

BOOK REPORT

A RENOVATION MODERNIZES A CLASSIC TUDOR WHILE
PAYING HOMAGE TO THE OWNERS' LITERARY PASSIONS.

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ARCHITECTURE John A. DeForest, AIA, DeForest Architects
INTERIOR DESIGN Nancy Burfiend, ASID, and My Nguyen, NB Design Group
HOME BUILDER Jeff Santerre, Prestige Custom Builders, Inc.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE Keith R. Geller, Keith Geller Landscape Design
BEDROOMS 4 | **BATHROOMS** 5 | **SQUARE FEET** 5,380



After their three children departed the nest, a Seattle couple considered simplifying. As the husband walked their dogs through the neighborhood, a 1929 brick Tudor just up the hill inevitably captured his attention. He especially loved the way the natural light bathed the house at different times of day. “He would always stop to ask the owner how she was doing, and after 10 years, she decided to move, so we bought it,” the wife says. “It has a view of Lake Washington that includes Mount Rainier and the Cascades, and it was just about the only house my husband would consider.”

Many area homes were being torn down and replaced, but the couple loved how the modest Tudor fit into the neighborhood. Still, they wanted to freshen it up, so they enlisted architect John A. DeForest to reimagine the home with modern light-filled spaces. “They had the courage to breathe new life into the house,” DeForest says. “That sends a nice message that the choice isn’t strictly between historic restoration and a tear down.”



Ceiling beams were removed from the library and the room was opened up to allow in more natural light. The sofa from Del-Teet, covered by Glant fabric from Kelly Forslund, joins an Antoine Proulx coffee table from Trammell-Gagné. *Left:* In the wife’s office, the owners’ wing chair contrasts against the strong lines of the steel-framed windows and bookshelves fabricated by Woodway Woodworks & Cabinets.



The breakfast nook's custom banquette, with cushions covered in Townsend Leather hide, affords splendid views of Lake Washington. The graceful Saarinen table by Knoll is from Design Within Reach and sits beneath a Boyd Lighting pendant from Susan Mills Showroom. The charming pair of Americana chairs is from the owners' collection.



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DeForest's plans maintained the home's traditional exterior but called for the inside to be stripped; he opened up a dark central stair hall, walls and hallways to make the interior free-flowing and more open to the natural light and water views. "It's a wonderful melding of a traditional Tudor with clean lines that creates a very livable environment," says Nancy Burfiend who, with My Nguyen, designed the interiors.

Of course, beneath that Tudor charm was a house whose bones had settled and skewed. Walls had to be straightened and floors flattened to prepare the shell for a precise modern aesthetic. "When walls have to interface with windows and doors with a ¼-inch reveal, they have to be plumb level and flat with zero tolerance for error," says Jeff Santerre, who helmed the build with superintendent Pat Radwick and project manager Chris Brooks.

In one of three courtyards, a sleek staircase spirals up to the second-level studio on the added garage, which sports decorative half timbers in the Tudor style; a brick façade by Holliday Masonry Company complements the home's existing brickwork. A pathway meanders through luxurious plantings, including the site's original rhododendrons.



Above: The stairway landing outside the library features a Herman Miller Eames chair and an old wooden farm table displaying a sculpture made by the homeowner's aunt and a lamp with a wallpaper printing roll as its base. Right: A skylight illuminates the home's word wall, a compilation of meaningful expressions contributed by family members.

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Because the homeowners are avid readers, DeForest incorporated custom bookshelves throughout the airy new interior. "I honestly felt sorry for John, because I just can't get rid of any books," the wife says, laughing. Plenty of cozy nooks were also added throughout the house for reading and enjoying the views, and Burfiend even furnished comfy pillows for the owners' beloved dogs.

The couple's adoration of the written word is further reflected in a striking word wall designed by DeForest as a backdrop for the three-story staircase. Seventeen family members, including the couple's children and their spouses and grandchildren, contributed content. "We had previously lived on the lakeshore, and the grandchildren, particularly,



Architect John A. DeForest designed the stairway as a sculptural piece against the word wall; Reid Signs used computer-controlled milling technology to route the words into panels. Greater Seattle Floors provided the white oak flooring, and the stair treads are from One Step Ahead.



The home's original Tudor exterior, which kept its steep roofline but received a new roof, features architectural steel windows and doors that hint at what might be found inside. The sunroom—which had been added midcentury and replaced in this incarnation of the home—opens onto the lakeview terrace through floor-to-ceiling bifold doors.

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were not happy that we were leaving all that fun of the water," the wife says. "So we decided this would be a good way to get them excited about this house." The contributions—ranging from the Gettysburg Address to an old family recipe—were computer-routed into panels, and the owners keep a printed paper version nearby to share with guests.

"This house is totally specialized for the couple and their family," Santerre says. "I'm seeing this a lot more. Folks don't worry about what would be most advantageous for the resale market. Instead, it's highly tailored to their lifestyle and what they appreciate." And because the couple didn't want to age out of their "forever home," it includes an elevator and a mostly ADA-compliant bathroom.

Larger windows were also added to afford views of the lake and the landscaped grounds. "I designed a woodland garden with many canopy layers incorporating native plantings and hardy Asian plants for early fragrant spring blooms and autumn color," says landscape designer Keith R. Geller. A secret garden near the wife's office, hexagonal Bluestone courtyards and basalt cobblestone paths complete the idyllic setting.



The master bath's elegant vanity features Kohler sinks and faucets by Dornbracht, all from Keller Supply Company. The sconces are by Marian Jamieson Furniture & Lighting. And in the spirit of the home's blending of old and new, a modern Louis Ghost chair rests on an antique rug.

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Inside, the home had originally been heavily carpeted and draped, but Burfiend and Nguyen used a serene neutral palette and a clean aesthetic to help showcase the couple's books and the wife's collections—from family heirloom furnishings to vintage campaign chests and charcoal drawings by her aunt. "The homeowner has a fantastic eye and has collected pieces for years, so it's just so nice to be able to enjoy them in a clean, simple environment. We did a triage of things that were very important to her," Burfiend says. "She also really loves fabrics with rich, organic textures to them, which made this project really fun."

Burfiend honored the home's new streamlined interior, adding touches of visual interest here and there. The result is an oasis that's perfect for hanging out with family or kicking back and digging into one of those volumes. "I feel like I'm on vacation in this house," the homeowner says. "It's very peaceful here." **L**



The master bedroom was moved to the old bathroom's location to take advantage of the prime lake panorama. Much of the furnishings were part of the owners' collection, including vintage pieces like the drop-leaf table and the coffee table, which is a bench from a rectory in Portland. The rug is from Driscoll Robbins.