



Photography by Susan Gilmore

FITTING IN

NEW CONSTRUCTION HONORS THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SURROUNDING HOMES TO BLEND INTO ONE OF THE TWIN CITIES' MOST ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS.

By Ivy Gracie

When two homes on adjacent lots became available on Mount Curve Avenue two years ago, David Erotas, Budd Batterson and Tom Hendrickson of Excelsior-based Trias Development couldn't resist the opportunity to develop the site. But the Minneapolis homes were beyond repair and a teardown was imminent. Fully aware of the trauma a teardown could instill, particularly in an area with homes dating as far back as the late 1800s, the partners set out to create a development that would make sense in one of the Twin Cities' most prestigious and historically significant neighborhoods.

They enlisted the help of architect Peter MacDonald, principal of Peter Stuard MacDonald and Company in Minneapolis. "We thought Peter was the right person for the job right from the beginning," recalls Erotas, Trias principal and president of Erotas Building Corporation, which handled the construction of the project. "He lives in the neighborhood, he goes down the street from the neighborhood and he's got a good eye on this architectural style." And together they created four premium homes done in classic architectural styles that blend in with the old neighborhood while offering the latest in modern conveniences.

LEFT: A terrace on one of the Villas relies on neoclassical shapes to give it a distinctly Italian feel.

TOP RIGHT: The Tudor combines the best of a classic style with modern convenience.

ABOVE: A sweeping staircase, strategically placed columns and a circular tray ceiling add drama to a Villa home.



ABOVE: The Padian pays homage to the Italian Renaissance Revival.



ABOVE: A Villa kitchen features high-end finishes and appliances as well as ample workspace.

SHOW RESPECT

Two adjoining north-facing homes — the Villas — perch at the top of the site and take a distinctly neoclassical style featuring symmetrical lines, arches and Juliet balconies dressed in wrought-iron railings. The neighboring Padian faces east to offer a 180-degree view of Mount Curve and pays homage to the Italian Renaissance Revival in America, which occurred when Mount Curve was originally developed. The project's largest home, the Tudor, shares one limited common wall with the Padian and offers a spacious, well-lit interpretation of an old classic.

"An older home is beautiful and grand, but often it can need half a million dollars worth of work," says Erotas. "This is new construction with new technology."

But despite their state-of-the-art bones, the homes' exteriors look as comfortable in the neighborhood as their more established elders. "We made sure to be authentic with everything we did on the exterior," says Erotas. "Real clay tile roofs on the Villas; real slate roofs on the Tudor. Everything is brick or cast stone, and all our gutters and downspouts are real copper. We made sure that the exterior was appointed to the high level that the neighborhood demands."

And to make Old World living even easier, a professionally managed association handles maintenance and upkeep. "There are a lot of people who want a grand old home, but they don't want to do the maintenance," says Batterson, Trias principal and realtor partner. "This gives them that feeling with all the benefits of modernity."

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Ranging in size from 3,900 to over 4,200 finished square feet, the homes offer ample footprints for spacious and gracious living. Public spaces occupy the main floors with formal living and dining areas, and roomy gourmet kitchens and family rooms. Dramatic stairways lead to the private spaces upstairs, where each home features three bedroom suites and a library/office space. Below ground, each home offers heated tuck-under garages large enough to accommodate three

cars and still offer abundant storage; the Padian and Tudor offer additional living space as well. And each home features an elevator that serves all three floors.

Elegant appointments are standard in every home. Hardwood floors ground the public areas; crown moldings accentuate the main floor's ten-foot ceilings. Gas fireplaces with natural stone surrounds and wood mantels warm the living and family rooms. The large kitchens are equally elegant and efficient, thanks to natural stone countertops, Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances and walk-in pantries. And all units are wired for sound and feature security systems.

"People who have bought in other developments talk about being nickel-and-dimed to death with all the extras," Erotas says. "We thought we should put together a package that fits with what people expect when they come into this neighborhood. In the model home, the only upgrade is a wine room and the lighting control system. It's appointed the way it should be right from the get-go." And because only one of the homes has been finished, the other three offer the potential for individual expression with allowance schedules for all accoutrements.

ACT AS IF

Honoring the architectural character of the neighborhood is what made the project work, according to Batterson. "The best compliment we get is from people walking by who ask, 'Is this a remodel?'" he says. "Teardown has become a bad word, but if done with a real sensitivity to what the surrounding environment is, it doesn't have to be scary. It can be a great success for the neighborhood."

And the relationship is reciprocal. "We're right in the heart of a neighborhood where everyone wants to live, right in the midst of the grand homes," says Batterson. "This site cannot be duplicated. There's no place else in this area where you can find a place to build attached housing in and amongst the grand homes from 100 years ago. It just doesn't exist. That's what makes this really special."✦