

# Hiding Ductwork

While Turn-of-the-Century and pre-war houses have their charm, the lack of central-cooling and -heating systems in many of these houses is a common complaint among owners today. Now there's technology that allows these systems to be installed without injuring the aesthetics (and decorative-plaster surfaces) of a period interior.

Georgian Rowhouse HVAC System  
General Contractor: Jim Hunter, HIC, Inc., Arlington, VA  
SpacePak Installer: Reed Heating & Air Conditioning, Forestville, MD

A serious fire in a historic Victorian row house in the Georgetown area of Washington, D.C., in April 1999 led to its restoration and the installation of a new, state-of-the-art heating and cooling system in the building. The fire destroyed the home's original windows, a three-story antique staircase, and the central-air-conditioning system. It also caused serious damage to the kitchen, dining room, upstairs bedrooms, and other areas of the house. Despite the damage, the fire gave the homeowners a chance to start over with a new HVAC system.

"A previous renovation of the house in 1973 had included the installation of a central-air-conditioning system. At the time, the big sheetmetal ductwork had been hidden inside closets, and special enclosures had to be built to conceal the ductwork," said Don Crockett, the owner of the house. After the fire, the walls and ceilings were open for the restoration, and presented the opportunity to regain living space without compromising historic details of the house.

SpacePak, a central-air-conditioning system using narrow, flexible ductwork, can be easily snaked through the walls like electrical wiring. The system was installed along with a new radiant heating system. Old radiators were replaced with concealed piping under the floors. The boiler was relocated to the roof. Coupled with the radiant floor-heating system, the SpacePak system will rectify the extreme temperature variances from floor to ceiling and the house drafts that were common with the old system.



A fire gutted much of this Georgetown-area townhouse, which was later fitted with a SpacePak "high-velocity comfort" system.

The SpacePak system uses pre-insulated 2-in. tubing (inner dia.). The round air outlets are about the size of a CD, and the blower unit is small enough to fit in a crawlspace or attic. The deep coil design is also designed to remove more humidity than conventional central-air systems. It can also be used with a hot-water pump, electric coil, or heat pump to provide heating.

Some of the renovations to the house required the approval of the Commission on Fine Arts for Washington, D.C., and the Historic Preservation Review Board of the District of Columbia. All the

original windows were destroyed, and are being replaced with reproductions that conform to the home's historic-preservation requirements. The three-story open staircase will also be re-created. ♦

For more information, contact SpacePak, 260 N. Elm St., Westfield, MA 01085; 413-564-5530, phone; 413-568-9613, fax; or log onto their website, [www.spacepak.com](http://www.spacepak.com) Write in No. 518



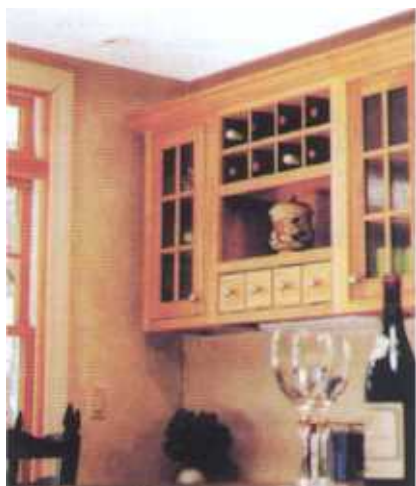
Inconspicuous outlets about the size of a CD are barely noticeable and can be installed in ceilings, walls, or floors. They can be painted or wallpapered to blend in with the room.



The system can supply central heating and cooling to historic properties without disturbing the historic details of the space.



SpacePak's compact blower fits neatly into a small space such as attic, closet, or crawlspace. Inset: Flexible, insulated 2-in. dia. tubing disperses conditioned air from the blower to the rooms. The tubing is hidden between wall studs or ceiling joists like electrical wiring.



The SpacePak outlet virtually disappears in this traditionally styled kitchen in another residence.