HOME | ARCHITECTURE | FURNITURE | LANDSCAPE | INTERIORS | SIGN UP TO OUR NEWSLETTER | ABOUT

HOME / ARCHITECTURE

Renovating a Mid-Century Modern Gem: The Story of The Cinderella House

AD ZIP System® Roof Sheathing

VISIT SITE

DVR

This homeowner purchased a dream mid-century home in Dallas, Texas. We chatted with Pavel Eichert to find out more about how a restoration became a renovation and the expansion bring to the home.

Paul, first of all, could you tell us a little bit about your background?

My husband, Richard Eichert, and I have always loved MCM design and aesthetics - for furniture, lighting, fixtures, and buildings. We have collected and restored MCM furniture and lighting for our own homes and have sold it through our business, Nexture. We also consulted and built an addition to a home in Arlington, Texas and a condo in Singapore. Having grown up in a family of builders, I guess home projects have always been exciting to me.

ZIP System® Roof Sheathing - Better Than Standard OSB

VISIT SITE

How did you come to live in your house and what drew you to the midcentury style?

When we moved to Dallas from Singapore in 2011 we looked at MCM homes, but with the crossovers and pace of sales happening in the Dallas market at that time, it wasn't practical to buy one, so we ended up in a mid-century ranch.

Vrbo

We did some interior renovations, landscaped and added a pool to that house. While we had already been collecting MCM pieces of furniture, we had not been able to find a home that was what we were looking for. We had been watching the market in Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, for a long time, and finally found a home that was very close to what we were looking for. We worked with Chris Lane on our current home "Cinderella", and just kept working on our house with Rhonda Bando (our architect) and owner of Rhonda Design Studio, who joined the team. They are a dream team together.

Our realtor, and now friend, John Weber called us one day to let us know that an MCM was going to be put on the market, but that it needed some work. When we saw it, even though it was apparent it would be a "project", we fell in love with it and knew we wanted to live in the Cinderella house.

We purchased 10407 Cinderella in, from the estate of Brenda Schulz. Brenda, who was one of the first female architects in Dallas, bought the house on December 30, 1975 and lived there until her death on September 20, 2011.

What do you know about the architect who designed your house?

The house was built by developers Sunny & Gopher as the model home for the Midway Hills neighborhood in 1954. The architect was Thomas Scott Dean, Mr. Dean was also an innovator and in 1981 published one of the first books on residential solar, How to Tailorize Your House.

Dean built a number of homes in our neighborhood as well as across Dallas. He was a professor at a number of Architecture schools and was the Dean of Architecture at Texas Tech University and Texas A&M University. He was a pioneer in the use of solar, wind, and wave energy and was working on the renovation through solar, instead of doing glass gazebos as many people did. We decided to do research on the house and build a website to include its history and the progress of the renovations. It was a great way to pass the time and document the experience.

What do you think was so special about this period in American design?

One of the things that we love about mid-century design is how relaxed it still is today. Because there was a lot of thought put into the form and function of these designs, whether it be for a home, a piece of furniture, or a light fixture, it remains timeless.

For Richard, who grew up in an MCM home, the period is nostalgic, and brings back happy memories from his childhood.

VISIT SITE

ZIP System® Roof Sheathing - Better Than Standard OSB

OR

What are the advantages/drawbacks of living in a midcentury house?

On the positive side, there's an abundance of natural light, thanks to large windows and clerestory windows. The space is well-planned and the high ceilings make rooms feel more spacious and airy.

The orientation also helps to keep the interior of the house cooler, which can be especially beneficial in Texas where summers can be scorching.

On the negative side, storage can be limited, as these homes often lack attics and have smaller closets. Additionally, the 2x4 ceiling joists limit the types of light fixtures that can be installed.

Another struggle is privacy, particularly before window coverings are installed. These homes can feel like fishbowls, leaving residents feeling exposed to the outside world.

What's your favourite part of the house and why?

Our favorite part of the house is the kitchen and pantry. We love its cook and entertain as we spent a lot of time with our architect working through the planning of the kitchen, including thinking about how each person will be using it.

We also included some fun technology in the kitchen, like Alexa IQ for controlling the house. As a result, we have fun cooking in the kitchen and it is a popular efficiency.

