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New Old House

Empty nesters refresh and restore a vintage St. Paul bungalow

BY SUZY FRISCH | PHOTOS BY GREG PAGE

Empty nesters Tim and Sandy wanted to move back to the city from the suburbs. When they found a bungalow in St. Paul near the Mississippi River, they were smitten with the neighborhood and the space offered by the 1922 house. Problem was, the home had been remodeled extensively and, in the process, lost much of its inherent bungalow charm.

Previous owners had removed some windows, original built-ins, and interior walls to make the main floor more open, but the changes left the space dark and lacking in personality. They also painted over original woodwork and installed a kitchen that Tim likens to a '60s mobile home. In its favor, the



LEFT Same footprint, better flow: The former kitchen became a side entrance and the kitchen moved to the rear of the house. **ABOVE** New, period-appropriate finishes include green marble soapstone countertops, white subway tile backsplash, a white apron sink, and quarter-sawn white oak cabinetry.



house possessed ample room for his woodworking workshop in the basement, a large kitchen, and two bedrooms and a bath upstairs.

The couple turned to David Heide Design Studio of Minneapolis to transform the home back to its original bungalow style, complete with Arts-and-Crafts detailing. Sandy and Tim envisioned a new layout within the same footprint, with a larger kitchen and a master suite in place of two main-floor bedrooms.

The design team's solution began at the front of the house, where they captured space from a front porch and turned half of it into a foyer. That provided a



more gracious entry for guests, says architect Mark Nelson.

The team added a wall to create more defined spaces for the living and dining rooms while bringing back some of the windows. The kitchen moved from the middle of the main floor to the back of the house. The former kitchen became a side entrance for the family and a transition space between the kitchen and dining room that boasts an island peninsula, shelves for cookbooks, and a small desk.

The kitchen is now spacious, functional, and light-filled thanks to a trifecta of windows overlooking the backyard. Green marble soapstone countertops, a white apron sink, white subway tile backsplash, and the quarter-sawn white oak cabinets combine to create a warm, usable place



resources

ARCHITECT: DAVID HEIDE DESIGN STUDIO
BUILDER: CROWN CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, INC.

project: KITCHEN



for just the couple or for casual entertaining.

"It's probably one-and-a-half times bigger than the old kitchen, but the most important thing is that it's now at the end of the house so there is no cross-traffic through it," Nelson says. "I really love the openness and the way the house flows. We've returned it to its original character. That was our greatest challenge, and yet I think it's the greatest success of this project."

The new design also moved the staircase to eliminate a steep, awkward climb to the second story. Now the open oak stairwell starts in the kitchen, adding a loftiness to the space. Crown Construction Company, Inc. of Golden Valley helped bring back the charm with a built-in buffet in the dining room, new moldings, two-panel doors, and other period millwork.

Two small main-floor bedrooms became a suite with a spacious walk-in closet and a large, airy—and modern—bathroom with both a walk-in shower and standalone tub. Decorative stained glass in the front foyer and in the bathroom ties the spaces together while reinforcing the Arts-and-Crafts aesthetic.

While they were reworking the main floor, the owners decided to add a powder bath and fix structural issues with the roof caused by past remodeling. While those changes added to the cost, they were important in restoring the house to its past glory, says Crown owner



and president Willie Anderson.

Tim, a retired lawyer, is finishing the upstairs to create two bedrooms and a bath, and, eventually, he will remodel the basement to include a family room and laundry room. For now, though, the couple couldn't be happier with the transformation. "It's a new old house," says Sandy. "It has a lot of the integrity of a bungalow, but now it has energy-efficient windows and a new kitchen. The layout works well for us." **MH**

SUZY FRISCH IS A FREELANCE WRITER IN APPLE VALLEY.

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