

INSIDE THE CITY

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The Tower by Keith Bachmann

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GET INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD



They Did It

These DIYers took their time to remodel their home

By Julie Foster

Nine years ago, Margaret Woodcock and Michael Blankenship purchased a 900-square-foot home in Land Park. The 1939 home had great possibilities. But it also had a reputation.

"There is always one house on the block that no one wants to deal with because there was so much work to do on it, and that was this house," Woodcock says.

It wasn't just that the home had been neglected.

"I say to people that we had to clear the land before we could even start on the house," explains Woodcock. "The entire backyard was totally engulfed by the blackberry bushes, which had started to grow around the sides of the house so that you couldn't even see out the windows."

Remodeling started once the couple plowed and leveled the backyard, leaving just one oak tree. Today, the landscaped backyard boasts a swimming pool, a vegetable garden with citrus trees, and Woodcock's art studio.

The first step they took was based on experience in remodeling their first home, in the Hollywood Park neighborhood. Then, they had proceeded without a clear idea of exactly where they were going.

"We knew we needed a master plan for this house," says Blankenship. So they hired architect Michael Malinowski.

The couple couldn't do everything at once. Instead, they made improvements as they could afford



This Curtis Park home underwent a gradual remodel

them. Over the years, they added a master bedroom and bath, removed a wall from another bedroom to create a family room and completely remodeled the kitchen. In the process, they increased the house's square footage by approximately 500 square feet.

What they created is a spacious home filled with vibrant colors and textures. By adding four transom windows and numerous French doors throughout the home, they have abundant natural light along with a feeling of being close to the outdoors. With the addition of a charming front porch, they can take advantage of the view of Land Park.

"Sometimes we sit outside with a glass of wine and neighbors walk by. Then we end up with a whole group of people out here," Blankenship says.

Woodcock and Blankenship have plenty of practical knowledge between them. Woodcock is a professional artist and art teacher at Cosumnes River College. Blankenship is involved with the construction industry. Together, they've tackled a good portion of the remodeling work, including the framing, installation of Sheetrock, tile work, wallpapering and painting. They left the electrical and plumbing work and installation of wood floors to professionals.

Their first project, after cleaning up the yard, was the living room. Blankenship decided he'd had enough of the basic colonial-style fireplace. So two weeks before Christmas, he decided to revamp it to give it an arts and crafts look.

After the fireplace came the addition of the master bedroom and bath, the reconfiguration of the family room, more landscaping, the construction of an art studio and, finally, the kitchen remodel, which was completed in 2005.

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