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# Double down: A smart renovation transforms an Uptown shotgun double into a spacious single

Sue Strachan NOV 2, 2017 - 5:00 PM

1 of 29



Family photos on a table in the den of Celeste Marshall's home. (Photo by Chris Granger, NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune)

Seven years ago, when Celeste Marshall rented one side of an Eastlake Victorian shotgun double, it was a bit worn around the edges, but

it still had a certain charm. Celeste was enchanted: "The minute I walked into the apartment, I felt at home."

Quickly enough, she made her side into a cozy home, and four years later, when the owner wanted to sell the house, she jumped at the opportunity to buy it.

The purchase also prompted her to get a real estate license. "So I could properly negotiate with the landlord," said Celeste, who is now an agent with New Orleans Historic Homes and Keller Williams Realty.

After buying the property in 2014, Celeste lived in the house for three more years before saving enough money to transform it from a typical double into a spacious single.

The house was full of potential. It had original pine floors and cypress baseboards. In a shed in the backyard, Celeste found bronze door hardware. The house also had original wiring, "which wasn't incredible," she said.

Celeste got to work with Jenny Zurik of Entablature (also the contractor) to create a floor plan. Making a double shotgun into a

single family home can be tricky; it's a balancing act to create a seamless flow between public and private spaces while also staying true to the house's original architecture.

The end result of the renovation is a beautiful, unified space that works for a modern lifestyle.

The front door remained in its original location, but now it opens to a large living room divided by a freestanding non-working fireplace. To create the large living space, a wall between the two former sides of the double was removed. The fireplace is the only reminder that the room was once divided into two separate units.

To unite the large space, Celeste painted the living room and all of the trim work (including the fireplace mantel) in Benjamin Moore Lucerne, a relaxing blue that's both serene and acts as a neutral backdrop for her collection of art, including photographs by Jennifer Shaw, Richard Sexton, Thom Bennett and herself (Celeste is a professional photographer). The room also features brightly hued furniture, including a citrusy-green couch from Hurwitz Mintz, a favorite resting spot for Flip, her

rescue greyhound, and Jeeves, her cat. (Jeeves, though, has recently taken a claw-like interest in an upholstered wingchair.)

On the street-side wall of the living room, Zurik suggested putting up wallpaper, with the whimsical floral print from Anthropologie creating its own art-like statement.

Past the front room, the public and private sides of the house are neatly divided. One side features the public areas -- the dining room, powder room, storage/pantry/laundry room and kitchen, whose design was "inspired by an English country kitchen," Celeste said.

The Carrera marble island counter top, for example, is perfect for rolling out scones when Celeste gets inspired by one of her favorite TV shows, "The Great British Baking Show."

The other side of the house is a guest bathroom -- with a 72-inch tub for tall people, Celeste said -- and a guest bedroom.

The master bathroom, bedroom and walk-in closet are on the same side of the house as the guest suite, but the master has a private entrance off the kitchen.

Both sides of the house have exits to the backyard, and Celeste plans to build a screened-in porch off her bedroom as part of phase two of the renovation.

But for now, it's a house ready for relaxation and entertaining; Celeste already has hosted several parties, including a house warming and a work event.

The renovation managed to capture both modern style but also the charm of the century-old property. "It's like a moment trapped in time, with so much history," Celeste said.

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