

Historic Back Bay condo boasts magnificent details

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hung in a niche above the parlor's fireplace. Today, a mirror resides in the hallowed place.

The building occupies a prime location in the Back Bay – midway between Dartmouth and Exeter streets on the sunny side of the street. Apparently, the “D” and “E” blocks are most coveted by buyers in the Back Bay because these streets are centrally located near all amenities of the neighborhood – from Copley Square to Newbury Street to the Esplanade along the Charles River.

Enter the building and you come in to a grand foyer replete with the trappings of the days when interior design meant ornate flourishes such as Greek pillars, wainscoting, carved ceiling beams, lavish wood floors. The original double bridal staircase still stands with its original handrails, balusters and newel posts. However, one half of the bifurcated carpeted stairway leads nowhere; the other half ascends to Unit 5, which is up one flight.

Go into the 1,695-square-foot, one-bedroom, two-bath residence, and your eye is immediately drawn

to the grand parlor, which remains a very grand parlor. This is a living room the way living rooms once held throngs for distinctive entertaining and sumptuous schmoozing.

Today the room, with its walnut walls and wainscoting, is large enough to accommodate distinct spaces for dining or sitting. The windows at the street side are stunning portals and let the light stream in. There is one window with 18 panes of glass; the other floor-to-ceiling window is a bow front overlooking Commonwealth Avenue Mall.

The details of the room are elaborate, with crown moldings, hidden cabinets in the wainscoting, and ceiling plaster reliefs. The wood-burning fireplace is surrounded by marble.

The dining space is also a library area with built-ins. The massive doors from the hallway still have the original brass-locking fixtures.

Across the hallway from the living area is the bedroom – a massive suite, with a fireplace and a wall of windows. The bedroom also has all the detail of the living room – the wainscoting, ceiling decoration and elaborates craftsmanship. The wood-burning fireplace is framed



The kitchen of Unit 5 at 177 Commonwealth Avenue is notable for its herringbone oak floor and the original wood-burning fireplace.

by an ornate wooden mantel and wall sconces.

Like the parlor room, the bedroom is large enough to be divided into separate use areas – such as a study, dressing room and exercise space. There is a walk-in closet with shelving directly off the bedroom. There is also a bonus room, which could be used as a home office, a



Back in its Victorian heyday, this condominium was a grand floor in a private mansion where every room was extravagant. Thus this bedroom is the size of a large studio apartment.

COURTESY PHOTOS / MARSH PROPERTIES

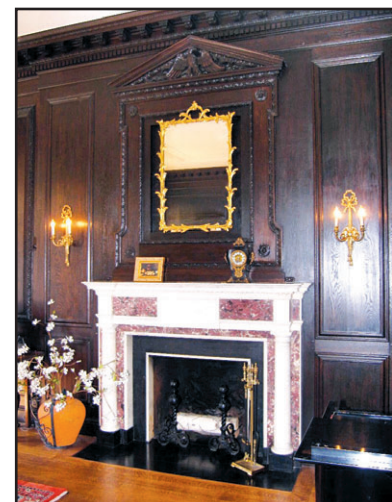
friendly bedroom or extravagant walk-in closet/dressing room. This study also has two closets for lots of storage.

An en suite bath is located off the bedroom. This is a large comfortable tiled bath with a soaking tub that has Jacuzzi jets and double sinks on the vanity. The bathroom, naturally, has shelves and cubbies.

A large multi-paneled window, with French door styling, is the most prominent feature of the bedroom and the most distinctive. This looks over the back byways of the Back Bay and is high enough to be a safe perch. The window opens to a wrought iron fire escape, which is sculpturally decorative.

Off the herringbone-wood floors of the hallway is another full bath, with a glass shower. There is also a laundry closet with a full-sized washer and dryer.

And the cozy kitchen is located across the hall from the second bath. This kitchen looks clean and efficient with white cabinets and white appliances, including a stove, refrigerator and sink. The kitchen's most distinctive feature is a wood-burning fireplace with a brick hearth, which gives an air of



The fireplace in the parlor is a grand hearth with an elegant wooden mantel surround. A portrait of John Adams by Gilbert Stuart once hung in the niche where a mirror now hangs.

authenticity to the cooking area.

Unit 5 at 177 Commonwealth Ave. includes direct access to a full parking space behind the building. There is central heat and air conditioning. All the electricity is included in the condo fee, which surely is a small price to pay to live in a quintessential historic building of the Back Bay.



The entry of 177 Commonwealth Ave. is grand, with a wedding staircase and elaborate period details such as pillars and ceiling inlays.



The mansion at 177 Commonwealth Ave. was designed in 1882 by Snell and Gregerson for John Quincy Adams, the great-grandson and grandson of the second and sixth U.S. presidents.

DETAILS

Address: 177 Commonwealth Ave., Unit 5, Back Bay

BR/BA: One bedroom, two baths

Price: \$1.495 million

Size: 1,695 square feet

Age: 1882

Price: \$1.495 million

Taxes: \$13,375 (with residential exemption)

Condo fee: \$620 per month

Features of home: Built for John Quincy Adams, this historic Back Bay townhouse with nine condominiums has entry foyer with full decorative details, including Greek pillars and double bridal staircase; Unit 5 has massive front parlor room that can be divided into dining, lounging and library areas, floor-to-ceiling windows, fireplace with marble surround, wainscoting with hidden cabinets; galley kitchen; large, light-filled bedroom that can be divided into separate use areas such as dressing or home office; en suite bath with double vanity and Jacuzzi soaking tub; extra room off bedroom could be office or “friendly” bedroom.

Close by: Back Bay's shops, restaurants and fine attractions such as Newbury Street, Boylston Street, Copley Square. Commonwealth Avenue Mall, Charles River Esplanade; nearby the Public Garden; easy access to MBTA Green Line at Copley Square or Arlington Street, Storrow Drive, Route 90.

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This property may be seen by appointment.

