

APRIL 2000

This Old House

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Mike*

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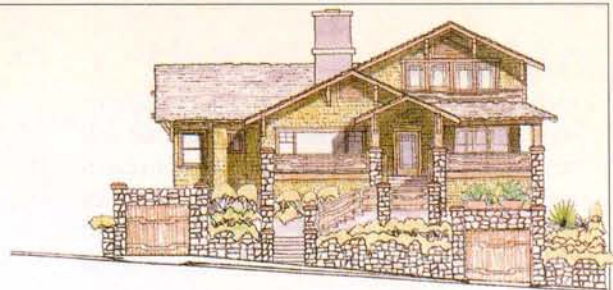
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ABOVE: Contractor Steve Crawford reframed almost all of Jan Winford's house, but he's putting back the signature elements of the Arts and Crafts style—low-pitched gable roof, brackets, and wide overhangs. LEFT: Before its reconstruction, the shape of Jan's bungalow hadn't changed much since this picture was taken in 1914.



Reframing History

Taking a California bungalow back to its Arts and Crafts roots

BY JEFF BOOK

Jan Winford's 1907 Santa Barbara bungalow is getting a total *This Old House* makeover, from its beefed-up foundation to its new second story. And the pace has been as ambitious as the renovation itself. "I feel like a general in a war, deploying troops to attack the enemy on several fronts," says contractor Steve Crawford. His commandos have removed the house's front deck, many exterior walls, and 70 percent of the roof structure, and the new framing is going up at a lightning pace. "It's easier to build things new than to try to retrofit," Crawford says.

The house he's constructing will be bigger and more structurally sound than the 1,485-square-foot original, but more important, it will be faithful to the bungalow's original style. "I wanted very much to maintain the Arts and Crafts tradition in the new design," says Jan. Architect Jerry Zimmer has done just that, taking key features from the existing house—the stonework, shingle siding, broad gables, and deep eaves supported by exposed brackets—and incorporating them into a grander, more coherent scheme. The front entry is moving from the side to the center of the facade, under a 14-foot-wide sheltering porch that captures the hillside site's ocean views. "Unlike many front porches, I think this one will be used a lot," Zimmer says. "There's uncovered seating on the second-floor deck, a covered area

For more information on the Santa Barbara project, check out www.thisoldhouse.org

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHELLEY METCALF

to the right of the front door, and another uncovered area to the left of the front door that will be good on cooler days when you want to catch the sun." He's kept the upstairs addition—which will be Jan's master suite—fairly low and stepped back to reduce its impact, hiding its mass behind railings and the front gable. Off the sitting room, Jan's daughter, Jennifer, will be living in a new first-floor suite separated from the rest of the house by pocket doors. "Such doors were a common element in old bungalows," Zimmer says. "They allowed rooms to open wide and flow into each other."

Pocket doors, wide porches, open rooms, exposed brackets, low-pitched gables, bungalow: All these are the hallmarks of a rich design movement known as the Craftsman, or Arts and Crafts, style, which swept through this country at the turn of the last century. The ideals embodied in this design philosophy were first advanced more than a century ago by the English Arts and Crafts movement. Its leading spokesmen, art critic John Ruskin and writer/designer William Morris, rejected Victorian decorative excesses and the shoddy quality of goods being mass produced in factories. They argued for a return to the integrity and beauty of traditional (meaning pre-industrial revolution) hand-craftsmanship.

Wisconsin-born designer and furniture maker Gustav Stickley became America's leading proponent of the Arts and Crafts philosophy after a trip to England in the late 1890s. Stickley established an artisans' guild in New York and published *The Craftsman*, a magazine that promoted a cozy, rusticated aesthetic and made the term "craftsman" synonymous with the style in America. Stickley's magazine showcased homes and furnishings that exemplified the movement's celebration of skillful handiwork, quality materials, and the beauty of functional forms—the same ideals that were to influence the Prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright (a charter member of the Chicago Arts and Crafts Society).

