



texas

TRANSFORM

This small 1940s bungalow was redesigned to create an open and



Cassidy and Emily Crocker and their daughter relocated to Austin, Texas, from Bend, Ore., where they had renovated a 3200-sq.-ft. house that had a modern open plan, lots of natural light, and plenty of space to spread out. Their former home was set amid houses that were also large, which meant deeper building setbacks that created a somewhat distant relationship between neighbors. They missed a strong sense of community and believed that a smaller house could accommodate their lifestyle just as well as their previous home.

When the Crockers began searching for a house in Austin, they sought a close-knit neighborhood with a friendly, front-porch vibe. A 1940s bungalow abutting a creek in the Travis Heights neighborhood fit the vision they had for their new house, but it would take a few strategic design moves and my firm's help to complete their idea of home.

A traditional home with typical challenges

The house the Crockers bought is a classic bungalow, with a gabled roof and front porch, lapped siding, and exposed rafter tails. It had been renovated by owners who addressed big-ticket items such as windows, foundation repairs, and a master-bath update. The exterior siding, the windows, and the overall building shape were true to the original bungalow design and well worth preserving. As tends to happen when ownership

PAINT
benjaminmoore.com
Black Berry (house)
Tropical Orange (doors)
Mascarpone (trim)
Pickle (windows)
Granite (brackets
and foundation)

