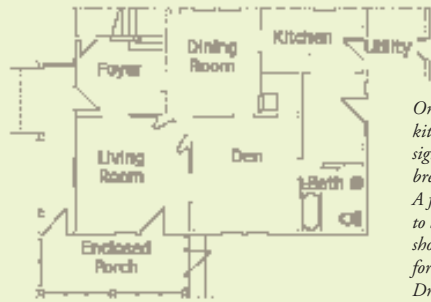
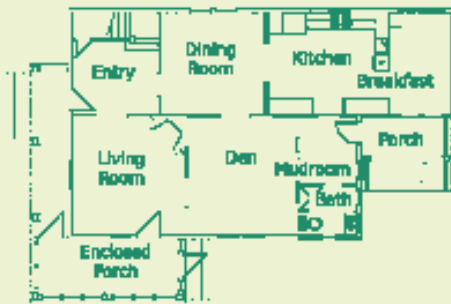


## TRANSITIONAL RENOVATION



ORIGINAL FIRST FLOOR PLAN

On the first floor, the kitchen was enlarged significantly and a breakfast area added. A full bath was converted to a powder room with shower, leaving space for a mudroom. Drawings courtesy Mark Oberholzer of Wittenberg Oberholzer Architects



NEW FIRST FLOOR PLAN

# REALIGNING A STURDY FOUR SQUARE

Finding and fixing up an older house always is a journey. For the Michaelides family, it meant coming home.

“This house reminded us a lot of the house we had in Montclair, New Jersey, before we moved to Houston — a homey four square” says Laura Michaelides, a design professional.

When Laura and husband Evan found their 1916 home in the Woodland Heights, it was certainly a welcome site, but it needed a lot of TLC. Laura collaborated with architect Mark Oberholzer to improve the functionality and appearance of the home, while simultaneously preserving the history and style of the original house.

### RESPECTFUL APPROACH

Laura worked closely with Mark, a longtime friend and colleague, to maintain the scale of the house as they created a new master suite and reinvented the kitchen. They sought materials that were the exact same or as similar as possible to those original to the home.

## THE FRONT OF THE 1916 WOODLAND HEIGHTS HOME WAS CHARMINGLY HOMEY THE BACK HALF NEEDED WORK

BY SANDRA COOK PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAYMOND ALDERETE



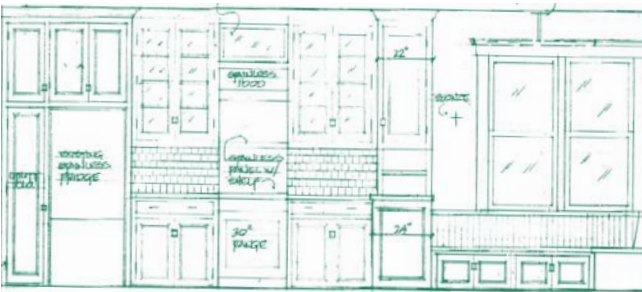
The enlarged entryway between kitchen and dining room allows a vista through the house to the front door. Countertops around the range are honed granite; wood countertops at left are made from old wood beams found in Galveston. An inexpensive stainless steel table from Ace Restaurant Mart serves as a kitchen island.



Laura and daughter, Sofia, cut stencils for the front door and change them seasonally.



The renovation did not gobble up the back yard, seen here from the breakfast area.



Laura Michaelides' drawing for the north wall of the kitchen

The all-new master suite feels like a part of the original house — even the studs are 2-by-6s, instead of the standard 2-by-4s. In the reworked kitchen, antique pine floors found at Historic Houston Warehouse maintain harmony with the floors in the rest of the house. Finding windows and doors for the new kitchen and master suite that fit in seamlessly was a priority to uphold the integrity of the home's character both inside and out. Historic Houston Warehouse and Adkins Antiques proved to be terrific resources.

As they embraced the history of the 1916 home, making improvements to meet the ideals of its original design became imperative. The goal was clearly to emphasize the best qualities of the house and change for the better the unappealing characteristics. Also, during the home's dramatic transition, the Michaelideses wisely chose to rewire the entire house.

