

Recipe for Efficient Design

A light, bright period kitchen emerges from a tight budget and a limited floorplan.

BY CATHERINE TITUS FELIX • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSAN GILMORE

"I was dreaming of a house for a long time," Molly Dinneen says. In 2001, Molly found the Foursquare of her dreams. She's been working on it ever since. "I wanted a Craftsman-style house," Molly says. Her mother had restored a bungalow in St. Paul, Minnesota, and that's where Molly caught the old-house bug. "When you move into a house like this, you are its steward not its owner," Molly says.

Molly's Foursquare is located on a greenbelt in central Minneapolis. The location gives her the convenience of urban living in a leafy-green setting. While the house was basically in good shape when she moved in, Molly wanted to bring it back to its former glory. She spent her weekends and vacations for nearly eight years stripping and refinishing the woodwork, a process that took longer because she was doing it all on her own.

From Window Frames to Kitchen Sinks

As the house transformed during those eight years, Molly contemplated the last project: the kitchen. It wasn't terrible, but it had been partially remodeled at some point in the past. A few original cabinets had survived, but new cabinets had been squeezed into the tight space and the kitchen's layout was a jumble. The sink had been jammed into a corner facing a wall, which Molly says was "pretty miserable," and a custom-made dishwasher had been installed underneath the bowl. When the dishwasher died and costs for replacing it started spurring ideas for what else would need to be replaced, the remodel was propelled into gear.

"I'm a member of the Twin Cities Bungalow Club," Molly says. "Their newsletter helps members find restorers, designers and decorators." It was through her club that Molly first saw the work of David Heide Design Studio. "They are absolutely about honoring the past," she says. "I thought they wouldn't be interested in my small house but when I spoke with them about the project they said, 'Sure.'"

Lots of Ideas, So Little Room

"I had a lot of ideas," Molly says. "I really wanted an Arts & Crafts style kitchen."

The room faces east and north, so Molly had to maximize the light. "I knew I wanted a farm house sink and painted cabinets and really needed more storage and work space," Molly says. Although the space is tight, Molly felt firmly that she wanted to remain within the original footprint of the house. "If we added on it would have compromised the architecture of the house," Molly says. "If the kitchen had been 100% original I would have found a way to make it work, but since so much was gone, I wanted to make it functional."

Molly also wanted to keep the original windows. Heide developed a plan that put the sink under a window and moved the dining room doorway slightly, creating space for a span of cabinets and countertops. He also suggested a glass panel be added to the back door in order to increase the light in the room. The entire process took several months, but with her plans finalized, and some initial estimates, it was time for Molly to figure out how to pay for it.

The Reality of the Recession

"I thought I could just refinance," Molly says. "But when I went to the credit union I couldn't believe how much value had come out of my house." The reality was that the recession had hit urban areas earlier and harder than many other



Like many early 20th-century homes, Molly Dinneen's Foursquare had a small kitchen. Remodeling efforts of previous owners had created a functional, but uninspired, space. Working with David Heide Design Studio, Molly acted as her own general contractor and did her own demolition to create a period-style kitchen that really works.

Get the look

Re-create Molly's style with these finds:

1. Acero ceiling fan. For pricing and dealers, (951) 735-9220 or minkagroup.net.
2. Metlox gingham green cup and saucer set, \$9.99. (800) 737-5223 or replacements.com.
3. Glass knobs, \$2.09-\$7.99 each. (877) 544-9887 or lookintheattic.com.
4. Willow area rug in tearose, visit tigerrug.net.



Style File

TYPE OF HOME: 1925 Foursquare.

BACKGROUND: Molly Dinneen had dreamt of owning an Arts & Crafts style home for a long time. She found her dream house in 2001 and has been working to return it to its full glory ever since. The previously remodeled kitchen posed a special challenge.

DESIGN ELEMENTS: Molly was determined to preserve the architectural integrity of her home, so she maximized as many original elements as possible. The original windows, woodwork and floors were supplemented with authentic details like subway tiles, wainscoting, Arts & Crafts style cabinets and period-style hardware.


DECORATING COLOR SCHEME: The color palette included creamy white, soft celadon green with pops of color provided by ruby-red glass cabinet knobs and a red, green, blue and cream Oriental rug.

INNOVATIVE IDEA: Glass replaced the solid wood panel in the original door to allow light to stream into the previously dark room. Shelves installed over the original windows help tie the cabinets together and visually unite the space.

Opposite: *The decorative perforations on the cabinet doors under the kitchen sink are an Arts & Crafts period design element with a practical purpose: The heat for the room was to have been installed there.*

Period details like the subway tile and ceiling moldings have been integrated into the kitchen of Molly Dinneen's 1925 Foursquare. The glass panel, which replaced the wooden one in the back door, allows sunlight to pour into the once dark room.





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parts of the country. Foreclosures were up and property values were down. "I wanted to keep the project affordable," Molly says. "So I had to figure out how to keep the design and how to finance it without a bank."

