

Growing Family



Growing Bungalow

Tripled in size, this house went from a weekend cottage to a

BY CHARLES MOORE

I grew up in Falls Church, Va., not far from Cherry Street, a quiet, old neighborhood where I always felt at home. As a teenager, regardless of where I was going, I'd find an excuse to drive down Cherry Street. The more time I spent in this neighborhood, the more I became enamored with one house: a one-story 1920s bungalow. I called it a "cottage bungalow" because of its diminutive scale, low-pitch roof, and lack of superfluous decoration.

After starting my own architecture firm, I worked on a few of the Cherry Street houses. While most of them grew, the small bungalow remained mostly unchanged and ultimately came up for sale. Of course, I bought it, and without hesitation, I restored it to its original

charm. I thought my work was complete; the house was perfect for my wife and me. Then I found out it soon would become home for more.

If I didn't remodel it, I thought, someone else would. So we decided to stay and add space for our growing family. However, the project posed personal and architectural dilemmas: How could I expand the charming little house without losing the modest exterior appearance that makes it so perfect? And how would a new exterior stay true to the original house while accommodating an open, organized, and light-filled floor plan that feels relevant to the way we live today?

Putting the neighborhood before the house

Searching for resolutions to these dilemmas, I began to study other houses in our neighborhood. Mostly older colonial-revival, Itali-



home for four and still fits quietly into its old neighborhood

anate, and Gothic-revival homes, all of them had been renovated and expanded over time, but had stayed true to their original style with appropriate proportions. Surrounded by two-story homes, our house not only was much smaller than any other in the neighborhood, but it also was the only Craftsman-style house on the block, a distinction that I did not want to lose.

My next task was to study our house. I noticed that the siding's 5-in. exposure complemented the house's small size; that the 6-in. skirt-board and wood drip edge provided a pleasing transition between the concrete foundation and the clapboard siding; that the 4-in. corner boards made every turn crisp; that the 2-ft. overhanging eaves and rakes, with exposed rafter tails and beaded sheathing, provided shade and texture; and that the wooden brackets structurally and aestheti-

cally supported each leg of rake. Originally designed for function, these details created the aesthetic that drew me to the house in the first place, and they had to be maintained.

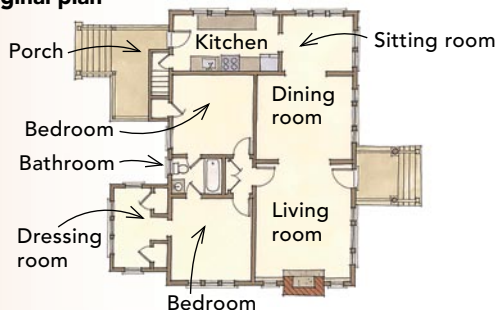
I also noticed the effect that two trees had on the house. A tall eastern red cedar hugging the northeast corner reinforced the small scale, and an American sycamore in the south-side yard offered shade from the midday summer sun. Both needed to be saved.

By the end of this exercise, I was confident that I could expand our house without adversely affecting the character of the neighborhood. Still, I wanted to maintain a diminutive scale that was more friendly than imposing. That's why I decided to put most of the new space behind the house, where it would be hidden by the new second floor (photo above taken at A on floor plan). To keep the house from becoming



BIGGER HOUSE, BETTER CONNECTIONS

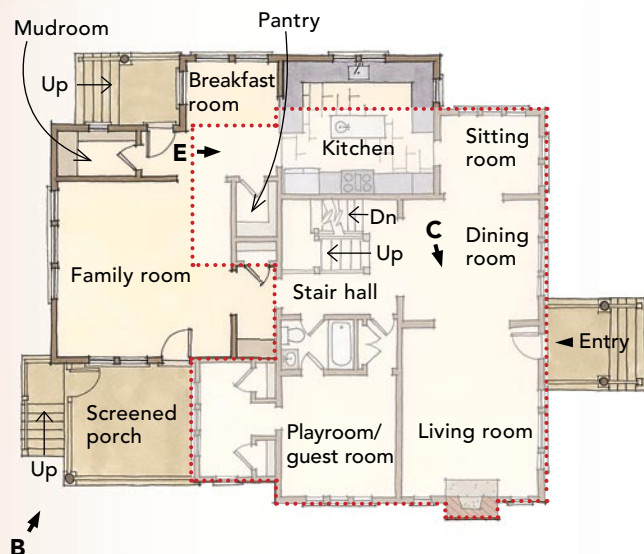
Original plan



One of the easiest ways to maintain the charm of the original house was to save as many rooms as possible. However, the first floor consisted of a series of rooms that were connected poorly to one another. To improve the plan, the new stair hall and the expanded kitchen physically and visually connect the living,

