

AN ARTS AND CRAFTS BUNGALOW EMERGES FROM THE UNDERGROWTH

i Craftsman

AND LEAPS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

STORY **DAN COOPER**

PHOTOGRAPHY **COREY FITZGERALD**

In past years, you might have driven by this house dozens of times and still been unaware of its presence; built in the earliest decade of the last century, this Craftsman-era bungalow lurked behind a screen of unattended vegetation that concealed it from the street. In fact, this writer visited it long ago and struggled to find it, even though the structure sits not far from the road. That search was well worth the trouble, for upon entering, I had been mightily impressed by the two grand public rooms and the extensive, original Mission-style woodwork.

A Massachusetts native returned recently from years spent living and working in the mountainous resort areas of Colorado. She was looking for a home and sought to retain at least some of the bucolic respite she had found in the west, discovering it here in the Pioneer Valley. She then enlisted the skills of designer Karen Dzenolet of KDZ Designs, LLC, in Pelham, and Wright Builders of Northampton. As Dzenolet recounts, "Initially, [the client] thought of Boston, but became

An earthy Craftsman palette was selected for the home's exterior. Wide and welcoming, the front porch features cobblestone piers and heavy timbers.





The dining room woodwork is original, as is the colonnade with its leaded glass bookcases. Both were meticulously restored.

enchanted with the less-urban feel of the Amherst/Northampton area. The moment she saw this property, she stopped looking; the expansive vista from the back porch spoke to her and that was it.”

Dzendolet remarks that her client, a busy professional woman, had diverse intentions for her new home, each seemingly at odds with the other. “Part of my design philosophy is determining how a client wants to use their home, and we realized that she had two objectives; she needed a place of serenity for herself, where she could feel comfortable and cocooned, but she’s also a generous person and enjoys holding benefits and other charitable events.

She needed a peaceful respite, but wanted to be able to host 20 or more people without batting an eye.”

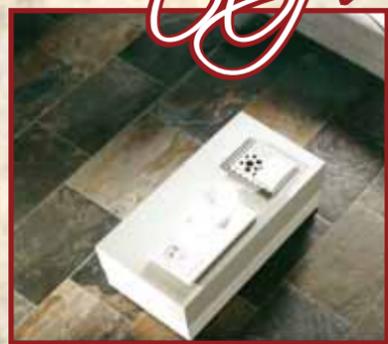
With these goals in mind, the newly formed team set out to redefine the house. Jonathan Wright, president of Wright Builders, notes, “Our objective was to put a shine on this hundred-year-old jewel of a house. This was a very unique project to participate in. The owner, while appreciating the house’s Craftsman style, also wanted to have up-to-date systems and contemporary ease of living. She wanted the house to be energy-efficient, and to have modern kitchens and bathrooms. She entertains a lot, and she desired a floor-plan that would be conducive to this.” Wright reveals



A small bedroom was commandeered to create a modern kitchen with historical and international accents. The countertop is polished Brazilian schist. The flooring is honed and filled travertine from Peru.



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how this was accomplished: “We made subtle changes such as widening the main staircase, and added a small dormer off the master bedroom; this latter feature permitted views of the beautiful garden and grounds that were being created. We also installed a second catering kitchen on the ground floor at the rear of the house that opens out onto the patio. There was a tiny, 11-foot-wide garage on the property—barely big enough for two bikes and a lawnmower—and we replaced that with one that blends seamlessly with the house’s architecture. This graceful transition from new to old has always been a primary objective of our firm—avoiding an abrupt and obvious change between

the old building and our work.”

Dzendolet concurs, “The goal of the renovation was to keep the footprint of the house and to maintain its historic exterior, but to bring the interior into the present.” For those who were familiar with the property before its renovation, it’s shocking to realize the foundation of the dwelling and its elevations were unchanged by the current owner. Yet, with extensive landscaping, the home now rises proudly from the landscape, all the while embracing it in the organic manner of the Arts and Crafts style.

