

# Charleston Mercury

## MAGAZINE

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## *From the Ashes to the Diamond*

### *10 Nassau Street*

It takes a special eye to see the potential of a great home in a hovel of mismatched cinder blocks, shutters and wood. However, North Carolina native Anne Brumbaugh drove past a dirty grey pit on Nassau Street, neglected over the course of the years and as she says, “had to have it.” Thus, she contacted Bob Fleming at Classic Remodeling began the eight-month renovation that has bettered the Charleston architectural landscape for a lifetime.

Anne and her husband Dave love the urban lifestyle of living downtown. They love walking to the local pubs, grabbing a beer and burger and walking home. Living close to a downtown elementary school, Dave loves to sit on his front porch and enjoy coffee, personally greeting parents and children as they walk to class in the mornings. They relish it, and they live for it — literally. They have altered this home to be tailor made to their ideals for happy living, which most importantly includes that urbanity. It wasn't easy, but with Fleming's help to appeal to the Board of Architectural Review (B.A.R), Historic Charleston Foundation and Preservation Society, they were approved to begin renovations with relative ease.



*Anne and David Brumbaugh toast to their elegant home in the newer portion of the residence, the kitchen.*





PHOTOGRAPH PROVIDED

*The facade of the Brumbaughs' home before they renovated it was dilapidated and needed someone to care for it and make it his own.*

The original photos of the building show that it epitomized neglect. However, when I entered the residence it epitomized a home built with love. Anne and Dave greeted me warmly, the original brick fireplace in the background, the original doorway framing them. They led me to the back of the warm home, doused in the smell of fresh coffee. The back part of the house flows effortlessly with the first, but it is not original to the structure.

Fleming explains that there has to be a hyphen, some sort of differentiating element from the original construct, the first two rooms and hallway, to what is new, the back den and kitchen. Thus, where the new begins and the old ends, the wall indents slightly by the kitchen sink looking to the streets outside. But, certain architectural standards couldn't have shaken the Brumbaughs' dreams from their foundation.

"I have always wanted to do a big historical renovation," explains Dave. Thus, finding Classic Remodeling as their point of



*The new facade of 10 Nassau Street brightens the corner and beautifies the neighborhood.*

contact was a dream come true, because they do their best to always use the preliminary elements of the home. Of course, the date of these preliminary constructs is somewhat ambiguous since city fire insurance maps show the house dating around 1890, but the catch is that the FIRST house on the lot dated to 1890. The current home is the second home, dating to 1905. Impressively, it still stands over a century later mostly in tact.

According to Fleming, the house had a lot of infill. To the layman this means that the front part of the house and the back part of the house came at separate times and were different parts from each other. Someone came in and inserted a cinderblock porch in the middle to glue together the two disjointed appendages.

The second story of the home was originally two bedrooms and a bathroom. Anne Brumbaugh wouldn't have it. She wanted her daughter Jocelyn to have a room, even if she was going off to college the year they moved in. So, Fleming accommodated her and



rightly so, because her vision was on the money. Now there are four bedrooms on the top floor and two bathrooms. Brightly colored and welcoming with an abundance of natural light, it is clear that a family has adopted a neglected home, made possible by Fleming, who has a passion for classic renovation.

When asked what the biggest challenge is in a major redo such as 10 Nassau Street, Fleming explains that it is “peeling back the onion to get to what is original.”

Today, the original elements glide along beautifully with the new introductions. The floors are of the 1905 construct, evidenced by the little piece of newspaper glued over what used to be a hole in the hopes of preserving warmth in the winter. Anne wanted to leave that memento, so Fleming’s team sanded over it, and left it as a museum relic. The spindles on the front porch railings are all original, removed, redone and reinstalled. The pocket doors are dark wood, gorgeous and from the early Edwardian era of the house. The front entryway, from frame to door, is of the original construct and old Charleston brick was salvaged to give the front steps that antique vibe. Everything is remarkably preserved straddling a gap in time with the greatest of ease.

The work is immaculate, the house is a home and the neighborhood is warm and cheery, highlighted by the heathery lavender house at the end of the street.



*The interior parlor of 10 Nassau Street exhibits the original details of the home. Gorgeous. Welcoming. Stylish.*