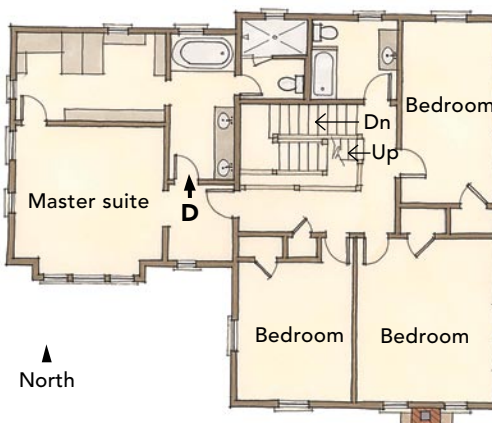
dining, and sitting rooms of the original house to the new family and breakfast rooms added to the back (photo right taken at B on floor plan). In the new master suite upstairs, you can move in an efficient circular pattern through the foyer, bedroom, closet, and bathroom without ever having to go backward.

New first-floor plan



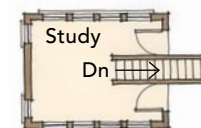
Dotted line represents original footprint.

New second-floor plan



Photos taken at lettered positions.

New third-floor plan



0 4 8 16 ft.



SPECS

Bedrooms: 5

Bathrooms: 3

Size: 3300 sq. ft.

Cost: \$200 per sq. ft.

Completed: 2005

Location: Falls Church, Va.

Architect: Moore Architects PC;
Charles Moore, AIA; Sarah Farrell,
project architect

Builder: GN Contracting Inc.



too tall, the new roof springs from 6-ft. second-floor walls. Shed dormers punch through the roof to increase headroom in the two street-facing bedrooms.

In the back of the house, I added a two-story gable addition for a large family room on the first floor and a master suite above. A small third floor, visible only from the back, makes room for a study. Finally, on the north side of the house, I bumped out the wall slightly with a single-story wing to gain space in the kitchen. Although the steeply pitched roof on the two main gables is tall, lower-pitched dormer roofs and single-story shed roofs help to minimize the house's scale.

Integrating old rooms into the new plan

The original house was as simple inside as it was out (original floor plan, facing page). The front entry opened directly into the living room and led to a series of public spaces: a dining room sandwiched between the living room on the south side and a small sitting room to the north. An inefficient galley kitchen provided access to a back porch and a basement stairway. Two small bedrooms in the back of the house were accessible from a hall off the living room; a bathroom was squeezed in between. My goal for the first floor was to keep as much of the original plan as possible, to expand the kitchen, and to add a large family room, all well connected.

The solution was to create a circulation area where the smaller of the two bedrooms had been. The area is now home to a hallway that leads to the new family room, a staircase that climbs to the new second floor, and stairs that descend to the basement. I was able to save the other bedroom for a playroom (and guest room) and to keep the living room, the dining room, and the sitting room as they were.

The addition on the back of the house is mostly an open family room. It connects to a breakfast room on one side and to a screened porch on the other, capturing late-afternoon sunsets and providing access to



ORIGINAL



UPDATED

A little sophistication for simple trim. All the original trim in the house was made from flat stock. To add a slightly more modern look, the new trim incorporates a parting bead and crown along the top of the casing. In the living room, the Rumford fireplace has a shallow, tall, and efficient firebox designed to throw heat into the room. Photo left taken at C on floor plan.



FineHomebuilding.com

See more ideas online for combining traditional Craftsman-style details with modern design and materials.



