

## Answers@Home



AFTER

### Q: One Room for Several Uses? A: Focus on Art, Smart Storage

This former bedroom is used as a home office, gallery space, TV room, and occasional guest room. The owners requested as much hidden storage as possible for binders and office supplies as well as lateral file drawers for archival storage. They needed desk space for the computer, printer, fax, and a small copier, plus clear space for manual writing. The couple has collected Asian ceramics for years, but most of the pieces were hidden in the attic in their handmade boxes. We suggested a display wall as the focus of the

room, designed for flexibility and optimal viewing of the art. Conceptually, the design is inspired by the overlapping structural connections in traditional Japanese and Chinese buildings. The horizontal supports and glass shelves can be repositioned for varied displays. Under the ceramics are storage cabinets with adjustable shelves. Opposite the display wall is a large storage unit with pocketing doors that conceal a television, media equipment, and a guest closet with built-in drawers. Closed, the wall is a grid of bird's eye maple with natural

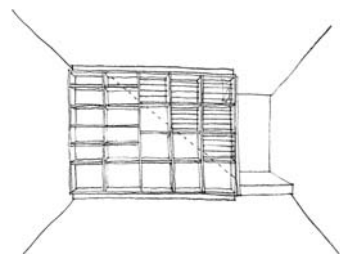
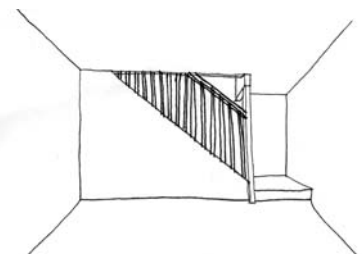
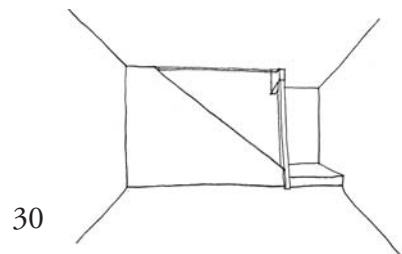
rice paper inserts, similar to opaque shoji panels. All the cabinet doors are similarly detailed. The colors of the desk chair, custom sofa bed, pillows, reading chair, storage ottoman, and rug are deliberately muted to create a soft backdrop for ceramics and paintings. With the art as the focal point, all of the room's other uses become good reasons for spending time in a soothing space. —Kim Sammis, Project Designer Wnuk Spurlock Architecture

### Q: Awkward Stairs? A: Bookshelf Railing

When a stairway is sandwiched between two walls, people often open one wall to allow for more connection between the two floors. However, this move can create a triangular pocket of space that breaks up the proportion of a room. Compounding the problem is the code requirement for railings. After adding a railing, the triangle is exaggerated and clashes even more with

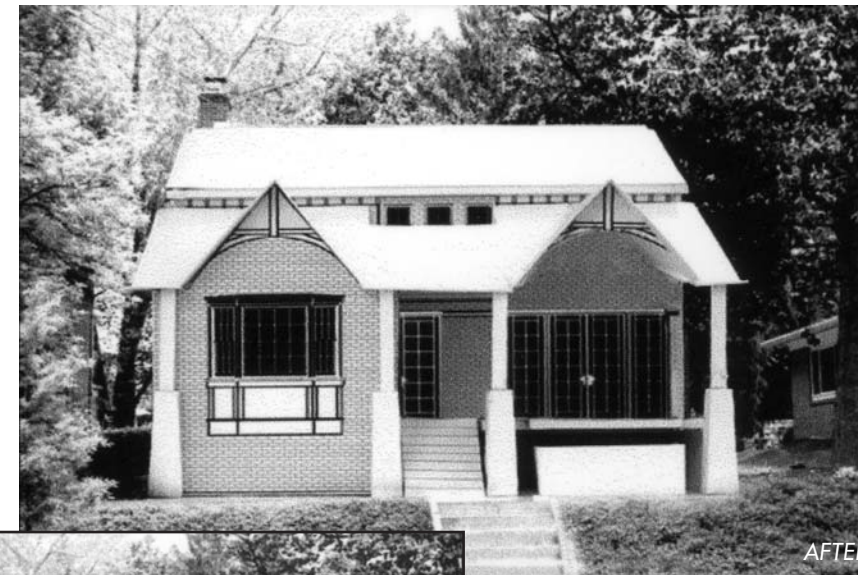
room's spatial proportions. The triangle can be an eyesore and the first thing one sees upon entering the house. To solve this problem and help solve another common household problem—lack of storage space—a bookshelf was designed to perform the task of a railing. The bookshelf/railing connects the stair and the room without clashing with proportional relationships. Since my clients are my

cousins, and since they were on a very small budget that paid only for materials (paint-grade pine), I constructed it myself—with a little help from their neighbor and friend Peter McClintock, who happens to be a master carpenter for Peterson & Collins. —Meghan Walsh, AIA Meghan Walsh Studio



## Answers@Home

### Q: Plain Façade? A: Arts and Crafts Facelift



AFTER

NOW

My clients feel that their house is very bland and unattractive from the street. They also want a front porch so they can interact more with their neighbors. Since they like the Arts and Crafts style, we've decided that this is a good direction to go. Construction starts this summer.

We've come up with the idea of changing the awkward front projection into one of two front gables with steeply pitched roofs and a sloped shed roof between. An interesting overhang supported by brackets and decorative posts will add to the visual character. A bay window on one side will add depth and shadow; on the other, generous french doors will open from the dining room to the new front porch. Brick and stone piers and planters will help tie it all together. The new roofs will be copper, and the decorative woodwork will be redwood; both materials will be repeated in the interior of the house, which is simultaneously undergoing a renovation. My clients are looking forward to having the outside of their home be as warm and welcoming as the inside.

—Reena Racki, AIA  
Reena Racki Associates

