

# Putting the Craft in a Pattern-Book House

In one of the D.C. area's most desirable neighborhoods, a potential teardown gets reworked for modern living

BY BRIAN PONTOLIO

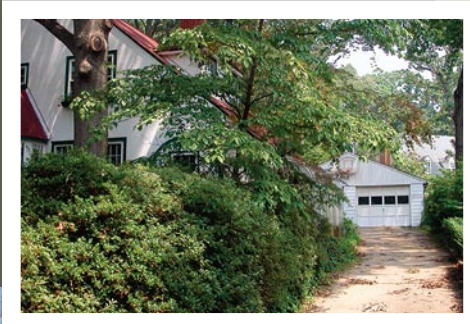
Architect Charlie Moore had seen this house many times before the Beddards' Realtor asked him to consult on a possible purchase. Well, not this particular house (photo below), but many variations of the same plan, which was built around the Alexandria, Va., area in the 1920s. "It's a pattern-book or catalog house," Moore says. "There's a bunch of them around with the same asymmetrical saltbox shape turned sideways from the street."

The reason why the most likely fate of this "neat little house" was to be torn down, says Moore, was not so much that it had been "mucked up" over the years with poorly executed additions and remodeling projects, but that it is in one of the Wash-



**The missing porch comes home.** Tapered porch columns hint at the Craftsman-style bungalow they might have built if it weren't for the area's restrictive zoning laws. Photos taken at A on floor plan.





**Shed the garage.** The area's zoning laws include garage space in the allowable size of a house. For a family that needs only enough storage for a few bikes and a handful of yard tools, replacing the garage with a small shed gained a backyard and space for a new family room, dining room, and master suite, and an additional bedroom. Photos above taken at B on floor plan.

ington, D.C., area's most desirable neighborhoods. In other words, the value of the existing house was not in the structure, but in the property and its proximity to our nation's capital. Jeannie Beddard in particular liked the location for the "short walk to the local elementary school and the small-town atmosphere."

The truth is that the Beddards might have torn down the house had it not been for local zoning regulations that restrict the size of a house to a fraction of the size of the prop-

erty. Coupled with the restrictive setbacks of a narrow lot, starting over wouldn't have allowed the Beddards to build what they really wanted: a Craftsman-style bungalow. "We were basically working with a new-house budget," Moore says, "so they could have done it, but it wouldn't have been a much bigger house and it would have been an oddly shaped bungalow."

With the first compromise behind them, Moore set out to do what Jeannie Beddard says they hired him to do: "Rework an old

"Before" photos: Courtesy of Moore Architects

house for modern living.” Together, they made some surprising decisions in the process.

### Lose what you won't use

As the Beddards found it, the driveway extended past the house and led to a large two-car garage. Unfortunately, in the eyes of the zoning board, every square foot of garage counted as living space in terms of lot coverage. There was no way Moore was going to be able to expand the kitchen and add a home office, a powder room, and a mudroom on the first floor, and add a full master suite and a guest bath on the second floor, without expanding the footprint. These spaces were only a few of the must-haves on the three-and-a-half page wish list the Beddards presented to Moore. “Plenty of windows and natural light” was on the first page as well.

In the end, the Beddards decided they could live without the garage and would rather allocate the space to the house. The result was a pair of two-story additions for the house and a small backyard shed for bikes and yard tools.

The bigger of the two additions is on the north-facing back side of the house. On the



### IT'S LIKE A WHOLE NEW HOUSE

The bold decision to move the stairs gave the entry foyer some breathing room and allowed both the first- and second-floor plans to revolve around gathering spaces. Downstairs, the kitchen is the hub, with living areas orbiting its central location. Upstairs, what might have been a narrow hallway is instead a spacious gallery. Photo above taken at D on floor plan.



**Keep it quaint, make it modern.** Although it now burns gas instead of wood, with a new mantel and a tiled surround, the fireplace warms the house more than ever. Photo taken at C on floor plan.



Photos taken at lettered positions.



## SPECS

- Bedrooms:** 4
- Bathrooms:** 3½
- Size:** 4064 sq. ft. (including 1139-sq.-ft. basement rec room)
- Cost:** \$165 per sq. ft.
- Completed:** 2007
- Location:** Alexandria, Va.
- Architect:** Charles Moore, AIA
- Project Architect:** Charles Warren
- Builder:** G&M Contracting Inc.

first floor, it's all family room; upstairs, it's all master suite. In this way, both spaces get natural light from three directions. Similarly, the smaller addition, which bumps out toward the driveway on the east-facing side of the house, is used for single rooms: a dining room downstairs and a bedroom above. Both of these spaces also have windows in all three walls.