A TOWERING TWO-CAR GARAGE



Every 1920s-era house needed a barn or a carriage house. In the 21st century, it seems that every house needs a two-car garage. I don't have anything against garages, except that they often are a missed opportunity. When I decided to build a detached garage in the rear corner of our lot, where it would take a backseat to the house and not block sunlight or views, I was determined to make it more than a shell to hold a couple of cars. By default, a roof creates space above the cars, so there was no question that our garage would have a full second floor. The challenge was to make the building useful and interesting.

The 24-ft.-sq. garage mimics all the details of the main house. The garage is stout, with two small shed dormers on the front that break up

the roof area. The entrance is attached to the south side of the garage under a shed roof that also provides storage space. A tower rises out of the shed roof to an elevation above the ridge of the garage and holds a winding stairwell that leads to the second floor.

Besides adding a unique visual element to the building, the tower solves a problem. Putting the stairs inside the main part of the garage would have taken away valuable storage space. Because the tower is not habitable space, zoning allowed it to exceed accessory-building height limits.

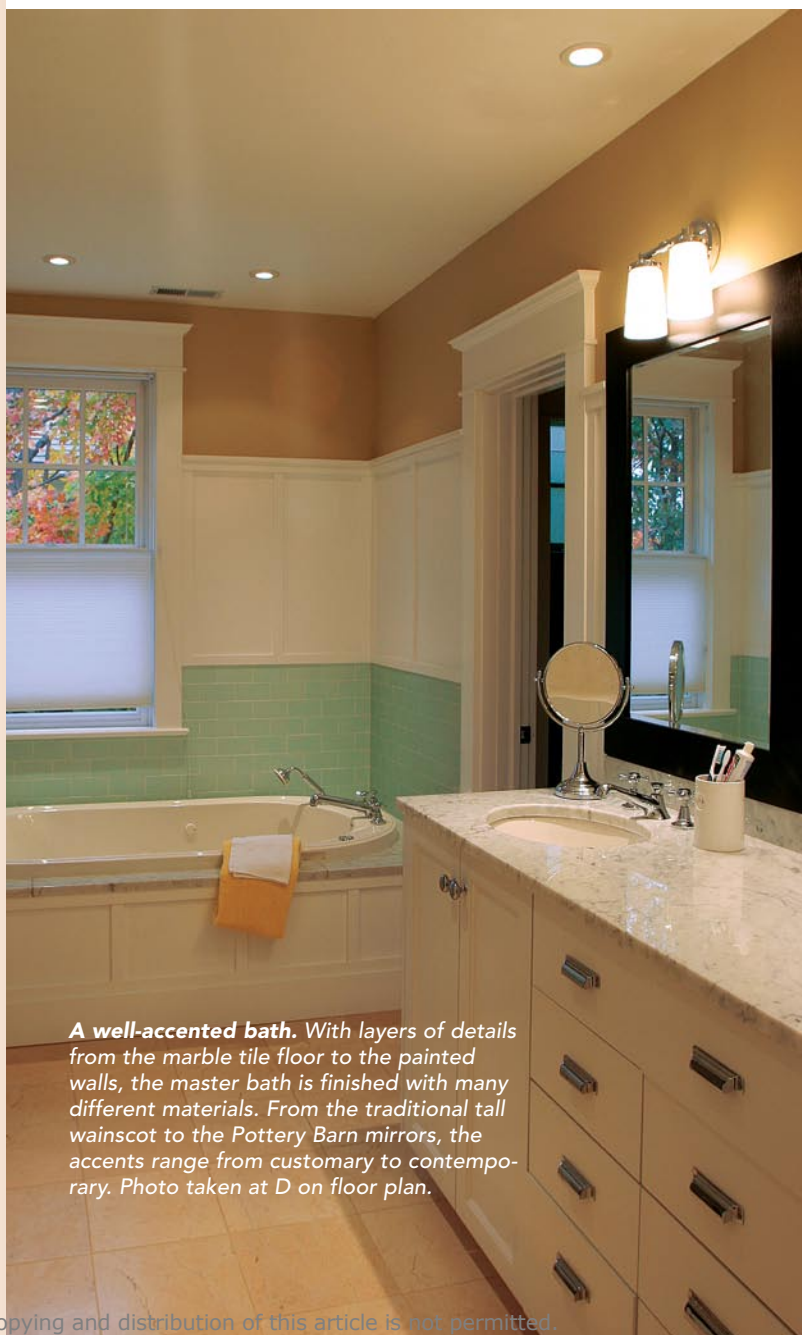
With a shed dormer along the back, two smaller dormers facing the street, and windows on both the tower and the opposite gable end, the garage's second floor gets natural light from all directions. Today, the upstairs is used for storage. Someday, though, it will make a great home office, exercise room, or small living space; the garage is insulated and has electrical service.

