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**BACKYARD  
BONUSES >**

The pool pavilion includes a sleek changing room with a natural textured-stone shower complete with a skylight.

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# LOOKING BACK

A thoughtful remodel in Country Club brightens up a fading masterpiece by one of Denver's most prolific architects.

BY JULIE DUGDALE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAUL J. GARCIA

## OPEN SPACE >

Lawton removed a column in the dining room to simplify the space and create a direct line of vision to the stunning original staircase. Once sealed from the outside, the room is now almost an extension of the patio thanks to a wall of accordion glass doors from NanaWall.

## MOD MAKEOVER >

Architect Matt Lawton kept original architect Burnham Hoyt's spirit alive—and the Landmark Preservation Commission happy—by pepping up the International Style facade with color-contrasting trim and new eaves. Subtle landscape changes helped draw focus to the home.



## < SLEEK AND LIVABLE

Clean, simple lines and a neutral palette make certain elements pop, such as the blue Klismos Hero chairs by Artistic Frame and the pendant by Terzani. The walnut paneling above the fireplace is a connective element carried throughout the home.

*Stumbling upon a Burnham Hoyt house is like scoring a parking spot at Wash Park on a summer Saturday.*

Hoyt is the architect who designed Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver Public Library's Central Library, Cherokee Castle in Sedalia, and a slew of other civic and residential treasures in Denver between the 1920s and 1950s. So when a local family found this early 1940s Hoyt home on the market in Denver's Country Club neighborhood, they knew they had to have it.

The house needed work, but the neighborhood's historic landmark status subjected potential renovations to rigorous scrutiny by Denver's Landmark Preservation Commission and the Country Club Design Review Board. Enter Matthew Lawton of Sexton Lawton

Architecture and Peggy Robbins Bender of Robbins Weiner Design, who modernized the home's aging facade and worn interior while keeping the historic integrity intact. The strategy was to nudge and reform the bones just enough to make it work for a modern family—specifically, one with refined style and a penchant for entertaining. “[The style] was already there,” Lawton says. “We just had to dust it off a little. In some ways, we had to kind of live in this architect's vision for this house. Some of the details were incredible to begin with. We decided to do quiet interventions in the house to subtly shape the spaces.”

## FACE LIFT ^

The home's original spiral staircase (and the flooring throughout) was reclad in wide-plank oak with custom stain, but the railing was left intact. Designer Peggy Robbins Bender chose Terzani Clear Crystal Mizu pendants to add a whimsical, elegant touch. The Fiona table from Troscan anchors the formal dining room; the Rock Edge chandelier from John Pomp Studios is the room's crown jewel.



## WHITE OUT >

The kitchen's design goal: minimalism. "We tried to maintain the white enclosure of the kitchen so when you walk into the space, all you really see are the two wood elements," Lawton says (see: a McGuire Seido Walnut counter stool and cabinetry by Bulthaup). "We wanted to keep it simple."



The most pressing order of business was figuring out a way to seamlessly connect the interior space with the expansive backyard. A row of windows that ran the length of the house was perfectly placed, but Lawton saw potential for more. Preserving the original window widths, he extended the windows down and turned them into glass bifold doors (by NanaWall) that allow for passage in and out—perfect for patio dinners on summer evenings. The pool house, which doubles as an open-air fitness studio with telescoping glass pocket doors (by Fleetwood), is meant to create a visual endpoint for the eye, almost as if the backyard were an outdoor room. "In some ways we were trying to get back to the original cues of the '40s, '50s, and '60s—that California indoor-outdoor vibe of palm trees and pools," Lawton says. "We tried to reference that era a little bit."

Inside, the team tweaked certain structural elements—a column here, a doorway there—to highlight the home's unique features and let the decor shine. "We had a blank slate," says Bender,

who aimed for what she calls "warm modernity." She went with "classic furnishings based on a family with sophisticated taste but a comfortable aesthetic." See: the living room's Minotti sofa and chairs and the Holly Hunt round table. "It was important to have the ability to move the furniture out and open the space for big gatherings or leave the furnishings for more intimate family get-togethers," Bender says.

The dining room is a perfect example of making small shifts to showcase the home's original design. "Here, the strategy was reduction," Lawton says. "We wanted to show off the indoor-outdoor elements and the staircase [which is original] in the background. So we stripped it down to clarify the space." Lawton added some personality by bringing the feel of outdoor masonry inside with the limestone wall, and Bender played off that texture with a rug by Scott Group Custom Carpets under the Troscan table and Cameron Collection chairs, all from Denver's Town studio. The room is airy and uncluttered but doesn't lack character (exhibit A, the chandelier by John Pomp Studios).

## SMART STYLE ^

Whimsical pool loungers (Dedon Fedro Floor Rockers) add a touch of fun, as does the walkway over the pool, which doubles as a means of storing the pool and hot tub covers: "We liked the poetic idea of a floating bridge across a body of water," Lawton says.



#### HIGHER UP ^

Revamping the balcony gave new life to the master suite, which looks out over the backyard. The floating concrete hearth (by Boulder's ConcretePete) and walnut accents replicate the combo in the living room.

Both Lawton and Bender point to the continuity of materials throughout the home to illustrate the warm-yet-clean aesthetic. The walnut vertical-grain paneling repeats in the living room over the fireplace, in the master bedroom as a sliding TV cabinet, and in the bathroom as a dividing wall. And large-format ceramic tiling (bulletproof to stains) serves as both the kitchen backsplash and the sink backsplash in the master bath. One element is bold and earthy, one is sleek and simple—and they coexist beautifully.

For the exterior, Lawton wanted to clean up and brighten Hoyt's beloved International Style, which is characterized by smooth, unornamented planes and flat roofs. "We combed the city photography archives to understand what the house looked like in 1942," he says; they discovered that there had been several renovations of the home and additions

*One element is bold and earthy, one is sleek and simple—and they coexist beautifully.*

to the property over the last seven decades. In the end, Lawton rebuilt the eaves in smooth, clear-grain Western red cedar and outlined the windows and doors in dark trim to give the whole look a modern sensibility. Clearing away some old fencing and dying trees and redefining the circular driveway helped balance the home's composition. "We wanted the house to be the star," Lawton says. We think Burnham Hoyt would approve. ■



#### < BATHING BEAUTY

The bathroom's continuous marble floor and wall tiling (from Ann Sacks) contrasts nicely with the walnut dividing wall.