



A REMODEL REMEDY

By Heidi Olinger Hart

People who occupy homes deliberately created for them often have an energy and enthusiasm that come from their interaction with the space. North Boulder residents Don and Karen (they requested their last name not be used) are two such people.

Karen radiates enthusiasm when talking about the remodel completed on their home in 2006, a design that, admitting maximum sunlight from the southwest, feels downright radiant. "We wanted a home where you come in and feel comfort-

able," Karen says. "We wanted something that reflects us, and [this] is totally us."

The decision to remodel the home, rather than demolish and build anew, also reflects who they are—and puts them in the minority on their street, where scrape-offs are the norm. Additionally, Karen and Don wanted to preserve their house in an economically and ecologically smart manner. The couple estimates the costs to completely redesign and rebuild their home would have been three times what they paid to remodel.

Their architect, Dominique Gettliffe of Gettliffe Architecture in Boulder, has

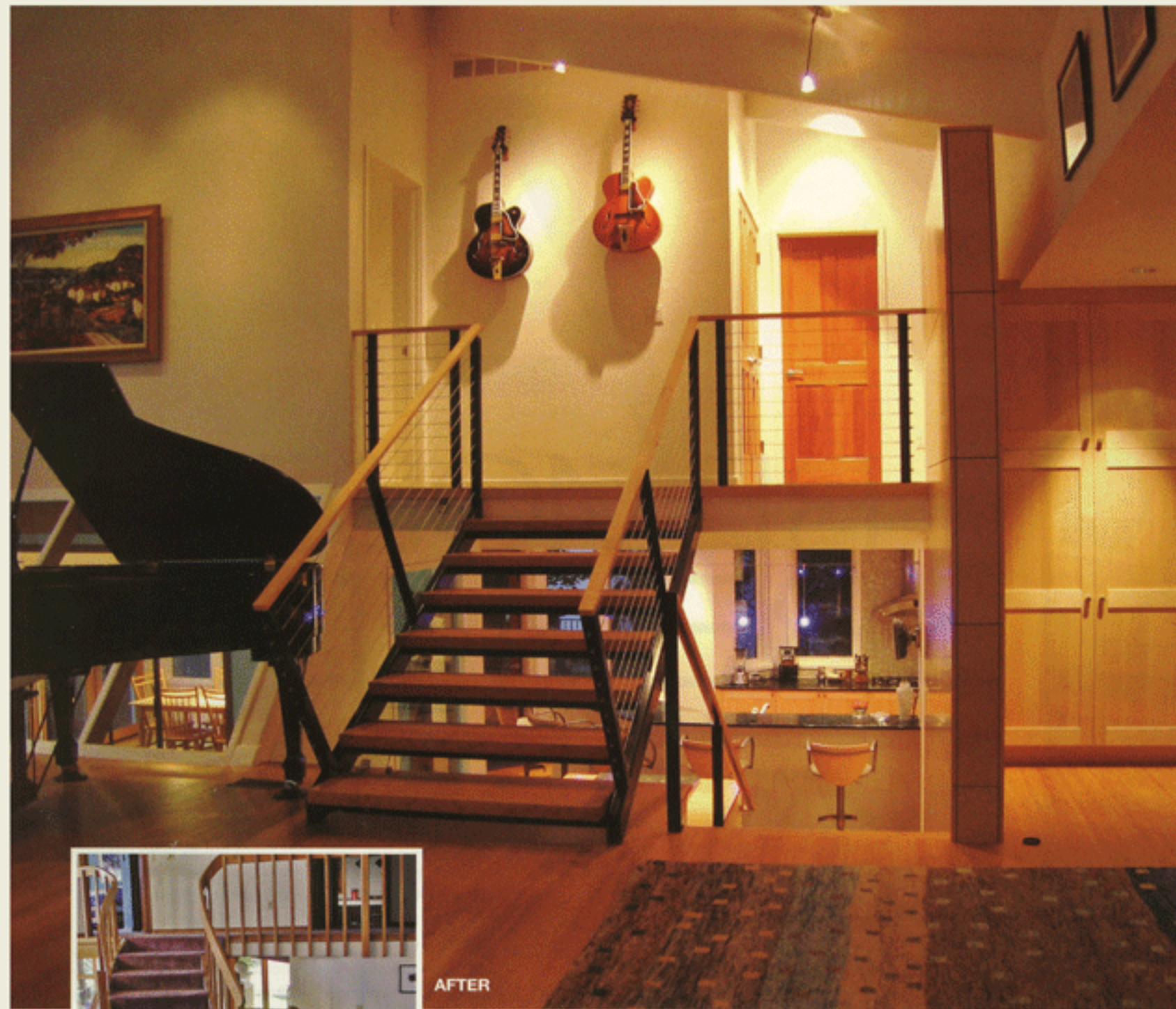
PHOTOS BY DOMINIQUE GETTLIFFE



Don and Karen were tired of playing hide-and-seek with their unremarkable front door that, although it faced the street, was difficult to locate on first glance. The claustrophobic and outdated bridge walkway (left of the front door) connects the main house to home offices. The remodel's striking new entry welcomes guests in style, and the redesigned bridge is now sunlit and spacious.