Previously, the house’s exterior color palette could best be described as subtle, if not plain. It was a soft gray with blue trim, and Dzendolet

and her client selected a palette inspired by the Craftsman movement. A rich olive was chosen for the body with a harmonious shade of yellow for the trim. These, in turn, enhanced the stonework piers of the front porch. “We also used aluminum clad windows for the sash to minimize the eventual maintenance, but insisted that the inside of the sash be paintable to maintain the authentic feel of wooden windows for the occupants.”

When the house was built, its interior was a disparate blend of high-style public rooms and perfunctory private chambers. The sprawling living and dining room were embellished with all of the iconic Craftsman fittings, including a massive colonnade supported by

Canvases by Easthampton-based artisans Kate Childs (left) and Karen Iglehart adorn the upstairs hallway. The homeowner grew up on Boston’s North Shore and the ethereal pieces are reminiscent of the ocean.



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A shed dormer was added to lighten up the master bedroom. The designer and builder collaborated on a freestanding cabinet (left) that partitions the sleeping area from the entryway. A bureau on one side, it houses audio/visual equipment on the other.



led glass bookcases; the original wainscoting was a series of framed battens crested with a plate rail, all of which were milled in darkly-stained oak, as was the custom of the time. “Unfortunately,” notes Dzenolet, “the other rooms on the first floor weren’t terribly special. There was a boxy little 1950s kitchen and bathroom, and a small room, perhaps originally intended as a first-floor bedroom. The entries were cramped and inefficient, so we honored the intent of the dining and living rooms, and adapted the rest of the first-floor space to the new owner’s wishes. We put in a premium kitchen that met [the client’s] standards, which entailed taking the space of the little bedroom, and reworked the remaining floor space to make the entries more functional.”

Even though the dining and living rooms remained relatively intact, a

century’s worth of wear necessitated a large amount of effort to restore and bring them up to a similar caliber of the rest of the new interior. All of the woodwork, save the colonnade, was removed for refinishing. Dzenolet also elected at this time to modify the parlor-side wainscoting. “All of the plate rails spilt as it was being removed for refinishing, so I chose to create a distinctive variation between the paneling in the two rooms. We kept the stiles and rails on exposed plaster in the dining room, but in the living room, installed solid wood wainscoting for a more formal look.” Because of the extensive systems and lighting that were to be installed, the beamed ceiling had to be lowered by a few inches to accommodate them. The ceiling was then skim-coated and additional moldings were used to build down the beams of the ceiling

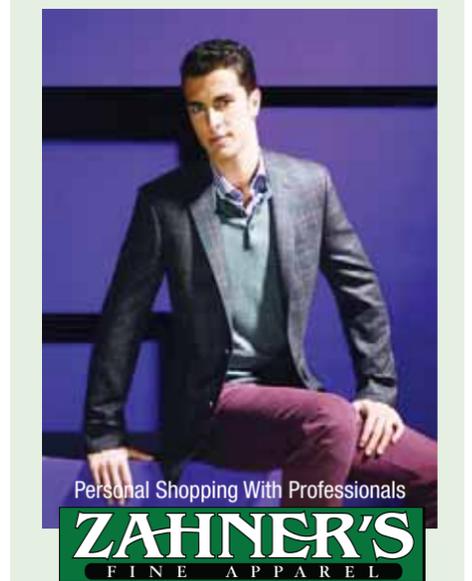
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to meet the new plaster.

The second floor's design was equally as challenging. The upper floor of a typical bungalow is a rabbit warren of two to four bedrooms snuggled into the eaves, and this house is no exception. This compelled Dzenolet and Wright Builders to work cleverly within the constraints of the building's envelope. "There were four original bedrooms, although one was very small—a nursery or child's room," Dzenolet says, "and this was turned into part of the master bathroom. We did add a small shed dormer in the master bedroom to allow light in and give [the client] a view of the grounds and hills to the rear of the

house. Originally, the only windows in this room faced the garage."

