

CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL ARCHITECTURE JOHN B. MURRAY



FOREWORD BY BUNNY WILLIAMS

THE MONACELLI PRESS



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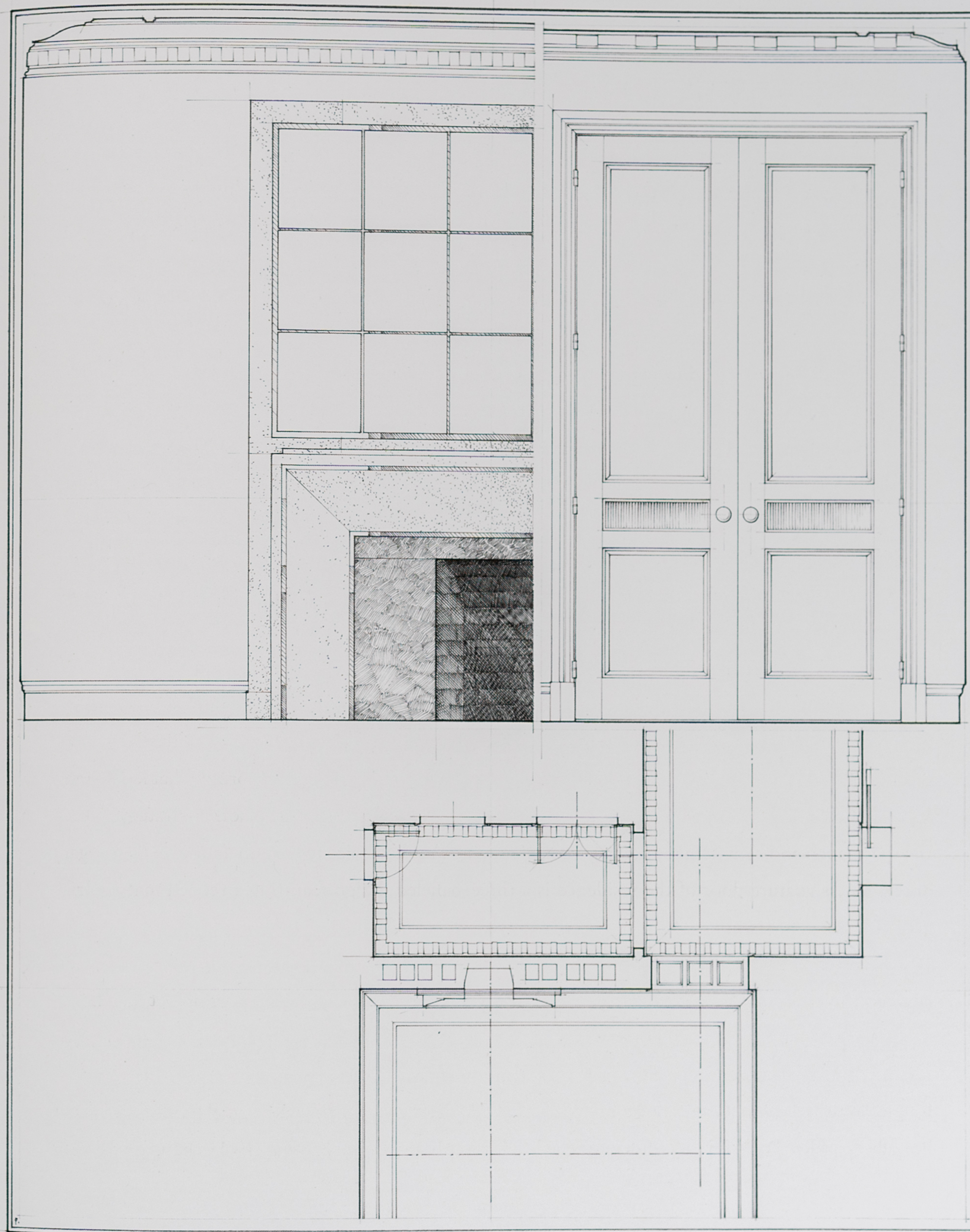
HONORING THE HEIGHT

Space, light, movement. When ceilings soar to eleven feet, the feeling of grandeur and gracious serenity is inevitable. Here the challenge was to take the approximately 2,700 square feet of Park Avenue apartment to its bare bones and reconsider the space anew. Our clients' evolving art collection was a constant source of inspiration: how and where best to view the Vik Muniz, to contemplate the John Chamberlain.

