

# New Century Mid-Century

## **A do-it-yourself couple transforms a post-war tract home**

A new life awaited this home when the current owners moved in. They had bought the house as the raw material for their vision of making a new home in the city and had chosen it in part because of their interest in mid-century modern housing. The house was one of a score of houses on the street that had been built from an identical floorplan for veterans returning from World War Two. The homeowners' goal was to adapt the structure to fit their lifestyle while retaining its essence as a modest post-war dwelling. They also wanted to preserve the way the house sat as a good citizen among its neighbors. The homeowners had the desire and capability to do the remodeling work themselves, and they hired an architect and began planning the project. When the planning was complete, the homeowners moved into the basement and set out on a do-it-yourself journey.

## **A newly open interior**

The homeowners had decided that the existing size of the home was adequate for their needs and that it was important to keep the home in scale with the neighborhood, so the project retained the existing footprint of the home. The demolition phase took the house down to bare studs and removed most of the existing interior walls. The main floor was apportioned between a living zone and a private master suite that occupies the entire rear half of the home. The kitchen was cramped and dark in its original location, so it was rebuilt in a new location on the sunny south side of the home. The kitchen and dining area, new den and living room are all open to each other. Retained at the center of the floorplan is the original brick fireplace.

## **An exterior re-imagined**

The remodeled home creates a new relationship between the inside and the outside. The homeowners saw that the L of the house plan contained a space that could become an outdoor room. The outdoor room would be open to the yard and to the south, yet be sheltered by two walls of the house. This little oasis incorporates a low wood deck; sliding french doors from the kitchen open onto it. The homeowners planted a vibrant landscape of native plants that creates a partial screen from traffic while still allowing a measure of interaction to take place with the street. It is a contemporary take on the idea of a front porch. The exterior of the home received new fiber cement lap siding, a new roof and a new color scheme.

## **A commitment to sustainability**

The project included making the aging home a better energy performer. The house was reinsulated from top to bottom. A new energy efficient heating and cooling system was installed, with radiant floor heat throughout the main level. All the windows were replaced. The homeowners brought the same sustainable thinking to the yard, where the new prairie landscaping helps mitigate storm water runoff.