Have you had to renovate any part of the house? If so, which area(s)?

While our original intention was to do a restoration, we discovered foundation damage and other major structural issues. We made the difficult decision to do a renovation, following the same construction methods, instead of a restoration.

We did an architectural survey and took detailed pictures so that we would be true to the house's original character in the renovation, replicating its many architectural details, including the windows, cabinets, ceiling, brick patterns, angled fascia and custom drip edges.

We spent nine months working with our architect, Rhonda Bando, AIA of Rhonda Design Studio, designing the house, wanting to stay as true to the original layout as possible, while updating the house to current building codes, technology, and best practices.

According to a neighbor who has lived in the area for decades, the house used to have a fence across the front. We didn't want to obstruct the front and chose instead to create separation with a planter box.

The fence block wall and planter were salvaged from a house in Farmer's Branch, TX. We were able to repurpose the original carport into a bedroom, full bath studio and pool house by moving the driveway from Royal Ln. to the alley.

When possible, we chose materials that represent the approach that would have been taken in the 1950s. The wall tile in the guest and primary bathrooms is hand-made from Hearth Ceramics and the floor tiles are a poured terrazzo. The cabinet doors are bent plywood with a natural matte finish, fused with walnut in a natural matte finish.

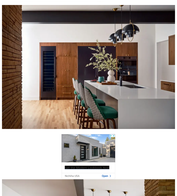
To meet current building codes, some of the wood beams needed to be replaced and a tubed beam was added to create the open living, dining, and kitchen area. Fortunately, we were able to retain the 2x6 ceiling rafters, not altering the original roof profile.

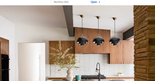
While the room sizes have been increased as a result of the primary suite addition on the back of the house, the only other rooms added were a half bath and a 2-car attached garage.

We salvaged as many materials and created the original look with the same grout color and details. We refurbished the metal gate that was original to the house when we bought it, as we suspect that Brenda Schulz added it.

The fireplace is original. Whenever we did cut-ups for trimming and fixtures from MCM designers, we selected from current designers who are inspired by the MCM aesthetic.

We have confidence that the details retained, along with the choices made for the renovation, including the use of energy efficient products (such as spray foam under the floors, in the walls, and in the ceilings), represent the original character of the home. Having both Thomas Scott Dean and Rhonda Studio around





Last but not least, do you have any tips for people interested in buying a midcentury house today? What should they pay attention to and why?

As for tips, know what's important for you with respect to the original details and what you can/can't live without. We didn't realize until after we got into the house the extent of what it was going to take to make the house structurally sound, and the impact that would have on some of the original details we had to replace.

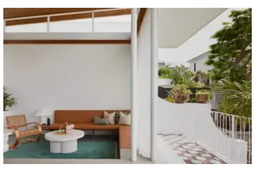
While our architect was meticulous at documenting details to be recreated, they are still new and not original. We were lucky to find some good trades people and suppliers to be able to match what was in and on the house originally.

We took our time and made choices for quality over quantity or speed, and the entire process took 33 months to complete. About 9 months of that time was spent planning with Manolo and Chryssi, so that when we started construction, we already knew where art, furniture, etc were going to be placed.

This allowed us to plan even for the degree of beam spread and wattage we would use for each lamp in every lighting fixture. With this level of planning, when covid started, we immediately started buying everything we had already selected for the house and storing it where we were living until it was needed. We didn't have a single delay waiting on materials because of the impact of covid!

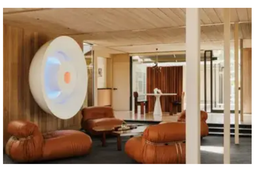
Photos by Stephen Karlisch, staging by Jennie O'Connor

Related News



This Home Draws Inspiration from Midcentury Architecture and a Passion for Unique Design

Vertical Windows, Custom Joinery and Nook Seating all Inform the Restoration of this Home



A Stunning Art Installation at William F. Cody's Family Home in Palm Springs

© ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. MID-CENTURY HOME 2019

Join our newsletter: The Bulletin

The best of Mid-Century Home

Your email

Subscribe

vrbo

Book Now

Whenever you're ready to travel, we'll be here. Please follow local travel and safety guidelines.