

APARTMENT
MINNEAPOLIS
MINNESOTA

Once part of a luxury hotel, this
condominium's small-space
sophistication is inspired by 1920s
architecture and style.

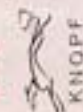
Tailored

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY ALECIA STEVENS
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EARSTLER © DOMICILIUM DECORATUS

LIVING HOUSES, GARDENS, PEOPLE



CHARLES





THIS PHOTO
Homeowner Anna Kohler at her childhood desk, which she painted white to blend with her apartment decor.
OPPOSITE. Colors in fabrics and accessories finish the living room.



S

Some things are just meant to be. Anna Kohler grew up in Minneapolis and knew the iconic 510 Groveland building—a limestone lady built in 1926 as an elite hotel. It hugged the boundary between downtown and the tony Kenwood neighborhood, which is anchored by the hip Walker Art Center, itself recently renovated and expanded by the celebrated Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron.

The 510 Groveland building—transformed into cooperative apartments in 1948—has miraculously maintained its original character. In 2007, when Anna began her search for a small condominium, it had a 940-square-foot unit for sale.

It was the first place she looked. “I was in shock when I walked in,” Anna says. “The building was just magical, and the light was incredible. But the place had been given a quick fix for the sale. They had painted the whole thing a kind of fleshy beige, which was horrible; they added cheap flooring, and the space was chopped up.”

It even had two entry doors, remnants from the days it had been two smaller apartments. “I hadn’t planned to do that much work,” she says. So, being practical, she moved on. But she didn’t stop thinking about it.

For a year, she continued her search for a home. She even made an offer on a place that was in foreclosure. But the bank never got back to her about its availability. So,



LEFT The new living room window seat conceals a radiator. Architect Laurel Ulland’s traditional millwork design contrasts with an unexpected metallic faux-leather seat cushion and splashy print pillow fabrics from such modernists as Kelly Wearstler, Jamie Drake, and David Hicks.

OPPOSITE Also in the living room, Anna chose a sophisticated mix of transitional furnishings, covering them with neutral textures and quiet patterns. She added bold, sensual touches with fuchsia velvet pillows, custom gilded mirrors, and graphic wall art.

*Repetitive molding
inspires the repeat
of materials, fabrics,
and colors.*

What's Fresh





LEFT A support beam, framed with handsome millwork, hints at the wall that once separated cooking from dining. By opening the space, Ulland was able to add a petite island. Anna chose Charles Ghost stools, designed by Philippe Starck, to keep the feeling light. For comfort, she added seat cushions in a Kelly Wearstler fabric.



she eventually withdrew her offer, believing it was a sign to revisit 510 Groveland. The unit she had previously viewed was still for sale, and this time she began to visualize what it could look like—a luminous, white space with marble walls and countertops, dark floors, and even more of the elegant, tailored molding for which the stately building was known.

