

ISSUE NUMBER 51
THE MAGAZINE PUBLISHED
IN THE INTEREST OF
PRESERVING AND
RESTORING THE
MODEST AMERICAN
20TH CENTURY HOME.
THE BUNGALOW,
AND THE RICH LIFESTYLE
THAT IT AFFORDS

AMERICAN BUNGALOW

RESTORATION
ACCESSORIES
HISTORY
FURNISHINGS
EVENTS
ARTS AND CRAFTS
UPGRADING
PHILOSOPHY
GARDENS
PROJECTS
LANDSCAPING



U.S. \$7.95 / CANADA \$11.95
5 1 >
25274 81149 6





A CLASSIC

Pasadena Craftsman

IS NEW AND OLD AGAIN

By JOHN LUKE

THE TWO-STORY CRAFTSMAN with its wide brown gables on Pasadena's south Oakland Avenue faces east, set back from the street behind a subtly rising lawn artfully strewn with river-rock boulders. A wisteria vine from which the house long ago took its informal name snakes around and over a pergola and deep, wide gabled porch in front. A low wall of clinker brick sets off a small outdoor sitting area beneath another low gable on the north side; behind it, yet another north-facing gable shades a second-floor extension toward the rear of the house. The lower portion is finished in creamy stucco. The upper is sheathed in brown shingles. There is a rhythmic, graceful asymmetry to the facade, with the front gables offset southward to open up space for the more layered horizontal and vertical elements on the north.

The 4,000-square-foot house was built in 1911 by Milwaukee Building Company, for many years the largest and most successful contracting firm in Southern California. Among the company's more notable commercial buildings were the Graumann's Chinese and Egyptian

Theaters in Hollywood and the colonnaded white 1919 Neoclassical Revival building on west Washington Boulevard, known today as The Culver Studios, which once housed Cecil B. DeMille Studios, was later headquarters for the production of "King-Kong," "Gone With The Wind" and "I Love Lucy" and where Orson Welles and Alfred





Hitchcock created some of their landmark films.

But the company also built hundreds of bungalows — many, like this one, intended as retirement homes for wealthy Midwesterners. According to Pasadena Heritage, the original owners, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Caunt, sold the house in 1916 to F. M. and Catherine Hicks, who hired the prominent Pasadena architectural firm Marston & Van Pelt to complete a series of

modifications. The house then remained largely untouched, inside and out, for more than 85 years.

Today, after a three-year rehabilitation project, including 18 months of construction that added 2,000 square feet of living space in the rear, the “Wisteria House” is a showplace in a neighborhood that includes many other historic Craftsman homes, among them the Greene & Greene Blacker House. But to Linda and



Robert Willett, who became the house's fourth owners 13 years ago and cherished its essentially original condition for 10 years before deciding it was time to undertake restoration, it is primarily what it felt like the first time they saw it on a late November day in 1993: the kind of house that says "home" and "family" the minute you walk in the door.

THE SECOND-FLOOR GABLE OVER THE DRIVEWAY ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE HOUSE WAS ADDED DURING THE RENOVATION TO RESTORE THE HOME'S ORIGINAL PROFILE: ONE LIKE IT WAS VISIBLE IN AN EARLY PHOTOGRAPH BUT HAD BEEN REMOVED.



"We just happened to be driving up Oakland one afternoon when we saw the 'For Sale' sign," Robert says. "We both loved it immediately. We knew from the beginning that as a practical matter we would eventually have to upgrade things like the electrical and plumbing systems to make it a little more livable. We also knew that would be a major undertaking, and we weren't in any rush. Despite some minor inconveniences, we simply loved living here and relished getting to know the place over the years."

Finally, when water began coming into the kitchen from a second-floor bathroom three years ago, they decided the time had come. They had been living in the house long enough to learn its history, and they had developed a strong sense of how to pre-

serve its original character while adapting it for the uses they and their 16-year-old daughter, Sarah, would be making of it in the years to come.

Working with their long-time family friend and contractor Jeffry Pollard, architect Stan McAuliffe and interior designer Su Bacon of Historic Lighting, they designed a two-story addition to the back of the house, along with a large wraparound covered patio for outdoor entertaining. The addition includes a new master bedroom suite, home office and library, exercise room and guest bedroom upstairs and an expanded kitchen and family room downstairs, along with an artist's studio for Sarah and a room that houses her menagerie of birds and small animals. The original master bedroom at the front of the house was restored as Sarah's bedroom.



THE MASTER BEDROOM (OPPOSITE) IS PART OF A NEW SUITE; THE ORIGINAL ONE, ABOVE, IS NOW DAUGHTER SARAH'S.

The project also included comprehensively updating the home's service systems, redoing bathrooms and restoring dilapidated exterior details, such as rotted rafter tails and the water-damaged mahogany roof of the front porch.

For Pollard, the project was a thoroughgoing introduction to Craftsman bungalow architecture and design, which were new to him until Linda Willett showed him a bungalow book shortly after she and Robert decided to buy the home. He soon had his own bungalow library and has come to embrace the style as "a complete architecture."





Joining New with Old

"We were very keen to retain its original look," Robert says. "We wanted the work to be seamless, in that the new construction would be continuous with the original design, but at the same time, for historical accuracy, we wanted it to be clear, when we were finished, that it wasn't all original. There had to be subtle indicators of where the old stops and the new begins. And that wasn't just something we alone wanted. It was something the city also asked for."

A particular case in point was the north-facing gable at the rear of the house, which was visible in a photograph taken in the early 1930s but had since been removed. According to Pollard, the city's building and safety department wanted the home to reflect



which sections were original and which were additions. “When we submitted our initial set of plans, the city said the addition matched the original too closely. We had to alter the exterior details of the addition just enough so that you could see where the property had been expanded.