When Laura and Evan bought the house, the rear portion of the first floor had evolved to include a laundry room (an obvious addition, built a couple of steps below the rest of the house) and a 1980s-style deck. These incongruous elements and the unfortunate sloping of the back end of the house meant the entire back portion of the house needed a fresh start, so much of it was removed and then rebuilt.



To bring natural light into the main work area of the kitchen, Laura placed a recessed window above the vent hood. The FiveStar range and Broan Rangemaster hood have the look and utility of a Viking set up, but without the name-brand price tag. The range's backsplash is glass subway tile.

## TRANSITIONAL RENOVATION



*After: View into the enlarged kitchen from the dining room entry. Laura designed her cabinets to resemble those of a butler's pantry she'd admired in a friend's apartment in New York. At the rear of the kitchen, where once there was a small laundry room, now there's now a sunny breakfast area.*



*Before: View into the tiny kitchen from the dining room*

Mark was careful in his design to preserve as much back yard as possible, as well as maintain a comfortable distance between the house and the detached garage/studio. To fit the needs of the Michaelides family, the dining room and kitchen were enlarged, a mudroom and small back porch were created and the downstairs bath was reconfigured. In spite of the significant spatial improvements, the resulting footprint was nearly the same as the "before" footprint, leaving a generous back yard and ample space between the house and garage.

After Mark completed the exterior lines of the house, Laura tackled the allocation of interior spaces. In Mark's design, the windows on the new upstairs portion of the house duplicated the windows downstairs, so Laura then placed the closet, bath and entry doors to correspond to the windows. She also adjusted the wall placement for the dining room and kitchen for better functionality and flow, creating equal wall space around the dining room window that had previously been off-center.

### CONQUERING THE KITCHEN

Laura's new kitchen had to have tall, butler's pantry-style cabinets. Inspired by cabinets at a friend's New York apartment, the grand, glass-front cabinets imply an air of elegance, yet lend a sense of casual comfort at the same time. "I love my cabinetry," Laura raves as she opens one of the lower doors. "I love that there's no kick and you can see the antique pine floors, so you know the cabinets were built for this space.

"The wooden countertops are old beams from Galveston that my carpenter, Larry Giles, finished with a marine-grade sealant for durability," says Laura. "He did a fantastic job."

Laura chose honed black granite for the areas surrounding the sink and major appliances. Larry installed the granite in a 1 1/2-inch thickness to match the thickness of the nearby wood surface. A stainless steel table from



*For the downstairs powder room window, Laura placed numerous sheers on a rod and squished them to provide just enough privacy while allowing in plenty of natural light. The result is a very modern interpretation of the Victorian lace curtain. Shower tile is Royal Mosa from KnoxTile.*

Ace Restaurant Mart functions as the kitchen island and, as Laura reports, “is so practical.”

Laura loves to mix the old with the new for a fun, decorative juxtaposition. The kitchen’s eye-catching backsplash features 3-by-6-inch subway tile, not in the traditional white ceramic, but in a groovy aqua-hued glass for a modern kick. While the architecture and cabinetry provide the old-fashioned foundation, contemporary touches, such as the industrial caged light fixtures and sleek ceiling fan, allow the space to feel stylish and hip.

