

Home & Garden

In flight: Brenda Angiel Aerial Dance Company soars at the American Dance Festival. PAGE 9E

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BY ALAN LELAND

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DURHAM

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WARE, PAGE 3E



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E, PAGE 6E

come on in



Sasha and Sara Berghausen restored and renovated this house built between 1919 and 1922 on West Club Boulevard in Durham.

STAFF PHOTOS BY JOHN ROTTET

Salvaged Beauty

A Durham couple turn a dilapidated mansion into a showcase of restoration and renovation

BY ZOE VOIGT
CORRESPONDENT

DURHAM

Once upon a time, long ago, there was a grand and beautiful mansion. But the mansion was in the way of progress, so it was dismantled to make way for a big factory. Some of the grand house's parts were salvaged and reconstructed into two fine, elegant homes — one on Watts Street and the other on E Street, now Club Boulevard.

Over the years, the house on E Street fell onto hard times. It was shoddily altered and divided into apartments. Later, it was abandoned and left to rot. Just when it looked as if the dilapidated house was about to meet inevitable demolition, a young couple — Sara and Sasha Berghausen — found it and saw potential.

"When I got home, I couldn't stop thinking about the stained glass windows," Sara says. Still, the house was so awful that the couple's son Alexander took to calling it "the droopy house" because some of the rooms had distinct slopes. Plastic had been stapled to the roof to keep water out, but it eventually leaked through. Not many people could have looked beyond the crud to see the possibilities beneath, but the Berghausens were just what this old house needed.

Sara, a librarian for literature and theater studies at

Duke University, and Sasha, a project designer for Ellen Cassilly Architect Inc., shared an interest in historic preservation and architecture. The fact that the couple had renovated two previous homes didn't hurt either.

So the Berghausens scraped away the decades of neglect and decay to uncover intricate architectural details, antique features and centuries-old craftsmanship. Where the house could be restored, the couple restored it. They renovated where it could not. During the process, Sasha pieced together a history of the house that was far more fascinating than the little that was recorded in local history books.

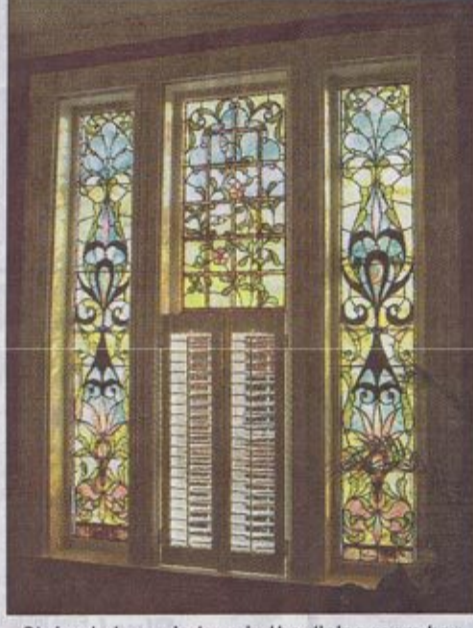
According to The Durham Architectural and Historical Inventory and city records, the old house on E

Street was built in 1923 and called the Thomas house, after E.R. Thomas, who ran a drugstore on Ninth Street. But using deed searches, historical photographs and Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (highly detailed city maps from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that were used to determine fire risk), Sasha discovered that the house was more likely built between 1919, when local plumber Luther Paschall purchased the land for \$1,500, and 1922, when he resold the property for \$11,000. Paschall was most likely the first occupant of the house because his name was listed at that address in the phone directory for Durham in 1920. Sasha has records that show Thomas bought the house later.

"Since houses are named for their first occupants, the historic register should call the home the Paschall house instead of the Thomas house," Sasha says.

Local lore has it that the house was moved to the location. But because the foundation and walls were

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Stained glass windows in the dining room bay came from the Washington Duke mansion.

PHOTO BY ZOE VOIGT FOR THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Want to show us around your home?

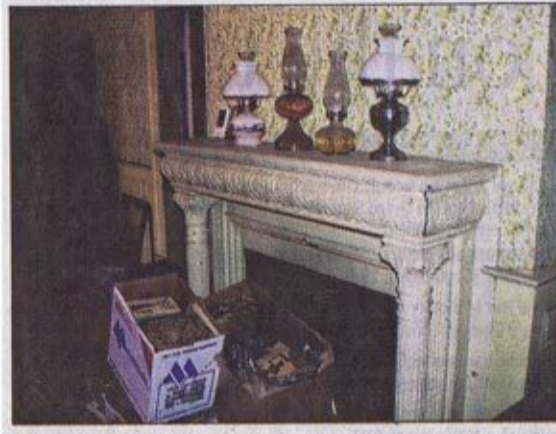
To be considered for Come On In, send photos of that special room in your home or some unique design feature that you are particularly proud of. It can be a corner of collectibles, a themed space or even a custom closet. Send photos and a short description of what makes that space in your place unique to the Home & Garden editor at homeandgarden@newsobserver.com or to 215 S. McDowell St., Raleigh, NC 27602. Be sure to include your name and daytime phone number.

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Home & Garden

THE NEWS & OBSERVER
SATURDAY, JULY 2, 2005

Beneath the ruins, the Berghausens found hand-carved millwork with intricate designs framing stained-glass windows and delicate ceramic tiles with translucent glazes surrounding the fireplaces.



Before the renovation and restoration, this fireplace mantel in the living room reflected years of neglect.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SASHA BERGHAUSEN



After paint was scraped away and the beauty of the wood and millwork revealed, the fireplace is restored to its original splendor and rightful place as a centerpiece of the room.



