



need of a welcoming space inside to greet guests. Here again, the best solution proved to be simple: converting the tiny dining area off the living room into a foyer. "There's great morning light in the entry now," Dwight says. "And there's also space for a hall table and chair. For every house I do, I like to design a space like that, some kind of place for a table and a vase of flowers or a lamp—some little welcoming thing."

To make that work, he eliminated the living-room entrance (and in the process, gained a stretch of wall space to display a growing art collection) and replaced a street-side window in the dining room with a glass door. Outdoors, the roofline was extended over the new opening to create a cozy front porch where an uncovered concrete landing once sufficed.

With the rearrangements taken care of, Dwight concentrated on the interior details to pull the new layout together. Because he and Brian are avid buyers of art, books, and pottery, redesigning the rooms to accommodate their numerous collections was a priority. Built-in shelving and displays frame the rooms, and a unique living-room wall treatment was designed to highlight rotating exhibits of art.

Instead of plasterboard, Dwight covered the walls with paint-grade plywood and trimmed them with 1x6 boards and quarter-round molding. "Though it's maybe two to

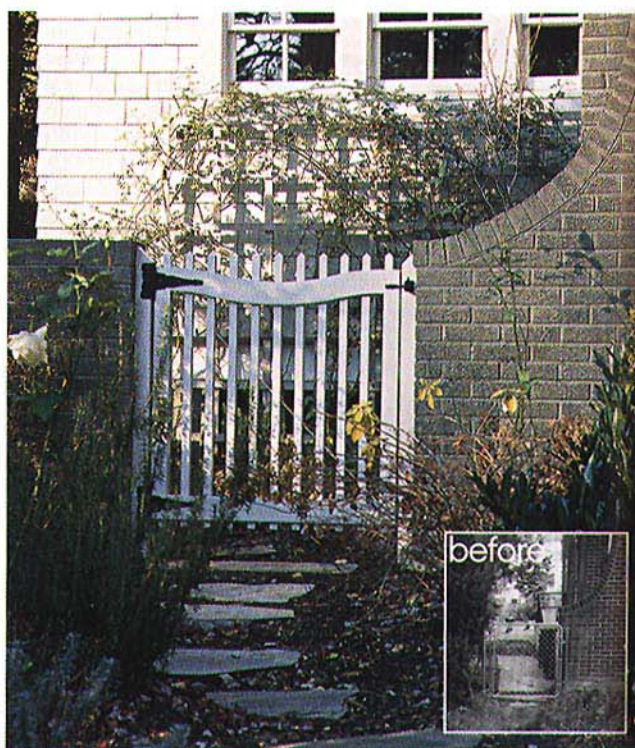
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The center island serves as an all-in-one work space, cleanup station, and storage and shelving unit. Low cost and high style blend well with vinyl flooring, stock cabinetry under the windows, and a manufactured countertop on the island. The dining-room doorway formerly functioned as the side exit off the old kitchen. **OPPOSITE:** With storage already accounted for, there's room for displays on an island shelf and in glass-front cabinets.



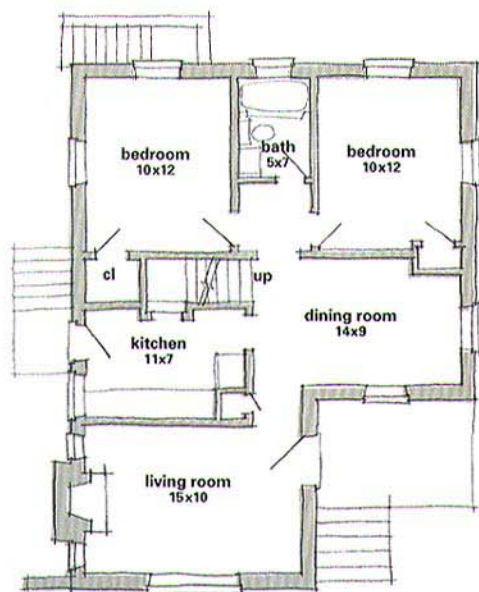
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renovation notes

