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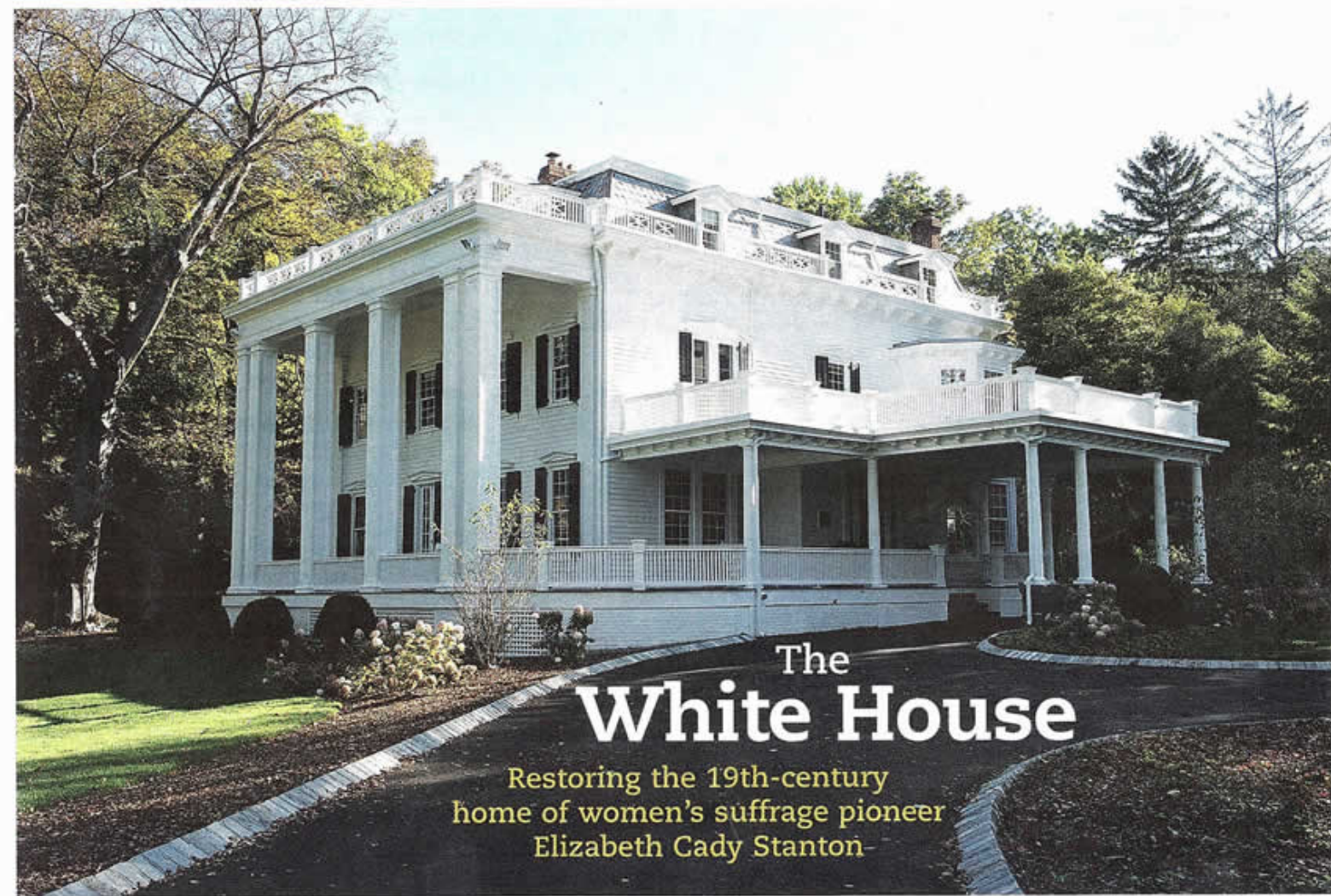
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The White House

Restoring the 19th-century
home of women's suffrage pioneer
Elizabeth Cady Stanton

inside



+ DESIGN

CULTURAL FUSION
Italian-style art glass by
a Japanese master,
at Pier Antiques Show.

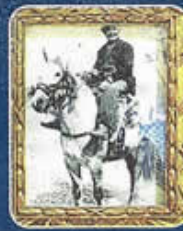
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INVENTORY BLOWOUT
Lennar launches end-
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Interior designer creatively
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home **improvement**

PHOTOS BY EUGENE PARCISEPE JR.



The architecture of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton house in Tenafly is the Second Empire style, one inspired by the mid-nineteenth-century revival in France of a 17th-century French Renaissance mode. Elements of this style are the mansard roof, with surfaces enlivened by patterned, colorful slates. This home's large portico was added in the early 20th century.

Landscape designer Paul Keyes is hoping the 150-year-old beech tree, left, survives. "We saved it, but it still needs a lot of TLC," he says.

The White House

Restoration of the 19th-century home of women's suffrage pioneer Elizabeth Cady Stanton

"Women are citizens of the United States, entitled to all the rights, privileges and immunities guaranteed to citizens by the national constitution."

