

dSpace Respectfully Renovates a Storied SOM- Designed Home in Chicago

The two-story residence in Old Town, originally designed in 1972, has received a modern face-lift that respects its roots

By Tate Gunnerson

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The living room of the newly designed home.

Photo: Tony Soluri Photography

Chicago is full of incredible architecture, from towering skyscrapers to modern townhouses. There's an entire school of architecture named after the city, after all. One of the most important firms in the city's architecture scene is surely Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. In addition to buildings like the Willis Tower, the firm also designed this beautiful two-story home in Old Town in 1972. Decades after it was completed, the home's current owner, Tom Kehoe, is having the interiors updated by design firm dSpace. AD PRO spoke to Kevin Toukoumidis, principal at dSpace, to learn more about the project.

What was it like to design the interiors for a home with so much history?

There were a lot of eyes on this project, so it was important to be thoughtful about the renovation. While not required, we engaged the landmarks department for its expertise.



Photo: Tony Soluri Photography

You maintained many of the original elements, most notably the two-story atrium and the steel staircase, which was inspired by a 1951 Mies van der Rohe design for the Arts Club of Chicago.

The whole house is centered around this atrium, so we wanted to preserve Bruce Graham's original design intent. We made some minor changes. On the second floor, we replaced a drywall railing with glass, opening up the views and bringing in light.

You made relatively few changes to the floor plan, but you did move the living room fireplace. Why?

We moved the fireplace to open up views to the yard. When you live in Chicago, and you're fortunate to have outdoor space, it's important to maximize the connection between interior and exterior. The fireplace is now located between two windows, and we extended the chimney to the 18-foot ceiling and clad it with Kenya Black marble, making it a strong focal point.

The marble is prominent throughout the interior, covering walls in the atrium, kitchen, and dining areas as well.

It was inspired by Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, and we felt it was fitting because of the Mies stairway. The dark black marble defines volumes, and it's easy on the eyes in such a bright space.

How would you sum up this experience?

It was a rewarding project, and we feel fortunate to have been a part of it. Our client was so appreciative of the work that he insisted that our firm throw a party at the house. More than 100 people attended, and it functioned spectacularly. The whole project was a truly amazing experience.