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## Tudor 2.0

When they razed a historic English Tudor in Greenwich, CT, the creative minds at **Hilton-VanderHorn Architects** didn't just rebuild it—they revamped it.

By *Matt Alderton*

**English Tudor homes are famous for their** elaborate stonework, distinctive timber framing, patterned brick, stately gables and precipitous pitched roofs. A tribute to the medieval cottages that crowded English hamlets during the 16th century—when the Tudor Dynasty reigned supreme—this style of home was all the rage in the roaring '20s, particularly in wealthy areas of Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, DC, where developers built entire neighborhoods of so-called "Stockbroker Tudors" for the country's new-money upper class.

**"All of the people who worked on the house are local craftsmen who have that Yankee ingenuity ... craftsmen not found in many other places."**

— *Douglas Vanderhorn*

The Tudor style wasn't just popular in the Mid-Atlantic, however. It also meandered its way further north, into New England, where homes are still being built in the style today. Homes like the one **Hilton-VanderHorn Architects** was hired to build for a family in Greenwich, Connecticut, where the firm is based.

"The home is in a historic 1920s neighborhood that was originally laid out by the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted—a very famous landscape designer who designed Central Park," explains founding partner **Douglas VanderHorn**. "The neighborhood is filled with English-style homes from the 1920s, and this property in particular had an existing 1920s English Tudor-style house on it."

Unfortunately, that home was in ill repair, and far too small for the client's family. Instead of renovating it, it was decided that **Hilton-VanderHorn**—which specializes in historically based residential design—would build a new "old" home.



To create a home that looked old (in style) but felt new, **Hilton-VanderHorn** combined elements of traditional Tudor architecture with features from the family's contemporary wish list. Traditional elements, for instance, include authentic carved-limestone fireplaces, real oak timbers, octagonal chimney flues, a graduated slate roof, hipped dormers, gothic arches, carved oak balusters, plaster tracery ceilings, antique-style windows with leaded glass dividers, and carved quatrefoil embellishments. And, of course, rustic exterior stonework, which was installed by **Luppino Landscaping & Masonry of Pound Ridge, New York**. "This is the finest stonework we've seen on one of our projects," **VanderHorn** says. "Every stone is pillowed, as they call it, meaning it's given that rustic sort of face, which projects forward and makes the stonework look authentic, like a true load-bearing stone wall—and a lot of it is not. It absolutely is convincing."

**Luppino** was in good company: the house runs over with fine detailing that acts as an autograph, signed by local New England craftsmen. "All of the people who worked on the house are local craftsmen who have that Yankee ingenuity," **VanderHorn** says. "A

close look at any part of the house will display the skills of the kind of craftsmen that we have in New England—craftsmen not found in many other places. New England really has maintained a good group of talented craftsmen, in part because there's enough wealth here—enough people who appreciate this level of craftsmanship—to support it."

Although impeccable craftsmanship is evident, form did not interfere with function, according to **VanderHorn**, who says the family's contemporary lifestyle figured prominently in the home's design. For instance, the house has eight bedrooms to accommodate several children and staff, as well as a four-car garage, not to mention its "smart house" controls.

Additionally, recreation figures prominently. "This is a young family. They wanted lots of recreation space because they have kids, and New England winters aren't always the best," **VanderHorn** says. "So, the interior of the house contains a large rec room and gymnasium on the lower level, a small basketball court on the third floor, and a theater."

The floor plan is equally cognizant of the family's four children. "The floor plan is more traditional in the formal areas of the house—the entry hall, the living room, the dining room—but the spaces where the family spends most of its time are laid out in a more contemporary fashion," says **VanderHorn**, referring to the integrated kitchen, family room, and breakfast room. "With four young children you want to provide a lot of yard space, and from the kitchen, breakfast area and family room you can look out to the fantastic yard and keep an eye on them."

When the firm began designing the home in 2008, it set out to build a house that would fit into the neighborhood as if it were one of the original 1920s English Tudor houses. When the home was completed in 2011, it was obvious that **Hilton-VanderHorn** had succeeded. "A lot of people look at this house and have no idea it's a new home," **VanderHorn** says. "They think it's an old house that's been restored, and that's the best compliment we can get."

### Project Credits

- General Contractor:** [Comerstone Contracting Corp.](#)
- Masonry:** [Luppino Landscaping & Masonry](#)
- Framing/Exterior Trim:** [MG Flynn](#)
- Landscape Design:** [Cummin Associates](#)
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