



INSPIRING SPACES, DESIGN DETAILS, AND FINISHING TOUCHES



The kitchen and family room occupy space in the house's rebuilt rear addition. Floating salvaged-wood shelves turn an awkward structural post into a decorative and useful feature.

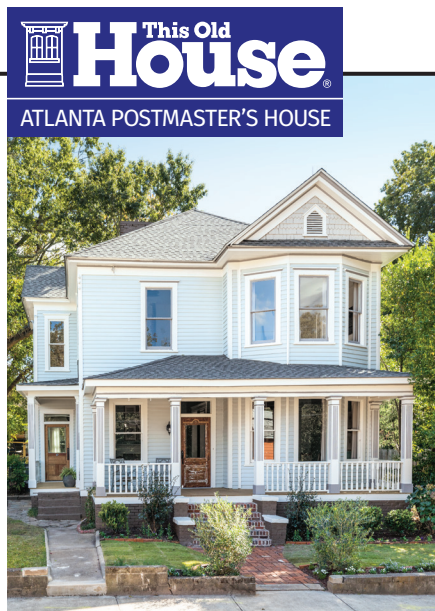
From the TOH Job Site

Old house, new vision

A young family creates spaces for the way they want to live now, while honoring the legacy of the 1890s house's original owner, a civil rights leader in the community of South Atlanta



BY NEDRA RHONE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CAMERON REYNOLDS



Some say you don't choose a house; the house chooses you. That sense of connection, and destiny, is very real for Jonathan and Kysha Hehn, proud stewards of the house built by voting-rights advocate Luther Judson Price more than a century ago. On their very first walk-through, Kysha saw past the peeling paint, rotting wood, and collapsed ceilings and had a strong intuition that the house was special, though she had yet to learn why. Once the Price history came to light, she and Jonathan knew they wanted their family to be part of preserving the house's legacy.

For the Hehns, and their children, Alivia Sage and Joia, the eight-month renovation of the 1890s house is now complete. The project brought with it treasured moments of learning about Price's history intertwined with some challenging decisions about the construction, which *This Old House* documented as part of its 44th television season.

"There were so many jigsaw pieces," says Kysha of figuring out what spaces to keep and what to reimagine. "We were able to look at all the pieces and ask ourselves, What do we actually want? It was really beautiful the way the process unfolded."

Above all the Hehns were inspired by Price's life: Born into slavery on a Georgia farm, then emancipated, he left home in his teens to attend college in Atlanta, opened a general store, and in 1889 became South Atlanta's first postmaster. He and his wife, Minnie, raised their five children in the house. Luther Judson Price died in 1936, and in the decades that followed the house became a multi-unit dwelling no longer owned by the Price family and was eventually abandoned. When the Hehns bought it, the derelict 3,000-square-foot



THESE PAGES
GRANITE COUNTERS:
Walker Zanger
FAUCET: Kohler
PAVERS: Cherokee Brick
ROOF: GAF



FAR LEFT: The renovated two-story house has a fresh coat of gray paint protecting its pine clapboards, which were scraped by hand. The brick walkway was laid with bricks salvaged from a chimney that came down. Nearly all the original windows were able to be restored.

LEFT: Jonathan and Kysha Hehn gather with Joia, 10, and Alivia Sage, 12, at the granite-topped kitchen island in the rear addition.

ABOVE: The family room is open to the main stairway, where salvaged 2x4s create a modern balustrade.

house had tacked-on rear additions, a rotting rear exterior stairway, and few original details.

The Hehns' vision was to keep the house's history on display while rebuilding what couldn't be saved. Today, the front half of the house retains the footprint and surviving features of the Price home, but builder Jerry Davis had to rebuild the rear after he found that one of the existing additions had sunk 6 inches due to wood rot. Davis, who also lives in South Atlanta, saw past the challenges: "We have done a lot of old houses, but this one was completely different because everybody knows who the house belonged to and the significance. Because of the Price legacy, the project meant that much more to me."

With the path cleared for reimagining the space in the new addition—built with two separate foundations to address site issues, including soil erosion—the Hehns could carve out the kind of family space they really wanted: an open-plan kitchen and family room with backyard-facing windows and doors. "I like that people seated at the island can look out at the backyard," Kysha



says, referring to the kitchen centerpiece. Maple base cabinets and open shelves, honed-granite countertops, and open produce bins that hark back to Price's general store echo other natural and organic elements in the house. A pair of copper-and-brass pendant lights salvaged from a ship, brass bin pulls, and a granite shelf with a brass gallery rail along the windows add a period feel.

The Hehns pay homage to the Prices in the front rooms of the house—now a dining room and a parlor—which retain their original footprint. Price-family memorabilia, including the postmaster's scale presented to them by Price's grandson, fill the walls and built-ins. With the damaged plaster repaired, Kysha approached local designers Monet Masters and Tavia Forbes to create a custom wall covering incorporating two meaningful elements: a blue-green background that echoes the color of wallpaper remnants revealed when the drop ceilings were removed, and an African motif, the *sankofa* bird, that represents learning from the past. The finished wallpaper now brightens the front entry and adjoining

ABOVE: An original front parlor serves as the dining room; the homeowners kept the ceiling joists exposed as a nod to the house's history. The wallpaper features the *sankofa* bird, which symbolizes learning from the past.

OPPOSITE: A front parlor honors Luther Price's legacy. His original postal scale, gifted by his grandson, is now displayed on the bookshelf. Portraits of Price and his wife adorn the wall.