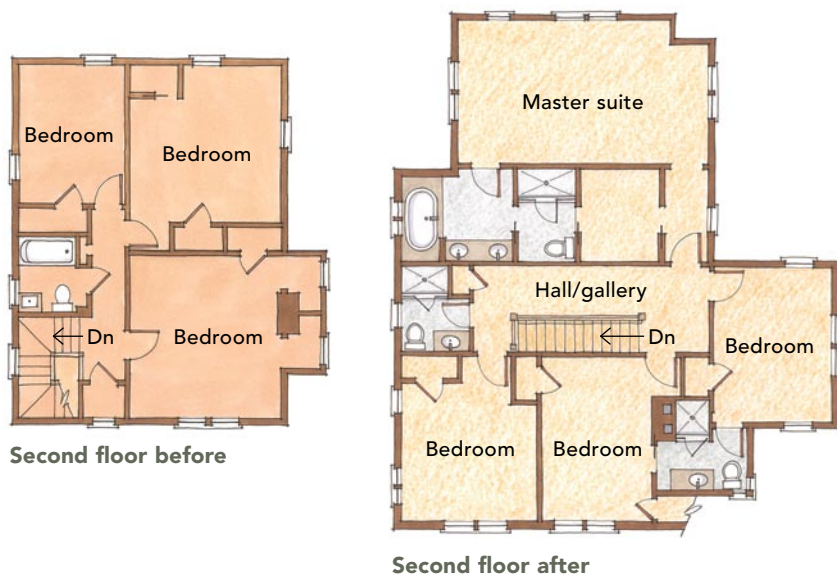
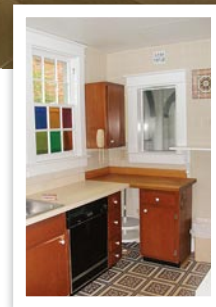
### The kitchen is the center of life and house

With all the purposeful spaces designed into houses these days, along with a common desire for natural light and outdoor connections, exterior wall space is valuable real estate in a home. On the first floor of this house, much of the perimeter is occupied by light-filled living spaces, including a family room, a dining room, a study, and a living room. The exception is a string of utility spaces that line the west-facing exterior wall.

En route to the centrally located kitchen, a powder room, a coat closet, a laundry room, and a pantry share the last stretch of available exterior wall space and landlock the kitchen.



**Landlocked, but light filled.** The old kitchen sported some sweet details, but it was a bit out of date. Lacking exterior walls, the new kitchen shares daylight and views with the family room. A breakfast counter connects the spaces. Photo above taken at E on floor plan.



Second floor before

Second floor after



## A PROPERTY WITH PRIVACY DESERVES A PATIO WITH A PERGOLA

With a private backyard this close to the city, the property was one of the house's biggest selling points. But while a great outdoor space was a must-have, the pergola was a compromise. Like the former garage, a covered porch is considered living space in the area's zoning laws. A pergola is not considered cover. Photo taken at F on floor plan.



**Cover and convenience.** Instead of opening into a tight vestibule and leading guests into the library, the new side entry offers protection from the elements outside and a sensible mud-room within. Photos taken at G (left) and H (below) on floor plan.



But the central kitchen works surprisingly well, says Jeannie Beddard, who wasn't particularly focused on the kitchen during the design process. "I'm not a gourmet cook," she says. "I do cook every night, but I was just more interested in getting the living spaces right." Having lived in the house for a few years now, Jeannie is impressed by how well the kitchen is connected to the family room, the backyard, and the side porch. "It's kind of the hub of the house," she says, "but the great thing about this house is that there is no space that isn't used well and used often."

### Adding some Craftsman to the plan

Even though the Beddards decided to work with the unbalanced facade of the house, they still hoped that a covered front porch, reminiscent of the Craftsman-style bungalows they've long admired, could be part of the new exterior. They got what they wanted,

complete with tapered columns. Because a covered porch is considered living space in the eyes of the zoning board, however, Moore couldn't shelter the backyard patio. Instead, he incorporated a pergola to match the one he designed as a gateway between the driveway and the backyard.

Like the bases of the front-porch columns and the pergolas, the base of the foundation is veneered with local stone. Besides tying the house to the landscape, Moore hopes the masonry will help protect the house's grade-level sills and framing from rot.

Early on in the design process, everyone agreed that the stucco siding should be replaced. Jeannie, in particular, had no interest in living in a stucco house. But once the stone veneer was laid up, none of the wood-siding materials that the Beddards considered seemed to fit the house. The only thing that seemed right was to re-stucco. They settled

on a stucco color that complements the stone. Because the chimney needed to be extended and they weren't able to match the original brick, the chimney was stuccoed, too, and topped with decorative clay chimney pots.

Jeannie has always loved slate roofs, but one look at the price, and she knew slate was out of the question. Although she doesn't think the DaVinci faux-slate roofing ([www.davinciroofscapes.com](http://www.davinciroofscapes.com)) is a believable substitute, she does like the look and approves of Moore's choice to clad the dormer sidewall with the roofing material. Her favorite material of all is the antique-oak flooring salvaged from cider vats ([www.mountainlumber.com](http://www.mountainlumber.com)). "I just feel like this is a unique house," she says, "and standard strip flooring wasn't going to cut it." □

Brian Pontolilo is *Fine Homebuilding's* managing editor. Photos by Charles Miller, except where noted.