

THE MAGAZINE *of* SPLENDID HOMES *and* GARDENS • SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014

# DESIGN

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# suburban renewal

A DARING REINVENTION OF A HUMDRUM  
SPLIT-LEVEL WEST OF BOSTON FULFILLS  
A COUPLE'S QUEST FOR A MODERN HOME

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**P**icture a modest, rather grim split-level house in the woods built the year Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected president. Now imagine the house obliquely bisected and implanted crossways with a long prism of glass and stainless steel. What two words best describe the finished product?

"Wicked cool," says owner Holly Ripley-Boyd. After 22 years fiddling with and trying to open up a Colonial Revival house in Reading, Massachusetts, she and her husband, Daniel Boyd, opted for a fresh start. In 2010, following an extended search for the perfect Modern house, they settled for the split-level west of Boston, hoping for the best in renovation potential. "I knew what I wanted but didn't know how to make it happen," says Ripley-Boyd. To do that, she called on architect Andrew Sidford of Andrew M. Sidford Architects in Newburyport, Massachusetts, whose work she'd admired in a design magazine. Sidford sat down with the couple and expanded their notions about what a renovation could be. He taught them a new vocabulary, with words like "overlapping spaces" and "interlinked planes." In the process of discovering what story they wanted the house to tell, he asked, "What do you want to see?" For Ripley-Boyd, it was the moon and stars. Today the couple's bedroom sits in the glass prow of Sidford's so-called implant, and, says Ripley-Boyd, "from my bed I can watch the moon move across the sky at night."

To get to that point, a sorry 1980s addition was torn down, making room for the implant, an angular space that extends beyond the house's foundation on both ends, hovering above the ground. On the street side, it holds the dining room, and on the private back side, the master suite. "It's small, but doesn't feel it," says Sidford of the reconfigured house. In fact, the post-renovation footprint is 1,970 square feet versus the 2,310 square feet of the original house.







**THE GLASS-AND-STEEL** addition extends beyond its foundation so that the dining room seems to hover above the ground near the front entry. Stainless steel shingles are a modern alter ego to wood shingles on the original house.









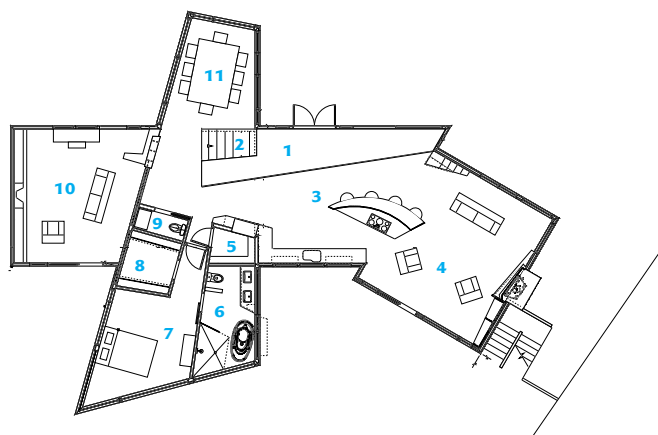
The new 4,000-square-foot house is basically the same size as the original structure, but it gains a sense of spaciousness from the addition of light and a better floor plan. The interior is open, and where old and new meet there are clear and dramatic views to the central kitchen and family room or to the entryway, located a level below. “It’s all about the flow,” says Ripley-Boyd. Despite the angle of the added space, the integrity of a single unit is maintained by a run of glass at the roofline as it rises from the dining room to the bedroom, highlighting the difference between the old ceiling height and the new. Wall color also plays into continuity. Except for the tiled bathrooms and daughter Charlotte’s downstairs bedroom, which has a turquoise palette the 10-year-old chose herself, all the rooms in the house are a study in grays.

To mirror the style of the new space, the kitchen and family room windows were extended to the roof, and the demarcation between the rooms was softened, not just by removing walls, but also by allowing the scimitar-shaped kitchen island to inch into the family room. Fitted with a Jenn-Air oven, the island is a crescent of dark steel with a bird’s-eye maple countertop. “I wanted things to be real,” says Ripley-Boyd, who chose all the materials and fixtures in the house. Glass ball lights by Bocci warmly illuminate the island’s seating area, complementing the glass on the Brisas hood over the Miele induction cooktop.

**NATURE IS THE** backdrop in the glass-enclosed dining room (FACING PAGE, BOTTOM). The fireplace in the family room (FACING PAGE, TOP) echoes lines of the enlarged windows. In the front entryway (ABOVE LEFT), stairs lead down to the terrace level or up to the main floor, where glass defines the new roofline. From the kitchen (ABOVE RIGHT), the sightline is past the dining room to the living room, which is original to the house. The interior has a loft-like sensibility, as the see-through balustrade of stainless steel and wood (RIGHT) defines the spaces above the entryway.







#### MAIN FLOOR

- 1 ENTRYWAY ON LOWER LEVEL
- 2 STAIRS UP
- 3 KITCHEN
- 4 FAMILY ROOM
- 5 PANTRY
- 6 MASTER BATH
- 7 MASTER BEDROOM
- 8 MASTER CLOSET
- 9 POWDER ROOM
- 10 LIVING ROOM
- 11 DINING ROOM

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See-through upper cabinets are mounted against glass walls around the sink, adding more light and a view to the pool area, in front of which a streambed wiggles through a landscape designed by Timothy Sheehan Landscape Architect in Wayland, Massachusetts. The pool is just far enough away for guests to admire the house but not see inside it, an important factor, since the master bedroom and bath are mostly glass. The deep, overhanging sweep of steel roof creates a protective sense of privacy for both.

Glass also defines the dining room and adds an element of drama as guests ascend from the entryway, calling attention to the space's transparent form, surrounded by the green of the woods and making it seem as if the table and chairs are sus-

pending in air. But for all its exposure, the addition has an intimate sensibility. "Modern but warm, not industrial," says Sidford. The same is true for the addition's exterior, which has stainless steel shingles that are different from, but compatible with, the wood shingles on the rest of the house, giving lightness to the building.

What had previously been a hodgepodge of porch along the back of the house is now a clean line of wooden deck that continues over the driveway to the space above the garage, where the family lived while the house was being remodeled. It was a long wait in tight quarters, but worth it. "Andrew's vision helped us create a perfect organic Modern that far surpassed any we've seen," says Ripley-Boyd, who, after a night of moon-gazing, still pinches herself in the morning. ■

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**ON THE PRIVATE** back side of the house (FACING PAGE), the new steel roof of the addition sweeps out over the master bedroom and bath. The deck runs outside the kitchen, extending over the driveway to the garage. Enveloped in glass, the master bedroom (ABOVE) is a place for stargazing. The master bath (LEFT) has a deep soaking tub and, on the travertine wall, an open shower that drains onto a pebbly floor. The view is to the backyard gardens and pool.