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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2011 ■ SECTION G

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REMODELING SPECIAL REPORT



Dream homes, but not at first

By Nicole Villalpando
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

When Kevin and Suzanne Zarling had their 1999 home built in the Green at Travis Country, they found one of this Southwest Austin neighborhood's builders, picked a plan and had it built. Done.

Well, not quite. Beginning in 2005, they have remodeled almost every aspect of the home, making it better suited for their needs and personalities.

They've done it project by project, allowing them to stay in the house during the transformation and allowing them to finance it in more manageable amounts.

Today, the finished house is one of eight homes on next weekend's National Association of the Remodeling Industry Austin Chapter's home tour.

We take a look at this home and two other projects that will be on the tour.

5701 Hero Drive

The Zarlings began their relationship with John Martin of Straight & Level Construction when they wanted to turn a bedroom into a media room. Martin turned a closet into an air-conditioned space for the audio visual equipment. He wired the room for sound and lighting, allowing both as well as the big-screen TV to be controlled with one remote. It took five weeks to complete and was a good test project to develop the trust between contractor and client.

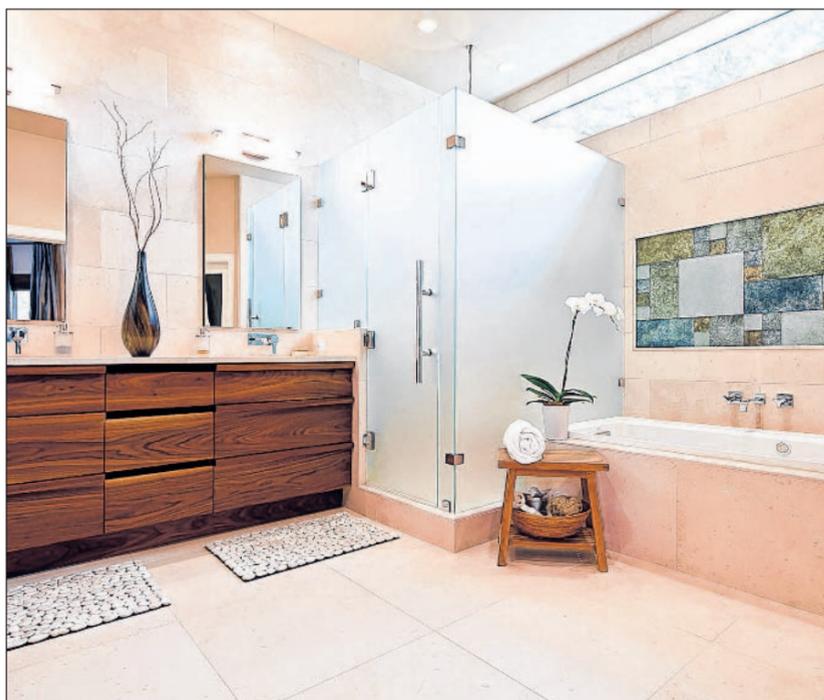
Next, the Zarlings wanted a new master bathroom, and while they were at it, a guest bath as well. Their bathroom was typical of the neighborhood: garden tub, two sinks, walk-

Austin homes tour showcases remodeling work. Take a closer look at 3 homes



In the fireplace area, the Zarlings added walnut shelving that extends to become the mantel. The fireplace has stones of varying thickness.

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See more photos plus get tips on what to know before you start remodeling with this story online.



Tom Coplen BUENA VISTA PHOTOGRAPHY

See REMODEL, G4

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Tudor Revival, upgraded and expanded

By Nicole Villalpando
AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Builder Tom Hallberg found a treasure behind the mess that was a 1930 Travis Heights Tudor Revival-style cottage.

Walls were missing, bricks scattered around the property. Another party had started work on the house, deconstructing it, but left mid-flip.

Hallberg of Hallberg Custom Homes sought to restore the home and put back the torn-down walls. He wanted to make the interior right for a modern family, while keeping the charm of the original exterior.

