

HOMES BY ARCHITECTS TOUR:

REINVENTING HOME

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Tradition with a twist

The home: 1928 white stucco, Mediterranean-style home in Minneapolis.

The owners: Julie Mulvahill and Peter Yoo.

The design team: Rosemary McMonigal, McMonigal Architects, Minneapolis, www.mcmonigal.com, 612-331-1244.

The mission: Mulvahill and Yoo knew their Linden Hills home would need many cosmetic upgrades when they bought it 11 years ago. "We loved the charming windows in the front living room, and it never went through a bad '70s renovation," said Mulvahill. But they did have to pull up cobalt blue and pink shag carpet and refinish the hardwood floors underneath. Then life intervened, and they waited eight years before addressing other more challenging issues, such as the dark narrow kitchen and airplane-size main-floor bathroom. Plus they discovered their home had little insulation and was always cold and drafty.

"The plan was to retain the overall character but significantly improve the energy-efficiency and sustainability while updating it to a modern aesthetic," said McMonigal.

The domino effect: "We decided to do a comprehensive renovation, rather than do it in parts and pieces," said Yoo. "If you wait eight years ... may as well go all the way."

Teardown not their style: With a design plan in hand, Yoo and Mulvahill gathered bids from several contractors. Among the improvements required were heating and cooling systems, insulation, lighting, plumbing and electrical. One contractor recommended that it would be more economical — and even offered a discount — to demolish the home and start over.

"We were shocked," said Mulvahill. "It wasn't the right move for us." They loved some parts of the house, and wanted to retain the original architectural flavor where they could.



TOP: The Euro-style kitchen is a mix of sleek terra-cotta colored cabinets, stainless-steel countertops with a butcher-block topped island. **LEFT:** Energizing red in the master bathroom, which has a high awning window for air flow. **RIGHT:** Homeowners Julie Mulvahill and Peter Yoo incorporated many green features, such as photovoltaic panels, into the renovation of their 1920s home.

"I travel to Europe and see homes that reflect what was there before," Yoo said. "But there's no shyness about putting in modern elements."

Staying in character: McMonigal matched the original oak floors, mimicked the barrel-vault shape in the dining room, and the new energy-efficient transoms over casements replaced the original arched windows. "It's a modern version of the three-paneled-window look original to

the house," said Mulvahill. **So long, sunroom:** The couple converted their 160-square-foot sunroom to a year-around space that was used for the new expanded kitchen. The sunroom wasn't a big loss because it leaked and needed repairs. "They would be spending so much time there — and it would get all the sun," said McMonigal.

Color it beautiful: The home's hues are a refreshing palette of energizing laven-

der, earthy terra cotta, steel gray and red rhubarb. "Color makes it a more exciting space to live in," said Mulvahill. "And it doesn't hurt to have a daughter who says, 'Let's do purple.'"

Fireplace reboot: McMonigal tore down the massive brick fireplace, gaining more space for the living and dining rooms. She replaced it with a gas unit made of sleek stainless steel filled with Japanese garden-style pebbles instead of faux logs. The see-through

glass opens up the views through the home. "With the large square opening, it's homey, like the wood-burning fireplace I grew up with," said Mulvahill.

Master improvement: On the second floor, the couple took space from one of the four bedrooms to create an expansive master suite with a Zen-style bathroom outfitted with heated floors, soaking tub with red-painted surround, and pebble-floored shower. The



BEFORE AND AFTER: The renovated home's exterior is gold and terra cotta.

large, high, Euro-style awning window opens up for breezes but provides privacy.

Modern Mediterranean: On the exterior, Mulvahill and Yoo removed the wrought-iron railings and had the house restuccoed, but instead of white, they painted it deep gold with terra cotta accents. They also added a covered porch on the front. "The new lines feel modern, but the color makes me think of the Mediterranean sensibility," said Yoo.

Going green: The home is LEED-silver-certified and is packed with sustainable strategies and eco-friendly features such as recyclable materials, LED lighting, radon-protection system, low-VOC paints, spray-foam insulation and passive solar design. Ten photovoltaic panels cover the south-facing roof to generate electricity. "We wanted to do something beyond saving money on our utility bills," said Yoo. "We have a 13-year-old daughter, and we wanted to teach her about being conscientious about the environment."

The result: The home is an eclectic style blending old and new. "Visually it looks new and modern, but it still feels like we held onto parts of the old house," said Mulvahill.

What people can learn on the tour: "They can see how you can re-energize an older house and make it modern and energy-efficient," said McMonigal.

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