

CWB Architects connects a reconfigured Carroll Gardens brownstone to views of its garden and the Manhattan skyline.



The side of a wood slat wall faces the front door and serves as an entry drop zone as well as containing a built in coat closet.

The living floor of the apartment is designed as a loft-like space with the kitchen in the center, dining area at the front, and a living room at the back. A powder room and stairs down to the lower level are concealed in the other end of the slat wall.

As part of the in-demand area known as Brownstone Brooklyn, Carroll Gardens' tree-lined blocks and parks have made it one of the most attractive family neighborhoods in recent decades. On Carroll Gardens' oldest streets, rowhouses are set back from the street to create larger gardens in front, a decision made in 1846 by surveyor and developer Richard Butt that gives the neighborhood its unique character.

A young couple with two children were thrilled to find a brownstone on one of these historic blocks at nearly half the price of those nearby, because it required significant work to improve its failing building structure and systems. The home had been divided into three apartments above a duplex, and the couple quickly realized they could offset the cost of purchase by renting out the upper apartments while keeping the duplex for themselves.

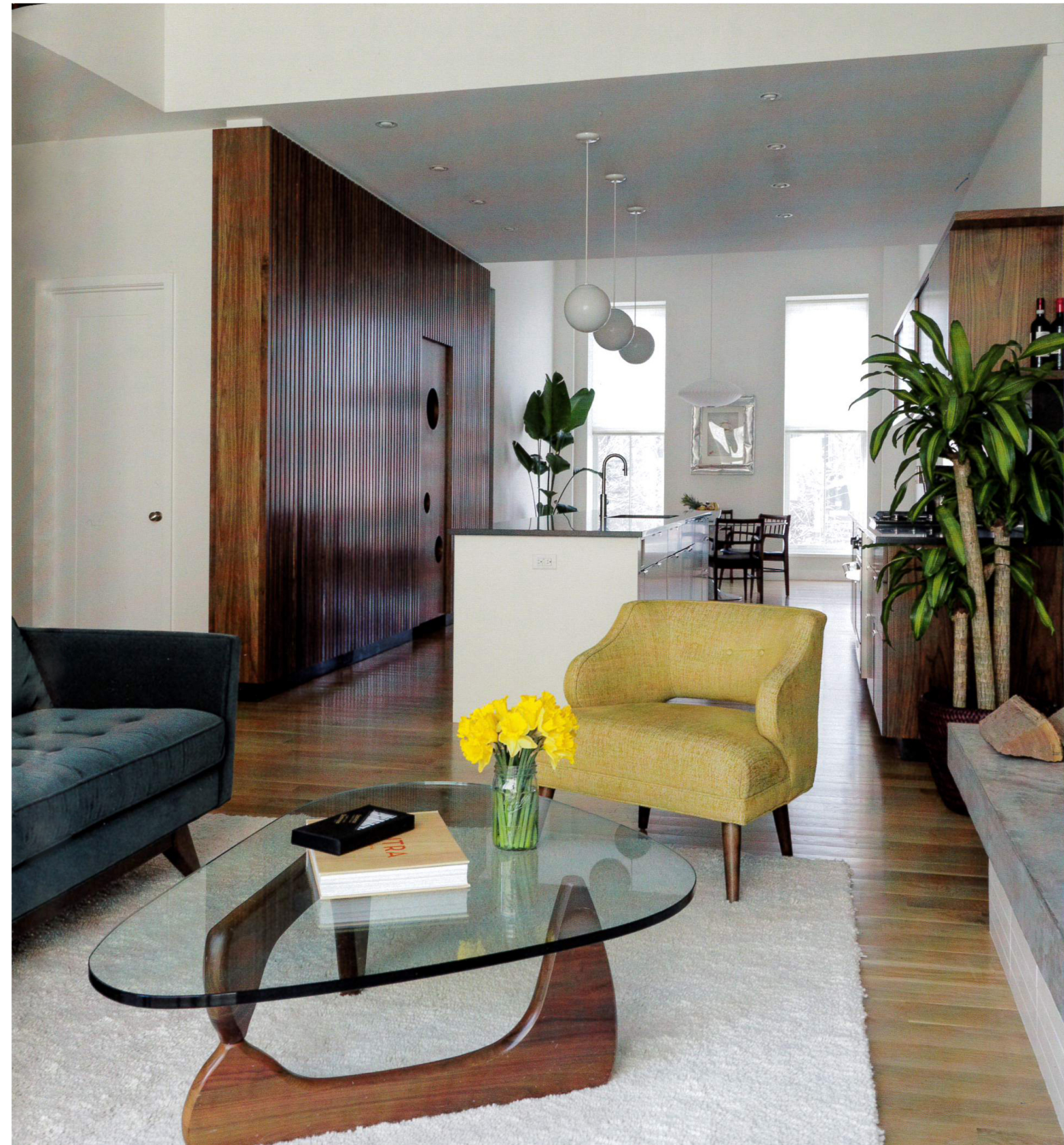
The owners hired CWB Architects the moment they saw the clean Scandinavian-inflected design of firm partner Brendan Coburn's Brooklyn brownstone. Their ideal home would be an uncluttered sanctuary with access to the outdoors.

