s have some fun.’ We added the new ‘No Diving.’ ”

Also on every floor, contemporary design warmly caresses treasured keepsakes.

In the basement, an outmoded fuse box, moved here from upstairs, hangs outside Scott’s new hidden wine cellar. Inside are photos of original owner Bordeaux and of the Shaw family grandchildren, who have visited. “When we had them back, they were all very touched,” Scott says.

On the first floor, in the family room — now linked to the kitchen, completing a newly smooth and circuitous path through this level — Scott and Katie refurbished a sofa that had been in the house in the 1930s, which one of the Shaws’ granddaughters had. “She sold it to us for \$150,” says Katie. “There was a Christmas present in it for Aggie’s husband that had ended up wedged between the cushions. We returned the gift.”

Nearby, new built-in cabinetry partitions the elongated living room (and hides plumbing for upstairs), raising the prominence of the restored piano that anchors one end. “The Wiemans — the third family that owned the house — had the piano,” says Scott. “We met one of their daughters. She walked into the living room and saw it. We’ve engaged so much about the house. Meeting people who were connected to it really has added.”

On the next-to-the-tippy-top level, off the game room (the original billiards table, “which must have been built up here,” Scott says, has dates on it from the early 1900s): the turret room. It’s hexagonal. It’s a little surprising. It’s fantastic. Its windows are original, in the same pattern as those in the new master bathroom one level down. “Unconsciously, you experience a sense of continuity,” Scott says.

Continuity is a constant here, expressed through a purposeful, meaningful decision to honor and preserve a home and its legacy — and then entrust it, someday, to its next, seventh family.

“It’s humbling,” says Scott. “You realize you pass through a house, but the house remains. You’re just part of the history of the house — a small part.”

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