

In the current economy, and with growing awareness of green concepts, it seems the desire for "big" houses is on the decline. This gives architects and remodelers an exciting opportunity and challenge: to make smaller houses live "large".

To me, a house should be tailored so that every square inch has purpose and usefulness in the daily life of its inhabitants. This concept is critically important in smaller homes. In the next couple of blogs, I will discuss different ideas and methodologies to customize your home, and maximize the utility of its space.

Repurposing under utilized space:

I thought I would start with an example (my own home); I had a formal dining room that we used 2-3 times a year at best. I came to realize that we were wasting this valuable square footage in our home, so I repurposed the room. Installing a wall of built-ins, I created a space for the family computer, with a mixture of concealed storage and bookcase / display shelves. I took the leaves out of the dining room table so it would comfortably seat 4 (previously it seated 8-10) and repositioned it against a wall in the room to maintain natural circulation paths. The remaining 4 chairs were dispersed into other parts of the house. The dining room is now used daily for craft projects with the kids, for surfing the net on the computer, or for browsing through an ever growing stack of magazines. The 2-3 times a year we need it for formal dining; with a few minutes of straightening up and minor rearrangement of the furnishing, it still serves its original purpose, and the new built-ins are perfect for serving.

I added 168 square feet of useful space to my home without changing its footprint. Repurposing a room is a great way to reclaim the under utilized spaces within your home. In my case, the combination of formal dining and a library / office space made perfect sense. If you have a space like this in your home, maybe its time to stop thinking about what it is, and start thinking about what else it could be.

Check back in for future installments of "Adding space without adding space"

