



The ART and CRAFT of TRANSFORMATION

Water cascades from the heavily wooded hillside, past the Studio overlooking the house and deck with a Sonoma basalt stone fireplace. The First Bedroom balcony offers views of the garden from above.

With careful planning, a diminutive post-war cottage is lifted and crafted into a historically inspired, original home with an open floor plan, hand crafted details and lush gardens.



House, patio and yard.



Kitchen with original 1949 cabinets and tile.



Living/Dining Room with Kitchen behind wall. Living areas are transformed into a second floor bedroom suite.

The property. Cramped, dark, and in need of upgrades, the 900 square foot two-bedroom house in Marin County was nestled against the foot of Mount Tamalpais in a heavily wooded neighborhood of modest post-war houses. Second growth redwoods on the sloping hillside, site coverage restrictions, and the lot size restricted the buildable area for most conventional expansion possibilities. Outdoor living area was limited to a small concrete patio. A dark gravel yard offered the only useable area – inhospitable for commonly used landscaping materials.

The design challenge. Double the house size, re-configure the floor plan for a 3-bedroom residence with home office, and expand living areas. Connect interior spaces with the exterior. Bring plenty of light into the house. Solve drainage problems that had plagued the low lying floor level. Open up tree canopy for light and create outdoor living areas with fresh ideas for the suburban backyard. And do it all on a modest budget.

The plan. Acting as architect and contractor, **HOOD** made the daring decision to lift the entire the house eleven feet off its deteriorated foundation and to create a new first floor of open living spaces, kitchen and office. The two-bedroom floor plan could easily be remodeled into a workable three-bedroom second floor with a strategically placed stair. The house's "footprint" would be increased sparingly to hold the budget and to minimize loss of precious level yard area.



Phase 1: Exterior Remodel

Above left: Furniture was stored tightly in two bedrooms. Utilities were disconnected. A masonry fireplace was demolished and the roof was stripped for seismic strengthening.

Above: The first phase of work began with the house still on its foundation for easy and safe work. Siding was stripped. Window and door framing was modified. New electrical, insulation and shear plywood to walls and roof were installed and inspected.

Above right: Side yard of house with new shear plywood. Underground utilities for the future Studio were completed. The house was ready for Phase 2.



Phase 2: House Lift and New Foundation

Left: With exterior remodel work roughed in, house was cut loose from the garage and lifted with hydraulic jacks onto wood cribbing. The original foundation was demolished.

Right: A bobcat-mounted drill rig gingerly maneuvered around the timber cribbing, drilling 20 foot deep piers.

Far right: A new concrete grade beam foundation was formed and placed. Foundation work took a grueling 24 days to complete.





Phase 3: Connect the Old and the New

Above right: Carpenters framed new walls for the house overhead before it was lowered inch by inch for a perfect landing on new construction in thirty minutes.

Right: First and Second Floors were connected. Fascia, reclaimed redwood brackets and trim work was pre-finished, fitted and installed.



Phase 4: Prepare for Winter

Above: Roofing, windows and shingle siding were Installed over five weeks – days before record rains.



The completed project with custom mix stains applied the following spring



Above: The double height ceiling reveals the original cottage's rear wall. A Doug Fir false beam serves as an insulated plumbing chase for upstairs bathrooms.

Phase 5: Cabinetry and Finishes

Reclaimed cypress redwood and Douglas fir was hand selected from sources and milled on site into columns, beams, railings, doors and interior trim.

Master Woodworker, William Eichenberger, a long time friend and collaborator, painstakingly sorted, milled and fitted 400 year-old Louisiana cypress wood salvaged from a Pre-Civil War warehouse. Together they created the kitchen within an Asian/ Arts and Crafts theme. Australian gumwood flooring was installed throughout the first floor after curing four weeks in the living room.



Above: Reclaimed woods, Japanese rice paper sandwiched in glass cabinet doors (for ease of maintenance) and absolute black granite countertops continue an Asian influenced theme.

Below left: "Shoji" style doors conceal the Kitchen.

Below right: On the "new" second floor, a fight-filled bedroom suite was created from the original living and dining area. A dressing room, bath and private deck overlook the hillside garden.





Expansive windows and concise Doug Fir details create a pronounced connection between the interior and exterior. The deck is defined as an outdoor room between the hillside and house.



Shortly after completion of the new living space, the owners hosted a sit-down, catered dinner for forty guests. There was still room for a speaker and pianist - all within 800 square feet of flexible space.



Phase 6: Hardscape/Landscape

Collaborating with landscape designer Thomas Henthorne, barren ground was transformed into a woodland garden. A toolshed (background in photo below) was moved to the hillside and remodeled into a studio with bath and circular deck.

Putting it all together...while keeping it all in play.

This project is a the culmination of analysis, context, function, budget, timelines, codes, labor, logistics, furniture, plants, water, color, sunlight, memory and delight.



After: The house prior to completion of the terrace and garden



Egyptian Papyrus and exotics in the woodland garden designed with landscape designer Thomas Henthorne create a land & pond effect with Kentucky Bluestone.



Postscript: After completion of the project, HOOD was engaged to consult and design a dozen remodel and new construction projects within walking distance of the Studio.

The property was **featured on HGTV** and the **cover of Sunset Magazine**.

At the time of sale there were multiple offers, closing escrow with a **net 280 percent return on investment**.

The property **set a sales record** in its market in Marin County.