

# Reimagined in Rollingwood

By Mauri Elbel  
Photography by David Stewart

*Clean and contemporary on the outside and sleek and spacious on the inside, the modern transformation of a modest mid-century home sitting on an oak-peppered lot in Austin's Rollingwood neighborhood was born out of a big vision and a little bit of faith.*



**W**hen local developer Landon Doyle of LD Construction and Remodeling came across a nondescript home nestled on a half-acre corner lot in one of Austin's most desired neighborhoods, he immediately saw its potential. The 1960's home was small — at just 1,948 square feet, it was a fraction of the size of the neighboring houses that had either been added onto or torn down and rebuilt over the years. Doyle wanted to at least double the home's size

to compete in an area surrounded by homes averaging 5,000 square feet and above so he turned to Nick Mehl of Element 5 Architecture and hired VK Construction + Remodeling to bring his vision to life.

From the beginning, Doyle saw past the home's unimaginative exterior and cramped, poorly-lit interior while focusing his appreciation on its existing layout and structure which he thought were well-suited for a remodel.

"It had a style I liked outside, and I felt bad about tearing something down that I felt was alright in terms of structure,"



Doyle says. "I really liked how it was already set up, and I knew I could work with it by adding a second floor and flattening the roof. I could see past some of the things that some people don't see."

Mehl admits he was initially hesitant of the remodel, preferring instead to start with a clean slate. But upon further investigation of the home, he began to agree with Doyle, a developer he had worked with on numerous past projects, and the two got to work on modernizing the mundane home.

"To bring the house up to the current standards, especially for resale, the kitchen and living room had to be much bigger and open," explains Mehl. "The home needed more natural light inside and required more square footage to keep up with its neighbors."

One of the things Doyle liked about the original home was its basic U-shaped pattern that hugged a central courtyard. The remodel reused the existing slab and brick and stayed true to the original footprint of the home with the exception of a small expansion at the back of the downstairs living room. Sitting on a large corner lot with ample room to grow, the second floor addition created 2,300 additional square feet of space and more than doubled the home's original size.

Now tucked back from the street on the lush, hilly lot, the 4,200-square-foot, six-bedroom, five-bathroom home fits within the context of the neighborhood while standing out with an updated design that respects its origins.

To architecturally enhance the home, Mehl sought to bring

in more natural light, an objective achieved through the addition of numerous windows and the removal of the existing wooden deck on the back of the house which blocked out a substantial amount of sunlight.

Replacing a large section of bricks with 24 feet of floor-to-ceiling windows spanning across the kitchen and foyer downstairs now floods the home with natural light. The design raised the downstairs ceilings by two feet with the now 10-foot-high ceilings enhancing the open feel throughout the space.

The kitchen, previously small and outdated, was enlarged to create better flow and function by rearranging cabinetry and installing a large honed Striato Olympico island with a waterfall edge that becomes the focal point of the space. Dark Carbono quartz countertops and a glistening stainless penny round backsplash contrast nicely with white cabinets and shiny stainless steel appliances.

Previously sunken with multiple step-downs, the main living space was leveled out with concrete that shines with a diamond polish and transitions flawlessly with white oak floors stained ebony in the bedrooms. The fireplace, surrounded by a Venetian plaster surface that runs from the floor to the ceiling, creates a visual separation between a smaller, more intimate living space near the entry and a larger one featuring a window wall separated by a built-in media cabinet and geometric wallpaper that adds visual interest and texture to the room. Walnut panels near the kitchen tie in with walnut floating shelves stretching from the fireplace, bringing warmth to the





contemporary space.

One of the remodel's most dramatic transformations occurs within its entryway where an open riser stair, taller ceilings and clerestory windows combine to create an open and inviting entry point. Signature of Doyle's remodels, the custom steel stair system remains minimalist in style and features white oak treads reinforced with an exposed steel bar running through the center. Above the stairs, a tongue and groove pine ceiling painted ebony complements the floors.

Upstairs, the sprawling master suite contains an enviable bathroom — a sleek and spa-worthy space bedecked in vein cut marble featuring a large soaking tub and walnut custom cabinets. A beautiful Ipe bench spans the length of the expansive shower, loaded with plumbing features that create eight separate spouts of water to delight the senses.

On the exterior, existing brick was repainted white to blend in well with the additions of stucco and Ipe. The focal point of the home is the reimagined courtyard, complete with a wooden boardwalk and cascading water feature that creates a calming and inviting experience as one enters the home. On the side of the home that faces a high-traffic street, Mehl broke up the volume and created visual appeal with a stacked two-story bay window that protrudes from the dining room downstairs and master bathroom upstairs. A tapered roof overhang with a black metal underside is carried around the entire house, giving the illusion that the windows touch the roofline and making the roof appear thinner and lighter with its tapered edge.

On the back of the house, a large terrace extends off the second floor overlooking a meticulously landscaped yard shaded by towering trees. The new deck below now functions as an open and inviting space to gather, featuring tall ceilings and an outdoor



**ARCHIECT** Element 5 Architecture  
512.473.8228 | [Element5architecture.com](http://Element5architecture.com)

**BUILDER** VK Construction + Remodeling  
512.897.3710 | [Vkremodeling.com](http://Vkremodeling.com)

**DEVELOPER** Landon Doyle  
LD Construction and Remodeling & Shamrock Realty  
512.784.9636

kitchen setup equipped with a six-foot linear fire pit, barbecue grill and outdoor refrigerator ideal for entertaining.

Overall, the remodel is just as alluring on the outside as it is on the inside, proving that good design can build on what already existed to transform an ordinary house into the spectacular home it was meant to be. ♦