In the duplex, the clients wanted to create a visual connection between the living spaces and the small back garden and large verdant front yard. The main floor has an open plan that flows from living room to kitchen to dining area with fixed, modern elements that define each of the public spaces. The garden level below contains all of the private bedroom and bathroom spaces. The services are on the cellar level, including a playroom and laundry, complete with a laundry chute from the garden floor.

The Mid-Century Modern-inspired décor throughout is muted and graceful, favoring walnut woodwork complemented by minimal furniture pieces. Nothing stands in the way of light or the sense of warm hospitality.

To create desirable rental spaces, CWB transformed the upper apartments into two bedroom, two bath floor-through units. They also turned the rooftop into a deck, shared with the apartment tenants, with breathtaking views of the city. No matter how far into the boroughs people move, they still want to see the iconic Manhattan skyline.

With increasing numbers of young creative people and new businesses moving in, 21st-century upstart Brooklyn is moving out from under the island's shadow and has earned its reputation for off-the-charts cool.





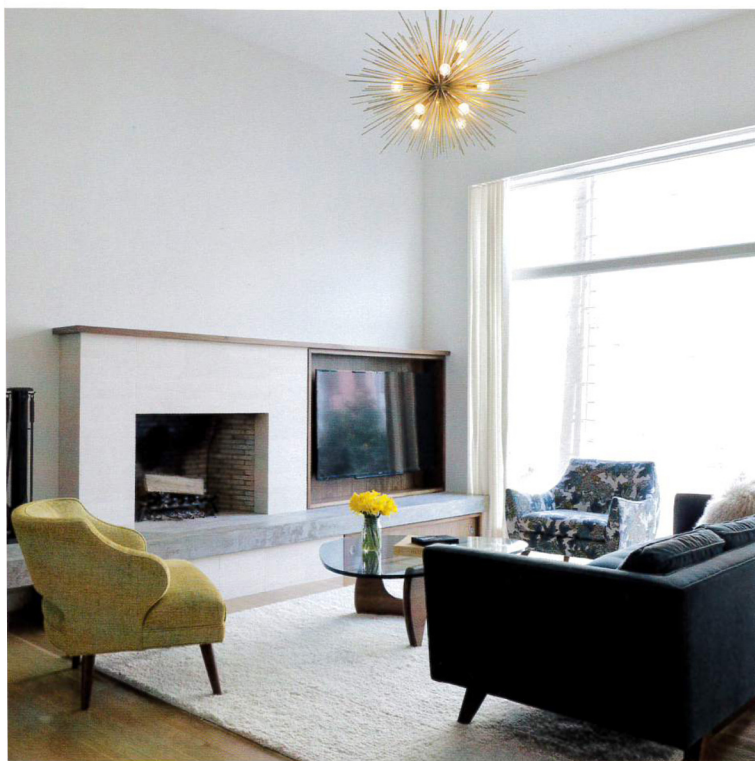
The dining area is minimalist. Three paintings of fruit in strong monochromatic colors stand out against the white walls and a round, white table.