Undeterred, Molly started searching for alternatives and learned about Neighborhood Housing Service. "They are a national, non-profit organization that offers low-interest loans for urban homeowners." Working with the service's construction specialist, Jim Richardson, Molly decided to act as her own general contractor. "Most GCs work by adding a percentage to the prices their subs give them, so there is not a lot of incentive for a GC to look for competitive bids," Molly says, "I've heard that many GCs are more flexible now. But that wasn't the case at the time." Molly wanted to do some of the work herself, and Jim helped her to find craftsmen who were willing to work that way. "He gave me a lot of advice," Molly says.

Slow and Sure

"Acting as your own GC slows the project down," Molly says. In the end Molly's costs came in at about half of the highest bid.

While it took the better part of a year and a half to complete her project, Molly feels that the money and resources she saved were ample compensation for her time. Sure, it was slow, but who wants to rush a dream?

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going GREEN and staying GREEN

"People think green projects cost more," Molly Dinneen says. "But it isn't true. Re-using and recycling things saves money."

David Heide also believes in the economy of going green. "Nothing's greener than good and appropriate design that won't end up in the dumpster," Heide says. "You can build a whole house with green products, but if it doesn't last or isn't functional, then it's not really green."

Molly and Heide found many ways to save money, and minimize their environmental impact. Here are some of their tips.

Do your own demolition. Molly knocked out the lath and plaster in her kitchen herself, ensuring that nothing extra was removed. This saved money on dumping fees, and less went to the landfill. "If I'd had a little more time I might have found some way to recycle the debris." Molly says.

Friends took the old cabinets from Molly's kitchen and reused them in their own home. She was also able to recycle her appliances through the shop where she bought the new ones.

The new appliances are all Energy-Star rated, which saves resources and money.

Molly refinished the old wood floors rather than replacing them, which was another money-saver.

Keeping within the existing footprint of the house saved money, energy and natural resources.

The cabinets were crafted in Heide's workshop using local woods and Benjamin Moore, lead-free Satin Impervo low-odor, low-VOC, LEED-qualifying paint.

The sink and faucet are 100% recyclable through the manufacturer.

The existing windows were repaired and reinstalled in the existing openings. No new framing work was required.

Molly reused the existing door but added glass panel to permit more natural light.

The exterior walls were insulated to current building code requirements making them more effective at cooling during the summer and retaining heat during the winter.

All of the new lighting fixtures are energy-efficient, low-voltage halogen.

By moving the dining room door slightly, David Heide was able to create space for much-needed cabinets and work space. The authentically detailed cabinets were crafted from local woods in his workshop.



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Resources

Cottage Kitchens

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David Heide Design Studio: (612) 337-5060 or dhdstudio.com.
Revival 2" x 4", Talc: Revival Tileworks, (760) 730-9141 or revivaltileworks.com.

1 1/4" Costa Esmeralda granite: Capital Granite, (888) 427-6483 or capitalgranite.com.

Liebherr CS1650, Stainless Steel: Liebherr, (800) 387-2011 or universal-akb.com.

Stainless Steel: Bosch, (800) 697-3277 or sears.com.

Stove hood: Vent-a-Hood, (800) 482-3514 or ventingdirect.com.

Glass knobs: B & M Hardware, (800) 708-6649 or thehardwarehut.com.

Cabinet paint: Benjamin Moore, HC-36 Hepple White, Wall paint: Benjamin Moore, OC-43 Overcast: Benjamin Moore, (888) 236-6667 or benjaminmoore.com.

Shaw's Original: Rohl, (888) 328-2389 or faucetdepot.com.

Single lever faucet, polished nickel: Rohl, (888) 837-5313 or homeclick.com.

Ceiling fan: Minka Aire, Acero, (866) 428-9289 or ylighting.com.

Custom pendants by David Heide Design Studio: Lightworks, (612) 724-8311 or lightworkslighting.com.

Fabric of Life

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Fabric, bedspreads, blankets, pillows: lala, (949) 464-9220 or kerryassill.com.

Matcha and Rose Petal Petits Fours by Valerie Confections: (888) 706-1408 or valerieconfections.com.

Assorted roses: (877) 899-2468 or organicbouquet.com.

Art House

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For more information on Chuck Kensicki of Good Home Construction, visit goodhomeconstruction.com. Kitchen table: Santa Monica flea market, visit santamonicaairportantiquemarket.com.

Kitchen products: Dynasty Cabinets by Omega Cabinetry in Plainfield Slab Opaque Pearl, omegacab.com. Whitehaus Farmhouse Sink with center divider, caesarstone.com in Raven, whitehauscollection.com. Rohl Country Kitchen Faucet in Chrome, rohlhome.com. Kira subway tile in Waterford Green, (310) 324-5184 or ctmtile.com. Black liner tiles, daltile.com. Armstrong VCT vinyl tiles, armstrong.com.

House-painting company: Old Towne Painting, contact Rick Lichie at (714) 726-0885.

Idea Notebook

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Crystal door knobs, period medicine cabinet, doorbell button and chimes, 1930 antique dining room chandelier and hand-made period lighting: Rejuvenation Lighting and House Parts, visit rejuvenation.com.

Mission style oak furniture: Oak Crafts, (866) 540-0679 or oak-crafts.com.

Windows: Pella, (800) 374-7281 or pella.com.