Hallberg bought the property in March 2010 and worked for three months with the City of Austin's Historic Preservation Commission to get the proper permits. He also sought the ap-

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proval of the Travis Heights Neighborhood Association. Reconstruction began in November 2010 and finished in May.

Hallberg says the challenge of this project was the restoration. He worked with architect Jim Recek on developing a plan to be faithful to the original home while making it functional for today. "It was challenging to come up with a design that appealed to the neighborhood and city that also fit with the financial plan," he says.

See REVIVAL, G3



At 1608 Travis Heights Blvd., an upgraded and remodeled Tudor Revival home, with work by Hallberg Custom Homes is on the market for \$749,900.

Chris Dietz
FIZBIN PHOTOGRAPHY

REVIVAL: Original bricks on the outside, upgraded amenities on the inside

Continued from G1

“Once the process got going, it was like any other construction process.”

Hallberg did research on Tudor Revival homes to make sure the rebuilding and the second-story addition fit that style. He collected the bricks from the original house and rebuilt the walls. He found low-E windows that looked like the originals.

Once inside, yellow pine floors run throughout the bottom floor. A step down from the arched door takes guests to the living room. An ornamental marble fireplace is on the wall with the door. A future homeowner could redo the chimney interior to make this a working fireplace. The living area flows to a dining area in front of the kitchen.

The kitchen offers a touch of today with granite counters and island. The island’s maple cabinets have been stained dark and distressed to give them an aged look. The rest of the kitchen cabinets are knotty alder, also achieving a vintage feel. A travertine backsplash lines the wall behind the six-burner range. The oven and microwave sit along this wall. The kitchen sink and dishwasher rest in the island.

It faces out to the family room, which offers large windows looking out at the backyard. The windows give this space a lot of natural light.

The backyard allows space for alley parking, or a future homeowner could build a carport or two-car garage.

At the front of the house, an office features a closet and a full bathroom with granite finishes. This space, with its large window, easily could be used as a bedroom or guest suite.

A laundry room with cabinets and sink also sits on the first floor.

The wood staircase to the second story is filled with stacked square windows, bringing in plenty of light. An open space upstairs with tall windows could be another office or a playroom.

The master suite features multiple windows on two sides. The bathroom offers travertine counters and floors, as well as



A wooden staircase is backed by a variety of windows, letting in plenty of light. The well-lighted, open space at the top of the stairs could be used for work or play.



Katie Hallberg TEAM REALTY OF TEXAS

Before Hallberg Custom Homes began work on 1608 Travis Heights Blvd., its interior was mostly unusable. However, bricks that were strewn in the backyard have since been added to the exterior.

travertine walk-in shower with a bench and a window, and a large soaking tub surrounded by travertine, which sits underneath a large window. A large master closet is inside the bathroom.

Two other bedrooms have ample closets and nice windows. The design makes clever use of the Tudor rooflines. These bedrooms share a full bathroom with Carrara marble counters and small-size white tile floors to give a vintage look. The shower is spacious with a small tub below.

People interested in the

house have included younger couples drawn to the closeness of South Congress Avenue and downtown and buyers from out of town, Hallberg says. “They like that the house goes with the neighborhood.”

“We tried to use colors and materials that went with if you were to build a new Tudor home,” he says.

From the finishes chosen to the faithfulness to Tudor Revival architecture, the home feels like a 1930s home inside but lives like a modern one. nvallpando@statesman.com; 912-5900



Chris Dietz photos FIZBIN PHOTOGRAPHY

The kitchen includes knotty alder cabinets and an island with maple and a granite countertop. The rear wall has a travertine backsplash and a range with six burners.

Where: 1608 Travis Heights Blvd., Austin 78704.
Size: 3,119 square feet with four bedrooms and three bathrooms.
Asking price: \$749,900.

Agent: Katie Hallberg, Team Realty of Texas/
FYI: The house will be open from 2 to 5 p.m. today.



