

Upgraded Elegance

A RENOVATION IN ALAMO HEIGHTS BRINGS BACK A PROPERTY'S PAST



There was only one structure remaining on a corner lot in Alamo Heights when John Grable Architects took on the property for renovation. But when it was first developed in the 1920s, the land was home to five buildings, including this surviving duplex. Grable wanted to honor the property's history by leaving the decades-old oak trees and recreating the courtyard that originally existed. To add modern living spaces for the duplex's upstairs and downstairs apartments, he envisioned a rooftop patio and a new living room flanked with glass to provide opulent views of the outdoors. "It's really kind of a symphony," Grable says. "There are these wonderful sonnets about the land and the interaction with the home and the neighborhood." —KATHLEEN PETTY



before
&
after



1 / Grable's team replaced some of the grass in the backyard with a flagstone patio, complete with a small fountain. Xeriscaping added green accents around the fountain and at the opposite corner of the patio.

2 / The construction of an open three-car parking pavilion closed in the yard, creating the same courtyard-like atmosphere that existed originally. Along with sheltering vehicles, the structure is used for events. "It's a dual pavilion," Grable says.

3 / A glassed-in living room was added to the original structure to provide more space and create the feeling of a treehouse from where the outdoors can be enjoyed even when inside.

4 / Existing live oak trees were preserved during construction. Crepe myrtle and palm trees were salvaged from other projects and added to the yard. Excess brush was cleared and bamboo planted for privacy.

5 / Flat clay tiles were used for the roof, which allowed for the creation of a rooftop patio. The extra space gives residents of the second-floor apartment views of downtown in an area that's private from their downstairs neighbors.

6 / An arched stairway that mimics an original stairway on the side of the home was added, providing residents access to a bridge between the second-story apartment and the courtyard. The dark paint on the bridge mirrors the bark on the live oaks. ●