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5280



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OF 5280 MAGAZINE

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Year's Winners!

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SO FRESH, SO CLEAN

story by CHRISTINE DEORIO
photography by DAVID LAUER

A new window—customized to fit the original opening—floods the living room with natural light. A leggy mix of furnishings emphasizes the bright, open vibe: Blu Dot's Strut console table, large and small round Tablo tables by Normann Copenhagen, and Gus Modern's GT Rocker.

Top
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A top-to-bottom renovation gives a disheveled Highland Victorian a modern floor plan and breezy vibe that belie its true age.



A pair of Muuto's Under the Bell pendant lamps—the shades are made from recycled plastic felt—illuminates a white Strut dining table from Blu Dot. A hair-on-hide rug provides another simple adornment. An original door is now a tall window that extends right down to the floor.

Facing page, top left: A tiny table from IKEA and toddler-friendly chairs create a pint-size dining area adjacent to the kitchen, dining room, and family room.

Facing page, top right: Architect Caroline Wilding created the entry hall's dramatic chandelier using black light fixture cord from the Color Cord Company and assorted parts from the Home Depot. The Splash coat rack is from Blu Dot, and the tiny stool is a vintage find.





The relocated kitchen offers eye-catching design details: a backsplash of Statuario Select marble, grain-matched walnut cabinetry designed by Caroline Wilding and fabricated by Precision Interiors, Silestone's Cemento quartz countertops, and sleek counter stools by Magis.

The transformation of the Highland neighborhood's old Queen Anne Victorians, Craftsman bungalows, and classic cottages into modern million-dollar homes is often so dramatic, it seems a bit dizzying at times. But the most amazing thing about the rehabilitation of this 1888 Victorian isn't its one-eighty from dreary to bright, but that its new owners—professional baseball player Josh Thole and his wife, Kathryn—decided to renovate it at all.

The three-story house had major flaws—a choppy floor plan, spooky attic, hidden basement room—and was in such bad repair, it would cost more to fix it up than to tear the whole thing down and start from scratch. But the couple fell in love with it nonetheless and felt that renovating was the right thing to do. That attitude was the perfect match for Denver-based design-build firm Design Platform, which specializes in adaptive reuse projects—and in spotting potential in unlikely places.

“A lot of the things you'd want from an old Victorian



The original red-brick wall provides a historical context for new, industrial design details—a hot-rolled-steel fireplace wall, black-metal-framed windows—and modern furnishings, including Article’s Gaba modular sofa, an Eames lounge chair and ottoman, and an Arco floor lamp from Design Within Reach.

home had already been taken out of this house,” says Jonas DiCaprio, the firm’s principal and an architect and general contractor for the project, “but not having to work around lots of original details allowed us to focus on improving the function of the space, which needed to work for the couple and their children.”

Here, DiCaprio and the project’s lead architect, Caroline Wilding (who now runs her own firm, Construct Design // Architecture), describe a transformation that achieved just that—while rewriting the design rules for a historical Victorian home.

5280 Home: From the street, this looks like a classic Queen Anne Victorian—except for that front porch.

Jonas DiCaprio: The roof that covered the front entry was falling off the house, so we had to take it—and the porch—down.

Caroline Wilding: When we realized we’d have to rebuild, we asked ourselves, “Are we going to do a fake-Victorian porch or be true to the fact that this

is all new?” We decided the language for this house would be to leave as much of the original texture as we could, and make every intervention as minimal and modern as possible.

Which original details did you preserve?

CW: We approached it in a surgical way: We left specific pieces of trim, revealed areas of the existing brick, and preserved the staircase that connects the first and second floors. We repaired as many exterior details as possible, and chose a less-is-more paint palette to let the textures and workmanship shine.

So then, what did you change?

CW: The house was divided into many different rooms, which didn’t work for this family. So we combined several rooms to create an open living-dining-family area. We added a mudroom and powder room, transformed an extra room into a second-floor playroom for the kids, and turned the entire third floor into a master suite.



The master bedroom's serene palette takes its inspiration from distressed white-oak floors.



Top: A custom light fixture and iron railing adorn the stairway leading to the third-floor master suite. *Above:* Minimal design details make a big impact in the master bathroom: Trueform Concrete's Floating concrete sinks, wall-mounted faucets by Newport Brass, and Cedar & Moss' Fjord Rod pendant lights. Floating under-sink shelves provide a spot for storage baskets.

Right: The old Victorian home's new, metal-wrapped porch roof channels rainwater shed by the main roof down into concrete planters—watering the plants via perforated pipes—and out onto the street. A simple palette of light gray and white paints gives the structure a modern edge while highlighting the texture of its original details.





JD: We also made changes to help them enjoy the Colorado environment. The powder room and family room open onto the backyard, and the dining room and kitchen are oriented toward the back as well. We really wanted the outdoor space to function as an additional living area.

Did that kind of practicality drive all the finish and furnishing selections?

JD: We pushed for finishes that would make life easier. The flooring—concrete in the new addition and prefinished white oak elsewhere—is very forgiving. It has a lot of variation in texture and color, so it hides dirt well.

CW: A great example is the kids' bedroom: Those are just mattresses on the floor—but Kathryn dressed them with amazing European bedding—and her homemade, house-shaped "headboards" are just black tape on the wall!

So many unexpected design details! Any favorites?

JD: When we were reframing the third floor, we realized that the master bedroom could have a view of downtown...

CW: So I added a skylight to the underside of the gabled roof so Kathryn and Josh can see the skyline from bed.

Did this project reveal the secret to modernizing an old Denver home?

CW: I think the key was that we weren't trying to do a fake Victorian and make the new spaces look like they've always been there. It turned out to be a really nice dialogue between the old and the new. ■



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Facing page and above: The kids' bedroom is furnished with a teepee, whiteboard, and fun wall art. House-shaped outlines on the wall—made with black tape by homeowner Kathryn Thole—function as headboards. European bedding dresses up mattresses that rest directly atop distressed white-oak floors.

Left: A custom scribe pattern—which Wilding designed using black and white hexagonal tiles from Arizona Tile—adds some fun to the floor in the kids' upstairs bathroom. Wilding also designed the custom mirror cabinet, which has concealed LED light strips on its top and bottom, and was built by local fabricator David Kremer. The modern takes on classic pedestal sinks are by Toto, and the eye-catching shower curtain is from CB2.

DESIGN PROS >
Architecture and construction by Caroline Wilding and Jonas DiCaprio, Design Platform

Interior finishes by Caroline Wilding, Design Platform

Interior furniture and decor by homeowner Kathryn Thole and Jenny Walsh, JJ Scholl