

Perspectives

Before & After



AFTER

New Old House

A transformation so complete, the result looks older than the original.

The house never really fit into its Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, neighborhood says architect John Meyer. "It's one of the more beautiful neighborhoods in the Boston area, with lots of lovely old houses—mansions, really," he says, and this gambrel-roofed building with its lack of architectural detail seemed out of place among the august homes around it. The new homeowners thought so, too, and were eager to have Meyer spearhead its makeover. Structurally, the only real change involved opening up the top floor and raising the roof to create a spacious second story topped by a new peaked roof with a trio of dormers. The real transformation occurred in the cosmetics. Take the windows, for example. For the most part, Meyer left them in their original spots, but made them larger and outfitted them with shutters (real shutters, the architect points out, for an authentic look), eyebrows, and deep moldings for a grander appearance. The front door now offers a gracious



BEFORE

welcome, with a columned portico topped by a balcony.

Carefully considered architectural details, like custom trim and leaded windows, make all the difference, Meyer says. "When you build something that's new within the personality of an existing neighborhood, you can't do an 80 percent version," he explains. "You have to do like 115 percent, take it a little further, with details and materials that are a little finer."

The homeowners are pleased with the result, but perhaps the best reaction comes from the neighbors. "A lot of the people in the neighborhood think it's an original house," Meyer says, with well-deserved pride. | Meyer & Meyer Architects, Boston, meyerandmeyerarchitects.com

| BY PAULA M. BODAH |