

Revival VERNACULAR

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Creating Beautiful Homes and Lasting Relationships

The Myth of *Kitchens Past*

As we approach the holidays, many of us plan to entertain based on our family's holiday traditions. Luckily for Revival many of our clients focus on their kitchens and how *"they simply can't have another Thanksgiving in this kitchen!"* Because of this frustration, we receive many requests for "traditional" kitchen renovations. While many clients are looking for kitchens that are designed in a "traditional" feel, they want anything but an old-fashioned kitchen. If you have a classic Atlanta home, even designed by one of the greats, you probably do not want the original kitchen. The kitchen was meant to be clean, efficient, and utilitarian; beautiful, luxurious, and "made for entertaining" were not part of the recipe. The differences in traditional kitchens and their modern counterparts are dramatic in both function and style. By comparing a few kitchen designs by Atlanta's well-known traditional architects, we can learn how far kitchens have evolved over the last century.

Early 20th century kitchens were meant to be service areas that were used by domestic servants. Kitchens were separated from the public areas of the home and were not embellished more than necessary. Kitchens were typically on the rear or side of the home with access to the exterior, either directly or through a small service porch. There were free-standing appliances, limited cabinet storage, and little counter space. A butler's pantry was placed between the kitchen and dining room, and there was always a storage closet. The powder room and a secondary staircase were also typically placed in this part of the house. This arrangement was remarkably consistent despite the size of the house.

The Henry Tompkins residence (1922-24) by Hentz, Reid, & Adler was a very typical arrangement for a larger home. The kitchen and other service functions are secluded to the rear, right of the home and separated from the public areas of the house. In the smaller William Parker residence (1928) by Ivey & Crook, all of the same functions were handled in a similar manner in the rear, left corner of the home. A maid or cook would have typically served the family, and the homeowners would spend little time in the kitchen.



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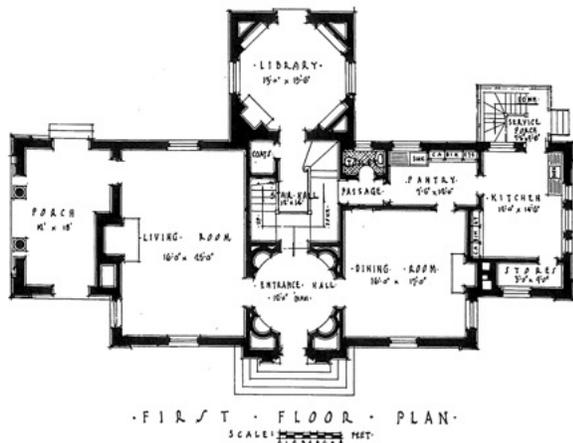
These two homes were designed and built for wealthy Buckhead families, but the kitchen and service areas of more modest, older homes differed little. Leila Ross Wilburn was the second female architect in Georgia and was very successful in publishing pattern books for builders and developers. As a female architect Wilburn was able to market her plans to women. However, even in her very modest plans, the general layout of her kitchens varied little from her male competitors.

Due to size limitations, smaller homes frequently combined small breakfast rooms with butler's pantry cabinets between the kitchen and dining room instead of having separate rooms for each function. Breakfast rooms or nooks were more common in smaller homes than in larger ones.

Clem Ford, who practiced in Atlanta from the 1930s until the 1980s, was one of the first traditional architects to experiment with different kitchen arrangements. Because he was required to design homes for families without servants, Ford understood that family life was beginning to revolve around the kitchen. He frequently placed the kitchen on the front of the house so that the cook could see the street and front yard and feel connected to the rest of the house. Ford was able to create a more modern floor plan even when using historical precedent such as the design for his Langdon Quinn residence (1973) based upon the Brush-Everard House (1717-19) in Williamsburg.

Today, kitchens are the "epicenter of American family life" according to Forbes. Homeowners want extensive furniture-like cabinet storage and acres of counter space. Living and dining rooms are abandoned for more casual entertaining centered around the kitchen. Large islands as used for eating breakfast, completing homework, and serving guests. Desks and work centers are frequently included, and more and more specific appliances are incorporated into the designs. Kitchens are no longer secluded to a corner of the house but are opened to living spaces so that the cook is not disconnected from the rest of the family or guests.

While modern kitchens likely look more "traditional" than ever, these are not the kitchens of Christmas past. Consequently, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner may be the only meals that are still eaten in many formal dining rooms. This may be a tradition that we need to reconsider.



New Revival Kitchens



The Good, The Bad *and the Ugly*: The State of Preservation in Atlanta



The Good - Mary Our Queen

The Catholic parish of Mary Our Queen in Norcross is attempting an ambitious project of preservation by relocation in moving a 100 year-old, neoclassical style church from Buffalo, NY. The parish hired Harrison Design Associates to design a new church and intended to salvage the Buffalo marble altar for their new church in Norcross; however, Father David Dyer and architect Bill Harrison developed the idea of moving the vacant church. While moving a historic building is "the preservation alternative of last resort," it is feasible and quite "green." Please visit the project's website, www.movedbygrace.com, and help support this monumental effort.



The Bad - Briarcliff Mansion

This Druid Hills mansion was designed by Charles Frazier in 1920 for Asa "Buddy" Candler and was enlarged by Frazier & Bodin in 1925. Candler was one of the principle heirs of the Coca-Cola fortune and one of Atlanta's greatest characters. This elaborate mansion and its forty-two acres housed a zoo, swimming pool, nursery, golf course, and other amenities that were enjoyed by the neighbors. The Candlers sold the property in 1948. It was purchased by Emory University in 1998 to create a multidisciplinary biotechnology development center in partnership with Georgia Tech. The mansion remains in a state of disrepair.

In 2007 the DeKalb County Historic Preservation Commission cited Emory for demolition by neglect of the Candler Mansion. Emory agreed to make the necessary repairs, but to date very little has been done. For Emory's 175th anniversary, the school's alumni magazine created 175 historical features, and "The Candler Mansion" was number five. "Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it cannot be torn down, but has fallen into disrepair and would cost untold millions to renovate. For now, it serves as the setting for scary movies and TV shows, such as a recent episode of *Vampire Diaries*."

Emory is constantly building and renovating, and it seems odd that the school would not recognize the value of this historic structure. *The Candler Mansion could definitely use a REVIVAL!*



The Ugly - Trust Company Bank

This former Trust Company branch bank at the corner of Piedmont Road and Piedmont Circle has recently been taken over by Inkaholics Tooty Parlor. Since our office is around the corner, we are hard to shock, but this paint job certainly does. This was a former Trust Company Bank branch designed by Abreu and Robeson, architects featured in the last edition of the *Vernacular*. This classic commercial building stood with its red brick and white trim for half a decade before meeting this terrible fate. A similar design still stands in a more original state on Peachtree Road at Pharr Road. It is amazing how much damage can be done with just paint.

From our Home to Yours, *Happy Holidays from Revival!*

Vernacular Terms

Gingerbreading

A gingerbread house is a common holiday tradition for many, but gingerbread trim is an architectural tradition that is rarely used today. Gingerbread trim refers to ornately carved frieze boards, scroll brackets, sawn balusters, and braced arches. This type of ornament is generally considered Victorian but was also used in the Carpenter Gothic and Stick Style of architecture that was popular from 1830 until the early 20th century. Gingerbread is sometimes used as a derogatory term to mean excessive or gaudy ornamentation.



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