As part of the facade renovation, CWB restored the windows to their full height to let in the maximum amount of natural light. Gardens front and back provide a welcome visual connection to the landscape.



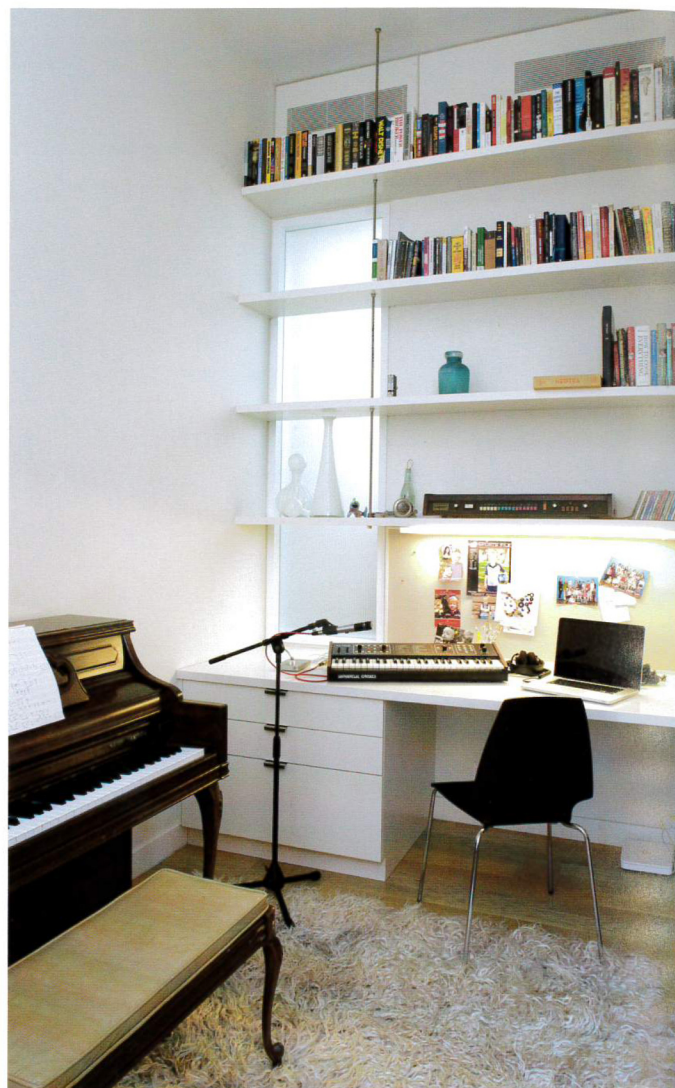
The floor-through parlor level uses varying volumes of space to maintain a modern, open plan from end to end that is inviting rather than cavernous. A lower ceiling height at the center conceals mechanical services and creates intimacy at the kitchen while higher ceilings at the front and back create loftier living and dining areas.

The slat wall faces the cooking range and helps reinforce the division of space while concealing a pantry and powder room.



A huge window in the sitting room looks over the back garden. An iron staircase links the first floor with the garden, creating an additional connection between the outside and inside.

OVERLEAF: Raised planter beds surround the back garden's circular entertaining area. Shrubs, including Japanese maple and laurel provide shade, with edging plants such as heuchera and euonymus give subtly contrasting color.

