

MODERN LUXURY

INTERIORS

VOLUME 5, 2025

MODERNLUXURY.COM

RECIPES FOR STYLE:
KITCHEN & BATH INSPIRATION
TO SPLASH UP YOUR SPACES

HOUSE of IDEAS

Shea McGee Shares Her Living Laboratory

HILLTOP SANCTUARY

A historic Beacon Hill residence is given a second life to reflect
its new owner's sensibility.

By ABBY BIELAGUS
Photography By READ MCKENDREE

A favorite patterned velvet was rescued from a chaise lounge to dress the library window seat, and a banquette sits below a Picasso.







“We love mixing from different eras that still all work well together. It injects more soul and meaning and lends an enduring quality. The result feels timeless, like the homeowner has lived there for years.”

—LISA THARP

Two-thirds of Lisa Tharp’s (lisatharp.com) design projects typically involve renovation. And when walls begin to come down, her team is there to help usher in the home’s next life. The designers, the architects and the builders form one eye, a singular vision that creates a cohesive design. But every so often, a property comes along that is like a beautiful canvas just waiting to be adorned.

For this residence on Beacon Hill, originally built in 1900, the homeowner bought it already gut-renovated. It was a modernization, a freshening up, that luckily worked in tandem with the overall design goals. “Some clients want historical accuracy in the brownstones we work on, and others want something that still respects history with a nod to the past but with a more contemporary feel,” says Tharp. The renovation is thoughtful and quiet, a streamlined take on history. The home’s curved bow windows frame hilltop views from the state capitol to Back Bay, which the client loves. She wanted the inside to be calm and relaxing with a

In the dining room are 1930s French art deco chairs from 1st Dibs in Zoran Satin in Platinum by Schumacher. The art to the right of the table is Sol LeWitt, and the art over the sideboard is *Promise to Keep* by Hisako Kobayashi from Galerie D’Orsay. Opposite page: Counter stools are Holly Hunt, and the art on the counter is by David Van Vactor.

spare refinement that doesn’t skimp on comfort. She hoped to incorporate a few special pieces from a prior residence while still making a fresh start. Most importantly, the design had to sync with the client’s modernist/contemporary art collection.

The rich wood of the library and subtle hints of violet in some works by Alex Katz and Sol LeWitt inspired a soft, subtle color palette. Tharp provided input on new artwork under consideration by the client. “The homeowner is a collector. She already has an incredible collection. Still, there were a couple of places where new pieces were needed. And it was such a pleasure to consult with her to ensure everything worked,” says Tharp. “Art brings fundamental cohesion to the project and really makes each room sing.”

That collector sensibility greatly informed the furniture selection. Each was chosen for its sculptural quality to ensure the silhouettes could converse with the artwork on the walls. Like in a gallery where statues and busts speak to the paintings and photos that



The more formal living room features sofas and drapery in a calming rose quartz, complemented by art over the fireplace by Alex Katz.





surround them. A mix of eras and influences was also important. For example, dining chairs are 1930s French art deco. In the library, a contemporary settee is lit by an iconic vintage floor lamp and sits below a Picasso. “We love mixing from different eras that still all work well together. It injects more soul and meaning and lends an enduring quality. The result feels timeless, like the homeowner has lived there for years,” says Tharp.

Bringing in some of the client’s own possessions helped make the space feel more immediately familiar. Rugs were resized, and a favorite patterned velvet was rescued from a chaise longue to dress the library window seat. One challenge came in trying to repurpose an existing oversize sectional that was not an ideal fit in the living room. “She had this favorite, incredibly large sectional that was so comfortable, yet overpowered the living room. It also walled off the room from adjoining spaces. We suggested moving the sectional to the family room, where we redesigned the intended furniture layout. We then cut down, reconfigured and reupholstered the piece. It became a modular seating group, which led to a fun, unique layout. She still has her big comfy couch to lounge on, yet we were able to create a more open and elegant furniture layout in the living room. We remain grateful that she was open to repurposing a favorite piece,” says Tharp.

Cutting into a client’s beloved possession sounds like a scary endeavor. Tharp knew she could take this leap of faith because she had not only earned the homeowner’s trust, but also spoke in her same language. The client is a woman of accomplishment who appreciates good design and magnificent works of art. “She is a collector and a supporter of the arts. She has a warm and welcoming personality and an easy-going nature. There is a softness to her and a flexibility, but still a refinement and a sense of purpose. I think we were successful in having the interior design reflect who she is as a person,” says Tharp. The favorite new spot of the client’s French poodle is on the pair of curved living room sofas by French designer Jean-Louis Denoit. Even the dog has exquisite taste.

A Lorae settee from The Bright Group, finished in Marrakech fabric in Dusk Pink, peeks into the main bedroom.

Opposite page: The bed in the primary bedroom is the homeowner’s, the bench is custom, and the art is by Tara Donovan.



Design Details

Type

Penthouse

Location

Beacon Hill

Interior Design

Lisa Tharp Design
lisatharp.com

RESOURCES

1st Dibs

Various furniture
1stdibs.com

BDDW

Dining room sideboard
bddw.com

The Bright Group

Various furniture
thebrightgroup.com

Donghia

Living room floor lamp
kravet.com/donghia

Holly Hunt

Various furniture
hollyhunt.com

Lindsey Adelman

Dining room chandelier
lindseyadelman.com

Roman Thomas

Library lounge chair
romanthomas.com

South Loop Loft

Living room side table
thesouthlooploft.com

Stark Carpet

Library rug
starkcarpet.com

Studio534

Primary bedroom side table
s5boston.com

The Rug Company

Primary bedroom rug
therugcompany.com