

BY ROE OSBORN



The Carpenter, With the Hammer in the Hall

Last July I visited the Crosby Mansion in the sleepy little rural town of Brewster, Mass., on Cape Cod. I'd been fascinated by the place since I moved to the Cape, and I jumped at the chance to take a tour. Coincidentally I'd just finished editing Gary Katz's article on classical trim ("A Look at Traditional Trim Designs," Aug/15), so I was primed to take an especially close look at the trim in this grand old home. The visit did not disappoint: The home displayed a virtual smorgasbord of styles and details, which I blogged about on the *JLC* website.

I found the strangest mix of door and window trim in the servants' quarters on the third floor of the mansion, which had recently been opened to the public after a huge restoration effort by the Crosby volunteers. This mix included a quirky wrapped-rosette (1) (a detail I'd also seen in the second-floor bedrooms) and, nearby, plain square-edge stock with a head casing that projected slightly past the jambs. In another example (2), a window with plain trim was adjacent to a window with a more elaborate trim that sported a thicker, heavier profile with rounded back band and curved transitions between the

decorative elements. The flat head casing on this heavier trim, also found around a doorway in the hallway (3), had to be quite thick to project over the heavy casing and looked too large and cumbersome, even with the cornice detail that wrapped around the top of the head casing. It was the only place in the mansion where the molding felt out of proportion—and was out of character with the level of detail in the rest of the home. (In his article, Katz had stressed proportion as being critical to details that pleased the eye.)

I longed to go back in time to find out how these odd details had come about. Did the owners run short of funds and change the detailing for the servants to something more affordable? Was that odd profile just something that was readily available from local suppliers? Did the carpenters resort to simpler details just to finish the place? Perhaps one of the volunteers knows—or maybe the answers are known only to the ghosts that folks have seen roaming the halls of the Crosby Mansion.

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Photos by Roe Osborn