BY ANTOINETTE RAINONE

Known as "the intellectual force in the emancipation of American women," Elizabeth Cady Stanton penned the above words more than 100 years ago in her Tenafly white-frame house — in the dining room, to be exact — where she lived with her husband and seven children from 1868 to 1887. In fact, she spent nine years here writing "History of Woman(sic) Suffrage" with fellow suffragists Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage.

Cady Stanton's entire life's work focused on securing women's rights — especially the right to vote. In 1880, she herself

made the effort to vote at the Tenafly polls as a registered Republican — to no avail. When she died in 1902 at age 86, it would be another 18 years before the United States granted women that right.

But Cady Stanton's groundbreaking work — accomplished within the walls of this prominent Second-Empire house — proved pivotal to that decision, finally granted in 1920.

With this kind of history, it's no wonder the house was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1975, a status that protects the house from ever being demolished.

Current homeowner Katie Kahn admits she

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The large porch was completely rebuilt by Van-Go Contracting in Bergenfield. Owner Peter Georgoutsas custom-milled pediments over the windows and recreated the porch with mahogany wood.



Georgoutsas also custom-milled balusters, posts and rails — all painstakingly done in his Bergenfield shop — to replicate the originals.

The White House



These two granite stones were unearthed during excavation. History buffs say "Grindelwald" is the name Cady Stanton gave to her house. Paul Keyes is designing two large stone piers in which he will incorporate these stones. They will be placed at the entrance of the driveway.

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did not fully appreciate the unique heritage of the house when her parents first bought it in 1980.

"When we moved in, I was preoccupied with high school, then left for college soon after, so I didn't really pay attention to our home's historic past," says Kahn. "Ironically, I attended Hobart College in Seneca Falls, [N.Y.] which just so happens to be the very town Cady Stanton moved to after leaving Tenafly. While up there, I toured her house — also a National Historic Landmark that is open to the public. It finally hit me how cool it was that I actually lived in her other house!"

Years passed, and Katie graduated from college and later married. In 2001, Katie and her husband Erik bought the house from her parents, where they now raise their three young children.

"Our children are excited to live here," says Kahn. "The first time they saw a photo of our house hanging in the mayor's office, they said, 'Wow, that's our house!' The two older ones understand someone important once lived here. They're proud to be a part of history."

With this same sense of pride, the Kahn's embarked on a full exterior restoration of their historic home, beginning last January. They hired Peter Georgoutsas, owner of Van-Go Contracting in Bergenfield, to restore and rebuild, and Paul Keyes, principal of Paul Keyes Associates in Tenafly, to design the landscape. They also consulted with Bill Saunders, president of the Historic Preservation Commission in Tenafly, for permits needed because the home is a National Landmark, as well as advice



on the home's historic elements.

"Many people [who own historic homes] tend to be afraid of the HPC," says Saunders. "They think we're restrictive and won't let them do anything to their homes. That's not true. All we care about is how the exterior of the house looks from the street. That includes paint color, but we have a choice of over 300 colors! Anything else they want to do to their homes — additions, etcetera — is their choice."

For Georgoutsas, who respects historic homes and has completed dozens of restorations on them, restoring this National Landmark "was a dream come true."

Since the home had been left alone for so many years, "the entire skin of the house had to be rebuilt," he says.

Georgoutsas and his team did everything: they insulated the house, excavated the foundation and created a new one, resurfaced the mansard roof, rebuilt the porte-cochere and recreated the porch.



Peter Georgoutsas rebuilt the porte-cochere, reinforcing it with steel beams. Homeowner Katie Kahn says they discovered carpenter ants had eaten away at the original ceiling and was in serious danger of collapsing if it wasn't replaced soon.

They also duplicated every detail, creating pediments over windows, as well as balusters, posts and rails for the porch. Saunders supplied them with turn-of-the-century photographs to aid Georgoutsas in recreating these historic elements, which he custom milled in his shop.

Keyes and his associates Burns Benson and George Gazonas then entered the scene to design the landscape, creating an unimposing one that enhances the house rather than detracts from it.

"When you pull up to a house, you don't want people to say: 'What a beautiful landscape.' You want people to say: 'What a beautiful house,'" he says. "The landscape should bring out the beauty of the structure."

Keyes' traditional design at the Cady Stanton house accomplishes that. Hydrangeas, boxwoods, flowering trees, elms and oaks all look as though they've always been there. Certainly, there are some trees and plants that he was able to preserve, including rhododendrons, a grand Taxus evergreen and a beech tree on the side of the house — both trees at least 150 years old.

The restoration results are a return to the historic home's intrinsic beauty and value.

"We have an altruistic responsibility to bring the past to the present," says Georgoutsas. "If it has a value to humanity — to all of us — it should be preserved."

The beauty and value of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton house? It's tall, elegant, even presidential. After all, it is a white house.

PHOTOS BY EUGENIE PARCISEPE JR.



Custom-milled pediments over windows are authentic replicates.



HPC's Bill Saunders discusses the restoration with contractor Peter Georgoutsas.



Landscape architect Paul Keyes shows a Blue Ridge boxwood he had flown in from W. Virginia.



A rebuilt concealed gutter and custom brackets make the bay window a focal point.