

A Small Addition Gives Big Benefits

A row house remodel with kitchen

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A carefully designed small addition can make for a large improvement to a Washington, DC home, particularly when the design takes into consideration the personal interests of the homeowner. When the owner of the brick row house, circa 1932, began to think about how to best expand her home to include a larger kitchen, more living space and proper storage, she knew 15 years in a home she loved meant any remodeling project would have to meet certain requirements.

The requirements were clear: build a rear addition to accommodate an expanded kitchen, enlarge a first floor family room, remodel a decrepit second floor sleeping porch to expand two rear bedrooms, and perhaps most importantly, be respectful of the home's older architecture.

When it came to expanding the row house, our design/build team got creative, and our analysis found that the DC zoning regulations accommodated a rear wing addition with a footprint of 10'-9" x 9'-8", plus a 2'-6" expansion of the existing family room. The expansion was necessary as every bit of space was required in order to fit the homeowner's needs. The project became the first home on the block to have a rear wing addition with windows on two sides.

Like most row houses, this home has a long hallway from the front door to the back of the house. The design for the rear addition takes advantage of this circulation path by segmenting the path into the entry foyer, basement stair hall lined with built-in cabinets and powder room access, butler's pantry with a bistro table, and finally arriving in the new galley kitchen. The long hallway with its sequence of spaces are each defined by square cased openings, one with an arch, and made functional with built-in storage.

An added benefit of the project was the incorporation of the existing sleeping porch into the second floor bedroom space. The old sleeping porch had been enclosed with poor quality storm windows and aluminum siding. There was no

heating, cooling or insulation, and the old wood floor sloped for drainage. Because the porch was unusable for daily use, it was being used for storage by the homeowner. An ample space, the porch measured 18' x 10', and it provided for generous new bedrooms when they were combined. The rear brick wall was cut open and beams were installed to allow for the integration of the bedroom and porch. The existing oak flooring was extended,



New arched-top windows in an enlarged family room resemble those found in Italian and French architecture

and windows were installed across the rear façade. One of the new bedrooms is now so large it could be used as a family room—currently it is being used as a TV room, while the smaller bedroom was designated as a guest room and received a new low-spring arch that creates an alcove where a guest bed and night stand are nestled. Enclosing the former sleeping porch proved to be an extremely cost-effective way of gaining bedroom space on the second floor, while staying true to the home's architectural history.

In addition to ensuring that the remodeling project maintained the architectural integrity of her home, the homeowner also sought us out to design a "cook's kitchen." Requirements for the



A creative expansion of a DC row house gives the homeowner a custom cook's kitchen, complete with a cobalt blue Viking range and farm sink



The addition of a butler's pantry and painted cabinetry with glass doors adds storage for the homeowner's collections of china, silver, and glassware

kitchen included a cobalt blue 48" wide Viking range, a window over a large farm sink, and sufficient cabinet space to store collections of china, silver, glassware, copperware, and linens. After many years of personal collecting, coupled over the years with inherited family collections, organized storage and display were essential

components of the project.

The available space was maximized with custom built-in cabinets, some with glass doors, for display and shelving. With an eye to versatility and functionality for visible storage, all the details were carefully considered, designed, and constructed—from a custom plate rack to display antique platters to paneled doors custom-built by our carpenters to replicate the home's original doors. The thoughtful design allows the homeowner to organize and display all of her collections in a visually appealing way.

Design features in the small kitchen went beyond just storage. The homeowner, fond of the arched-top windows often found in French and Italian architecture, encouraged us to specify arched-top French doors and windows for her project. Above the cobalt blue Viking range we designed a recessed niche accented with tumbled mosaic stone for storing cooking oils. The kitchen's backsplash was tiled in a limestone subway tile (3" x 6"), while the majority of the kitchen cabinetry was painted a pale sage green to harmonize with the quartz countertops. A tall section of cabinetry housing a refrigerator, microwave drawer and appliance "garage," was stained in a medium walnut to provide variety and contrast with the painted cabinets. They are fitted out with a spice drawer, roll-out shelves, and a knife block to make life easier for a cook. Oak floors were stained to contrast with the cabinet color and installed throughout to unify the entire row house.

For this client and this project, the homeowner's collections and personal interests strongly influenced the functionality and aesthetics of the new space. Now, with the homeowner's collections properly displayed, the homeowner is continually reminded of a vacation, a family member or a special occasion. The remodeling has made this home a personal and memorable space.

Bruce Wentworth, AIA is an architect and contractor providing residential design/build services with Wentworth, Inc. Learn more about the firm's services at www.wentworth-studio.com or call 240-395-0705 x 100. ★