Arts and Crafts designers found an ideal showcase for their creations in the modest bungalow. Both the structure and the word *bungalow* (derived from the Hindi *bangala*, meaning hut, from the Bengal region) originated

Existing Floor Plan



THE PLAYERS

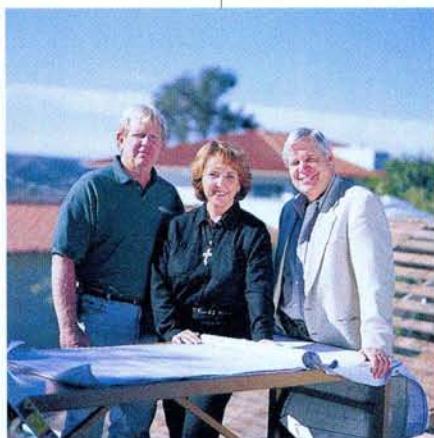
Jan Winford, homeowner (center) Jan has always been a renovator. From her classic sports car to the rental properties she manages, she distinguishes herself by the way she cares for old things. "I've lived in this house for 26 years," she says. "Now its time

has come." Jan knows the story of her house from the day it was built. She feels that it binds her with the families who have lived there before, and she wants this project to celebrate both the house and her antecedents there. But more than that, the project has become her legacy, something that gives her life focus as she struggles to recover from a recent bout with cancer. There's a sense that when she speaks of "honoring the integrity of the house's bones," it is her own bones she's referring to. "I want to do this thing; I want to see it through," she says. "I want to sit in the garden and look at it, and it will be splendid."

Jerry Zimmer, architect (right) Zimmer exudes a singular calm born of his Buddhist sensibilities and the Santa Barbara in his soul. It was here, as a twentysomething seeking shelter from a cold rain, that he parked himself in the fine arts section of the public library, and discovered his love for architecture. And it was here, after receiving his Architectural Engineering degree from nearby California State Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, that he found

his first job. In 1973, Zimmer started his own firm, Architects West, where he involves the contractor and landscape architect early on. In effect, he designs from the property line to the house, rather than planting a building and shrubbing it up. "The house is a result of the site," he says. His approach has won him 17 local and national awards for his commercial, residential, and public buildings.

Steve Crawford, contractor (left) Crawford loves making things, and always has. In the late 1960s, when the other beach hippies were hangin' ten, Crawford turned his fascination with hand-tooled leather belts into a thriving enterprise. A couple of years later, he partnered up with a guy who crafted pine cabinets in his garage, and within a year was presenting handmade furniture at craft shows throughout the region. But building and renovating homes, especially those from the 1920s and 1930s, proved the ultimate extension of Crawford's creative passion. His ability to produce meticulous results in very little time made him perfect for the demanding schedule of a *This Old House* winter project. Not to mention he's always been one of Jerry Zimmer's favorite contractors (and not coincidentally, golf partners), and Zimmer knew that his honesty, easygoing manner, and his unwillingness to accept "good enough" would mesh well with Jan. —Nelson C. Handel



the master plan

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM SLATTERY

New First Floor

West Wing

Includes front bedroom, back sitting room, and bathroom, all accessible from either the living room or the family room.

Living Room

Features a refurbished fireplace wrapped by the staircase to a new second story.

Kitchen/Family Room

The galley kitchen leads to an eating area/family room. French doors open onto the back patio and provide a view of Jan's lovingly tended terrace gardens.

Bedroom Suite

Jan's grad-student daughter, Jennifer, gets a bedroom and expanded bathroom off the front sitting room.

Front Sitting Room

The former dining room can still double as a place to entertain.

Porch

South-facing deck creates space in and out of the perpetual sun.

