

Home nod to 17th century, Byzantium poem

One of Charleston's most creative new houses almost didn't get built — at least not like it eventually did.

Andrew Gould designed the home for his parents, who relocated to the city after living outside Boston.

Gould has studied architecture, is working to get his architecture license and has designed about a dozen churches as well as other homes.

His most notable local building may be the Holy Ascension Orthodox Church in Mount Pleasant's



Robert Behre
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On neighborhood.

Gould's parents were looking for an English arts and crafts aesthetic, a Victorian-era type house but one that emphasized space for family living rather than entertaining.

"I wanted this house to be a comfortable, modern house — modern in the Victorian sense, not in the 20th-century sense," he says.

His parents' house is one of several that Gould and his business partner, George Holt, have built on a small, yet-to-be named dead-end street off Ashley Avenue, just south of the Crosstown Expressway.

Gould says his design for his parents at 264-C Ashley ran into stiff questions from the city's Board of Architectural Review.

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ROBERT BEHRE/STAFF

The configuration of the interior stair at 264-C Ashley Ave. means that this isn't a Charleston single house in the strict sense of the term. The post and beam and sawn ballusters give the house a 17th-century English feel.

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"One would think a wooden, two-story house set back from the street and highly invisible would not be difficult to get approval from the BAR," he says. "It was very frustrating."

One point of contention was Gould's plan to use timbers for the piazza, a feature rarely (if ever) used downtown.

Some feared it would make the home look too rural, like a misplaced mountain house.

Gould prevailed by pledging to plane the timbers smooth, add fine detailing and paint them white, all to make the home look more refined, more urban. Flat, sawn balusters with fretwork ornamentation complement the solid timbers.

Also, the home was given a single-home-type entrance onto the piazza, complete with a parapet with a sailing ship carved into it. Gould says the design both matches the 17th-century aesthetic he was shooting for and is a visual riff on one of his favorite poems, "Sailing to Byzantium." (His and Holt's company is New World Byzantine.)

Gould says experts with the American College of the Building Arts did the timber framing, complete with pegged joints, inside and out. "They were pleased to do a permanent timber frame in downtown Charleston," he says. "It's not something they often do."

The house's generous porches open onto a garden,



The carved parapet on 264-C Ashley Ave. harks back to Charleston's early history and matches up with the Jacobean flavor of the architecture.

"The only highly unusual thing as far as this (floor plan) was the pipe organ. I designed the whole room around the pipe organ."

Designer Andrew Gould

an unusually large outdoor space relative to its immediate neighbors.

"Having the house open up to this generous porch and garden is crucial to making the house feel as large as it does," Gould says. "It doesn't seem like a small house (even though it is, with only 1,250 square feet and two bedrooms)."

The piazza door, piazzas and garden make this look like a Charleston single house at first blush, but a step inside shows it's not.

"It's more than one room deep from the porch back," he says. "It's a square floor plan."

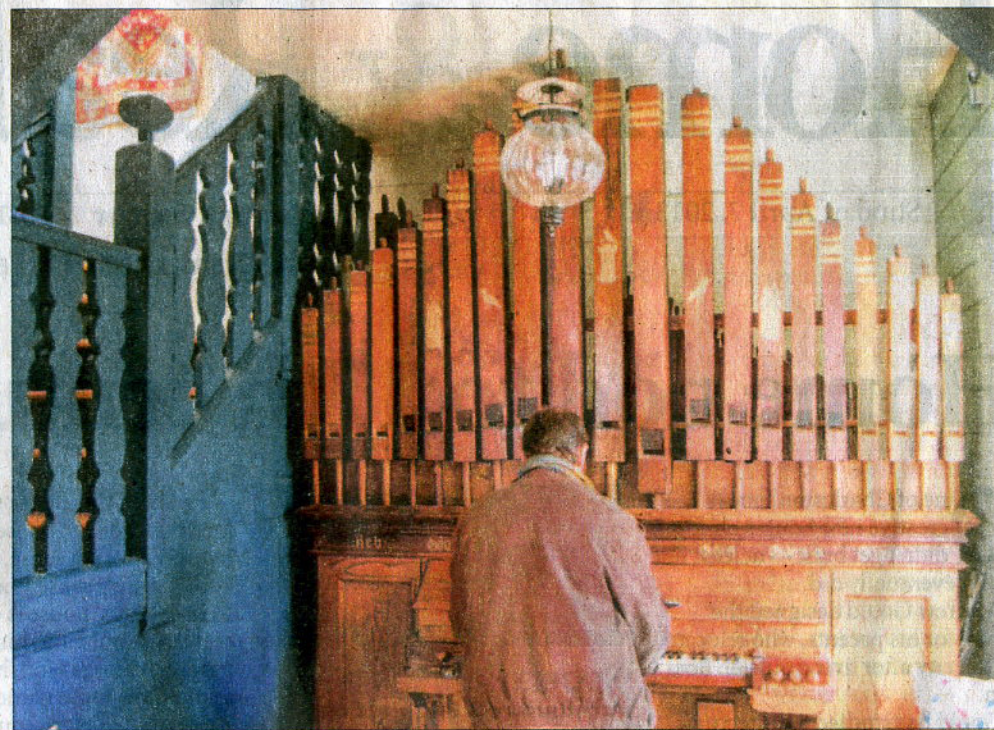
While there is a stair in the middle, it's pushed back to the

rear, with a large open room just back from the porch.

"The only highly unusual thing as far as this (floor plan) was the pipe organ," he says. "I designed the whole room around the pipe organ."

Gould assembled the organ in high school. Despite his parents downsizing their space by half, it made the move. "It's actually all parts from several much larger church organs," Gould says. "I made modifications to put it all together."

The interior has almost a medieval aesthetic, with Gould carving a stone detail in the hearth and designing a metal chandelier. Upstairs, the master bed chamber is made



PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT BEHRE/STAFF

Designer Andrew Gould plays the pipe organ that he constructed himself as a young man and whose placement in his parents' house had a big effect on the floor plan.

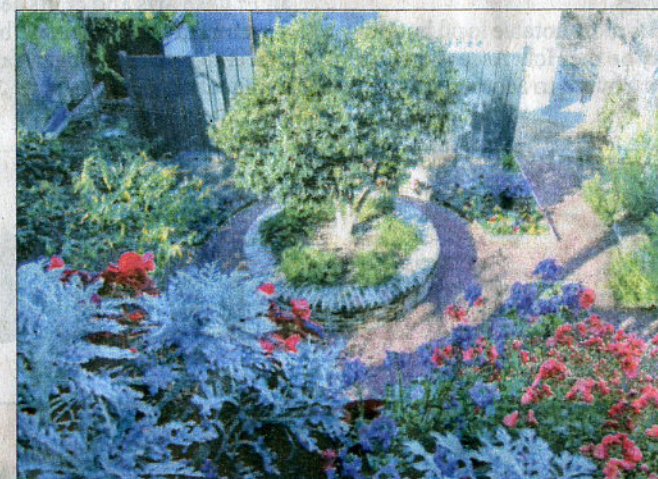
of timbers and wood trim seamlessly united.

But Gould says the overall architecture isn't medieval or English arts and crafts as much as it is Jacobean, and the interior's colors match that 17th-century English look.

The blue paint on the stair was imported from England, since Gould says American paint couldn't match its richness and luster.

It's just one of many unique aspects that make this two-story wooden home such an interesting addition to the city.

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The house at 264-C Ashley Avenue has a small footprint, in part to save space for a large garden visible from both piazzas.