This building, designed in 1916 by J. E. R. Carpenter, acknowledged as the "father of the modern large apartment in New York," had seen various configurations, but the original footprint is still evident here. We changed the floor plan to allow a more tailored entry gallery to flow into the dining room. Cream marble flooring visually connects the gallery and dining room in one long procession. To better appreciate paintings and sculpture from various perspectives, these spatial long-view moments became a repeated theme. Find the axes, maintain the depth of space, arrange rooms so they appear to blend from one to the other, always creating views. What is that wonderful work here? There, beyond? The view from the entry gallery travels through the dining room and ends with a painting in the bedroom hall.

Honoring the extraordinary height of the rooms was another repeated program inspiration. We were invited to depart from the established cannon and invent plaster ceiling details that draw the eye up but startle in their form. The fun came in presenting our imaginative clients with different versions of a cornice detail and, in our back and forth, ending with a wide scalloped ceiling profile that looks timeless, contemporary and, most importantly, speaks to their particular aesthetic. Another strategy to keep the space open and complement the height of the rooms was the choice to custom-fabricate tall, elegant doors. The signature door of the residence is a three-paneled design featuring a reeded match-strike articulation in the middle panel.

When we excavated the space that would become the dining room, a blocked-up window was uncovered. An occasion for light, which, with our Beaux-Arts proclivities, we never pass up! At our clients' behest, we collaborated with interior designer David Kleinberg to add a jewel to the residence, a bar that provides the perfect backdrop to the view from the dining room. With honed black travertine counters, lacquer-finished cabinets with doors and shelves of Starfire glass, and polished nickel hardware, the bar literally sparkles. Pocket doors of deep-etched Silk glass, between the bar and the kitchen, are open or





needs. We created a laundry area, stripped back any fussy aesthetic and made a light, airy room with white-oak plank floors, honed Calacatta marble countertops, and reserved-in-its-simplicity cabinetry to provide generous custom-designed storage space. In the study, the custom-created cerused oak cabinetry with state-of-the-art shelf lighting now showcases the client's antique radio-and-clock collections.

Works of art, bold and ethereal, informed a program for living that majestically frames colorful and textural expression in many different forms in a way that is as highly refined as it is functional.

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: Views from the dining room to the gallery and to the living room. OVERLEAF: To attract light, the cornice is composed of angled planes. Light also inspired the design of the honed limestone chimney breast and mantel. Over the hearth two nine-paneled mirrors capture outdoor light and visually open the space. The two "curtains" of mirror slide apart to reveal the source of entertainment, a flat-screen monitor.







ABOVE: The height of each room was emphasized to create walls for showcasing art.
OPPOSITE: Simple millwork in the sitting room provides display space for works of art and amplifies the view and the light. The signature door of the residence is a three-paneled design featuring a reeded match strike articulation in the middle panel.



ABOVE: We uncovered a blocked window, and since the light was more welcome than the view, we installed a pocket screen door that matches the door to the kitchen. The dining room is now a room of connections—to the kitchen, to the bar, to the living room, to the entry. OPPOSITE: A tiny bedroom and bath became an open kitchen with Calacatta marble counters and backsplash.





PRECEDING SPREAD: The master bedroom features an inventive plaster cornice and a reeded match-strike motif in the custom cabinets. ABOVE: Her bathroom is Bianco Dolomiti marble with mirrors framed in polished nickel. OPPOSITE: A doorway connecting the cerused oak study to the living room adds a sense of flow and light.

