


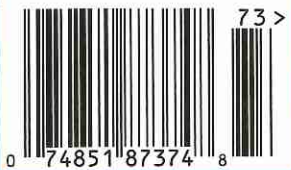
Boston home



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MINI OASIS

A tiny urban backyard gets a major upgrade.

BY RACHEL SLADE

JUST AS THEY WERE WRAPPING up their Beacon Hill brownstone renovation, the homeowners looked out the window of their brand-new kitchen and saw—well, let’s just say it wasn’t exactly a pleasant view. Their nearly 500 square feet of “rustic” backyard ended at the bumper of their car. It was at that moment they realized that after lavishing so much attention on the interior of their home, they’d have to do something about the outside, too.

For design help, their architect, Nick Winton of

Anmahian Winton Architects, suggested contacting landscape architect Stephanie Hubbard, the founder of Boston-based SiteCreative. Hubbard’s work is renowned for its beauty, focus, and restraint, and this project would test her skills in a tight urban setting.

Hubbard’s main objective was to create a tableau that would retain its charm throughout all four seasons. To draw the inside out, she extended the kitchen’s white ceramic pavers into the yard, bordered by pavers in black granite (a material

she also used for the short run of stairs leading up to the parking level). Hubbard designed a screen of evergreen hedges in large corten steel planters, which she chose for their warm orange patina. In the foreground, Jacquemontii birches “are a new, big focal feature, which creates a cozy space in the evening,” she says. Her landscape design also includes wild grasses and flowering plants with an abundance of white blooms. “Our plantings stayed within a very simple vocabulary to keep the focus on the lushness

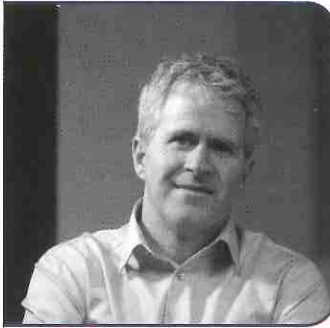
of ferns and textures,” she says. Hubbard paneled the walls of the yard with space-brightening white cement board, typically used as a building veneer.

When the sun sets, the magic starts: “Lighting was very important,” Hubbard says. “We used very low-level landscape lighting—not too bright—to add glow around the edges, as well as uplights.” Once the couple’s two young sons are in bed, the homeowners turn on the gas-fueled fire pit (set in a bed of river stones), and break out the cocktails.

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