

The living room is a prime example of the beauty of the custom-designed interior transoms that add architectural interest throughout all the rooms. The homeowner stitched the needlepoint on the piano bench using colors selected by interior designer Claudia Beck.





CITY *Chic*

*A sophisticated palette of blues and greens turns
a neighborhood condo into a private home sweet home.*

By Dana W. Todd



Helen Aman stumbled upon Fairview Row, a set of condominiums constructed in the heart of the historic Hayes Barton neighborhood in Five Points, quite by accident. As was her custom, one day she walked to nearby shops to complete her daily errands in the neighborhood where she and her husband, Gene, lived in a single-family residence. Across the street from one of her retail stops, marketing literature about a new construction project not yet underway piqued her interest.

The project consisted of a set of three historically

respectful buildings that together contained a total of fourteen condominiums. Although the couple said they would never consider living in a condo, Fairview Row caught their attention with the way it seamlessly blended with the historical architecture of nearby homes. As empty nesters, they were looking for a simpler lifestyle but wanted to keep close to friends and favorite entertainment spots in their current neighborhood. A condo at Fairview Row fit the bill, and they purchased one before it was even under construction.

“There is no yard work at Fairview Row,” Aman says. “I can walk to the dry cleaners, the bank, post office, and our favorite



Left: The same aqua shade used throughout the home suddenly takes a warm and comforting turn in the family room when it is paired with taupe. Grasscloth wallcovering surrounds comfortable furniture including the leather chairs from Hancock & Moore. An ottoman is upholstered in Cowtan & Tout animal print. *Top:* A mirrored vanity opens up the powder room while a Thibaut wallcovering coordinates with the linen-colored quartz countertop.

restaurant, just like I have always done. It's a little community here."

Beacon Street Development, a firm that specializes in infill development and who constructed the Fairview Row project, purchased three older homes that were being used as shops on the outskirts of Hayes Barton. With the support of the neighborhood, the firm removed those homes and built three large traditional Fairview Row buildings that complement the existing architectural tone of the neighborhood.

"We found a great street and offered something that didn't exist," Jim Wiley says, president of Beacon Street. "We designed Fairview Row as if we were designing a single-family home, not an

abbreviated version of one."

Unlike larger metropolitan areas, Raleigh was built as a planned community with a small downtown and one inner ring of suburban residences. Dense housing complexes, such as Fairview Row, were never planned or built. However, with Raleigh's current urban growth, transitional housing such as condominiums is attractive to those who wish for a more pedestrian lifestyle and daily community engagement on the street with neighbors.

Even though the Aman family never planned to live in a condo, the historic charm of a community of like-minded neighbors living in proximity, along with the extra conveniences like designated off-street parking, central elevator, climate-controlled storage spaces, and security appealed to them. And since Beacon Street Development engineered the buildings with commercial-grade concrete and



steel, there is as much privacy and serenity as in a detached single-family home.

Since the homeowners purchased the Fairview Row condo while it was still under construction, their interior designer, Claudia Beck of Claudia Beck Interiors, was able to customize the space for how the family lives, removing walls to allow an open flow suitable for entertaining. She scaled back the size of the guest bedroom and added the square footage to the living room. The master bathroom features his-and-hers sinks with a walk-in shower between them. By rearranging spaces, Beck designed a home in which the family feels the coziness of a

single-family dwelling while maintaining the Aman's mandate of a non-condo look or feel.

As a starting point for the interior design, Beck set the tone for a restful environment by choosing a color palette of aqua, mineral green, and cream, which she used throughout the space to unify the rooms. She added a touch of the homeowners' personality by integrating Aman's needlepoint artistry into several rooms, even to the point of shopping and choosing the embroidery yarn in the correct colorways for the piano bench in the living room and pillows on the den sofa. The rooms are traditional but light and bright as the homeowners requested.



“The color palette is one of the most important parts of this design,” Beck says. “Also important are the inclusion of beautiful fabrics and the proper proportion, balance, and scale in every room.”

“My favorite room is the living room, which boasts a French fireplace and white upholstery punctuated by aqua and green silk fabrics. A beautiful silver leaf Friedman Brothers mirror over the mantle hangs between two specially commissioned works of art.”

Coastal artwork is reminiscent of the homeowners’ love of water, and the coastal theme is represented in paintings

Top Left: Custom-designed interior transom windows throughout the condo mimic the exterior transoms on the building. The wallcovering is a Scalamandre damask, and the dining chairs are upholstered in a Brunschwig & Fils aqua stripe silk. Sunbrella fabric on the side chairs is just right for the grandchildren.

Top Right: The kitchen is highlighted by a granite island with a decorative ogee edge and custom corner corbels.

Bottom Right: A sisal and jute chevron carpet pattern is a practical addition to the sunroom. Aqua and white ticking fabric covers the sofa and two club chairs. Remote-controlled shades disappear behind mock fabric valances when not in use but block the rays during the warmer months.



Taking square footage from a guest bedroom elongated the living room. Three windows open onto the terrace for fresh air.





Top: Coastal artwork in the master bedroom creates a restful reprieve. A single Schumacher linen damask fabric is used throughout the room and on the bed, which is flanked by two French chests topped with marble.

Bottom: Helen Aman's side of the master bathroom is accented with custom drapery made from Schumacher Coin Silk Plaid and a Visual Comfort crystal chandelier and coordinating sconces.

throughout the residence. It is a happy reminder of the couple's upbringing on the eastern North Carolina coast and is a subject that meshes well with the aqua and light green color scheme.

"The colors were new to me, but I was ready to go for it," Aman says. "In the past, I have always used traditional reds and greens. The pastels in this home are restful yet upbeat. I don't care for the darkness. There are no dark areas in this house."

The open layout and colors make this a perfect home for entertaining, which the Amans do frequently. They are able to invite those friends who make up their community – the ones they see each day walking the neighborhood streets, just steps outside their home sweet home. ♦