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REMODEL: With changes to the homes come changes in residents' lifestyles

Continued from G1

in glass shower and narrow toilet room. They completely transformed it, using the space in more practical ways. Martin raised the sloping roof to allow more headroom in the now 10-foot ceilings. He rearranged the room to allow for a larger shower with frosted glass doors and rain shower head. He removed the glass block window and went for a high horizontal window to let in light but protect privacy. Instead of the large garden tub to take up space, the couple chose a smaller soaking tub. A liquid glass mural above it creates interest in a room with travertine floors and walls. The counters were redesigned with Crème Marfil marble top and custom walnut drawers with walnut pull ledges. Nice additions include heated floors and a heated towel rack. The Zarlings opted to ditch the linen closet and instead added shelving to an expanded toilet area for towel storage.

The extra space that was the master linen closet was added to the guest bathroom to open it up. This guest bathroom now has a fresh look with Silestone counters and vessel sinks. The mirror is now framed with light fixtures above it instead of just a mirror stuck to the wall with a fixture of large round bulbs that is often found in production homes of this time period. Pocket doors provide additional privacy in the combined toilet and shower/tub area. The additional 2½ feet of space might not seem like much, but the room no longer feels claustrophobic. The

9th Annual Tour of Remodeled Homes

When: Noon to 6 p.m. Saturday and Oct. 23
Tickets: \$20. Both locations of Central Market and Breed & Co. Tickets also available at AustinNARI.org or at the homes on day of the tour.
Information: 413-9744, AustinNARI.org

bathroom project took three months.

When a pipe burst in the breakfast area in January 2010, it provided the Zarlings with a perfect reason to redo the living spaces because the water-damaged oak floors in this great room had to be removed. The Zarlings went big in their thinking. Martin removed a half wall that stood between the kitchen and the living room. This wall had two columns, one of which provided structural support. Martin added support in the attic to allow the wall and its columns to be removed. Now, the Zarlings really had one big great room.

The design next focused on the fireplace area. Suzanne Zarling had an idea for a stone fireplace with differing thickness of rock. Walnut shelving that evolves into the fireplace mantel sits on one side. The other side provides walnut cabinets that contain all the storage plus some lost by removing the half wall.

Floors and baseboard were added to the rest of the living spaces from the breakfast nook

to the kitchen to the dining room and front study. It was a three-month process.

The kitchen transformation has been done in two parts, starting with the January 2010 flood and ending this summer. An additional row of glass-fronted cabinets now sit on top of the original cabinets. New granite covers an island with more storage and the rest of the counters. The cabinets were painted a dark gray and new stainless-steel appliances introduced. The pantry now has a frosted glass door.

Martin estimates that if homeowners wanted to replicate this project, it would cost \$125,000 to \$170,000 depending on the materials chosen.

For the Zarlings, they learned to be patient, live in a work zone and get what they really wanted.

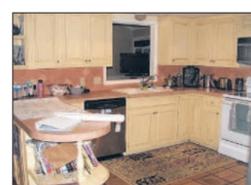
"We didn't settle," Suzanne Zarling says. "I'm so glad." The room she loves most is the master bathroom, which has truly become the peaceful retreat she wanted.

6806 Rockledge Cove

Chris O'Connell and Monica Landers knew they wanted to remodel their 1978 home in Northwest Austin when they bought it in 2006. They saved the money and worked with an initial architect to see what was possible. By January 2010, they were ready to get bids from contractors.

They chose John Gehlken of Austin Impressions, who worked with architect Jose Minguell of Minguell-McQuary Architecture+Design to complete the project.

The home presented some



MINGUELL-MCQUARY ARCHITECTURE+DESIGN

The dated fireplace in Chris O'Connell and Monica Landers' home was given a contemporary upgrade with a horizontal travertine fireplace. In the kitchen, walls were removed to connect the kitchen with the living room, and an island with a cooktop was added.

unusual heating and air-conditioning challenges. They wanted to open up the space in the family room and kitchen, but there had to be a way to reroute the HVAC system more efficiently. Before work started, Gehlken brought in subcontractors to take a look and then the design for the home evolved around rerouting the system.

