

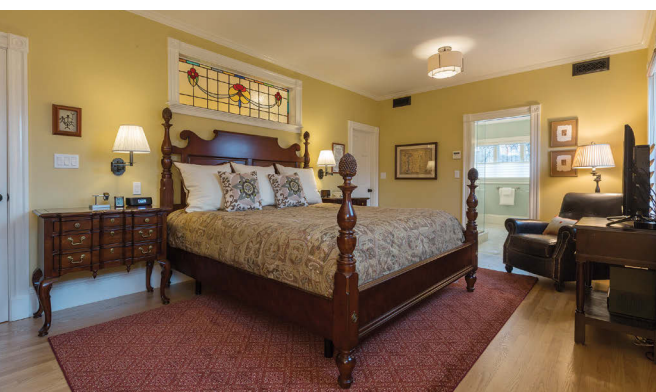
Bold Moves

Make the Space

How completely rethinking the floor plan helped resolve a cold, cramped master bathroom

BY ROB YAGID

The owners of this Massachusetts Victorian were no strangers to the work of Byggmeister Design Build. Over the years, the firm, which explicitly focuses on remodeling work with a commitment to efficiency, completed a finished basement and an extensive garage project on the property. So, when the owners sought a new master bathroom, they already knew that they'd be getting an expertly crafted space and an improvement to the home's efficiency along the way. The finished bath is a complete transformation, and an



A design in waiting. A stained-glass window the owners were saving for special use now sits at the center of the master-bedroom wall, around which traffic circulates from the new entry to the new bathroom and walk-in closet.





New view. Once an entry to a second-floor balcony, new opposing vanities now flank a trio of high-performance windows that simulate architecturally appropriate leaded glass. A generous shower with a glass-paneled corner allows light to fill the space.



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—Byggmeister project team

example of what’s possible when you reassign value to existing spaces.

When looking at the original layout of the master suite (facing page, top), it’s easy to become enamored by the opportunity the balcony affords. After all, access to the outdoors—light and views—is a conventional element sought after in the bid for comfort. But the energy demands of a home should also be a priority. And in truth, the balcony was underutilized. It was high maintenance

and its leaky old door offset any real comfort and efficiency that the daylight imparted on the space.

“Our favorite projects involve taking the weakest part of a house and turning it into the best part of the house,” wrote the project team. “In this case, we chose to capture the old balcony as indoor space and relocate the bathroom to that end of the master suite.”

By moving the bathroom to the balcony position, the team was able air-seal and

improve insulation levels in the exterior walls. High-quality, tight windows keep the thermal boundary in check, without completely losing access to the light and views that help bring the space to life.

The abundance of floor space on this side of the master suite allowed the owners additional amenities within the bathroom. Now, they have a spacious walk-in shower, a separate toilet closet, dual vanities, and a makeup counter. The result is an elevated



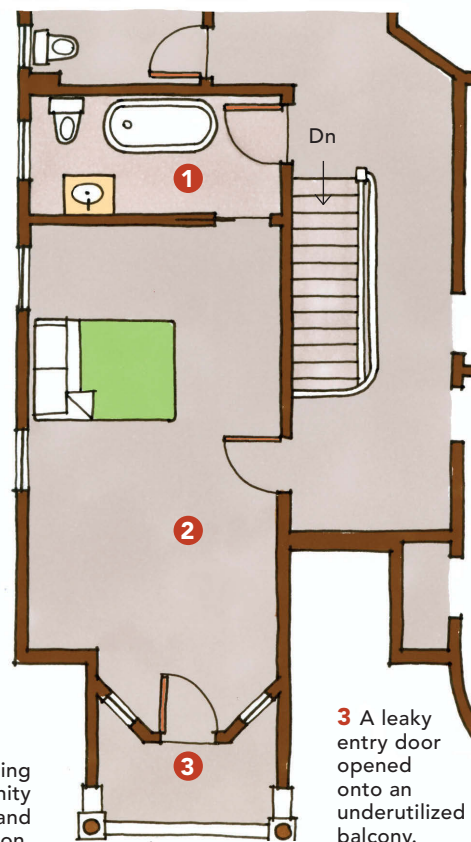
THE BIG SHIFT

Moving the bathroom to the opposite side of the bedroom not only gave the room increased square footage by taking over an underused balcony, it enhanced the circulation through the master suite and opened opportunities in peripheral areas. By adding a small addition and moving the bedroom entry door, dead space in the hall was layered into the creation of a new walk-in closet.

1 While somewhat functional, the existing master bath was cramped and lacked storage and a sense of comfort.

2 Dead space in the existing plan provided opportunity for greater functionality and inspired the bath relocation.

Before



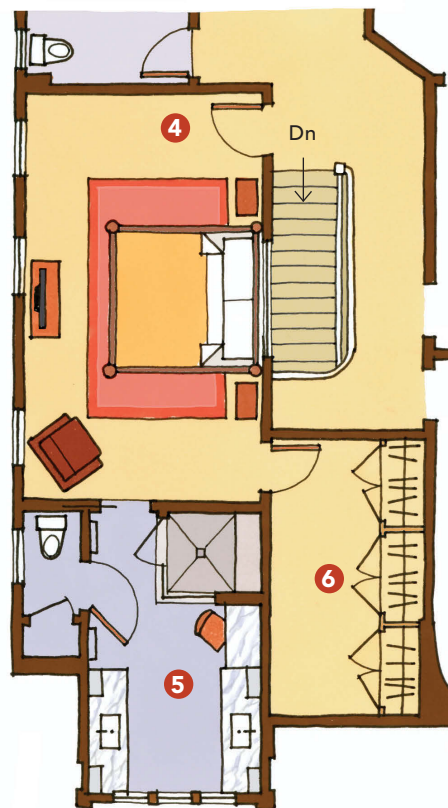
3 A leaky entry door opened onto an underutilized balcony.

After

4 Moving the wall separating the old bath and the bedroom made it possible to rearrange the entry to the bathroom, which improves the flow through the entire space.

5 The shower, water closet, and vanities are placed to alleviate congestion when moving through the bathroom, and a built-in makeup counter maximizes the utility of the space.

6 By adding a small addition and capturing existing space in the hall, the team was able to create a large walk-in closet and dressing room.



0 2 4 8 ft.

master suite that improves both circulation and functionality.

The team's favorite part? "The homeowners report that the bathroom—where the old balcony had been—is now the most comfortable room in the house." □

Rob Yagid is founder and executive director of Keep Craft Alive. Photos by Jim Raycroft, courtesy of Byggmeister Design Build.

Location Newton, Mass. Architect Doug Ruther Interior design Karin Mahdavi