

Qualified Remodeler

Dedicated To Professionalism In Remodeling

March 1995

- 
- **NARI CotY Award Winners**
 - **Environmental Programs, Products and Designs**



ROOM ADDITIONS ROOM ADDITIONS ROOM ADDITIONS

The new gable windows and bedroom dormer were used to add scale and character to the exterior of the existing house. The skylight was placed over the whirlpool tub on the sloping ceiling of the bathroom to let in natural light.



David and Kathy Figueroa were confident that their three school-age children could finally make it through the night without needing Mom and Dad in the next room. They also were ready to treat themselves to some much-needed privacy. Despite a strong love for their children, the Figueros wanted some separation and a peaceful place in which to end a hectic day.

Their plan was to have the children utilize the home's existing three bedrooms on the main floor and to

Parenthood doesn't always mean self-sacrifice, as the owners of a home in New England discovered when they expanded their attic to create a secluded master suite

create a new master suite on the level above, which consisted of a loft area overlooking the living room and unfinished attic space. The Figueros had definite ideas about what they wanted, so they turned to architect John August Black, AIA of Lapis Architecture in Cambridge, MA, to pull it all together.

Making it happen

The Figueros had compiled a file of magazine clippings of things they liked, which they showed Black. "I often encourage my clients to do this since it's

**MAKING
PRIVACY**

A Reality

by Keith Goldstein

*Photos by John Horner,
Architectural Photography*



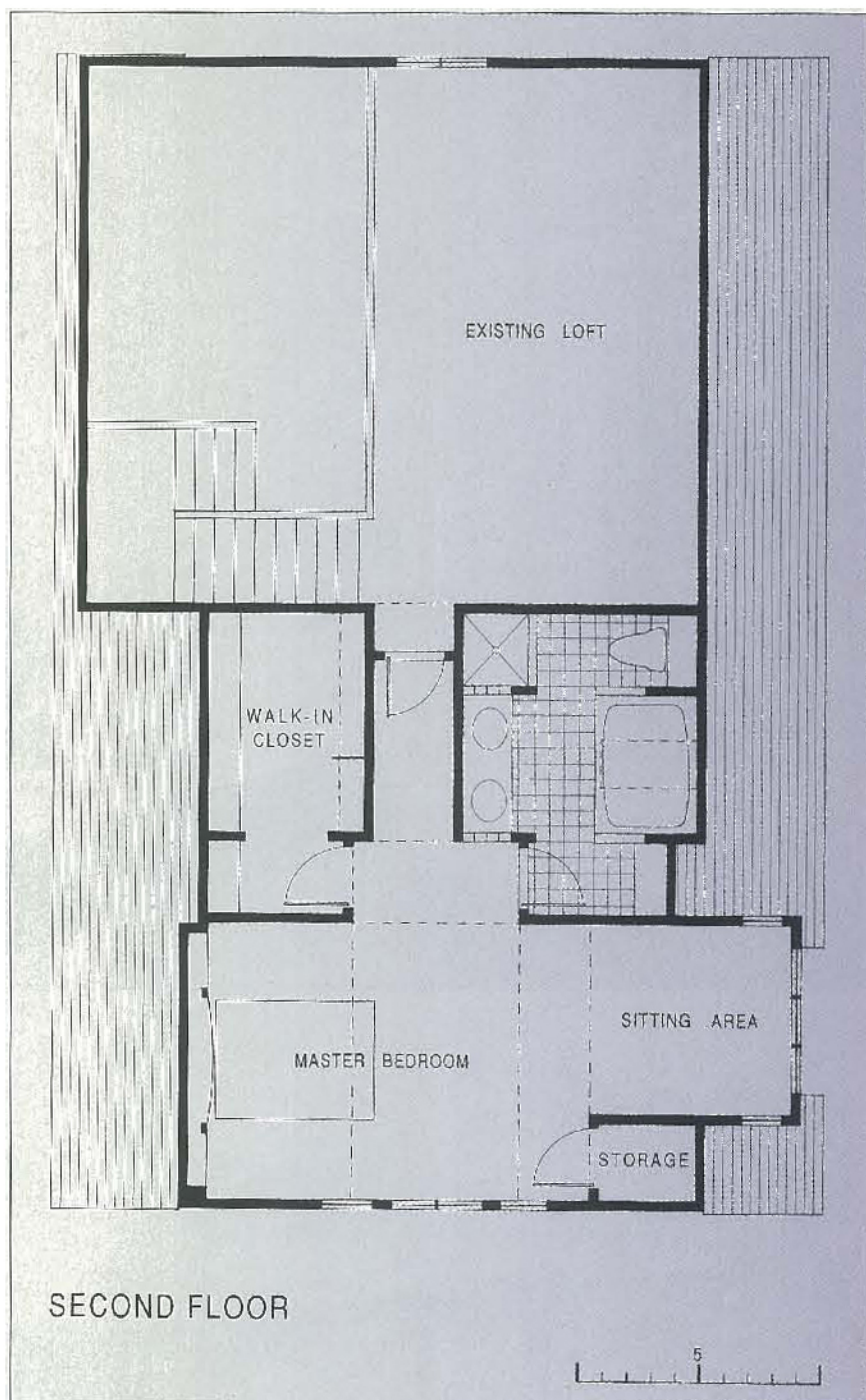
a clear way to communicate how they wish their renovated space to feel," says Black. "The ideas that the owners presented seemed very reasonable. We quickly agreed on a basic layout, although I studied a dozen bathroom configurations before settling on one," he notes.