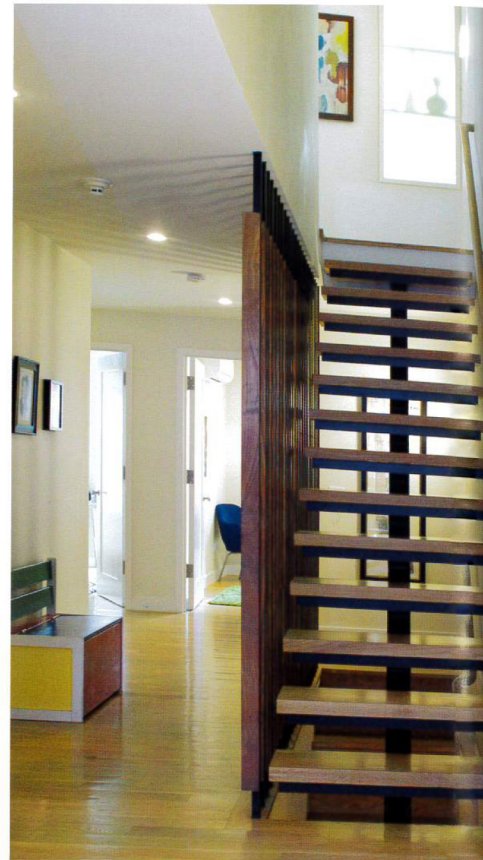


One of the requirements of the design was for a studio, where the husband, who is a musician and music producer, could work. This was created by taking a portion of the first floor and separating it off from the sitting room. The room can be closed off when necessary.

With its open risers and steel and wood slat handrail, the modern stair comprises half of duplex's wood-clad functional core. The frosted window at the top brings light into the stair hall from the studio.



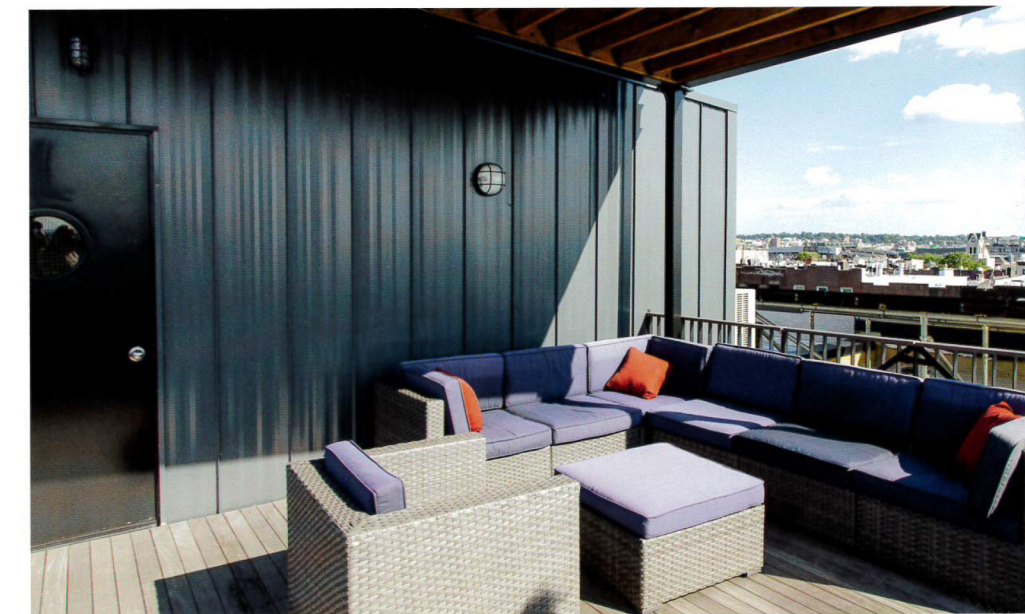




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The ground floor contains the family bedrooms. The simplicity of the first floor is continued here, with understated tones and colors.





On the top floor is a deck shared with the tenants of the two intervening floors. The client brought up comfortable all weather chairs and a sofas. The parapets had to be restored, and the shed houses the mechanicals. Inspirationally, they decided to install solar panels, and were able to cover the roofs of the mechanicals shed as well as build a separate array.