

The entablature around the porte-cochere mimics the trim on the 1865 portion of the house. The decorative brackets, which would have been out of proportion on the smaller structure, were not copied.

A cove along the base of the ceiling provides a place for subtle up lighting.



The columns are made of 4-by-4-inch lumber that is wrapped and trimmed with cedar.



Granite piers, crafted by stonemason Bruce Johnson of Gloucester, form a sturdy base for the structure.



The large lantern hangs like a chandelier from the barrel-vaulted ceiling.

Cobblestone pavers give the porte-cochere historical ambience.

Built-in benches make the space seem more like an outdoor room. They provide a place for waiting passengers to sit and can be handy spots to set packages when unloading a vehicle.

The barrel-vaulted ceiling is finished in pine beadboard similar to that on the ceiling of the existing porch.

DESIGNING

Under Cover

THE WHITE HOUSE AND BUCKINGHAM PALACE HAVE PORTE-COCHERES. YOU CAN TOO. **BY GAIL RAVGIALA**

A simple problem begot an elegant solution when architect Richard Bernstein's client asked for a place to park her car that would shield her from rain and snow as she hauled groceries into her historic home. There is a working horse barn some 200 yards from the house, and her husband has made room to park his vehicle there, but, she says, "my car never made it that far."

The answer was a porte-cochere. Literally "the door for carriages," in the day of the horse-drawn vehicle this practical embellishment to grand public buildings and stately homes (Buckingham Palace and the White House come to mind) allowed passengers to make their

way from carriage to building under protective cover. Today, it works just as effectively for the family sedan.

The new construction had to be an aesthetic complement to the house, which was built in 1765 and substantially expanded in 1865.

"I realized we were creating a unique exterior room," says Bernstein. Granite piers, crafted by Gloucester stonemason Bruce Johnson, form a base for columns that support the slate roof. A graceful vaulted ceiling is accentuated by lighting in a cove at the ceiling base, and an imposing bronze lantern hangs like a grand chandelier.

To bring a sense of intimacy, Bernstein had two wooden benches built between the piers.

S+H Construction of Cambridge executed Bernstein's plan and won the 2006 Eastern Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry's Contractor of the Year Silver Award for Exterior Renovation for the project.

"The whole thing just works perfectly," says the homeowner. "The space is covered, and the lights come on when you pull up at night. Now my car has its own little place." Best of all, she says, "people say it looks as if it has always been here."

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