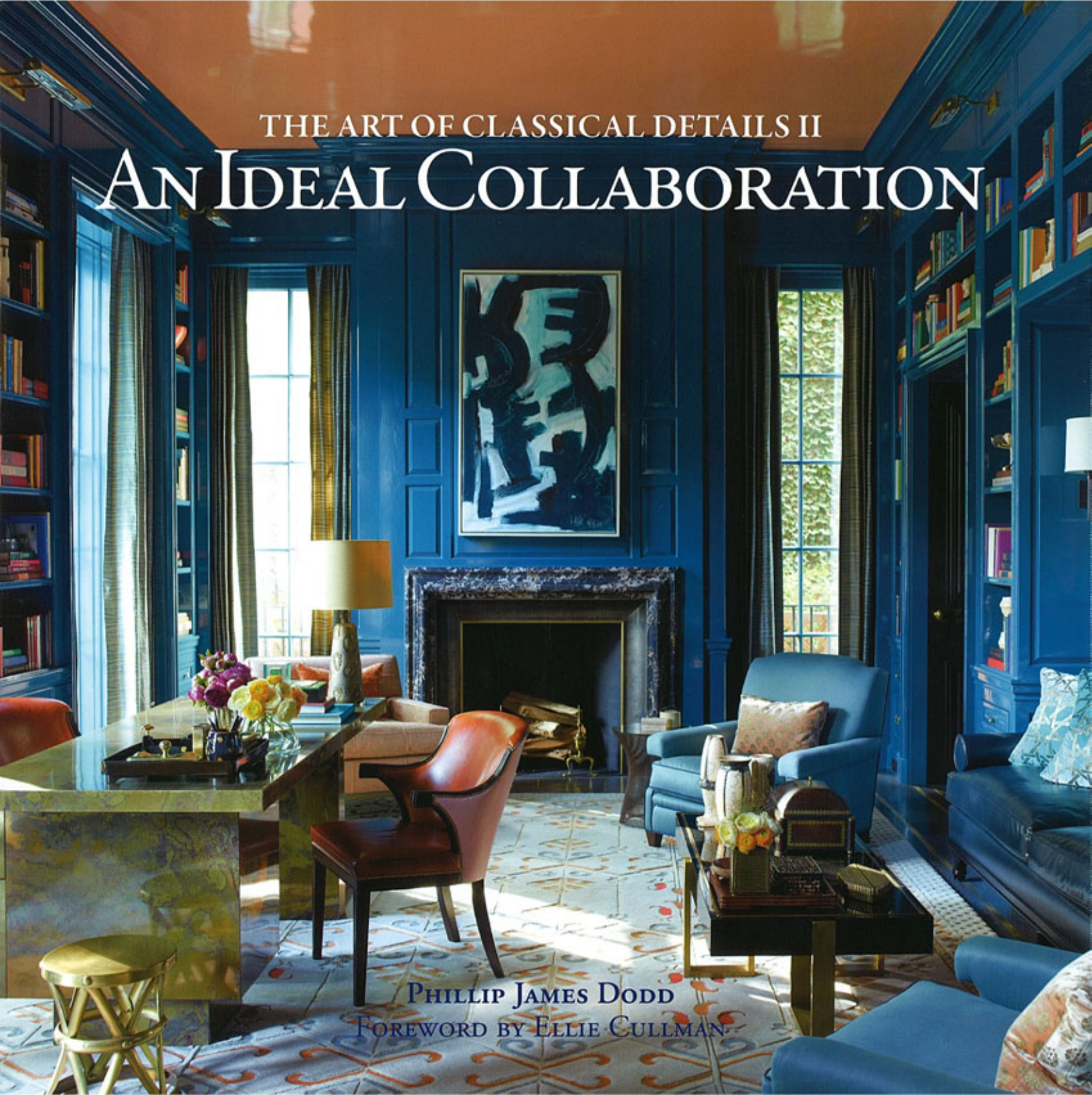
THE ART OF CLASSICAL DETAILS II

An Ideal Collaboration



Phillip James Dodd

Foreword by Ellie Cullman

ABOVE:
BOXWOOD (see page 197): A detail of the hand-gouged oak paneling in the library, which gives a contemporary spin on an otherwise traditional room.
G. P. Schafer Architect

OPPOSITE:
A CLASSICAL REVIVAL TOWNHOUSE (see page 203): Looking down on an elegant staircase that spirals through three floors of the townhouse, and is illuminated by a three-part chandelier and a circular skylight above.
Andrew Skurman Architects

BOXWOOD

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

G. P. Schafer Architect

Sometimes adapting a house with a lot of history to the demands of modern family life requires completely reimagining it. But that doesn't necessarily mean it has to lose its soul in the process—sometimes it actually regains it. This 14,000-square-foot Charles Platt-designed house in the Belle Meade suburb of Nashville was originally built in 1914. It was then substantially altered in the 1950s with the re-cladding of its façade in brick, the complete reconfiguring of its interior, and the addition of an entry portico, garages, and outbuildings. Altered again in the 1990s, much of the charm of Platt's original design had been lost by 2005, when our clients bought the house.

Believing in the validity of Platt's original vision, we completely reworked the house once again, in order to restore the substance of his original interior, reintroduce the original French doors out to the garden, and rebuild the 1950s portico in a manner more suited to Platt's architecture. Most importantly, we adapted the house to the 21st-century lifestyle of a young family with three small children, whose lives revolve around a large new kitchen, family and informal dining rooms.

Working in close collaboration with Nashville landscape architect Gavin Duke and the interior decorator David Netto over four years, our design has allowed the house to regain the classical elegance and understated formality of its original form, while at the same time achieving a livability, freshness, and vitality through the modern traditionalism of the interior architectural detailing and decoration. All this was accomplished while remaining within the footprint of the original house, as mandated by the local zoning board.

Further images from this project can be found on pages 22, 24 and 246.

G. P. Schafer Architect is a New York City-based firm specializing in classical and traditional residential architecture. In each of its projects the firm emphasizes a commitment to quality, craftsmanship, rigorous detail based on an understanding of historic precedent and, most importantly, comfort and livability. Led by principal Gil Schafer III, the firm has been widely published in books and periodicals on both sides of the Atlantic and has been the recipient of numerous awards including three Palladio Awards for outstanding traditional residential design.

"To make a house that is truly beautiful, comfortable, and feels connected with the land, requires that architects, landscape designers, and decorators engage in a dialogue with each other from the start of a project to its finish. To create something in which you can no longer discern where one person's contribution ends and the other's begins."

Gil Schafer

BOXWOOD (see page 197): A view into the new oak paneled library, and living room beyond, of this remodeled house originally designed by the great American classicist Charles A. Platt in 1915.

G. P. Schafer Architect