This fireplace is in the downstairs guest room. It has antique encaustic tiles on the hearth and Victorian ceramic relief tiles on the surround. The mantel is original to the house.



Sara and Sasha Berghausen mixed contemporary comfort with architectural restoration in their Durham home.

PHOTO BY ZOE VOIGT FOR THE NEWS & OBSERVER

RENOVATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1E

slightly off on one side. Sasha theorized that sections of the house were brought in from elsewhere and reassembled on the site. Scribbling on plaster discovered under old wallpaper appears to confirm his thinking. "Shall we build two houses?" the inscription inquires.

Sasha also learned that Paschall and his brother and business partner, John, bought lots in both neighborhoods. A "sister" house went up on Watts during the same time the Club Boulevard house was built. Sasha visited the Watts house, which still stands, to confirm his suspicions and to get clues on how his house might have looked before it was subdivided into apartments. Once he was able to visualize the whole house, it was easier to design solutions to the layout and storage issues, of which there were plenty.

Piecing it together

Not only was the house chopped up into apartments, but the original interior staircases also had been moved to the outside porch. Sasha had to figure out how to reunite the house.

"The layout of the upstairs apartments was so convoluted that I could not understand exactly how the upstairs and downstairs related to one another until I had completed measured drawings of both floors and overlaid them in the computer," he says.

The once-gorgeous solid cherry pocket doors with ornate Victorian hardware were sealed in the walls (probably to reduce the draft). Fake pine paneling covered beautiful ornate woodwork. False walls had been slapped up to create closet space for the apartments. "It was the worst quality of stuff imaginable," Sasha says.

But there were also treasures. Beneath the ruins, the Berghausens found hand-carved millwork with intricate designs

framing stained-glass windows and delicate ceramic tiles with translucent glazes surrounding the fireplaces. On the hearth were antique encaustic tiles, and the walls had ornate wainscoting. Original hardware — doorknobs, doorstops, hinges and strikeplates — and plumbing fixtures were top-of-the-line styles from the late 19th century.

"I found some of the patent information on some of the lock sets and they show the patent date was 1888," Sasha says. "What that would mean is all of that is Victorian in style."

Paschall, Sasha says, "wanted an upscale house. It was built to be fancy."

In fact, it appears much of the house's elegant touches — the stained glass, the hardware and some of the fireplaces — came from another place. Old photos show that some of the

stained glass windows came from the Washington Duke estate, also known as Fairview Mansion, which was built in 1888 on what is now Duke Street (near Fowler's Market). The mansion was demolished in 1919 to make room for an expansion of the American Tobacco Co., about the time the Paschall brothers were building their homes.

Giving birth

Work on the Berghausen house took nine months. "It was like having a third kid," Sara says.

The fact that the previous owners cut so many corners probably saved much of the house's historic appeal. "The house was a mess, but it was intact," Sasha says. "If they had renovated 30 or 40 years ago, the character of the home could have been lost."

Today, the two-story frame

house in the Watts Hospital-Hilldale neighborhood is probably very much as it would have been when it was built. Except better. The floors, mantels and wainscoting have been completely refinished. Every painted surface is fresh, and the stained glass was bowed and ready to collapse has been reset. The false paneling "walls" are gone.

The large brass light fixture in the dining room was found wrapped in paper in the basement. Originally a gas fixture, it was converted to electric. In the music room, it took 55 hours to remove the layers of paint on the walnut mantel.

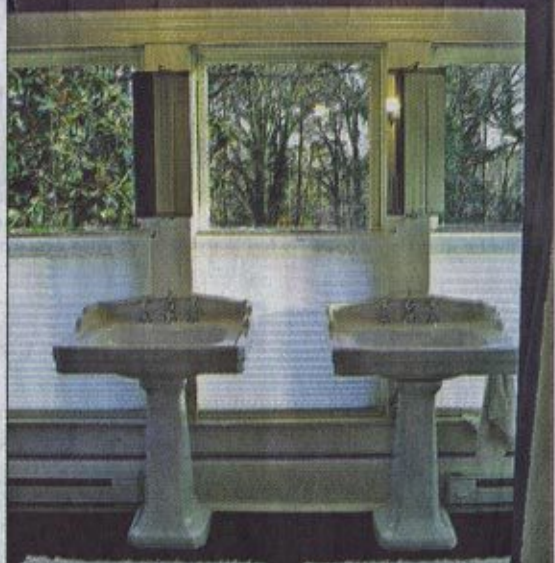
Nothing in the kitchen was salvageable, so the Berghausens gutted it and created a simple, contemporary space. Intense blue cozies up the large room, which has a 12-foot-high ceiling and light maple cabinets.

Victorian elegance abounds, but so does contemporary style. To create the master bedroom suite, an adjacent room was made into his-and-her closets and a master bath. Pedestal sinks stand in front of a wall of three-quarter height windows.

The bathroom renovation was no easy task. The plumbing and vent had to be run through the narrow molding separating the windows. Above each sink, small mirrors swivel to reveal medicine cabinets. Not only are there fabulous views, but also plenty of room in the small space for an extra-large antique metal tub.

This past spring, the Durham Preservation Society of Durham honored the Berghausens' efforts, awarding the house a Pyne Preservation Award.

Some might say this story has a fairy tale ending. The Berghausens might agree. "I can't even believe it sometimes," says Sara. "I wake up in the morning and I still can't believe that this is our house."



In the master bathroom, the mirrors over the twin sinks swivel to reveal medicine cabinets.

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