The agreed-upon basics included a bathroom with whirlpool tub, two sinks, a separate stall shower, toilet and vanity; a large walk-in closet with built-in shelves so that bureaus wouldn't be needed; a built-in headboard containing shelves and cabinets for the bedroom; a sitting area; and a storage closet.

Black allowed logic to play a big part in laying out the space. "The bathroom location was predetermined by rough plumbing that had been installed by the builder, while the sitting area was located to face the backyard and to allow southern sun to light the interior," Black explains. The floor plan also addressed the Figueroas' privacy concerns: the bathroom and walk-in closet serve as a buffer between the bedroom and other house activities. Access to the bedroom is achieved through a small hall that leads past the bath and closet from the loft space. Black notes, "The hall ceiling is low to emphasize this sense of separation, while the space above houses a new HVAC unit for the suite."

The clients were clear about wanting a "relaxing bath area." To achieve this, a large whirlpool bath was tucked under the sloping bathroom ceiling. A skylight was placed directly above the tub, as were recessed lighting fixtures controlled by a dimmer switch. As part of the new heating/cooling system, a linear heating vent was installed along the base of the skylight to keep the glass from fogging up and to prevent condensation from causing sill damage. "To give the space around the whirlpool a more intimate feel, small angled walls (accented with glass block) were used to screen the toilet and vanity," says Black. Additional glass block was used at either end of the vanity top to "create visual openness and to filter light into the bedroom and shower."

The suite's sitting area came in the form of a dormer, which "also offered



a much-needed opportunity to improve the exterior of the house," Black points out. Centered over two existing windows, it is detailed to add scale to the house.

When 'surprise' isn't a party

You'd be hard-pressed to find a remodeler who enjoys being surprised during a project. One such "surprise"

Unfinished attic space was used to create the new master bedroom suite, which includes a large walk-in closet, bathroom and bedroom with sitting area. A storage closet for an exercise bicycle was also incorporated into the room's design. The entryway leads to a stairway and existing loft space that overlooks the living room.



ROOM ADDITIONS ROOM ADDITIONS ROOM ADDITIONS



The sitting area is part of the dormer. A half-round gable window (out of view) was designed to mimic the arched alcove ceiling of the room's entry hall.

Before the remodel, the house appeared as a 'plain, uninspired box,' according to John August Black, AIA.



ROOM ADDITIONS ROOM ADDITIONS ROOM ADDITIONS

occurred when the plumber was testing the new bathroom fixtures and water came pouring through the garage ceiling. The builder hadn't tied the waste pipe into the main line, leaving it as an open-ended pipe above the garage ceiling. "Fortunately, no serious damage was done, and only a few gypsum boards had to be replaced," Black recalls.

A more serious problem involved the structural support for the new dormer, which became more complicated when it was discovered that the second-floor bearing walls didn't line up with the first-floor carrying beam. "We had to install two laminated veneer lumber beams, cut two posts into a second-floor wall, and then carry the load to the ground using two steel columns and concrete footings," Black reports. The problem was successfully solved without causing serious delays, but it *did* cause some budgetary problems. Although the owners were focused on "creating a special retreat," practical issues such as re-sale and budget concerns were in no way ignored.

When the contractor – Boston Contractors and Developers, also of Cambridge – was chosen for the job, the construction plans were reviewed in the hopes of cutting some costs. A few items were shelved, including an additional skylight over the tub, an ellipse window in the dormer, decorative shingling and more detailed built-ins. However, Black says the changes "didn't compromise the owners' original goals or diminish the project's design quality."

Now that the \$30,000 project is complete, the owners can close the door to their new 560-sq.-ft. suite and ignore the chaos that might be occurring one floor below. As David Figueroa notes, "The actual construction might have taken some of the fun out of it, but now that the work is behind us, we enjoy the room immensely." **QR**



Major Products

Norco Windows
Velux skylight
Pittsburgh Corning glass block
Kohler 'Farmington' lavatories
Kohler 'Wellworth' toilet
Jacuzzi 'Signa' whirlpool tub
Jacuzzi shower base
Midland shower door
Delta 'Neo-Style' tub and lavatory faucets
Alsons handheld shower
GUSA European Collection towel racks
Dal Tile
NuTone bathroom exhaust system

At the owners' request, glass block was used in the bathroom. Two glass block windows, one in the wall shared with the bedroom and the other in the stall shower, allow light to fill the space. The whirlpool area, with angled walls and skylight, is reflected in the mirror.