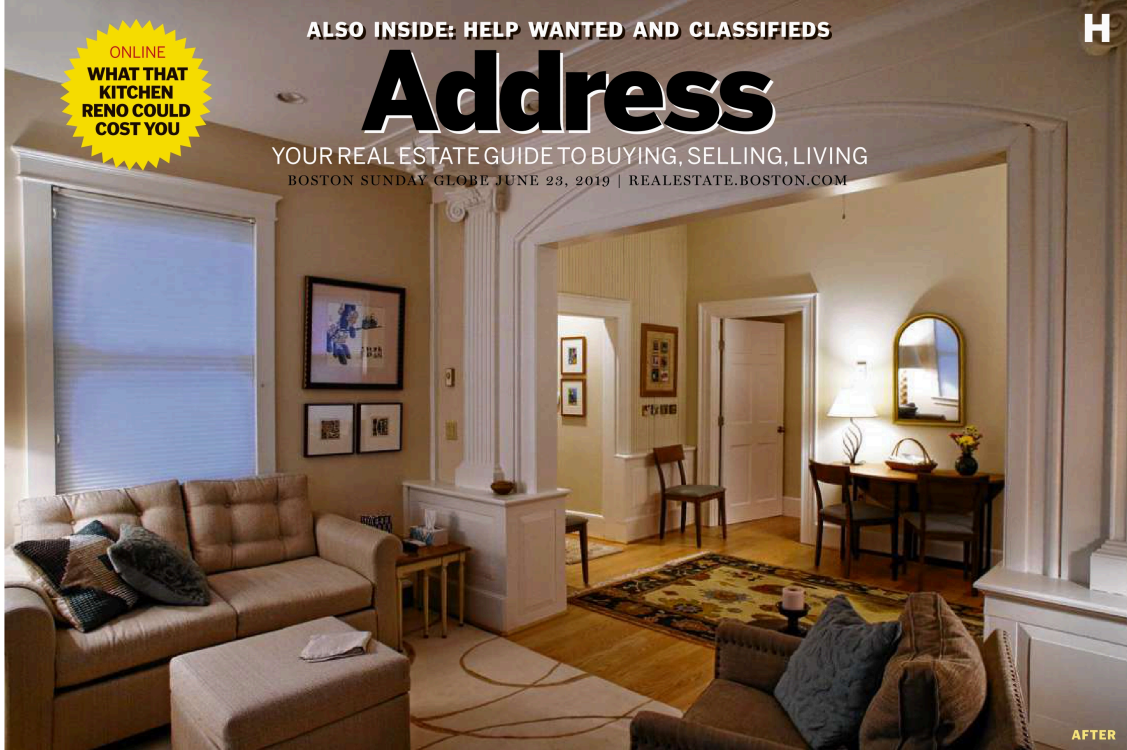


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BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE JUNE 23, 2019 | REALESTATE.BOSTON.COM



AFTER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

## Remembering the *Kennedys*

Their former garage in Brookline becomes an airy abode.

Rosalind Gertner lightened up the Kennedys' former carriage house with paint and hardwood flooring. The original entry wall (seen here before and after the renovation) is just wide enough to fit a car and flanked by carved columns. The Kennedys lived on the property from 1920 to 1927. Pictured: Eunice, Kathleen, and Rosemary in front of the carriage house circa 1925.

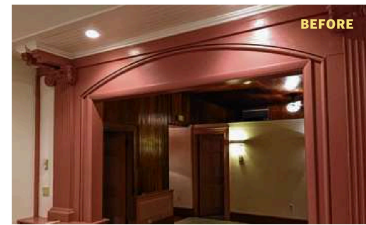
By Madeline Bilis  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**R**osalind Gertner lays her head where the Kennedy family once parked their cars. In the former carriage house in Brookline, the owner of design firm RG-Homes transformed a tiny — and rather dimly lit — apartment into a bright, breezy abode.

"It was dark, dark, dark," said Gertner, who downsized from a roughly 3,000-square-foot single-family home in Hudson to the outbuilding in 2017. Gertner's sister, retired federal judge Nancy Gertner, bought the property on Abbotsford Road 32 years ago, and after years of renting out the carriage house, granted Rosalind complete creative freedom over the structure. Along with a contractor from Woods Remodeling, Rosalind spent six months updating its 750 square feet into a modern living space.

