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Mixing styles restores a 1920s home to its former glory

Abstract:

Orfield Design & Construction combined Arts and Crafts and art deco to save this home from its previous remodels. By successfully blending the two styles, the company created an award-winning project.

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The homeowners wanted more space for the family to gather, so one of Orfield's solutions was to enlarge the kitchen and create an informal sitting area.

After photos by Adrienne Page Photography

When [Orfield Design & Construction](#) [1] took on this whole-house remodel for a newly blended family, they discovered a classic home that was the victim of previous remodels gone horribly wrong.

"In the 1970s, somebody came along and made some terrible choices," says company Vice President Laura Orfield.

The kitchen featured yellow linoleum flooring and countertops, with a mix of white and oak cabinets. The oddest part was a free-standing stove in the middle of the kitchen — apparently

someone's misguided idea of a kitchen island, says company President Ronald Orfield.

In the bathrooms, pink tile was paired with dated oak vanities. The upstairs bathroom had been poorly done and frequently leaked if someone tried to take a bath. Plus, the home was too small for this newly extended family.

Orfield had previously remodeled a kitchen for one of the homeowners. When the couple decided to move into the Minneapolis home because it was closer to their jobs than the suburban house, she thought of Orfield again.

The 1920s Arts and Crafts home still had many beautiful features, and Orfield's mission was to restore it to its previous glory, as well as add space for the larger family.

Making space

It was important to the clients that everybody have their own space to make the blending of the two families easier. They wanted the children's bedrooms to be on the second floor, while the small bedroom on the first floor would be expanded into a large master suite. The master suite included a new gas fireplace and a walk-in closet. The new bathroom was built on the site of the previous small bedroom and featured a large two-sink countertop and custom, multiple-head, glass block shower.



In the kitchen, the clients were looking not only to update, but also to add space.

"They had a formal dining room, but they wanted a larger breakfast/eating area for the family to gather in," Ronald Orfield says.



The kitchen is a good example of how Orfield successfully blended the art deco and Arts and Crafts styles with its curved cabinets and modern appliances that complement the traditional tile backsplash.

The kitchen was taken down to the studs and expanded. Every remnant of the old style was removed, and the new kitchen has the luxurious feel the clients wanted, with handmade maple cabinets, granite countertops and stainless steel appliances.

The team improved the first floor by removing some walls and opening the spaces up to provide better flow.

"The house was very segmented to start with," Ronald Orfield says. "They told us they'd rather have a lot of space than a lot of small rooms."

In the living room, Orfield built a large, custom bookcase and fireplace surround. Above the fireplace, they installed three stained glass windows that had been designed from a sketch by Ronald Orfield. Two of them replaced existing windows. The third covered the chimney and is lit by a light installed behind the glass. The effect is Orfield's favorite feature in the home, he says.

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The family also gained space with a finished basement as a place for their teenagers to hang out.

"The basement was semi-finished with horrible paneling and ugly indoor/outdoor carpet," says Laura Orfield.

The Orfield team ran heating to the basement, installed a gas fireplace, added drywall, painted and replaced the carpet, drastically improving the room.

Upstairs, adding a dormer allowed a cramped bathroom to expand. Before the remodel, the bathroom — the only one on a second floor with three bedrooms — had been squeezed under the roof with a ceiling that angled to the floor.

"It needed to be totally gutted and redone," says Ronald Orfield. "It was a bathroom, but you barely had room to stand up."

Orfield expanded the room to full ceiling height, added a tub and large walk-in shower and updated the finishes and fixtures.

"Now there's ample room for what you really need with three bedrooms upstairs," he says.

Blending styles

Another wrinkle in the remodel was the couple's art deco antiques and furnishings that contrasted with the Arts and Crafts home. Orfield's challenge became to blend the two styles without creating another mismatched remodel.



The upstairs bathroom was expanded to make room for a walk-in shower and a tub.



The wooden fireplace surround and bookcases along with the custom-designed stained glass windows are Ron Orfield's favorite features in the remodel.

"That was our biggest challenge: to merge these two tastes into something that still looked good," says Laura Orfield.

The solution the Orfield team came up with was to keep all the structural items in the Arts and Crafts style and use the art deco as an accent. For example, the living room fireplace surround was created in the Arts and Crafts spirit, as was the custom-designed staircase. In the master bathroom and kitchen, the cabinets were designed with a lot of curves to showcase the art deco style.

"We wanted to make sure the structural details matched the home," Laura Orfield says. "We used original, large trim on all of the windows and doors to match the original home."