This north Boulder home needed a major Rx to turn a patchwork of isolated rooms into a single home without a seam. See how the owners and their architect achieved a dazzling remodel that left the original footprint intact.



BEFORE
New railings and open stairs brought light, flow and a contemporary aura to Don and Karen's main living areas.

AFTER

focused on sustainable design for more than 20 years. He says that even if materials had been recycled and reused for this project, a demolition would have produced a greater volume of waste than the renovation. The difference, he estimates, is 20 percent waste from a deconstruction versus 4 percent from the actual remodel.

Piecing the Patchwork

During the nine years they lived in the old home, Don, Karen and their children (ages 8, 6 and 5) say they felt confined. The kitchen, dining and living rooms, would-be gathering areas, were walled in and cut off from one another. And the house lacked a deck system necessary to connect the living space to the outdoors. "We're outside a lot," says Karen, who grew up in Boulder. Come winter, her family spends every

weekend at Eldora Ski Resort, and they wanted a home that would complement their Boulder lifestyle.

The original house presented other architectural challenges as well. The main entry was difficult to locate, even though it faced the street, and a narrow, enclosed bridge connected the original home, a 1956 cottage, to the central living quarters, which were added in 1984. A total of four additions had been made to the property over the years, including children's bedrooms that Don and Karen added in 1997.

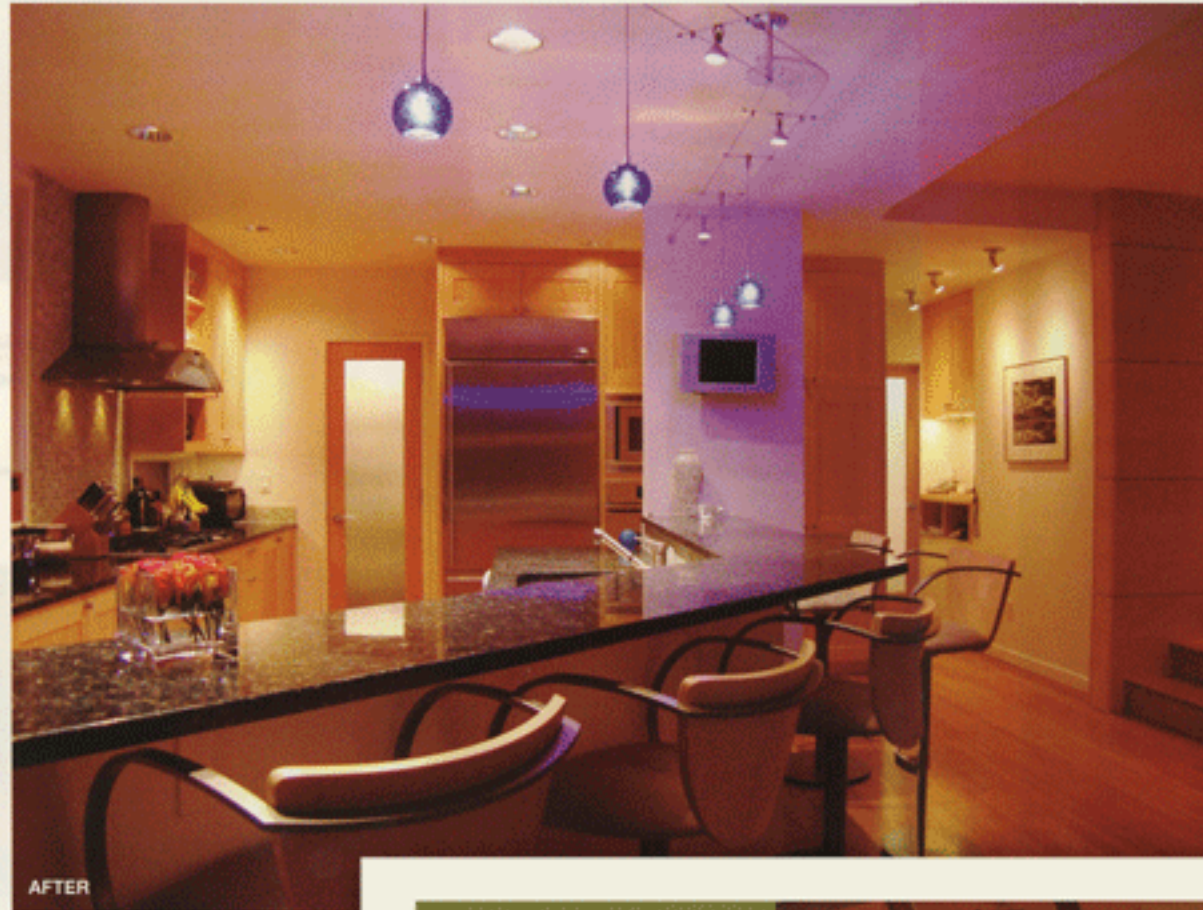
Each addition reflected the decade in which it was built and was distinct from the whole. The result was a disjointed, dysfunctional house. "We wanted the flow of the home to be better and we wanted it more open," Karen says. But several