Garage

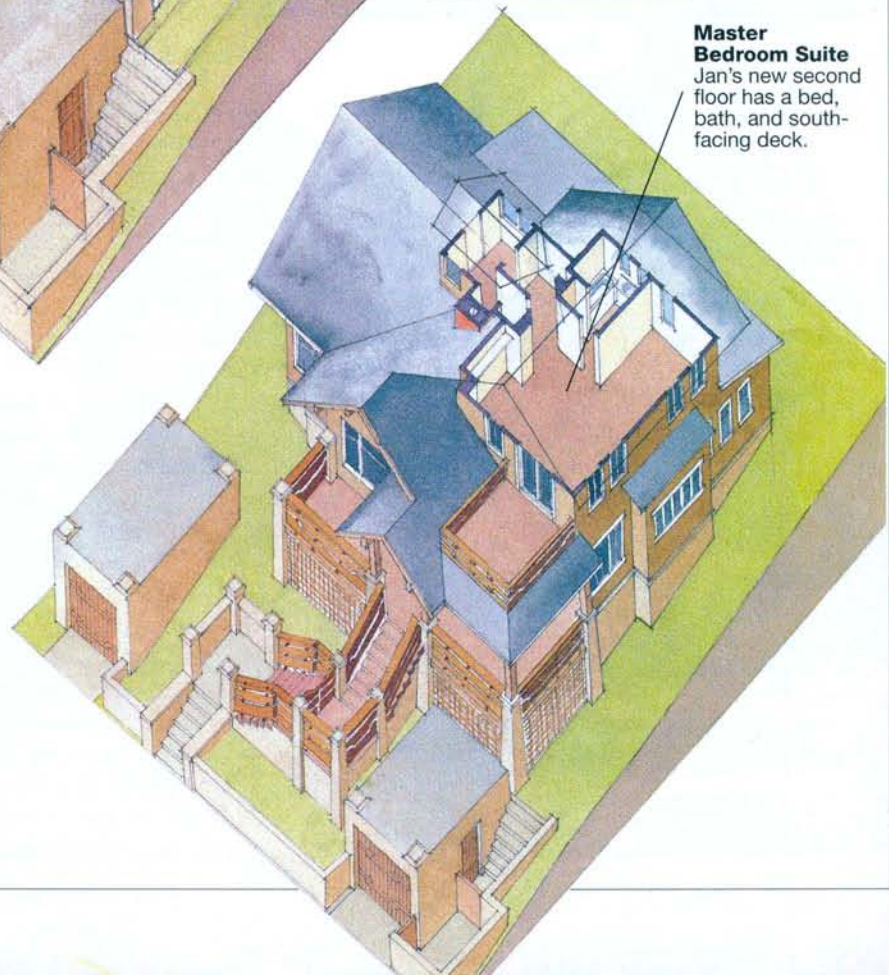
Santa Barbara regulations call for two off-street parking spaces.

Second Floor

Master Bedroom Suite

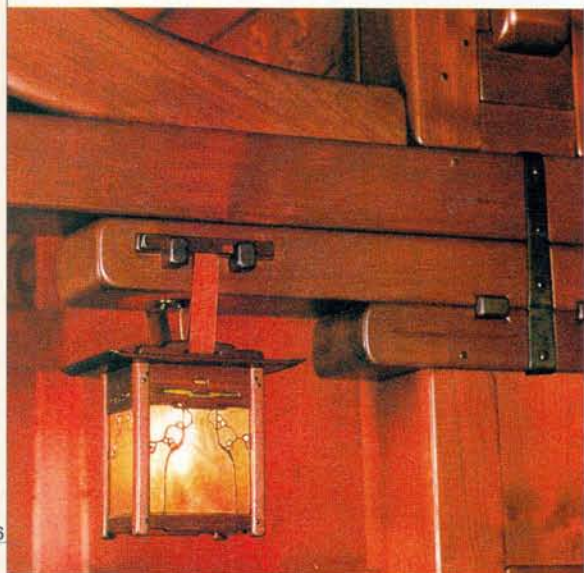
Jan's new second floor has a bed, bath, and south-facing deck.

Steve Crawford's crew removes a header (BELOW) to make way for a new second floor (RIGHT) and some reconfigured first-floor rooms (ABOVE).