In furnishing the interior, Dzenolet bore in mind that her client, while appreciating the client's vintage architecture, was not exactly one who chose to slavishly re-enact the past. Dzenolet comments, "The homeowner didn't want to be too literal, preferring a more representational interpretation of the Craftsman style. She's a minimalist and a very concise person who doesn't care for much clutter." Dzenolet, with Wright Builders, designed a large, free-standing cabinet for the master bedroom that partitions the sleeping area from the entry and bathroom. "On one

side it's a bureau, while the other houses audio and visual equipment. This keeps the floor space clear and unobstructed in the rest of the room."

One of the more distinctive original motifs of the house's architecture is the gradually tapering column as found on those of the first-floor colonnade, a hallmark of the Craftsman style. Wherever possible, Dzenolet replicated this on the newel posts and the pilasters of the master bathroom sinks and other cabinetry. This, along with other subtle touches, allowed the designer to create bathrooms that are contemporary in function and appearance, but still reference the house's architecture. Another



Paired with minimalist lines, Vermont Danby white marble is radiant in an upstairs bathroom. The floor is tiled, but the walls are from slab.

Opposite: Rich wood tones and simple, functional furniture epitomize Craftsman décor in a guest bedroom.

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design element was the use of strong horizontals in materials, which also impart an Arts and Crafts feel.

The most modern components of the house lay unseen or barely evident behind plaster and paint; the homeowner, whose profession necessitates cutting-edge technology, desired a home that also featured the most recent generation of electronic amenities. “She wanted a smart house,” Dzendolet observes. “One of the more intriguing features is that she can control all of the systems from her iPad wherever she is. This includes all of the lighting, the security system, climate control and the electronic window coverings. As someone who depends on technology, the house is wired extensively for audio and video along with advanced lighting systems.”

Rejuvenating the overgrown grounds was required much more than a “clear-cut” approach; there were original and early plantings that the owner wanted to preserve. While the front yard had some grooming over the years, the back of the expansive property had been woefully neglected. “A vast amount of clearing had to be done,” says Dzendolet. “When my client purchased the property, there was a driveway that wrapped around the back of the house and returned to the front; this was removed, and a patio was created in its place. It’s designed so that you can walk out at ground level from the catering kitchen. The patio, in turn, leads through the back garden and grounds out to a stone pavilion.”

In clearing the grounds, the team, along with their landscaper, sought to salvage as many of the estate plantings as possible. “There is a wonderful original dogwood and a tri-colored beech,”



In clearing the grounds, the landscaper tried to salvage as many of the existing estate plantings as possible. The stone patio (left) is ideal for al fresco entertaining.



Dzendolet notes, “and a huge Japanese maple that we actually moved to the back so the owner could see it from her office. She’s so passionate about it that she even selected fabric for that room that matches [the maple].” The ground from the rear garden entrance was leveled off to a gentler grade so that the owner and her guests could walk out from the second kitchen and grill on the patio. Across the backyard sits the stone pavilion, reminiscent of the more robust Craftsman style of the American West. Under its roof sits a semicircle of chairs nestled around a fireplace. As Dzendolet adds, “Our goal was to create a more rustic area and bring nature inside. It’s an extension of the house, but removed

from it by the grounds. My client can sit out there with her laptop and summer kitchen, relaxing by herself or with any number of guests. It’s also screened in, and with the warmth of the fireplace, can be used eight or nine months out of the year.”

Dzendolet freely shares the credit for the success of the project: “I’m a generalist, and along with Wright Builders and the landscaper, we relied on the expertise of the kitchen and lighting designers—Classic Kitchens of Greenfield and Goldstein Design, LLC, of Marblehead. I had no hesitancy calling them in to assist. It was a very dynamic partnership, where we all respected each other’s opinions, and thus came up with a

really solid and interesting plan that met the client’s needs and expectations.”

“Most of all,” she continues, “working with the client was extremely easy; she trusted my decisions and understood my decision-making process. I always presented my choices to her, and she always felt comfortable asking questions. If she didn’t like something, we would discuss the choice to understand how best to find something that would still make sense within the overall design concept, but appeal to her as well.”

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The family unwinds inside the rustic, freestanding stone pavilion. “It’s an extension of the home, but removed from it by the grounds,” the designer says.

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