architects, including one from the firm that would redesign the home, advised them to demolish the house and start from scratch. The message: "This place is a mess."

Finding an architect who would work with the scope and constraints of what the couple wanted was a process. But Karen says she could tell Gettliffe was "visualizing the solution," because he spent hours studying the space before sketching a



There was not enough space for the family and guests to sit in the kitchen before the remodel, Karen says. With new lighting and a cosmetic makeover, the kitchen is now a functional place in the same amount of space.



EARTH-FRIENDLY OVERHAUL

Gettliffe Architecture incorporated the following "green" elements into Karen and Don's north Boulder remodel.

To allow sunshine to enter the pool area, a passive solar room on the home's lower level, Gettliffe set off the decking on the next higher level from the structure itself.

Blown-cellulose insulation, made from recycled newsprint, keeps the home airtight.

Flooring in the living room, dining room, kitchen and bridge is sustainable bamboo.

A clean-burning pellet stove is the home's primary heat source. Thanks to the stove, the furnace turns on perhaps only twice during a cold winter, Karen says.

The composite Oasis deck is made of recycled plastics and wood.

Remodeling, rather than demolishing, was ecologically responsible.

—Heidi Olinger Hart





To transform the cramped bridge walkway, architect Dominique Gettliffe raised the ceiling and added west-facing windows to frame the flatirons views.



concept. Gettliffe says he walked away from the first meeting saying to the young, doubting architect, "I think we can do something with this."

Gettliffe's solution would relocate and redesign the main entrance; connect the living room, dining room and kitchen; connect the interior to the outdoors with a 1,157-square-foot deck system; and increase and contemporize the space within the bridge.

Home, Sweet Cohesive Home

As the mother of an active family, Karen especially appreciates the new mudroom. "I can't even tell you!" she exuberantly says. "Moms respond to mudrooms. It's



AFTER



BEFORE

The new deck's open staircase and cable railings let sunlight pass into the indoor pool area on the lower level. Before the deck addition, the family couldn't access the outdoors from the second floor and the hot tub was in a conspicuous location. Now, the family enjoys dining, tubing and expansive mountain views from their new elevated deck.

the best thing ever, and I love it now." Noting other features of the remodel that parents can best appreciate, she points to the kitchen island the children regularly use and the pantry that was enlarged by removing a downstairs shower. "We use the house more now," she says. "[We have] so much more livable space."

Since the renovation, the family also dines outdoors, and Don and Karen enjoy lingering on the new deck off the master bedroom. "It's like being on vacation," Karen says. "We've never had that outdoor element before. It's a very comfortable feeling." Don's repeated comment, she says, sums up the couple's feelings about their remodeled home: "We can't believe it. We live in this house!"

Heidi Olinger Hart frequently writes about architecture and design, and has gained recognition for her work with the International Association of Business Communicators, Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce and the Boettcher Foundation. She is a member of the Denver Woman's Press Club and has been a Coloradan for 20 years.



TYING UP LOOSE ENDS

The main goal of remodeling this north Boulder home was to open up and connect spaces in the existing structure, says architect Dominique Gettliffe. Thus, the remodel accomplished four things:

1 Created a new main entrance in a new place. This gives the home a unified style from the outside in, and creates an unmistakable focal point. Gettliffe moved the front door left of its former location and elevated it to the level of the main floor. A deck and overhang accentuate the formal sense of entry.

2 Created a central heart by linking the living room, dining room and kitchen. Gettliffe replaced the existing stairs with an open staircase and removed the stairway walls to make it as transparent as possible and create visual access to the kitchen, a half-level below the living room.

3 Created a connection to the outdoors. A deck affords views from three levels and eliminates the disparate look that had resulted from the home's four additions. To lighten the deck's

visual effect, Gettliffe combined steel structural elements and guardrail cables with accent wood and composite decking. "The combination of the two is a good contrast," he says.

4 Created more space within the bridge. Gettliffe literally raised the roof and inserted windows to contemporize the space and give it a wide, western exposure with a Flatirons view.

—Heidi Olinger Hart