“At the same time, though, they asked us to replace that lost gable as part of the renovation but, again, to do so in a way that made clear to a sharp eye that it was new construction. The space under that gable is now the guest bedroom.”

That historic photo also showed that the home’s exterior, which was uniformly brown upstairs and down when they bought it, was originally two-toned, as it is again today.





The house's new interior and exterior spaces are distinguishable from the originals mainly by being a bit more spacious. In all other respects they are faithful to the original design, from their box-beamed ceilings and banks of windows and glass doors to the patterning of the cement rear patio, which repeats the original surfacing of the front porch. The result is an artful blend of old and new that underscores the fam-

ily friendliness that the Willetts felt distinguished the original house and that has been preserved and reinforced in its expansion. Su Bacon oversaw the selection of new furniture, much of it from Warren Hile Studio, and designed new leaded-glass cabinets and lighting fixtures that faithfully mirror those that were originally built in. The renovated kitchen and bathrooms gleam with marble, stone and tile.



One of the home's most beautiful features, the broad, shallow-stepped quartersawn-oak staircase that was at the rear of the house, is now more central, providing a transition between front and rear, downstairs and upstairs, and old and new that unites the spaces in classical Craftsman style. It still rises to face the gently curved, glass-paned wall and doors of the original "Captain's Quarters," an upstairs study

THE SIMPLE BUT GRANDLY SCALED, QUARTERSAWN-OAK STAIRWAY LEADS UP TOWARD THE CURVED DOORS OF THE ORIGINAL "CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS," WHOSE SIMILARLY CURVED OUTER WALL CAN BE SEEN OPPOSITE IN ANOTHER VIEW (PAGE 73). CHARLIE RESTS ON THE TOP LANDING.

and sitting room, but now in a newly expanded second-floor central hallway where the distinction between old and new is all but invisible.

Looking Ahead

The pride Jeffrey Pollard takes in the restored and renovated home is evident as he points out the detailed craftsmanship with which new elements—moldings, door lights, windows, built-in cabinets—mirror original ones. And one can hear the Willetts' pleasure

and pride in the way they talk about their plan to enjoy "a great house, in a great neighborhood," for many years to come.

"It was pretty clear to us that the people who've lived in this house over the years have loved it as much as we do," Robert says. "Sterling Johnson, who owned it for a long, long time, has come back several times to reminisce and to admire what we've done with it. That means a great deal to us. It's been an exciting and gratifying experience. On it goes." 📷





Resources

CONTRACTOR

Jeffrey G Pollard
JG Pollard and Sons Inc.
Sunland, Calif.
818 353-2009
jeffrey.pollard@verizon.net

ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Stan McAuliffe
Santa Barbara, Calif.
805 962-7504
draftech@cox.net

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Charlie Rose
Wild Rose Landscape Design
Monrovia, Calif.
626 305-0793
wildroselandscape@aol.com

INTERIOR DESIGN, LIGHT FIXTURES AND ACCESSORIES

Su Bacon
Historic Lighting
Monrovia, Calif.
626 303-4899
historicalighting.com

WINDOWS AND FRENCH DOORS

**Vent vue Window
Products Co. Inc**
Los Angeles, Calif.
323 225-2288
ventvue.com

PLUMBING

Tom Riggs
Plumbing Connection
Newhall, Calif.
661 253-0848

ROOFING AND SHINGLES

Scott Burdett
SJB Construction
Canyon Country, Calif.
818 606-8336
sjbconst@earthlink.net

TECHNOLOGY/PLASMA TV

Anthony Marotta
Marconi Radio
Glendale, Calif.
818 240-1090
marconiradio.com

DRYWALL

Derek Trabilcy
Derek Trabilcy Drywall
Burbank, Calif.
818 565-0110
trabilcy@aol.com

HARDWOOD FLOORS

Allen Murray
Murray Flooring
Glendale, Calif.
818 247-1506

FINISH CARPENTRY

John Yusta
Robert Dean (Associate)
Yusta Construction
Santa Clarita, Calif.
661 947-9930

FINISH TRIM

Mario Trujillo
Glendale, Calif.
818 241-0612
copecut.com

CARPENTER

Barry Leggett
Pasadena, Calif.
626 233-6808

CABINETY

Norm Franzle
Franzle Custom Home
Specialties
Sun Valley, Calif.
818 768-3972

TILE

Mission Tile West
South Pasadena, Calif.
626 799-4595
missiontilewest.com

TILE SETTER

Jim Barnhart
JB Tile
Burbank, Calif.
818 842-6737

GRANITE AND MARBLE SUPPLIERS

Walker & Zanger
Sun Valley, Calif.
818 504-0235

GRANITE AND MARBLE INSTALLER

Alfred Cortez
AC Marble
Sun Valley, Calif.
818 953-7453

CONCRETE FOUNDATION

Rick Lau
RL Concrete
Sun Valley, Calif.
818 767 3284

CONCRETE FLAT WORK

Chilos
Block Brick & Tile Driveways
Duarte, Calif.
818 358-8752

TUB AND SHOWER ENCLOSURES

Dan and Dave Murtha
Burbank Glass and Mirror
Burbank, Calif.
818 841-2335
burbankglass.com

INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR PAINTING AND FINISHING

Sam McCrary
Trinity Construction
Sunland, Calif.
818 951-4174

POOL AND SPA

Robert Risinger
Aqua Artist
Montrose, Calif.
818 248-3451

