

Recycled remodel

Professional designers tackle their own condo with a totally green makeover

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May 2006 Portland Tribune @Home

<http://portlandtribune.com/athome/may06/index.html>

It didn't take long for Beth Meredith and Eric Storm to decide that the condominium in Northwest Portland would make the perfect home.

In addition to its prime location within walking distance of shops and restaurants, the condo also had stunning architectural details and a great floor plan with enough space to accommodate a home office.

Despite its charm, the condo did have one significant drawback: A wall separated the kitchen from the rest of the home, which disrupted the flow of the space and made the kitchen and adjacent hallway feel cramped and dark.

“We looked at more than one unit in this building, but this one had the best layout and the best light,” Storm says. “But we knew as soon as we saw this space that we were going to tear down that wall.”

Meredith and Storm co-own Living Spaces, a design firm that specializes in green remodeling projects, and wanted their home to reflect their values and act as a showroom for their clients.

It also was important to the couple to choose finishes that were consistent with the period of their building, which was built in 1907.

Tearing out the wall was the first phase of their remodeling project and the transformation was immediate.



GREEN DREAM Couple turns their Northwest condo into an eco-friendly oasis



Eric Storm and Beth Meredith love the quaint courtyard in the center of their historic condominium in Northwest Portland.

Removing the wall made the 769-square-foot unit feel much larger and flooded the space with natural light. It also created extra space for the couple to use as a breakfast nook.

“It created a much more functional space that also looks much larger,” Meredith says. “It was a small change, but the impact was huge.”

Once the wall was removed, the couple set to work remodeling the kitchen.

The original pressboard cabinets were removed and replaced with cabinets made from a combination of wheatboard and salvaged wood.

Instead of choosing materials like oak or maple, which tend to look dated, Meredith and Storm opted to paint the cabinets with two-tone green and white paint to fit with the architecture.

The couple also covered the Formica countertops with porcelain tile, removed the vinyl flooring to reveal original fir floors and added new lighting in the kitchen and a ceiling fan in the dining room.

All of the wood used in the project, including the trim and the boards used to patch the fir floors, was salvaged.

“Each time someone in the building does a remodeling project they put their original materials in the basement,” Meredith says. “We got almost all of the materials we needed for our project from those extra supplies.”

Meredith notes that the doors and other materials that were removed from their unit during the remodeling project were placed into the cache of materials in the basement for other residents to use.

In addition to creating a more aesthetically appealing and eco-friendly living space, Meredith and Storm wanted to improve the energy efficiency of their home.

In order to have the biggest impact, the 100-year-old windows were replaced with dual glazed wooden windows that are argon-filled and have a low-E coating.

Although the windows feature modern energy-efficient technology, the style still fits with the classic architecture of the building.



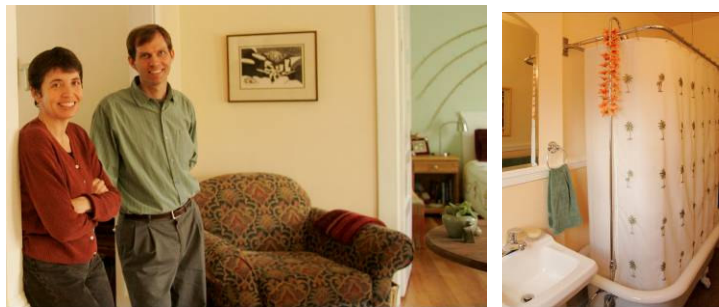
Eric Storm and Beth Meredith run Living Spaces, a design firm specializing in environmentally friendly design, from the dining room of their historic condominium.

“We knew that having really energy-efficient windows was a long-term investment that would really impact our comfort level,” Meredith says. “It’s made a huge difference. We almost never have to turn our heat on.”

Although the kitchen was the focus of the remodeling project, Meredith and Storm also made small changes elsewhere in their home.



The vinyl flooring in the bathroom was replaced with Marmoleum, a salvaged stained glass window was added in the foyer and an oversized home office table was made from salvaged wood and painted with zero-VOC paint.



The entire project took just a few months to complete, but Storm is confident that the impact will last a lifetime.



“We focus on creating designs that are affordable and beautiful but also green and functional,” he says. “We wanted to use materials that were timeless and environmentally friendly but also reflected the architecture of the building.”

“Our goal was to create a home that fit us like a glove and this place fits us perfectly,” Meredith says. “It’s really low maintenance and high functioning and there’s no wasted space, which is what we think green design is all about.”

MEET THE EXPERTS
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