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2006 Best of the Best Design
Award winners hit high-end

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Peter Feinmann, Owner
Feinmann Inc.

Upscale Design

2006 Best of the Best Design Award winners illustrate how to take advantage of the high-end market

With baby boomers continuing to fuel growth in the residential remodeling market, it's no wonder their penchant for high-end luxuries, amenities and design details have come shining through in this year's winning Best of the Best Design Awards projects. This year's award winning projects – more so than any previous year – exhibit the type of upscale flair boomers require in their homes. Large additions, luxurious kitchens and baths, high-tech basement remodels and amenity-filled outdoor living projects were the most notable trends.

The more than 180 entries – in 18 categories – were judged on four criteria: construction quality, visual appeal, effective space planning, and functionality. Kitchens dominated in number of entries, followed by additions and whole-house remodels.

Sixty two award winners emerged, including 11 Platinum Awards and one Best of the Best Award, honoring our judges' choice for the project of the year.



2006 Best of the Best Design Award Judges

Dan Griffin,
Griffin & Associates
David McNulty,
McNulty Design Group
Michael Menn,
Design Construction
Concepts

2007 Entries Being Accepted

To enter a project in our 2007 Best of the Best Design Awards program, log on to www.proremodeler.com/designawards.



Blast from the Past

Exterior renovation returns
historical home to its roots

By **Ann Matesi**
Contributing Editor

EXTERIOR

Remodeler and architect: **Feinmann Inc.**, Arlington, Mass.

Using a treasured set of original architectural plans for their century-old Victorian home as their guide, the owners of this Newton, Mass., home realized their long-held dream of returning the exterior façade of the house to its past distinctive charm and character. The end result was not only a residence that serves as a showpiece for its community, but is also more energy-efficient and low-maintenance.



Rather than create an exact copy of the original façade, the restoration process used authentic Victorian details such as brackets and panels; ribbon boards at different levels; and custom molding accents. The team paid special attention to re-establishing the correct design and visual weight for the porch and deck balustrade. *After photos: John Horner Photography*

Extensively remodeled nearly 40 years earlier, the home's clapboard siding had been covered with stucco, its outdoor porches altered, and its charming gingerbread detailing long gone. The previous owner had even replaced all of the traditional double-hung windows with flat, uninsulated, industrial-style window panels.

Client history

Over the years, Feinmann worked with the clients on several interior remodeling projects, including a recent addition to the back of their home. In that project, Feinmann updated the kitchen, enlarged the dining room and added a sunroom. "As we worked with them they expressed their strong intention of eventually restoring the home's Victorian-style exterior," says certified remodeler Peter Feinmann. "Keeping this objective in mind, the rear addition was designed to complement their future plans for the home rather than to match its current appearance."

The much-anticipated exterior renovation project that began in 2005 included the front and two side elevations. "We were fortunate that the owners had the hand-drawn plans for the home in their possession," says Feinmann, "because having the ability to refer back to the original sketches for a house this age is extremely unusual. This helped us to visualize what the old façade really looked like."

Although the sketches were a tremendous help in setting the design goals for the project, they also made it more challenging, he says. "Essentially this project turned out to be a reproduction of the theme of the home rather than an exact replication of it," Feinmann said. "We had to address the budget that we were working with, and matching all of its original specifications would have been cost-prohibitive for the client."

Protocol check

Prior to the start of the project, the remodeler had to submit the design for the proposed renovation to the local historical board for approval. "They were thrilled," says project manager Rick Cutler. "When they compared the new plans to the original ones they could hardly see any difference at all. At first they thought that we had just re-drawn them."

Recapturing the style of the front of the home was the most difficult part of the project, Cutler says. "The last remodel really destroyed the look of the home," Cutler says. "It had a Swiss chalet appearance. We had to do a fair amount of demolition just to get to the point of where we could start the restoration process."

The exterior now features a combination of materials that include natural red cedar shake shingles, custom-made brackets, porch posts, medallions, brick and natural stone. Achieving the right look for the new porch railings also



The home's low-maintenance exterior features decorative urethane millwork from Fypon and insulated simulated divided sash windows from Marvin.

proved to be a major challenge, says Feinmann.

Local homes of similar age provided a helpful reference point for the redesign. "We spent a lot of time touring the area to get ideas for what we thought would look best in terms of re-establishing the original style," says Cutler.

High-efficiency insulated windows were used to replace all of the existing ones. "Fortunately, we could see from the original drawings that the window locations had been left intact, so we were able to save a lot of time and expense by avoiding major framing changes," Feinmann says.

The remodel also addressed upgrading the home's existing insulation deficiency. Blown-in insulation was added through all the exterior walls and spray-in-place soft foam insulation was incorporated into the attic.

"One of the most remarkable things," says Cutler, "was that although this was a remodeling project that specifically addressed the exterior of the home, it had a huge impact on the livability of the interior living spaces as well."

Design/Build advantage

This type of project demonstrates the benefits of running a design/build firm. "We maintain a staff of architects and designers who work very closely with our project managers," says Feinmann. "This permits us to manage the tension between the design and construction elements of a project – the tug and pull, as I call it. Because everyone is all part of the same company, they play well together. It is the element of recognizing the collaborative effort, which is very important, that makes a project like this one work."