**COVER STORY**

Renewed Victorian

Reniassances transform home into a modern masterpiece L4

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**Real Estate**

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**View of doorways patio looking toward the media room with thich folding glass doors.**

**The master bedroom overlooking the backyard.**

**Victorian masterpiece**

Reniassances bring light, life, and style to 5-bedroom home

By Michael Feece

An exterior glance of 121 Valley St. shows how the home blends well with the Victorian houses that are a staple in the Noe Valley neighborhood of San Francisco. But upon entering the front door, it becomes strikingly apparent that this home is not the same.

"It looks like a simple Victorian on the outside," agent Scotty Kelly of Vanguard Properties said. "But you open the door and it is not what you would have expected. It's a modern masterpiece."

The five-bedroom, 4.5-bath house, built in 1900, still retains its Queen Anne facade that was common in Victorian architecture. The former, however, has been transformed into a modern living space with an abundance of natural light and features green technology amenities.

Purchased in the summer of 2000 as a building project, the property looked as if it were on its last legs, said James Gallagher of Cal C A D Construction, which owns the house with partners Paul McKenna.

"The structure was held up by a few boards," Gallagher said. "There was a need every four or five feet in the walls. It could have collapsed at any moment; in addition, he said, the inside was more daunting than welcoming. It was dingy, small and dark," Gallagher said. "The living room was right in front, and the kitchen was way in the back. There was no light or life inside."

From the start, Gallagher and McKenna were determined to take the 1,000-square-foot first-upper and convert it into a 1,500-square foot luxury home it is now. But the beginning stages proved to be slow-going.

"The biggest challenge was the initial planning," Gallagher said. "Working with the Planning Department, with the things we wanted to do, like having two bathrooms on the upper level, we had to change our plans several times."

Gallagher said the process, though slow and arduous, eventually worked out. During this stage, Cal C A D had chosen architect Erik Dumont of Dumont Mansion Architects to head the design.

"One aspect Dumont wanted to keep intact was the Victorian exterior," Holzer said. "Here this is a turn-of-the-century house, it was important to preserve the front facade," Holzer said. "When you opened the door, it was cohesive right in, with light filling up the house."

After the planning stages, the actual renovations started in January. The heavy lifting consisted of cutting the center of the house's floor plate and excavating down to make four feet to make new space for the ground level.

Also, the sloped Victorian-style roof was replaced with a more traditional flat roof decorated with glass windows to invite in sunlight and with solar panels for efficient energy use.

"We were interested in incorporating some certain aspects of green design with the home and other sustainable materials," Dumont said. The heating system is a dual fuel boiler system that runs through the floors and serves all the domestic water heating needs.

After eight months of work, the finishing result was a Victorian reincarnated into an expanded, high-tech home.

"As it turned out, everything beyond the front yard has been so masterful, there was no resemblance to what was there before," Dumont said. The interior became more spacious because of the light creating natural lighting into the main level, with ceilings of more than 10 feet. Dumont said the light reaches the very core of the house, whereas in most Bay Area homes it doesn't. It really opens up the house and makes it very different and more spacious," he said.

The main level has a living room area with custom cabinetry and a modern gas fireplace. There is also a guest bedroom that could serve as an office or additional guest bedroom. Further into the wide main floor, the state-of-the-art kitchen features a Sub-Zero refrigerator. Male ovens and wine coolers are built into the plan, and family room subtly tucked into the extended flat wood deck area.

"The main level is your favorite part of the house," Kelly said. "It's spacious and a must." An addition was added to the level above, toward the rear yard, to provide more space.

The master bedroom suite and two additional bedrooms with patio view and one full bath room lend themselves to any family that wants to make Noe Valley their home.

"The walk-in closets on the top-floor bedroom are perfect for the teenager kid," Gallagher said. "Having a house that a family could easily live in was something we had in mind when we were renovating."

The lower level consists of a media room that is wired for Surround sound with a wet bar with Miele dishwasher and under-counter Sub-Zero refrigerator.

"It's perfect for entertaining, or it can be used for a play area for children," Kelly said about the space, which extends to the patio and backyard.

An additional guest bedroom is included.

"We think what we really tried to do was to create a cohesive environment so it flows well from room to room and floor to floor," Dumont said. "We tried to create different experiences from the library to the deck out back."

Gallagher said the finished home, priced at $3,995,000, is a perfect blend of old and new. "It's a piece of preservation," he said. "I wish more houses were fashioned like this. We are all preserving the house, but we want to bring it to the modern lifestyle."