

## East-meets-Gothic in Zen makeunder



Photo by: **Arthur Pollock**

‘MODERN AESTHETIC’: The Gothic exterior of the Burrage House, above, belies the minimalist, modern interior of the penthouse condo.

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By: [Paul Restuccia](#)

The interior of the five-bedroom penthouse unit at the Burrage House mansion in the Back Bay, which just went on the market for \$10.7 million, is nothing like you’d expect from the building’s exterior.

The imposing residence at 314 Commonwealth Ave., built in 1899 as the home of copper tycoon Albert Burrage, was modeled after a French Gothic chateau and is decorated with gargoyles, dragons and cherubs carved into its elaborate stonework.

But the current penthouse owners went for a minimalist approach, with an interior designed by Japanese-born architect Moho Abe of Woburn-based Zen Associates. Abe has successfully incorporated an Eastern aesthetic within the confines of a very Western building.

There are only four units in the Burrage, which was converted to condos in 2003-2004.

The penthouse has large, open living spaces filled with natural light that radiate serenity.

“People are taken aback by the open space and minimalist design,” said listing broker Terry Maitland of Landvest. “The buyer is going to have to be someone with a really modern aesthetic because too much has gone into the renovation.”

The architect took advantage of the top floors by creating vaulted ceilings and adding skylights throughout. Fine touches include a staircase to the fifth floor with floating maple stairs and handrails wrapped in leather.

The entryway off the elevator, modeled after a Japanese house, has movable walls that are ideal for displaying artwork. The open living/dining area features beige limestone floors and a wood fireplace set inside a large wall of onyx.

The building has two turrets: Under one is a free-standing stainless steel hot tub, and the other hosts a meditation space.

The custom kitchen features blue limestone floors and stainless steel Poggenpohl cabinetry, and Sub-Zero, Kuppersbusch and Miele appliances. At the far end of the kitchen is a built-in tropical fish tank that acts as a divider to a family room with cathedral ceilings, skylights and a gas fireplace.

Off the family room is a cleverly designed child's bedroom with built-in beds. A hallway has a long row of burled walnut cabinets with lots of storage space and a Miele washer and dryer.

The fifth floor, taken up by the master bedroom suite, has a carpeted bedroom with a sunken bed and a wall of burled walnut closets with custom built-ins. The bedroom opens onto a two-tiered roof deck with another hot tub as well as great Back Bay tower views.

If there's any negative, it's that three of the unit's bedrooms are in a connected 1,265-square-foot apartment in the building next door. The unit, made for a nanny or other live-in help, is rather average-looking and is untouched by the hand of the architect.

The penthouse and live-in apartment total 8,565 square feet and the taxes are \$81,461 this year. The condo fee, even though it includes all utilities, including heat and central air conditioning, is a staggering \$5,676 a month.

But in its favor, the penthouse comes with four deeded spaces in the building's garage, plus there's one outdoor parking space. You'd be hard-pressed to get this kind of parking anywhere in the city no matter the price.

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