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Discovering Chestnut Hill: Conservancy recognizes developer Brad Bank with award for preservation excellence

Posted on February 1, 2019 (https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/2019/02/01/discovering-chestnut-hill-conservancy-recognizes-developer-brad-bank-with-award-for-preservation-excellence/), updated on June 28, 2019 (https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/2019/02/01/discovering-chestnut-hill-conservancy-recognizes-developer-brad-bank-with-award-for-preservation-excellence/) by Contributor (https://www.chestnuthilllocal.com/author/contributor/)



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View of the restored living room at 115 West Chestnut Hill Ave.

by Patricia Cove

Brad Bank has found his calling. Following stints as a lawyer, real estate agent and antique automobile restorer, he has combined his talents, and love of the "old," into a fulfilling career in discovering and restoring historically significant buildings. Bank makes it clear, that he is not into "flipping." He and his partners, Tom Mayer and Stacy Mogul, enjoy the discovery and restoration process, especially preserving and enhancing the architectural

details that are so often lost in the new construction and renovation projects of today. That is one of the main reasons that their restoration project at 115 West Chestnut Hill Ave. is one of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy's Preservation Award winners for 2018.

The 1888 Victorian residence is a gem when it comes to significant historic homes. With so many of the original exterior and interior architectural features still in place, Bank and his team went to work bringing back to life such details as the elaborately inlaid hardwood floors, intricate plaster and coffered ceilings, colorful stained-glass windows and fireplaces surrounded in Mercer tiles. Outside, the home received a new roof and a porch balustrade that was replicated in painstaking detail by a master craftsman woodworker.

The balustrade being located below an original wooden frieze accented with four-leaf clovers.

A lot of the restoration work is not even visible to the naked eye. Bank's team installed a high-efficiency and state-of-the-art direct vent gas hot water coil heating system. All knob and tube electric wiring was removed and replaced with a 200-amp service and modern wiring, taking great care to ensure that original gas fixtures now received the new electric current. With updated plumbing, an original claw-footed tub was kept in place, and new, spa-like bathrooms were furnished in state-of-the-art, but period appropriate fixtures, along with the tile and marble designs.

ank equipped the house with a new gourmet kitchen and butler's pantry, sporting a Sub-Zero refrigerator and Wolf range. The kitchen space was designed to incorporate the original oversized, multi-paned windows, allowing natural light to flood the space, highlighting the cream-recessed panel cabinetry with a white, subtly veined, "zero care" marble.

In 1985, the Chestnut Hill Conservancy undertook a community-wide inventory that identified each building within its boundaries as historically "significant" or "contributing," depending on the building's age, architect, style and contracting firm.

It was this inventory that, when submitted to the United States Department of the Interior, enabled Chestnut Hill to be designated a National Historic District.

With this honor, however, comes responsibilities. We are witness to a disturbing trend throughout Philadelphia where properties are being demolished, and lots subdivided to maximize profits without regard to materials or historic architecture, which are such character-defining features and create the historic atmosphere we all cherish. Properly restored, original architectural details that define a specific style, both inside and out, can offer more than aesthetic charm. They add significant value to the real estate as well.

The recognition and endorsement of the honor that Chestnut Hill holds, by responsible developers like Bank and his team, is why this community remains a desired location for people to live and work. By continuing to invest in the preservation and maintenance of the authentic architectural features of properties like 115 West Chestnut Hill Ave., they help make Chestnut Hill the National Historic District that it is honored to be.

Patricia Cove is Vice President for Preservation of the Chestnut Hill Conservancy.

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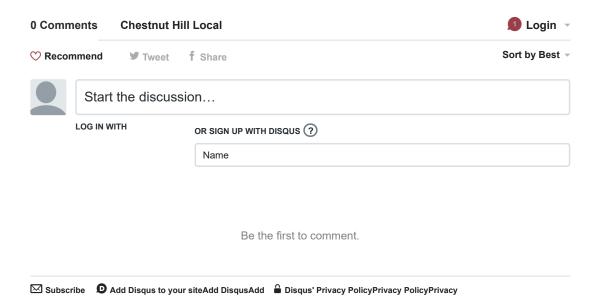
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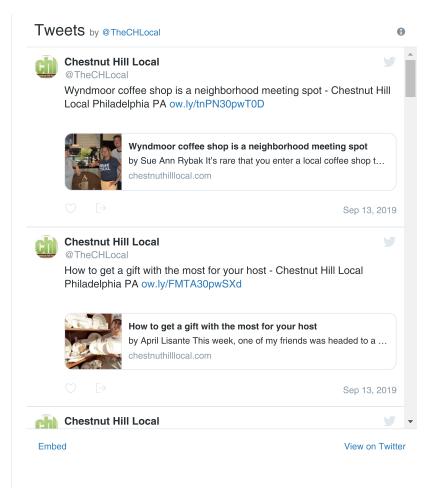
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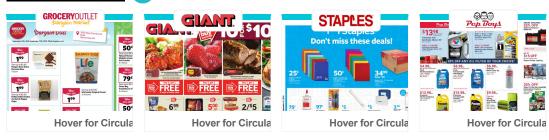
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