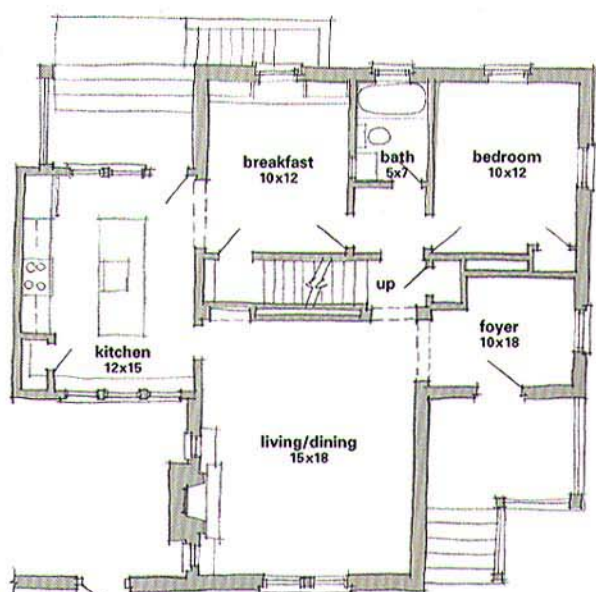
A new addition can help solve a space crunch; the trick is making it seem original. This is particularly difficult when brick is involved. Though Dwight McNeill chose wood-shingle siding for the new construction, he still had to deal with altered window and door openings in the old part of the house. The changes required touch-up masonry work—work that's often obvious because it's difficult to precisely match brick and mortar colors. He solved that problem (and helped blend the whole house) with an exterior palette that links old and new. By painting the brick and choosing complementary colors for the roof, shutters, siding, and trim, he unified the home and turned what could have been an all-too-apparent addition into a seamless extension.



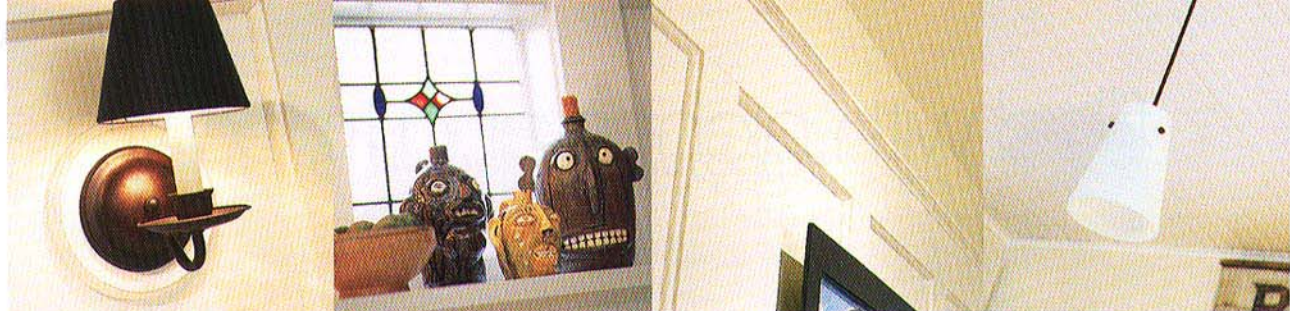
FROM LEFT: To keep the addition sympathetic to the original architecture, Dwight retained the roofline, extended the original rear dormer slightly, and included a matching one in the master bedroom. He designed the gate to the herb garden, which is tucked under a set of kitchen windows.