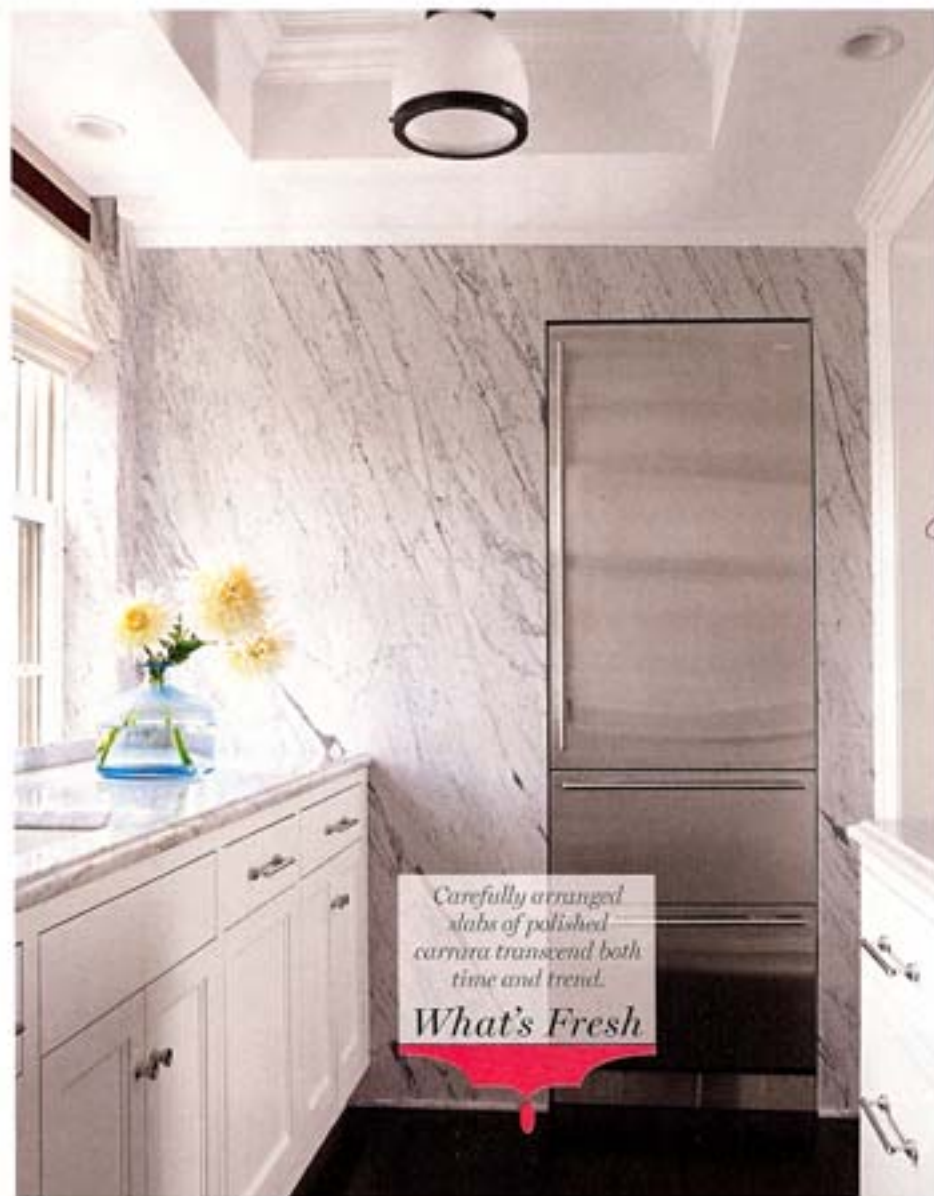
Anna bought the unit and immediately called Laurel Ulland of Laurel Ulland Architecture to help her transform this aging beauty into a jewel, a 21st-century version of its ghost.

"Anna shows up at our first meeting with her little white laptop, flipping from one Web page to the next, showing me things she likes," Ulland says, smiling. "I was so impressed and could see how involved she would be. She was as

interested in the faucets and hardware and finishes as she was the furniture." While Anna was tracking furniture dimensions, shopping chandeliers, or selecting the perfect white paint, Ulland and project architect Max Windmiller were tackling the joys and woes of working on an historic property that's also a fixture in downtown Minneapolis.

"We are stewards of an older building like this. We can live in them, but there are others who will come after us. We were very cognizant of the character of this building, especially its panel moldings," Ulland says, with a sense of reverence.

Because natural light is one of the building's most rewarding features, Ulland accentuated it by opening the cramped, outmoded kitchen to the dining area and using frosted glass in the pantry door to help move the natural



LEFT The home's black-and-white color palette includes middle ground in the kitchen, where walls and countertops are sheathed in polished Carrara marble. The stainless steel ensures a decidedly modern kitchen.

OPPOSITE A frosted-glass door beyond the dining table sends light into a dual-purpose laundry room and pantry. The delicate chandelier, barely visible against a white ceiling and walls, adds sparkle against the hard surfaces around it.