The owners' love for antiquing and finding new treasures also created another interesting challenge for the firm. Throughout the project, the clients would find historic antiques they wanted incorporated into the remodel.

"The owners would just walk in with a new item and say 'Let's use this somewhere,'" Laura Orfield says.

The stained glass window in the master bedroom was one of those items. As they were getting ready to drywall that room, the clients brought the window in, and Ron Orfield had to redesign the room to incorporate it. The fireplace surround in the master bedroom required some planning as well. The homeowners had purchased it from another home, and it came to the house piece-meal. When they were cleaning it for installation,

Orfield's crew discovered a missing piece, so they replicated the marble leg to finish the installation.

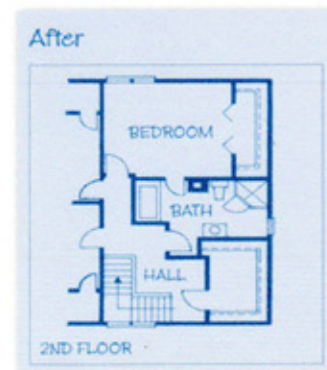
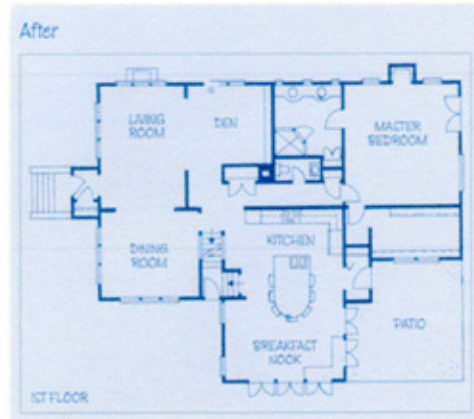
"Incorporating their things into the project was a challenge," Ronald Orfield says. "Any designer wants to have all the components on hand before the project starts, so it was obviously frustrating at times."

That's the only thing the Orfields say they should have done differently with the project: insist on getting all the extras up front. Because of their history with the client and the size of the project, they instead tried to be very accommodating, which probably was a mistake, Laura Orfield says.

Despite those problems, the project ended up being a success.

"I'm proud that we remained true to the home's architectural style," Laura Orfield says. "We achieved their goal of blending their tastes in these different rooms."

The clients were also pleased and have referred several projects to the company.



Project Timeline

(for Timeline payments and complete Budget History, see pages 30 and 31 in the May 2007 issue.)

Payment Date	Stage of Project
April 12, 2004	
May 2004	Project start
June 2004	Completion of demolition, excavation, rough framing and roof
July 16, 2004	

July 22, 2004	
Aug 2004	Completion of rough electrical, HVAC and plumbing
Aug 25, 2004	
Sept 2004	Completion of insulation, drywall and floors
Oct 28, 2004	
Nov 2004	Installation of cabinets, countertops and finish trim
Nov 17, 2004	
Dec 2004	Completion of finished basement
Jan 11, 2005	
Feb 23, 2005	
April 11, 2005	
July 2005	Construction of rear patio
July 11, 2005	
August 2005	Installation of custom fireplace surround for master bedroom
Aug 3, 2005	
August 2005	Project completion
Oct 10, 2005	
Jan 17, 2006	

Products List

Appliances: KitchenAid **Doors:** Marvin, Masonite **Faucets:** American Standard, Porcher & Franke **Fireplace:** Heat & Glo **Roofing:** GAF **Sinks:** American Standard, Blanco **Windows:** Marvin

The Financials

Normally, Orfield Design & Construction tries to limit change orders on projects.

On this home, though, the clients requested more than 20 change orders along the way, ranging from \$239 for plumbing fixtures to \$8,015 for upgraded tile.

Cost wasn't an issue for these clients, which certainly made them unusual.

"The clients' lack of a budget certainly surprised us," says company vice president Laura Orfield. "There were huge, thousands-of-dollars change orders. Those things add up, but they wanted to have all the features they wanted."

Although the clients were billed for all the changes it did eat into the company's profit margin, resulting in a 30 percent gross profit, down from the budgeted 40 percent.

While still profitable, the company learned its lesson about trying to be too accommodating to clients, Orfield says.

Company Snapshot

Orfield Design & Construction

Owners: Ronald and Laura Orfield

Location: Saint Louis Park, Minn.

2006 volume: \$1.9 million

Projected 2007 volume: \$1.8 million

Web site: www.orfielddesign.com ^[2]

Biggest challenge: Blending the Arts and Crafts style of the home with the clients' art deco antiques