#### AMPLE ACCOMMODATIONS

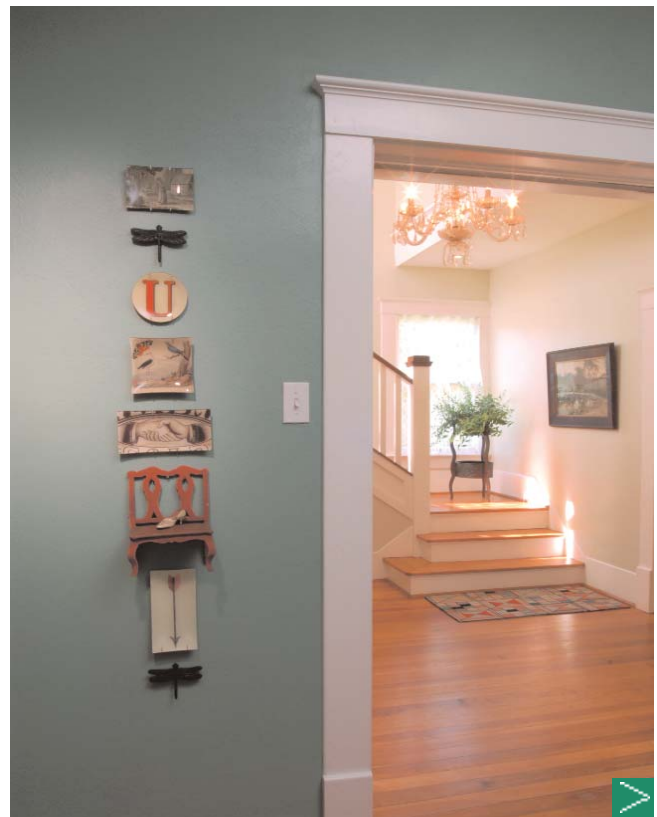
The new downstairs portion allowed for the addition of a spacious master suite upstairs for Laura and Evan. The now-extended hallway leading to the master suite includes the convenient laundry area and an office nook for Evan, an executive in software development.

The airy bedroom boasts eight windows, including four on the wall overlooking the back yard. The bed, tucked into its own niche, anchors the room. Drawing from Evan’s Greek heritage, Laura selected a pale wall color accented with peaceful blue moldings and fabrics. The curvy Regency sofa was a bargain discovery at Reeds Antiques that was refurbished to complement the new master bedroom.

The bath, with a slightly more neutral color palette, draws on nature for its design impact. Eye-catching limestone on the vanity provides a sea of texture in spite of its smooth finish — close examination reveals air pockets, fossils, bits of coral and seashells. The tile is Dutch Royal Mosa and the casual linen drapes underscore the casual, beachy feel.

“The idea for the house is that it’s not a fancy house,” says Laura. “It’s really simple and I think that’s what we liked about it.”

See remodeling resources for this house on Page 37.

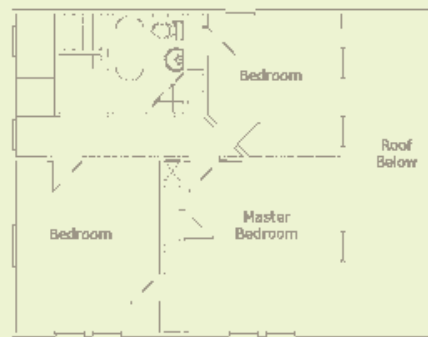


*Laura prefers to select an overall palette of colors for multiple rooms, employing subtle shifts in hue to provide a soothing visual experience from room to room. Art plates, at left, in the living room are by John Derian.*

TRANSITIONAL RENOVATION



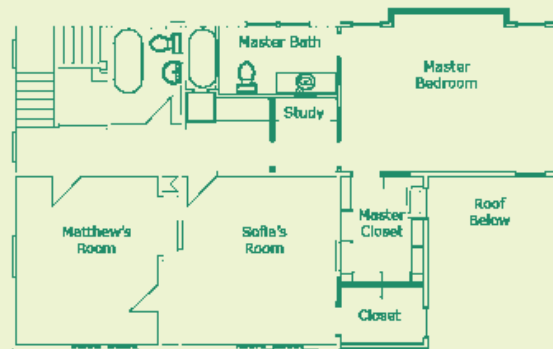
Limestone countertops from Walker Zanger are the glory of the master bath. Scones and floor tiles are from Waterworks.



Above: The new master suite upstairs with eight windows feels like a treehouse. Laura found the swanky Regency sofa at Reeves Antiques, re-upholstered it, and now "it's one of my favorite things in the house."

Left: On the second floor, a new master suite, with bath and walk-in closet, was built over what had been the roof of the first floor.

Roof Below ORIGINAL SECOND FLOOR PLAN



Roof Below NEW SECOND FLOOR PLAN