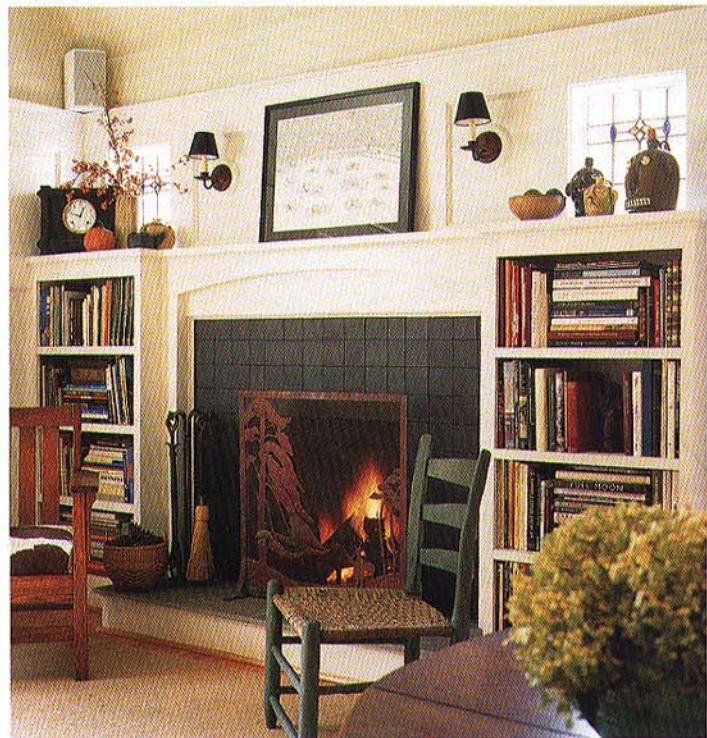
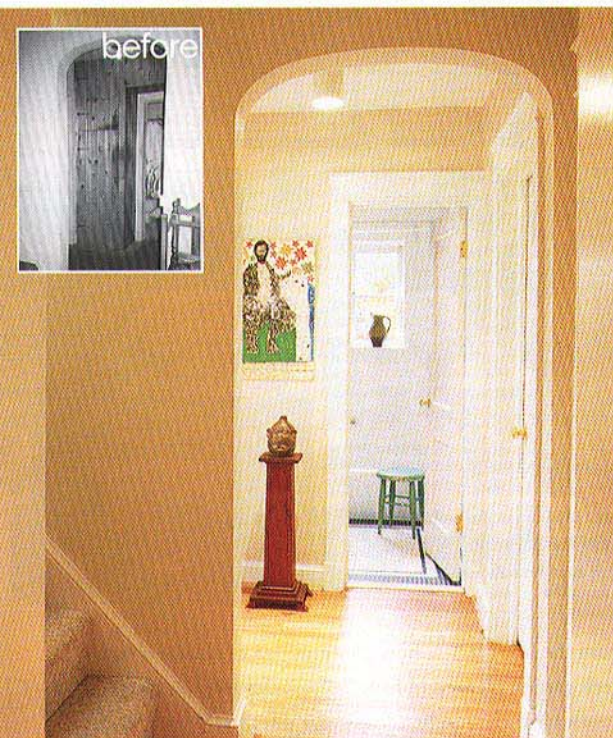
main floor before



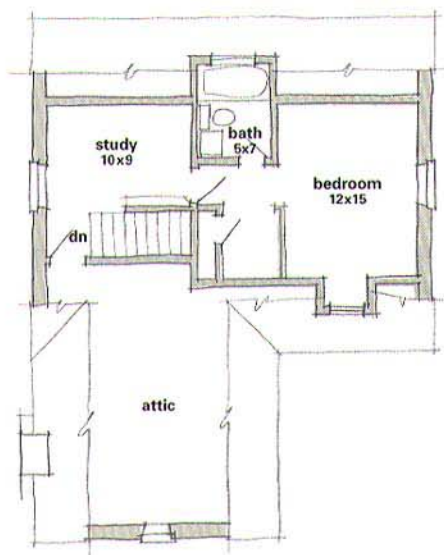
main floor after



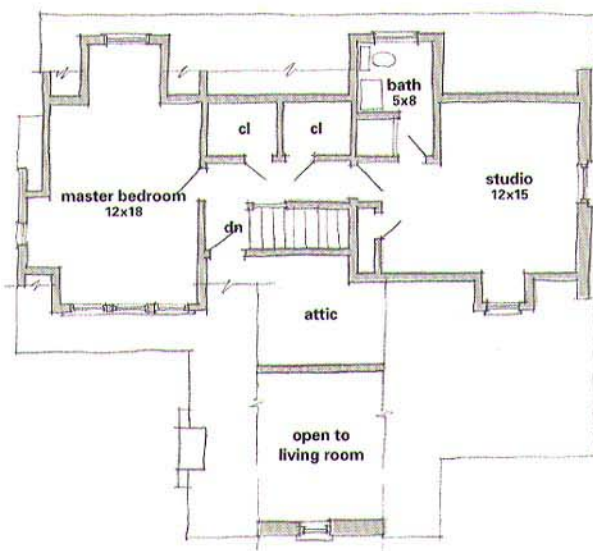
FROM LEFT: Simple sconces over the mantel are mounted on wood rounds. Pieces from a Southern pottery collection top the display shelf running the length of the fireplace wall. Dwight opted for wood paneling instead of drywall on the living-room walls to showcase an ever-changing array of artwork. An old-fashioned beadboard ceiling in the kitchen mixes easily with simple contemporary lighting.