The family room went from a 11-foot-wide stone fireplace that reached the vaulted ceiling—a look straight out of "The Brady Bunch"—to a contemporary horizontal travertine fireplace with space for storage beside it and along the wall. The ceiling now drops down in the middle to create intimacy while solving the HVAC system problem. A corner window looks out on the backyard.

The kitchen, which had offered off-white cabinets and Saltillo tile floors and sat on three walls, became an open space that joined with the living room. The frame of a wall defines the separation between the two areas. Now a glass tile backsplash sits along one wall of the kitchen with the sink beneath. Granite counters cover this space as well as the large island with the cooktop. Stainless steel appliances and dark-stained cabinets give this space a contemporary feel.

The remodel also created a coffee bar area with a wine refrigerator on one side of the kitchen. Nearby a full pool bath offers olive green glass tiles with vessel sink on granite counters.

On the other side of the kitchen is the open dining room that leads to the living room. The living room now has a desk area for homework time. While keeping the original windows, the space has been updated to match the family room's contemporary feel.

At the front of the house, Gelkhen redid the banister to

be more modern and redid the staircase with sea grass treads. Maple floors flow throughout the living areas. Gelkhen reclaimed the old pecan floors to be used in another project.

The family lived in the house during the five-month remodel, creating a pseudo kitchen and living space in the game room.

"Oh, it was absolutely worth it," Landers says. "It really changes how we do everything and how we entertain. It was definitely worth it. Now I can barely remember how it was before."

And, while the kitchen was really done for O'Connell, the chef in the family, Landers says she now cooks more because of the kitchen's inviting space.

Gehlken estimates this project would cost another family \$150,000 to \$170,000 to do it again.

3112 Lafayette Ave.

Royce Flournoy of Texas Construction Co. got to experience what being a homeowner in a remodeling situation is all about when he found an 1,100-square-foot 1930s home and transformed it into a 21st-century house with an addition.

Flournoy added a stepping path to the front door and painted a darker shade of gray with white trim on the exterior.

Inside, he opened the living space by taking down a wall that blocked the kitchen. He replaced the fossilized limestone fireplace with a more contemporary Lueders limestone fireplace and added a herringbone pattern brick to the inside of the fireplace. He removed low shelving to create a clean look in the room.

The dining room now is open to both the kitchen and living space and offers a doorway to the backyard. The kitchen, with the wall removed, allows

for cooking while talking with guests. Flournoy gutted the old kitchen and added Carrara marble counters, ebonized oak cabinets and stainless steel appliances. He extended the finished oak floors in the rest of the living space to the kitchen.

The home's two bedrooms each feature reconfigured bathrooms. The master bedroom lost some square footage to allow for a larger bathroom. White subway tiles give both bathrooms a clean look. The master bathroom offers a large walk-in shower and a large mirror with storage behind it and a laundry chute that leads to the new laundry room.

Flournoy tore down the old carport and added an addition in its place. This space becomes the laundry room and pantry, the office and the media room. Bookcases line one side of the steps down to the media room. A long couch sits underneath a wall of windows. Across is the TV, recessed into the wall.

This is Flournoy's favorite room in the house because he can entertain here, especially a football-watching party.

In the backyard, Flournoy added a gate at the side fence that leads to a parking pad inside the backyard. This space replaces the carport.

The project took five months total. Flournoy completed the main house in two months and built the addition in three months after he had already moved in earlier this year.

To re-create this project, Flournoy estimates it would cost about \$210,000.

He says he learned a lot about being the client. "It can be very frustrating if expectations aren't met... you thought something was going to go in that day and it didn't," he says. "I've become a lot more empathetic."

nvillalpando@statesman.com; 912-5900



COLES HAIRSTON COLES HAIRSTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Royce Flournoy tore down the carport and in its place put an addition that houses the laundry room and pantry, office and media room. The updated kitchen has marble counters, ebonized oak cabinets and stainless steel appliances.

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