ABOVE: Greene and Greene's Pasadena masterpiece, the Gamble House, was built in 1908 for an heir of the Procter and Gamble fortune. It featured quintessential examples of Arts and Crafts design, including elaborate strap and peg joinery, as well as leaded art-glass lanterns and hand-polished teak wood interiors (BELOW).



in India, where British colonists attached the name to native one-story dwellings with wide, shady verandas and cooling cross-ventilation. Though its adaptable form was translated into other styles, in this country the word *bungalow* has become almost synonymous with the Arts and Crafts house. This type of bungalow displayed many progressive or "modern" elements, among them open-plan living areas with an emphasis on space and natural light; unity with the surrounding landscape through strong horizontal lines, sheltering porches, and ample windows; integrated features such as built-ins and art-glass panels; prominent fireplaces; and aesthetically compatible furnishings.

The style enjoyed its heyday from 1900 to 1930. It was especially popular in fast-growing California, though countless examples were built across the nation in regional variations. Ironically, the demand for this handcrafted look opened the way to its mass-production. Stickley and other designers offered Craftsman bungalow plans through the mail, and companies such as Sears, Roebuck sold entire kits of numbered, pre-cut lumber and other materials, which were shipped by rail all over the country for assembly by local carpenters. Sears alone sold more than 50,000 prefab houses from 1908 to 1940, and many of these structures are still in service. Likewise, the demand for harmonious interiors fueled the manufacture of handsome lighting, hardware, tiles, wallpaper, fabric, ceramics, art glass, and furniture—most famously the simply lined and solidly constructed pieces designed by Gustav Stickley (and his brothers Leopold and John George)—which are now highly prized by collectors.

The bungalow thrived because it offered the burgeoning American middle class affordable, comfortable housing with a handcrafted individuality. Most



Bungalow: "A house reduced to its simplest form, which never fails to harmonize with its surroundings, because its low, broad proportions and absolute lack of ornament give it a character so natural and unaffected that it seems to sing into a blend with any landscape."

— GUSTAV STICKLEY

were appealing but modest structures, like Jan's house. Notable architects such as Wright and Bernard Maybeck drew grander designs, but none were more stunning than those conceived by the California-based brothers Charles and Henry Greene. Trained as both architects and woodworkers, the Greenes' finest work is the 1908 Gamble house in Pasadena. Now a museum, the shingle-clad structure has two stories plus a third-story pool room, yet despite its size it blends gracefully into its surroundings. Inside is a feast of sumptuous woods, delicate art glass, fine metalwork, and highly articulated joinery.

Though not nearly as lavish as the Gamble House, Zimmer's design pays homage to the Greene & Greene aesthetic with an undulating "cloud-lift" motif in the railings of the front steps and decks. Inside, Jan's bungalow will also be endowed with warmth and hand-crafted beauty characteristic of the Greenes' touch. *This Old House* enlisted Paul Duchscherer, a designer and an author of three books on Arts and Crafts houses, to help select decorative features authentic to the era. For the fireplace—the symbolic heart of any bungalow—he designed a new surround that will incorporate a wood mantel, an overmantel panel with period sconces,

and a view-reflecting mirror. Handmade Craftsman-style tiles will accent both the fireplace surround and kitchen counters. A wisteria theme, inspired by an old vine on the property when Jan moved in, will figure most prominently in the custom-made art-glass panels in and around the new front door, and in the hand-painted frieze accents in the living room and entry. "The decor will be quite richly detailed," explains Zimmer. "We've found lights, pedestal sinks, tiles, and other fixtures that hark back to the Craftsman era."

When the dust clears, Jan will plant new wisteria vines on either side of the front steps—part of a garden plan that combines climbing roses, Craftsman-era favorites, with California natives such as foothill penstemon, Western redbud, and manzanita. Things grow fast on this sunny coast; it won't be long before the landscape will provide an idyllic setting for the house. "If we do this right, everything will look like it was done years and years ago," says Crawford, expressing the hopes of everyone involved. "We will have succeeded if someone who doesn't know it was a *This Old House* project looks at it and says, 'Man, they've really kept this old place up.'"

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ABOVE: Gustav Stickley designed hundreds of bungalows like this one, originally published in *The Craftsman* in 1909. RIGHT: Traditional Arts and Crafts interiors are rich in wood—built-ins, mantel, and furniture included. BELOW: The typical modest bungalow prevails in Pasadena's historic Bungalow Heaven neighborhood.