First, the deep brown bead board walls were painted a soft tan. Retro light fixtures were nixed in favor of more traditional lamps, and green wall-to-wall carpeting was swapped for hardwood. Then Gertner rearranged the floor plan, enlarging the single bedroom and raising the ceilings in the bathroom. Yet for all its updates, including new plumbing and electrical systems, the

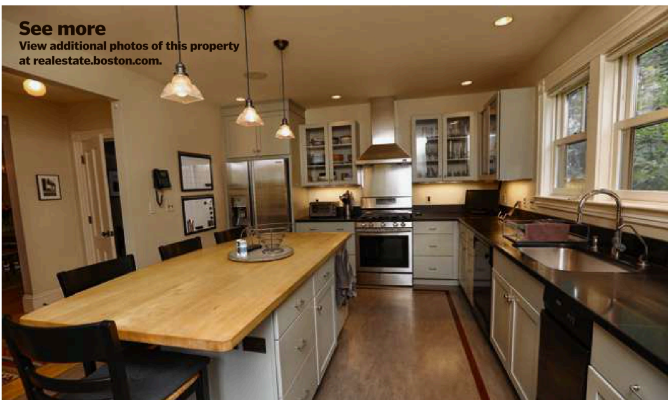
KENNEDY, Page H2



BEFORE  
ROSALIND GERTNER



COURTESY OF THE JOHN F. KENNEDY LIBRARY FOUNDATION



PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

The butcher-block island seats four in this Arlington Victorian on the market for \$995,000.

HOME OF THE WEEK

## Overhauled Victorian is steps from Arlington beach

7 WESTMORELAND AVE.

By John R. Ellement  
GLOBE STAFF

**R**eservoir Beach in Arlington will never be confused with the sandy shores of the Cape, but if you owned this newly renovated Victorian, summer fun would be only steps away.

This 119-year-old house still has the hallmarks of its original state — the welcoming front porch wraps around to the right, and the stairway is framed by bracketed wood columns. The front door opens to a foyer with an oak floor, a window, and the main stairway with its original posts and railings.

On the right, a French door opens into a living room with a bay window bump-out, oak flooring, and thin crown molding. Another French door connects to a family room that has a gas fireplace with a wooden mantel — part of the extensive renovations that re-energized this house in 2001. The room also boasts built-in bookshelves to the left of the fireplace, a ceiling fan, thin crown molding, hardwood flooring, and a bank of three windows that allow light to pour into the space. The dining room, which runs parallel to the family room, features a candle-like chandelier, sconces, a coat closet, and oak flooring.

HOME OF THE WEEK, Page H2

# Ask...



Have a question for our experts: Send it to [Address@globe.com](mailto:Address@globe.com). Questions are subject to editing.



## The Carpenter

**ROB ROBILLARD**  
Answers your questions about leaks, chips, cracks, tools, and more.

## Cracks in the basement, rodents in the garage

**Q.** The basement floor in the home my parents had built has a long crack running from one side to the other. Can this be corrected by laminating the basement, which is damp?

GINNIE MAYHEW

**A.** Cracks are a common sign of settlement. You should be concerned if you see any of the following:

- Gaps forming between the floor and walls
- Gaps forming between the walls and ceiling
- Walls pulling away from each other
- Cracks on the walls, especially near the corners
- Doors or windows that cease to open correctly or floors and surfaces that noticeably slope

If the floor crack is seeping water, you can't stop that with an injection or a patch. You'll have to relieve the hydrostatic pressure by installing an interior drain tile. With drain tile in place on the inside of foundation footings, the ground water under pressure has somewhere to go — the pressure causes it to seep through the gravel bed surrounding the drain tile and into a sump pump.

That said, concrete basements will always crack. Usually, small cracks rarely impact the structural integrity of your home. Bigger cracks or those caused by in-

stability of the soil beneath your house can lead to serious issues. If you notice significant cracks in your basement, make sure to have them inspected by a professional to identify their damage potential.

**Q.** We have an HVAC unit in our attic and would like to add insulation to the rafters bays to make the entire space conditioned. The attic is for storage and won't be finished. In the Boston area, what type of insulation should we use: open or closed cell? We know closed is more expensive, but want to get the right product for our conditions.

