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Behind The Modern Restoration Of A Dutch Colonial In Seattle

Author: [Lauren Gallow](#) — Photographer: [Kara Mercer](#) / November 25, 2024



Photo: [Kara Mercer](#)



The remodel of this traditional Dutch Colonial abode in Seattle's Laurelhurst neighborhood started small with just a few planned upgrades, but as work got underway, its scope quickly increased to become a down-to-the-studs renovation designed to marry the best of old and new. Although the effort was more than initially expected, it was familiar and rewarding territory for the clients. "We've always loved Seattle's older homes," says the owner, whose family has lived in a handful of classic properties in Seattle over the years. "When we learned that this 100-year-old house was coming on the market, we were excited at the prospect—and when we set foot on the grounds and saw the expansive lawn leading down to the water, we knew we had found the perfect place for us."

From the beginning, the owners wanted to keep the home's character intact, and as the project expanded, they hired Aaron Mollick and Lisa Sidlauskas of Studio AM

Home Details

Architecture

Aaron Mollick and Lisa Sidlauskas, [Studio AM Architecture Interiors](#)

Interior Design

Kat Lawton, [Kat Lawton Interiors](#)

project expanded, they hired Aaron Mollick and Lisa Sturaskas of Studio AM Architecture | Interiors as well as interior designer Kat Lawton of Kat Lawton Interiors to make it happen. "The house is a gem, but they wanted to modernize it," Lawton recalls. "It was an important goal to preserve the original charming aesthetic while making it more functional for modern living."

Home Builder

Jay Nygaard and Dan Garman, [Gallagher Co. Construction](#)

Landscape Architecture

Richard Hartlage, [Land Morphology](#).

Styling

Teressa Johnson



Though the residence was in relatively good structural shape, there were certain aspects that weren't ideal for the family (which includes two teenagers and a dog) and their shared active lifestyle. "The layout, one we commonly see in older homes, was based on bygone behavioral patterns, and the formal spaces, such as the living room and dining room, were separate from work areas, like the kitchen and pantry, with very little visual connection between them," Mollick says. With the help of the Gallagher Co. Construction team led by builders Jay Nygaard and Dan Garman, they set to work reimagining the four-story dwelling. The first item on the docket was to open the main living level's floor plan and expand the then-cramped kitchen to enjoy the waterfront views and give the family, who loves to host gatherings, an expansive entertaining space.

Throughout the house, history was the guide. The team retained original details like leaded-glass entry windows, arched passage doors and an appealing multipaned window in the pantry, then went to great lengths to echo these features in other spaces. "The goal was to make new elements look as if they had always been here," Lawton explains. That objective was carried out by weaving explicit period-inspired details, such as beamed ceilings and traditional moldings, into many rooms. Other elements, like the kitchen's oversize geometric floors, give history a more subtle nod.

"Wherever you are in this house, you are cocooned in charming details," Lawton says. Take, for instance, the traditional string ties on the kitchen nook chair cushions. Antiques, such as the entry console, have pride of place throughout, and vintage accessories and artworks (including a portrait in the command center) are set against a palette of blues, whites and greens inspired by times passed.



Photo: Kara Mercer

Off the kitchen is the family command center. The walls are painted in Sherwin-Williams' Monorail Silver, with trim and casework in Cadet by the same brand. The vintage painting adds period character.





Photo: [Kara Mercer](#)

Cushions upholstered in Kravet Couture fabric and a Hudson Valley Lighting pendant create a cozy reading nook in the upper-floor library. Zak+Fox's Orangerie wallcovering adds a bold dose of pattern.



Photo: [Kara Mercer](#)

The library's built-in shelving is accessed via a ladder by Putnam Rolling Ladder and lit with sconces by Visual Comfort & Co. Shelves in Benjamin Moore's Newburg Green back a vintage oil painting.



While renovations on the main floor were straightforward, the other levels yielded more complex challenges. To create more usable space in what was once a low-ceilinged basement, the house was lifted and the ground underneath excavated to make way for a new recreation room, which has become a favorite family hub for movie nights. In the attic, the discovery that the entire floor was several inches from level required it to be detached with surgical precision to prevent damage to existing finish carpentry before being raised to perfect plumb. "It's extremely rare for people to make the choice to preserve rather than to scrap and replace, but keeping original details was important to these owners," Nygaard says. "It was truly a labor of love for us all to create something so timeless and true to the original." Mollick agrees, adding, "In this process, everyone proved to be a good steward of the old home."

Outside, the architects designed a new wellness pavilion containing a golf simulator, gym and yoga studio. With its dark exterior walls and green roof filled with blooming perennials specified by landscape architect Richard Hartlage of Land Morphology, the smaller building recedes into the landscape. Not only does this permit the main house to be the focus, but it also allows the eyes of those inside to pass over the structure to the water views.

The care taken with the dwelling has proved worth it to the family who resides here. "It's amazing to see it all come to fruition," the homeowner says. "We are now living the reality we dreamed about when we first walked into the backyard."



Photo: [Kara Mercer](#)

In the backyard, a new wellness pavilion contains an exercise room and a golf simulator. Painted in Benjamin Moore's Gravel Gray, the structure is visually distinct from the main house. The terrace overlooks Union Bay.





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The home's entry features a reconstructed stair crafted by Oka Woodworks Inc. A Visual Comfort & Co. lamp sits atop the antique console from Lolo French Antiques. The rug is from Andonian Rugs, and the pendant is by Hudson Valley Lighting.

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