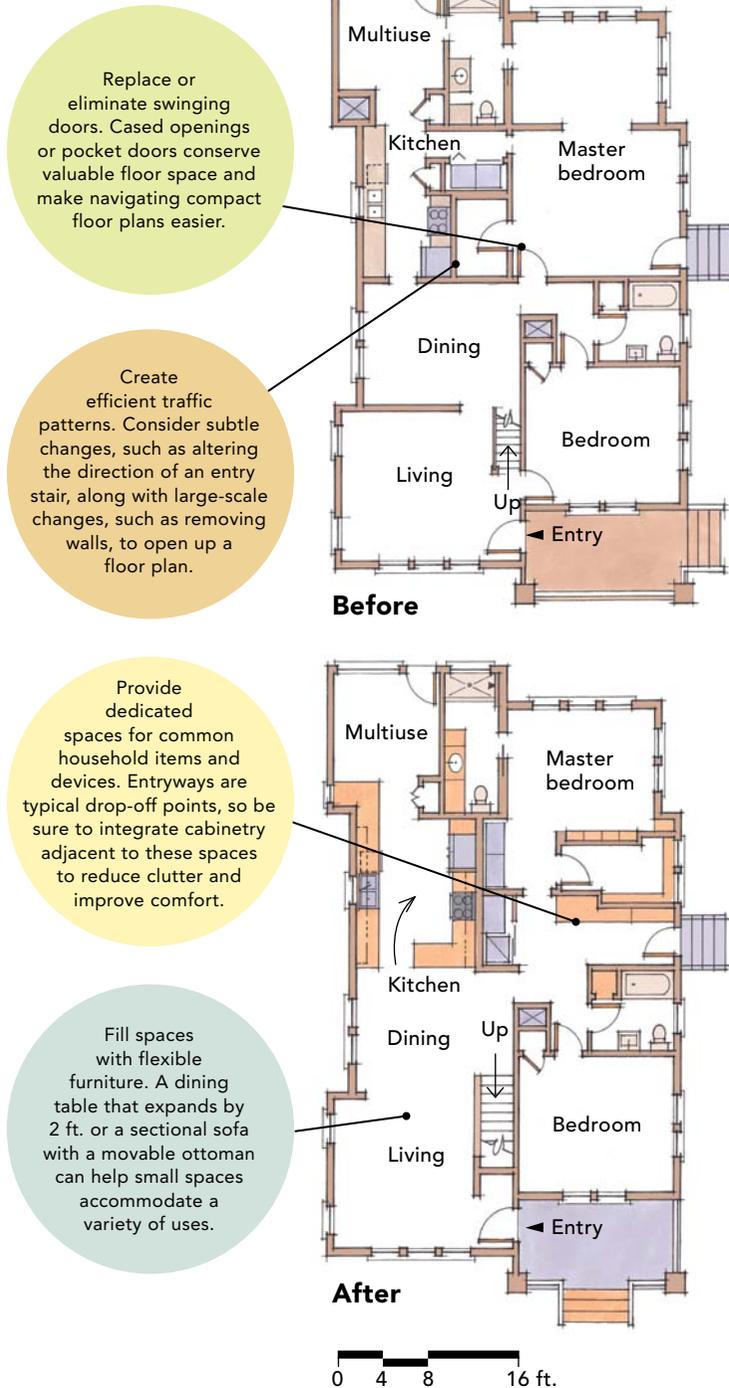
MATION

comfortable contemporary home

BY CINDY BLACK

SMALL-HOME SOLUTIONS

Every home has its own challenges, but there are common design elements that can be integrated into most projects to improve livability. Here are four strategies that were used to change the way this small home lives.



of a house changes hands, though, each new project encompassed a series of decisions that didn't necessarily follow the path set by the last. In our case, we wanted to update the materials and finishes in the home while being sensitive to the bungalow form, and we wanted to improve the home's plan.

Big challenges lay in the arrangement of the kitchen, which was disconnected from the front-of-house living and dining areas and had a galley-style layout that limited the home's social possibilities. The laundry room was in a cramped hallway between the kitchen and master bedroom, which created privacy and noise issues for both rooms. Similarly, the side entry needed resolution, as it brought homeowners and guests into the house through the master bedroom.

Contemporary solutions

Beginning with the curbside appearance of the house, we reoriented the front-porch stair to face the front yard and make the approach to the house more welcoming. Inside the front entry, a gracious new stair to the existing loft made of reclaimed Douglas fir and pine creates a defined nook for a small dresser table that serves as a catchall.

We removed partition walls to open up the kitchen to the dining and living area, which created a more integrated common space. We also enhanced the kitchen's functionality with a new peninsula

SPECS

Bedrooms: 2

Bathrooms: 2

Size: 1545 sq. ft., plus a 350-sq.-ft. attic loft

Completed: 2011

Location: Austin, Texas

Architect: Rick & Cindy Black Architects, rickandcindy.net

Builder: Risinger Homes, risingerhomes.com



CABINETS
ikea.com

COUNTERTOP
ikea.com

RANGE
geappliances.com

SINK
ebay.com

RANGE HOOD
geappliances.com



Addition by subtraction. Eliminating partition walls opened the central part of the home to create a light-filled and contiguous kitchen, dining, and living space. Increasing the width of the kitchen made way for a mix of custom and Ikea cabinetry.

A moment before entry. A new custom-built staircase leading to an existing loft also creates a defined space inside the front door. Such spaces help bring order and logic to compact homes and keep them from feeling like hollow volumes filled with furniture.

intended to serve as an additional worksurface as well as a spot for social gathering. We outfitted the kitchen with Ikea cabinets and added custom open shelving to streamline the look of the room and expand the visual sense of space.

To remedy the side entry, the Crockers were willing to reduce the size of the master suite to create room for a new entrance and a built-in desk that allows the space to function as a drop-off zone and a home office. The laundry was relocated to this new central hallway, too. Its stackable washer and dryer saved space that can be used for cleaning supplies and additional general storage.

Ensuring continuity from the front porch to the back porch was essential to maintaining connection to the outdoors and creating a natural flow through the common spaces. Rather than trying to create separate rooms for each function, we overlapped the uses of each space. In a small house, this focuses the patterns of life on being together in a peaceful and functional setting.

By putting effort into creating quality spaces, and not just big spaces, the Crockers created a home that accommodates their lifestyle in ways they never could have imagined. □

Cindy Black is a partner with her husband in Rick & Cindy Black Architects. Photos by Whit Preston.