THESE PAGES
INTERIOR DOOR HARDWARE:
Baldwin Hardware
WALLPAPER DESIGN:
Forbes Masters
WALLPAPER MANUFACTURER:
Mitchell Black

“To step into a place where we are preserving a legacy and keeping the spirit of the Price family alive has so much meaning for us.”

—KYSHA HEHN, homeowner

rooms, which also feature original fireplaces and exposed ceiling joists, serving as a reminder of the house's age and history.

The decision to preserve some imperfect elements as a connection to the past is evident upstairs as well, where a wall near the stairs showcases a swath of plaster with layers of old paint, and one of Joia's bedroom walls displays the opening where an old stovepipe once functioned. “We purposely didn't fix everything,” says Jonathan. “We love those bits of history peeking through.”

A necessary improvement for comfort and energy efficiency is the new two-zone forced-air

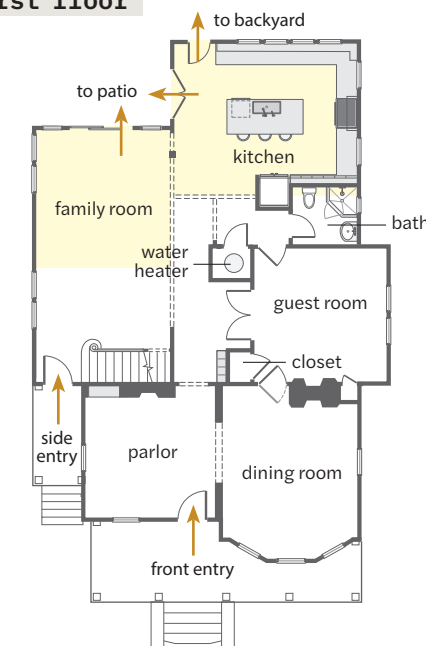
STYLING: THERESA ORY

FLOOR PLANS: IAN WOPOLE

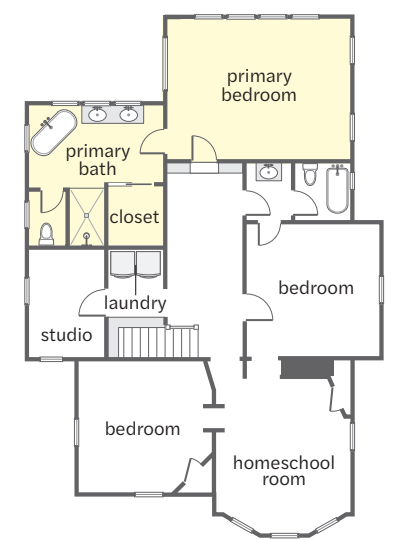
FLOOR PLANS

The front rooms of the 3,000-square-foot house retain their original footprint, with a dining room, parlor, and future guest room downstairs and two bedrooms, a homeschool room, and a studio upstairs. The rear addition replaced two previous additions that had to come down. It holds a family room and kitchen on the first floor. Three sets of doors leading out from the kitchen-family room establish a strong connection to the outdoors. The primary suite, with views of the backyard, fills out the second floor. The upstairs hallway doubles as a gathering space for the kids; an alcove off the hall has base cabinets with a washer/dryer.

first floor



second floor



scale
5'
addition



The primary bedroom has a tree house feeling, with a pine ceiling that rises 17 feet high, a chandelier made from a sun-bleached root system, and a reclaimed-maple platform bed.

“The outdoor space is a great learning environment, with everything from a drum circle and a chicken coop to an edible garden.”

—JENN NAWADA, *TOH landscape contractor*

HVAC system, which brought air-conditioning to the house for the first time. Two 3-ton heat pumps provide heating and cooling in a system that Jonathan helped install by running the flexible ductwork in the attic and basement. “The house feels generous, but there is not much mechanical space in it,” says *TOH* plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey, referencing the basement crawl space.

The family’s second-floor sanctuary includes a homeschool room: Kysha has taught the children at home for the last five years. Alivia Sage and Joia chose the bay-windowed room at the front of the house for its abundant natural light and claimed existing bedrooms adjacent to it for their own. Kysha envisions the hallway leading from their bedrooms to the primary suite as a gathering place for them to play games. The primary suite has a minimalist aesthetic. “The neutral color palette and natural materials create a calm and ethereal space,” says interior designer Theresa Ory.

Outdoors, Kysha created a learning area in the backyard, collaborating on the design with *TOH* landscape contractor Jenn Nawada. The space includes a greenhouse classroom, a shelter for chickens and rabbits, creative spaces for art and music, and a lectern carved from a tree trunk.

The house’s exterior showcases the team’s many efforts to reuse and improve, including hand scraping and patching the original pine clapboards, then painting them a soft gray that is similar to what is seen in old photographs. In front, Davis rebuilt the rotted porch, reorienting the boards front-to-back, to shed water.

While the heavy lifting of the renovation is done, Kysha says the process of restoring the home’s spirit is just beginning. She feels most at peace in the rooms that honor the Price family. “In the other portions of the house, I feel compelled to do what the space calls for. In the kitchen you prepare meals, in the bedroom you rest, but in the *sankofa* rooms, you reflect, you dream, and you are simply present.”

RIGHT: In the primary bath, the soaking tub sits at an angle to better take in views of the treetops. The vanity’s live-edge magnolia slab and woven-bamboo blinds echo the natural textures at play in the adjoining bedroom.



BELOW: The rear addition is clad in fiber-cement siding and reflects the homeowners’ desire for walls of windows and doors. The backyard serves as an outdoor classroom, which includes a music area with a drum circle and a fire pit.