a backyard patio. Bumping out the kitchen wall allowed me to expand the galley kitchen into a more functional working arrangement.

The new second floor is standard and includes a master suite and three smaller bedrooms with a shared bath. In fact, the most interesting part of the second floor might be the stairs leading to the third-floor study. The study provides a home office and acts as a light monitor, pulling sunlight into the center of the house. Opening any one of the study's eight awning windows during the summer creates an updraft that draws hot air up and out of the house.

Details and finishes for a modern Craftsman aesthetic

Without straying too far from the Craftsman style, the new interior is a hybrid of the house's existing finishes and details and some more-modern styles. The original house was trimmed with flat casings and baseboards with an ogee profile and beveled plinth blocks. I wanted to maintain the simple feel of this detailing while adding a little sophistication, so I included a parting bead and crown molding along the tops of the casings (photos p. 109). All the interior trim is painted bright white to contrast with the many different wall colors in the house.



A well-accented bath. With layers of details from the marble tile floor to the painted walls, the master bath is finished with many different materials. From the traditional tall wainscot to the Pottery Barn mirrors, the accents range from customary to contemporary. Photo taken at D on floor plan.



A collection of finishes and colors reinforces a modern Craftsman look.

View from the new to the old. From the new breakfast room in the back of the house, you can see all the way into the original sitting room in the front of the house. Bumping out the exterior kitchen wall made space to turn an inefficient galley kitchen into a more comfortable workspace. Photo taken at E on floor plan.

Five-panel doors capture the essence of the Craftsman style, but these new doors use MDF (medium-density fiberboard) and a high-tech manufacturing process from TruStile (www.trustile.com) that prevents cracking and separating around the panels. Although they come from many different sources, all the door hardware, light fixtures, and floor registers are oil-rubbed bronze. The old oak floors in the original house had seen better days, so I replaced them with new white-oak strip flooring. However, I saved and refinished the beautiful heart-pine floors in the old first-floor bedroom where the playroom is now.

The original living-room fireplace was built without a damper or a lined flue, and it drew poorly. Rather than try to salvage what seemed to be a complete failure, I decided to build a new Rumford fireplace (bottom photo, p. 109). The shallow firebox used in a Rumford design helps to push heat into the room instead of up the chimney.

In the kitchen, a collection of materials, finishes, and colors also reinforces a modern Craftsman look. With a simple, recessed flat-

panel design, the base cabinets are clear-finished maple, and the wall cabinets are painted bright white. Around the perimeter, the countertops are honed black granite. The center island, though, is honed Carrara marble, which draws attention to the central workspace. The island, the stove, and the main kitchen sink share the same centerline as the double-hung kitchen window above the sink. All the appliances are stainless steel, and the floor is tiled with honed green slate in a running-bond pattern.

The bathrooms all are finished in white flat-panel wainscoting with a high top trim that draws attention to the narrow band of painted wall (this detail also was used in the dining room). The bathroom floors are tiled with 12-in.-sq. cream honed marble, and the bath and shower surrounds are 3-in. by 6-in. subway tile. The mirrors are from Pottery Barn and Restoration Hardware.

Beginning this project was scary for me. Our first daughter was born the same day that the roof was torn off the house (our second daughter was born just as I was wrapping up this article). In the end, everything worked out fine. I'm sure that as our family continues to grow, the house will continue to adapt gracefully to our needs. □

Charles Moore, AIA, is the principal at Moore Architects PC in Alexandria, Va. Photos by Brian Pontolilo, except where noted.