

See the homes Chicago architects love

DENNIS RODKIN  

The houses received awards from the American Institute of Architects Chicago chapter today on an online event that replaced the organization's annual in-person spring party celebrating the best of what it calls "[small projects](#)"—works that aren't done on the skyscraper and institutional scale that it features in the fall.

AIA Chicago jurors gave a citation of merit, a second-level award, to each of five other residential designs, most notably the rehab of an Old Town house designed in 1972 by the late [Bruce Graham](#), architect of the Inland Steel and John Hancock towers, among many others.



When dSpace Studio's client [bought a house on Willow Street in Old Town](#) a few years ago, it was both already stunning and in need of updating. It was designed by architectural giant Bruce Graham in 1972 for a friend who held onto it for 44 years, until her death.

"The house had really great bones, from Bruce Graham," said Kevin Toukoumidis, principal at dSpace. But its wood façade was worn out and some changes inside could make the interior even lighter than it was. They included replacing drywall railings on the walkway around the central atrium with glass, and moving a tall fireplace and chimney off the glass rear wall, where it broke up the view of the enclosed rear garden, to a side wall.



Tony Soluri

In the rehab the fireplace and some walls were covered in marble slabs—a reference, said Toukoumidis, to the work of another great Chicago architect, Ludwig Mies van Der Rohe, a longtime friend of Graham.

Outside, the street front of the house is wrapped in wood as it originally was, but the architects worked with landmarks officials to get approval for a more contemporary black finish, and enhanced privacy with a row of trees. A juror said the result was "a remarkably sensitive renovation."

Toukoumidis' firm also received a citation of merit for the handsome design of [this Lincoln Park penthouse](#), which was for sale in 2019 at \$6.75 million but later went off the market unsold. Also receiving citations were Radutny's design for the interior of a condo in Mies buildings on North Lake Shore Drive, the renovation of a 1996 house in the Catskill Mountains in New York by the firm DAAM, and renovations and an addition to a pre-Chicago Fire house by CamesGibson.