



2009

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SENIOR EDITORS

THE JUDGES

Ali R. Honarkar, principal,
Division1 Architects,
Washington, D.C.

Greg Kraus, lead designer,
Otogawa-Anschel Design-Build,
Minneapolis

Gary Rochman, president,
Rochman Design-Build,
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Rebecca Swanston, AIA, principal,
Swanston Associates,
Baltimore

Patricia Tetro, vice president,
BOWA Builders,
McLean, Va.

JP Ward, AIA, head architect,
Anthony Wilder Design/Build,
Cabin John, Md.

For two days in June, six judges — award winners themselves — scrutinized the merits of 271 projects from around the nation in this year’s Remodeling Design Awards. They discussed and debated each project’s creativity, originality, and its power of presentation. Judges considered the flexibility of floor plans as well as the relationship between each structure’s exterior and interior design.

Concepts including simplicity, craftsmanship, and livability played their part in the judges’ assessment of the projects, as well as more subtle attributes such as a design’s “sense of whimsy” or “the story it tells.” One overarching theme was sustainability/eco-friendly design. “This should be required in all design categories, to some level,” said judge JP Ward, AIA. “The education that architects and designers need to pass on to clients is extremely important.”

Awards entries are organized into nine categories, with an additional 26 subcategories based on price. Judges are not required to award a winner in each category, and they have leeway in determining which projects show the highest degree of design expertise and craftsmanship. As expected, kitchens, baths, and whole-house remodels dominated the entries. Many more projects were entered in the green category this year than in the past.

In the end, our judges selected 16 projects for distinction. One Best of the Year, four Grand Awards, seven Merit Awards, and four Honorable Mentions are presented on the following pages. Slide shows with many more images and project information can be found at RemodelingDesignAwards.com. Winners will be honored at an awards breakfast and panel discussion on Wednesday, Oct. 28, at this year’s Remodeling Show in Indianapolis.



Architect Jonathan Feldman increased the size of this urban San Francisco home not with additions but by admitting more light and air, and connecting to the outdoors. The dining area, relocated from a dark back corner to the front of the house, now opens to the living room. The new interior stairwell is framed by a corner column of glass.

Best of the Year WHOLE-HOUSE REMODELING, \$250,000 – \$500,000

Flexible Footprint

When subtraction becomes the new addition.

Aptly referred to as “Open Box 2,” this project doubled the size of a squared-off San Francisco residence without increasing its footprint. By creating a facade of clean lines and Mondrian-like geometry and an open interior, architect Jonathan Feldman achieved what the judges called a “spectacular transformation” that also had “reachable” design features and fit within its budget.

Feldman who, along with his wife, interior designer Lisa Lougee, had remodeled a home in this same neighborhood of stucco Spanish-style single-family residences built in 1949, was approached by a client who bought this house to renovate and



Photos: Paul Dyer Photography



Before

Project challenges included upgrading the home yet keeping it within its footprint to avoid a lengthy and difficult city permitting process. Feldman began by subtracting exterior elements such as bump-outs and gables to give the uninspired 1940s residence a contemporary face-lift. By relocating the entry to the lower level and eliminating the exterior stairwell, he was able to engage the home with the street and “activate” the relatively unused lower level.

Location: San Francisco
Contractor: Felix Chan, Lara Construction, Daly City, Calif.
Designer: Jonathan Feldman, Feldman Architecture, San Francisco
Interior designer: Lisa Lougee, Lisa Lougee Interiors, San Francisco
Landscape designer: Loretta Gargan, Landscape + Design, San Francisco

sell. The client liked what Feldman had done with the architect’s own home and wanted something similar — modern but warm. “The home was already trying to be modern, but it was a cheap copy,” Feldman says. “We tried to embrace the more modern part of it but do it in a way that was warmer and more connected with nature.”

LIVING WITHIN ITS MEANS

The first challenge was to increase the amount of habitable space without increasing the footprint, which would have resulted in a lengthy permitting process with the City of San Francisco. “We could change the aesthetics without making anything larger — roofs, walls, and footprint,” Feldman says. “So we either maintained what was there or subtracted some elements such as gables and bump-outs.”

This choice, which created a design of clean, simple lines, appealed to the judges, who were impressed with the project’s composition, its relationship to the street, and its design consistency.

Inside, the original home, broken up into small rooms with few windows, was dark and cramped. The ground floor had a garage and storage space; the home’s entrance was upstairs. There was no real connection to the outdoors. “We wanted to open up the plan

and engage the spaces on the lower floor and bring in light,” Feldman says.

The garage remained, but Feldman increased habitable space by reclaiming the rest of the ground floor — putting in an entry on that level and creating bed, bath, laundry, and family rooms. By changing the home’s entrance, Feldman was able to engage the street and “activate” all the rooms on the ground floor. In the rear, slide-fold doors off the first-floor bed and family rooms open onto a new outdoor space with a patio and lush plantings.

Upstairs, Feldman removed walls to create a master suite out of the original kitchen and dining room. He relocated the kitchen, removing walls to connect it with the new living and dining spaces.

Everywhere, there are windows, both vertical and horizontal. “We used upper transom windows because the home is very close to other houses,” Feldman says. “You don’t necessarily want to see the house next door, but you do want to see the sky and have light penetrate the room.”

The newly built interior stair core with open risers is a sculptural feature surrounded on two sides by columns of windows that allow light to filter through. The solar paneled roof holds a skylight hatch that slides open providing access to a roof deck, which boasts several garden beds and offers great city views.

Photos: Paul Dyer Photography

The light, the windows, and the connection to the garden all serve to make the rooms feel larger. “Even when the doors are closed, you get the same sense of space,” Feldman says.

DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE

Not knowing who might live in the house, part of the program focused on flexible space. “We had a lot of discussion about what we could put [into the design] that would appeal to a lot of people,” Feldman says. “And with families, needs will change over time.”

For example, Feldman says, “We discussed whether two bedrooms should be on the same floor, which would be ideal for a small child, versus something that would work better for the shape of the building.” They decided to put a small bedroom off the main suite, which could be used for a young child or perhaps as an office. An older child might sleep in the downstairs bedroom, or that could be used as a guest suite or office.

When Feldman works with clients who are living in a home, he discusses these same concerns. “[We] talk a lot about how they use the house every day — when they’re rushing to work, on the weekends, when grandma comes for a week, when there’s a dinner party. Though each person has different living needs, everyone needs to have enough privacy and connection.” —S.F.



Before



Clean lines, stainless steel, and wood make the kitchen modern, yet warm. The same modern feel continues on the floor below in the guest bedroom and family room, which open onto the back garden. On the rear elevation, horizontal windows allow in light and add interest to the facade while maintaining privacy from neighbors. Details, such as the shape of the garden paving, echo the clean, bold style of the windows and doors, adding sophistication to the simple design. Before the remodel, access to the yard was through a dark storage area. All the design elements, such as skylights and the open stair design, admit light into the dark house.