

By stripping back a variety of misguided add-ons and upgrades, a Pacific Northwest home revitalization honors architect John Storrs' original intent.

By Devlin Smith  
Photography © 2019 David Papazian:  
David Papazian Photography

# Cleared VISION

THROUGHOUT THE LIVING AND DINING AREAS, ORIGINAL OAK FLOORING REMAINS. A LOCALLY MADE CUSTOM SINGLE-SHELF SLIDING-GLASS-DOOR CABINET WAS INSTALLED TO WRAP AROUND THE DINING ROOM FOR A FUN DISPLAY. HOMEOWNERS ABBY LANDON AND RICK STARK COVETED A RESTORED ADRIAN PEARSALL SOFA IN NORWAY, BUT THE UPHOLSTERY WAS ALL WRONG FOR THEIR SPACE. WHEN A SIMILAR PEARSALL MODEL APPEARED LOCALLY, DESIGNER VICKI SIMON SNAPPED IT UP AND WORKED WITH AREA ARTISANS TO REBUILD THE COUCH AND ATTACHED END TABLES.

N

early 60 years ago, Donald H. Holden, a doctor, and his wife, Vivian, a swim cap designer for Jantzen, commissioned John Storrs to design a home for their family just outside of Portland. The Holdens lived in the home for 40 years before selling to a developer who originally intended to raze the home but instead decided to upgrade it to meet the tastes of early 2000s homebuyers. The improvements included tearing out the original custom cabinetry in the kitchen and replacing it with Craftsman-style cherry wood cabinetry.

DESIGNER VICKI SIMON KNEW THE ORIGINAL FIREPLACE WAS THE STAR ATTRACTION IN THE LIVING ROOM SO SHE ARRANGED THE FURNISHINGS TO FACE IT.





Current owners Abby Landon and Rick Stark purchased the 1962 home from the developers in 2003. "The state of the home when we took possession was freshly updated in the kitchen, new paint inside and out, and beautiful floors and surfaces," the homeowners say.

### MAKING IT YOUR OWN

Though it boasted so many new features and fit Abby and Rick's needs, the home no longer reflected its era or the original vision of its architect. The couple began thinking about making some changes to the home. A chance

meeting in 2018 connected them with the person who would lead that project, designer Vicki Simon.

"I happened to sit down next to Abby at a dinner in 2018 and we struck up a conversation leading to what I did for a living and what a vintage house enthusiast I was," Vicki says. "Then, when I mentioned the upcoming Restore Oregon tour and that the work of John Storrs was going to be the focus of the tour, she excitedly exclaimed that she lived in a Storrs house. She told me that they were thinking of doing some upgrades down the road. I expressed my sincere interest in being considered for consulting on those upgrades."

**ABOVE:** THE ORIGINAL 1960s KITCHEN CABINETRY WAS LOST WHEN THIS HOME WAS PREVIOUSLY UPDATED NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO. VICKI WORKED WITH LOCAL ARTISANS TO MODIFY THE SHAKER-STYLE CABINETS TO GIVE THEM A CLEAN, MODERN FEEL.

**RIGHT:** THE KITCHEN UPDATES INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF A CUSTOM CONCRETE TABLE THAT WAS POURED WITH BITS OF SMASHED CAR GLASS AND SEASHELLS TO MIMIC TERRAZZO.





Her interest in John Storrs sparked by the tour, and with the prospect of working on Abby and Rick's home, Vicki began researching the architect. That knowledge, and the home itself, informed the design choices she made on this project.

#### RESTORATION AND UPDATES

"Restoring a vintage home to honor the original architect's intent is always a joy for me," Vicki says. "I relish the restoration process, while solving design problems for modern living, but it's always respect the architecture first. Paying attention to which things get expressed and left alone is part of my deliberate intentionality when I design. The cues were all there; it just took an astute attention and drive, and a client willing to go the distance."

---

THE BREAKFAST NOOK WAS GIVEN MODERN FLAIR WITH THE INSTALLATION OF A GEORGE NELSON BUBBLE LAMP AND THE ADDITION OF ARNE JACOBSEN SERIES 7 CHAIRS FOR FRITZ HANSEN.

THE DINING ROOM WAS OUTFITTED WITH A CHERRY WOOD BUFFET AND CROWN MOLDING IN THE EARLY 2000s. DESIGNER VICKI SIMON STRIPPED THAT BACK AND HAD A MID CENTURY-STYLE CABINET INSTALLED TO HOLD THE HOMEOWNERS' CHINA AND COLLECTIBLES.

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT: THE ORIGINAL, CUSTOM DOORS WERE FOUND IN THE BASEMENT AND RESTORED DURING THIS PROJECT.

OPPOSITE TOP RIGHT: LIGHTING WAS REPLACED INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE HOME TO BETTER REFLECT ITS EARLY 1960s HERITAGE. GONE ARE RECESSED, CANNED LIGHTS; IN THEIR PLACE ARE SLEEK, GEOMETRIC FIXTURES.



The homeowners originally intended to do a few updates—new carpeting on the stairs, new appliances, new furniture—but Vicki convinced them of what was possible if they returned the home to its original glory. The early 2000s kitchen was a great place to start.

“I felt that we could do some modifications, taking out the most objectionable offenses, and, with master carpentry and paint, we could do wonders in this kitchen and be intentionally period-appropriate with those design decisions,” Vicki says. “So, for example, instead of replacing the Shaker-style cabinet doors, we filled them in, making them flat panel. Luckily, the hinges were already exposed. We changed out the knobs. We stripped off the ugly curved trim atop all the cabinets and therefore exposed the paneled walls and ceiling.”

#### LOOKING AHEAD

The kitchen, living and dining areas were successfully rehabbed over the course of eight months. The revitalization of this Mid Century Modern home is still a work in progress, according to Abby and Rick. The homeowners have a wish list they will be working with Vicki to complete.

“Knowledge of MCM is addictive/expensive,” the homeowners say. “We would love to correct all the Craftsman bits added to the exterior and continue the MCM backdates to the main bedroom and bath.”