Voice of Experience

Originally a poured-concrete structure, the building has a wonderful rhythm of windows and columns that were not negotiable, says architect Laurel Ulland. Klaus Freyinger, an architect who has lived and worked in the building for years, became a guru when Ulland needed a history lesson or faced an engineering puzzle. Freyinger maintains a basement library, which includes original moldings and the knives used to cut them so they may be precisely reproduced in projects such as Anna Kohler's. This helps maintain the historical integrity of the building.

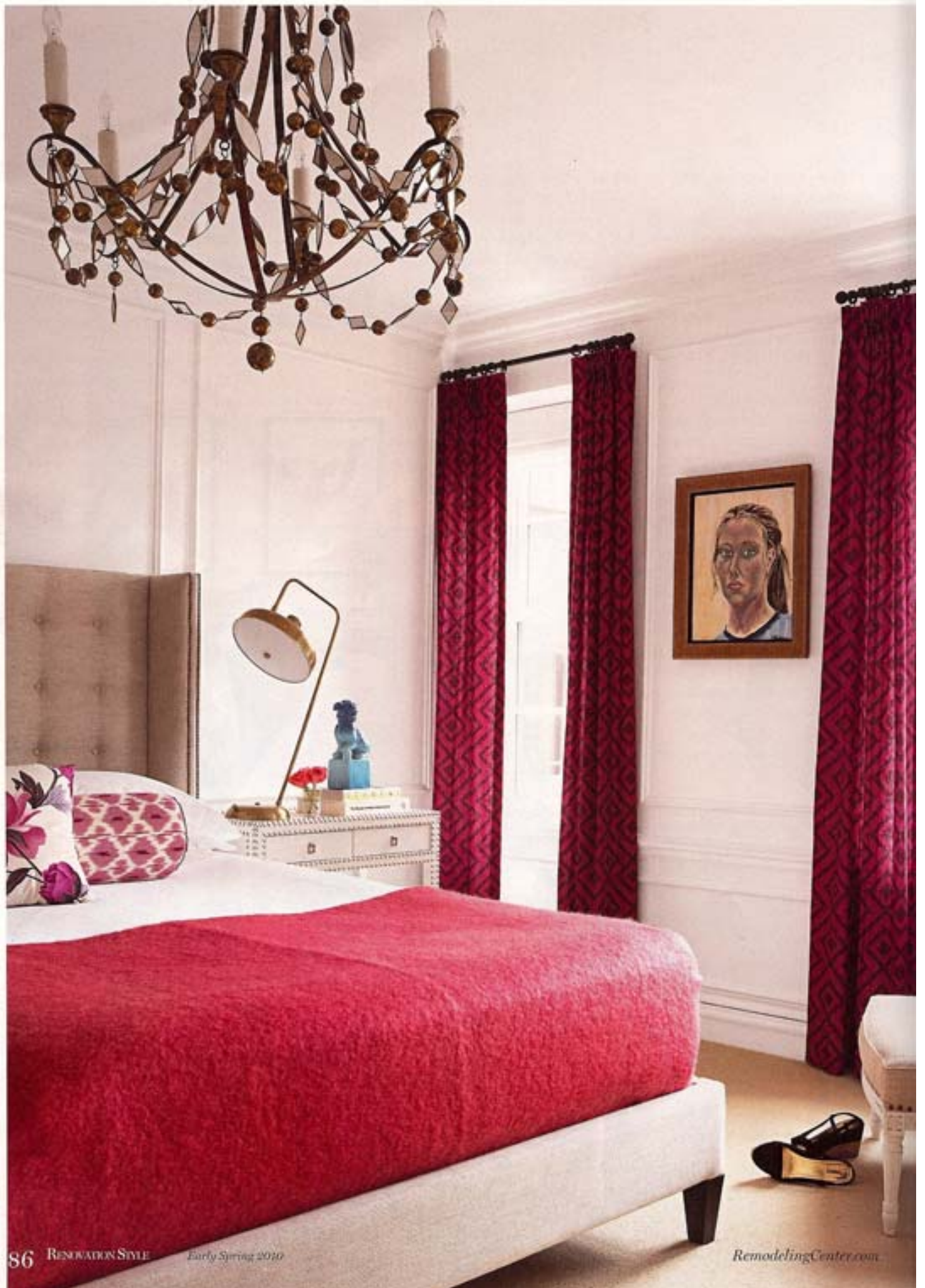
Carefully arranged slabs of polished Carrara transcend both time and trend.