M.B.

**A.** I reached out to my spray foam contractor, Frank Bood at [InsulationDoneRight.com](http://InsulationDoneRight.com). Frank recommends closed cell because of its high R-value per inch; many homes in the Boston area have small roof rafters. Closed cell will also prevent moisture from getting to the roof deck.

**Q.** For two years now, squirrels or chipmunks have been chewing up our new garage door, both the wood and the plastic edge. I may have left bird food in the garage years ago. I definitely try not to leave anything

tasty in there anymore. I tried capturing the animals with traps, but they seem smarter than I am. Do you have any advice?

A.A.

**A.** I'm guessing that they smell or think there is food in there. I reached out to Matt Carr at Concord-Carlisle Pest Control for advice. Matt says you probably have mice. He recommends putting snap traps on the inside to the sides of the bay doors. Mice feel the temperature fluctuations when they're out searching for food and want to investigate. Also, when mice travel, they drop bits of urine as scent markers because they can't see well. When other mice pick up this scent, they think there's a mouse party going on in there and don't want to be left out.

Interesting tidbit: Mice can climb almost anything (including wallpaper) and gnaw through aging mortar.

*Rob Robillard is a general contractor, carpenter, editor of [AConcordCarpenter.com](http://AConcordCarpenter.com), and principal of a carpentry and renovation business. Send your questions to [homerepair@globe.com](mailto:homerepair@globe.com) or tweet them to [@robertrobillard](https://twitter.com/robertrobillard). Subscribe to our free newsletter at [pages.email.bostonglobe.com/AddressSignUp](mailto:pages.email.bostonglobe.com/AddressSignUp).*

## 1900 Victorian boasts paver patio, wraparound porch

► **HOME OF THE WEEK**  
*Continued from Page H1*

The family and dining rooms, as well as an office nook with a built-in desk, spill into an entryway to the kitchen. Highlights of the kitchen include an island with a butcher-block top that seats four; a Marmoleum floor; dark-toned granite counters; stainless-steel appliances, including a trash compactor; a floor-to-ceiling pantry; and solid wood cabinets (some with glass fronts) painted a light gray. French doors lead to a deck.

A half bath with honeycomb tile flooring and a porcelain sink completes the first floor.

All three bedrooms are on the second floor. The master suite, which is 234 square feet, offers a hallway with two closets, oak flooring, a ceiling fan, a cathedral ceiling, and a bath with a double vanity, a soaking tub/shower combo with a tile surround (there's wood paneling along the front of the tub that matches the cabinets) and a Carrara marble counter and flooring.

The other bedrooms are carpeted and have ceiling fans and wide windows. The main bathroom features a pedestal sink, a tub/shower combo, a subway tile surround, a linen closet,

**\$995,000**

**Style:** Victorian  
**Year built:** 1900  
**Square feet:** 2,165  
**Bedrooms:** 3  
**Baths:** 2 full, 1 half  
**Sewer/water:** Public  
**Taxes:** \$8,437 (2019)

and a basketweave tile floor.

In 2012, the formerly drab attic space was transformed into a bonus room with skylights.

The basement is unfinished except for the laundry room. The house has central air, and the windows are new.

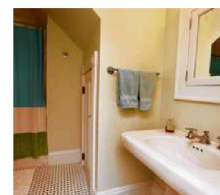
The lot is 0.12 of an acre with a bluestone patio, a fence, a mature Japanese zelkova tree, a brick paver and cobblestone driveway, and a rock wall.

Judy Weinberg of Leading Edge Real Estate in Arlington is the listing agent. As of press time, an offer had been accepted on this property.

Follow John R. Ellement on Twitter @JREbostglobe. Send comments and listings to [homehelp@askglobe.com](mailto:homehelp@askglobe.com). Please note: We do not feature unfurnished homes and will not respond to submissions we won't pursue. Subscribe to our weekly real estate newsletter at [pages.email.bostonglobe.com/AddressSignUp](mailto:pages.email.bostonglobe.com/AddressSignUp).



PHOTOS BY PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF



Clockwise from top: The 0.12-acre lot features a bluestone patio; one of two full baths on the second floor; and the living room offers a bump-out and oak flooring.