FROM LEFT: Removing knotty-pine paneling, eliminating a closet, and restoring the wood floor dramatically changed the look of the hall leading to the main-floor bath. Flanking built-ins and salvaged stained-glass windows reframe the fireplace and provide display space for collectibles.

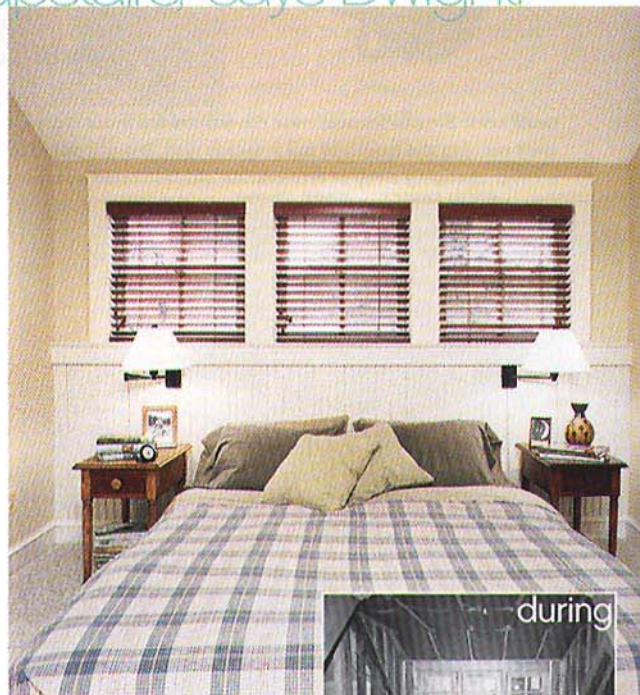


second floor before



second floor after

filled with niches and knee walls,
"it's all rather ship-like upstairs," says Dwight.



One part of the whole-house renovation turned the entire second story into a master suite. Wainscoting and wood-slat blinds in the refurbished bath are echoed in the bedroom. A broad dormer with a short beadboard wall was designed specifically to serve as a headboard.

three times more expensive than drywall, the wood was an opportunity to dress the room up," he says. "And the idea was that wood is much more forgiving of nail holes since we tend to move things around pretty frequently."

In the new kitchen, the center island serves as a food prep area and also corrals the traffic pattern. ("It works especially well at parties," Dwight says, "because you can put a buffet on that table or have the bartender stationed behind it, and nobody gets in the way.") Glass-front cabinets line the cooktop wall for displays of North Carolina pottery, and painted stock cabinetry under a bank of windows with southern exposure provides practical storage and a countertop for plants and collectibles.

The attention to detail paid off upstairs as well. The sloping ceilings, knee walls, and dormers that make the existing space so inviting are echoed in the new master bedroom. "It's all just sculpted space," says Dwight. "There was a little study that sat at the top of the stairs, and since there's no closet in the bedroom addition, we made that study into walk-in closets on the way to the bathroom. Now the whole top floor operates as a master suite."

The finishing touches outdoors tie the old house in with the new addition: A short wing wall that extended

from the front facade now continues on to enclose a small herb garden planted in front of the addition. Out back, a doorway in the kitchen leads to a porch and wide set of steps that overlook an adjoining terrace made of salvaged flagstone. "Originally, you exited the old kitchen through a side door, stepped onto a small stoop, and then went around to the backyard," says Dwight. "There was no relationship between the interior of the house and the outdoors. The new rear entry is part of a bigger gesture to the backyard, to open the house to it."

In the end, Dwight's vision for the property proves that its hidden potential was clearly worth uncovering, though he admits that he did some redefining along the way. "It's really great to have a place you can think of as your own little design laboratory," says Dwight, "but after all this, I now have tremendous empathy for my clients. Even though I know how the process works, driving up in the morning and not finding anyone there working on your house—you just get upset. I knew everything would get done, but I was still just as liable as my clients are to all the insecurities and the aggravation." ■

Architect: Dwight McNeill

For more information, turn to the Buying Guide on page 114.