

ALL
ABOUT:

Architecture

Just like the best relationships start out with a solid foundation, so, too, do exceptional homes. Without good bones, there is little an interior designer or a landscape architect can do to transform a house from ordinary to extraordinary. It's up to the architect to balance concrete and steel with the native site or find breathing room in a city brownstone by envisioning floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking a courtyard. Architects are challenged with marrying exteriors and interiors to create a seamless look, anticipating how each space will need to function from the start and incorporating the right features to maximize the potential of every room. The structural details—clean lines, intricate woodworking or even a spiral staircase—are the first things to define the character of a house and some of the last things departing guests forget when they leave. Whatever the style, be it traditional or modern, a well-constructed abode should serve as a steadfast yet visionary beginning for a standout home.

Architect Jesse Hager, alongside Heather Rowell, undertook a near-total gut renovation of this Houston home, originally designed in the 1970s by well-regarded architect Frank Welch. Massive walls of Texas limestone offer an organizing presence, "breaking things up and providing thresholds and transitions," Hager explains. Landscape architect Kevin Steed used plantings with a more organic vibe to contrast the architecture's rectilinear forms.

PHOTO: NICK JOHNSON