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light while, at the same time, preventing views of the laundry appliances.

Radiators in the living room and bathroom had to be preserved, so Ulland literally designed around them, housing them in welcoming window seats crafted with millwork that blends with the apartment's original. A storage cabinet in the kitchen cleverly conceals mechanical ductwork while its glass front puts dishware on display.

Adopting Anna's vision for white and carrara marble in the kitchen, Ulland sheathed the walls in polished slabs of the classic stone, a nod to historical kitchens of the early 20th century.

The floors had been destroyed over the years and replaced with plywood, carpeting, and synthetic wood, so Ulland installed traditional white oak, then ebonized it.

Throughout, the design team used architectural language of this 1920s classic building but modernized it with a crisp black-and-white color palette. Then Anna added her magic.

Though not a trained designer—yet—it is clear from the result Anna has found her calling. (Her only previous design experiences were doing her childhood bedroom and college dorm room. But Anna spent last summer studying at Parsons School of Design in New York City.)

"This is my dream. I have always loved the era of the 1920s," Anna says. "When I was little, I would have said, 'This is it. This is the place I want to live.' And doing this project changed the direction of my life."

RESOURCES PAGE 118

OPPOSITE Within the traditional architecture, Anna used a graphic patterned linen by David Hicks for a shock of color. Repetitive, staccato elements—a tufted headboard and nailhead trim on the bedside table and ottoman—give the bedroom a sense of energy and continuity. **RIGHT** The vintage-inspired nickel washbasin is topped with a carrara remnant from the kitchen. Walls are covered in a lustrous wallpaper of fuchsia, lavender, and golden hues.



The Plans, Before & After

Situated in a poured-concrete building, this apartment didn't present Anna Kohler and architect Laurel Ulland many options when it came to changing the basic footprint. In addition to major upgrades of flooring, millwork, and lighting, the newly renovated condo has a reconfigured and combined kitchen and dining room.

BEFORE

The previously renovated bathroom was functional, but the fixtures were dated.

An awkwardly positioned bedroom doubled as a hallway for anyone entering the master bedroom.

A compact and oddly shaped kitchen was a jumble of appliances, colors, and cabinets.



AFTER

The old bedroom became an office, creating a buffer between the dining room and master bedroom.

Open to the dining room, the new kitchen's natural light flows through the core of the apartment.

The only room with windows on two walls, the living room has abundant natural light and city views.

940 square feet

ARCHITECT LAUREL ULLAND
DESIGNER ANNA KOHLER

Bed olystudio.com



This upholstered bed frame (see page 86) provides comfort and soft edges. The high headboard adds a stately sense of style with brass nailhead trim and a tufted fabric.

Dakota bed, upholstered in hemp wool. Oly Studio.

Anna packed lots of style into a small space. Here are some of her product choices, from faucet to fabric.

Fabric

leeindustries.com

Used on the chairs in the living room (see page 87), this fabric creates a neutral backdrop for throw pillows and other accents. Despite its quiet colors, this geometric design gives it a fresh and vibrant look.

Thatchit fabric in natural color (rayon blend). Lee Industries.

Faucet

rohlhome.com

Add classical lines to either a contemporary or traditional bathroom with this curvy faucet.

Three-hole traditional country spout widespread lavatory faucet with lever handles, shown in polished chrome. Perrin & Rowe, distributed by Rohl.



Chair

olystudio.com

Carved feet give this side chair a fun twist at the desk (see page 79) or in the dining room.

Ajax side chair, shown with antique-white legs and hemp wool. Oly Studio.



Sconce

visualcomfort.com



Using a pair of these to flank the mirror above the bathroom sink (see page 87), Anna gets soft, balanced light. The polished silver finish coordinates with other elements in the vanity area.

Zyl sconce in polished silver with natural paper shade. Visual Comfort.