## Outbuilding reno preserves Kennedy history

► **KENNEDY**  
*Continued from Page H1*

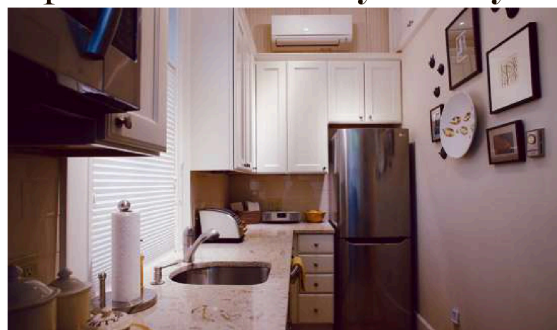
place maintains a sense of antique charm.

"It's extraordinary to be here," Rosalind said. "To be in somebody's — the Kennedys' — garage, essentially."

It was a century earlier, in 1920, when Joseph and Rose Kennedy moved from their home at 83 Beals St. — now a National Historic Site — to the grand 1905 Victorian on Abbotsford Road. They did so with three children in tow, including 8-year-old Jack. Eunice, Robert, and Patricia Kennedy were born in the house, and the children often could be found playing on the porch and greeting milkmen, mailmen, ice deliverers, and neighbors. But in 1927, when JFK was 10 years old, Joseph decided to move the family to New York City. They settled into an even larger house in the Bronx, leaving their two former homes in Brookline behind.

A series of owners left their marks on the property in the years after the Kennedy family departed. One turned the main residence into a boarding house for a time, while another added a glass atrium onto the carriage house. The Gertners replaced the atrium with a small addition in 2009. The main home's stained-glass window, as well as the carriage house's old-world feel, however, have remained.

The original entry wall to the carriage house is its most striking original detail. The opening, which is just wide enough to fit a car, is flanked by intricately carved columns. It opens from the house's addition to the living room, where Rosalind made the best use of its modest footprint



CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF

The kitchen has a narrow refrigerator and a smaller-than-average sink.

with a loveseat and an armchair.

"I have no sense of it being small," Rosalind said. That's thanks to the carriage house's soaring ceilings, which add a sense of spaciousness to the open-concept living and dining areas. She maximized the height by adorning the walls with art.

"Thank heavens these ceiling heights are so high, because I've traveled the world and I have items on the wall from virtually everywhere I went," Rosalind said.

Greeting cards from Finland, watercolors from France, and beadwork from South Africa are some of the treasures decorating the cottage.

"I've lived in much bigger houses, and in a sense, you lose this experience of this art. It's all over the place," she said. "Some of the things that I have hanging now — I enjoy them so much more. I see them better."

Rosalind also brought some of her existing furniture into the carriage house. Many pieces —

from the lone loveseat to the floor lamp in the living room — were from Boston Design Center.

Beyond the addition and main living area, the building squeezes in a bedroom, kitchen, and bathroom. The formerly tiny bedroom, which at one time could accommodate only a twin bed, now boasts a queen. Rosalind adjusted the home's floor plan to enlarge the bedroom, building out one wall and inserting two closets (including one "that I use just for shoes," Rosalind said) with luggage storage space above them. She moved the laundry area, which stuck out of the kitchen, into the bedroom by installing a stackable washer and dryer.

The nearby kitchen received all new cabinets, appliances, and granite countertops. Ceiling-height cabinets add extra storage space, while a narrow refrigerator and a smaller-than-average sink complete the package.

In the bathroom, a sleek walk-in shower is fronted by a panel of glass. And in such a small space, little details matter. Rosalind chose several textured tiles in the bathroom shower to inject personality into the room.

All of her design decisions, she said, came down to creating spaces that brought her pleasure. "There wasn't really a concept of creating a statement that was consistent wherever you went through the place," Rosalind said. Rather, the result is an eclectic mix of art, furniture, and fine details — all coexisting inside a former garage.

"Many houses have garages," Rosalind said. "But they don't have histories like this one does."

Madeline Bilis, an editor at *Travel + Leisure*, can be reached at [madelinebilis@gmail.com](mailto:madelinebilis@gmail.com). Follow her on Twitter at @madelinebilis.