

SMALL SPACES



Although William Salit extensively remodeled his flat, he left a few unique elements untouched. "The fireplace is just the way it was when I purchased this place," he says. An artist friend, Derik Van Beers, created the whimsical glazed pots.

MOVING TOWARD THE LIGHT

BY PAIGE PORTER PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES CARRIER

A San Francisco artist gave his 1,000-square-foot Edwardian flat a major facelift when he opened it to the light that had been there all along.



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William Salit had a recurring dream. After months of disheartening house-hunting in the San Francisco Bay Area, he would lie in bed at night and dream about his favorite abode, a flat where he'd lived in the 1980s. He would draw

lines in his imagination, picturing the perfect remodel. When he was awake, he would walk past the building and wish it would come up for sale. Then one day, it did.

"People say you should live in a place before you remodel it," says William, a graphic designer. "Well, I did. I lived here for eight years, so I was ready. I launched right into the remodel the moment the house was mine."

Built in 1905, the building had survived earthquakes and had dodged any drastic changes by previous owners. "Everything was original in it. It was literally untouched space, with beautiful hardwood floors and cove ceilings, a huge skylight, and a stained glass window at the top of the stairs. The heart of the house had such great light."

William's primary goal was to open the space and thereby spread the wealth of light. "I'm quite >> on 58

The bowed window in the living room reflects the Edwardian style of the flat. A simple sofa and love seat create a cozy conversation group. When William didn't find the perfect coffee table, he designed this one, which has a plywood top set on a steel truss with casters.



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sensitive to light and openness and color,” he says. “Perhaps I’m more aware of those things because I’m a graphic designer.” He also was cognizant of the building’s historical beauty and the importance of retaining its character. “I wasn’t trying to force an old Edwardian into becoming a loft. I wanted to make some aesthetic changes, none of them too forced, and take advantage of all the nuances that were already here.”

He began by hiring architect Michael Mullin, whose design aesthetic is similarly organic. “William, being a designer, was incredibly thoughtful through this whole process,” says Mullin. “He’d mapped out a blueprint on his own and turned it over to me, but his ideas were in sync with what I wanted to do with the space.”

The blueprint involved removing a pantry and laundry room in order to elongate the kitchen and open it to the sun porch, inviting in more light. A larger kitchen would allow space for a table for six, eliminating the >> on 60

A pair of wrought-iron end tables, set side by side, makes a spacious end table next to the love seat in the living room. The grouping of vases and pots, which William collected over a number of years, are united by their pleasing range of neutral tones.



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need for a dining room. The flat's obvious dining room would become his bedroom, while the former bedroom space, just off the living room, would become his office. "One of the things I knew I would do right away was to tear off the doors to open it all up," says William. Where he chose to maintain doors—into the bedroom and the bathroom—they are sandblasted glass.

With that kind of open floor plan, however, William had to find a solution to the problem of hiding his full-time home office from the rest of the house. "I really wanted to be able to put it all away at the end of the day and not think about it," he says. But William wasn't interested in off-the-shelf solutions, so he went to work on his own computer to design a series of storage spaces, cabinets, and movable doors that would allow him to make his office >> on 62

The home office (*above*) includes two computer stations that can be concealed behind the doors. A tinted green panel slides to reveal the work station and hide the bedroom. When the panel is closed, the office borrows light from the bedroom. Staggered filing cabinets (*left*) were William's answer to an angled window. "I didn't want another solid wall of wood," he says.



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disappear after hours. “I was able to create a space that is fully functional, yet very organized,” he says.

The design features two large wooden doors, wrapped with bands of aluminum, that swing open to expose the work space, and close to conceal it. A third door in the middle, covered in green laminate, breaks up the mass and slides open, obscuring the bedroom while William works. “For me, everything revolves around coming up with a unique solution for a unique problem,” William says.

Take the bathroom, for instance. The tiny 5½x5½-foot space once included a miniature claw-foot tub, which occupied most of the room and left little space to stand at the sink. “I decided to do away with the tub, hard as it was to part with, and create an open >> on 64

French doors and a large sash window welcome abundant light into the kitchen (above). Cabinets next to the refrigerator hide the washer and dryer. The backsplash (left) is tinted green glass that plays off the cabinetry’s slightly metallic silvered-green finish. The unusual finish was created with a mixture of green paint and silver auto-body paint.



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shower.” The all-white tiled bathroom boasts a gently sloping floor, which drains water away from the sink and toilet area. “The bathroom is so light it actually feels twice its size,” says William.

While the bathroom is all white, the rest of the house wears flirtatious shades of green, butter yellow, and pale aqua. “I experimented with colors I felt were pleasing to my eyes. I didn’t want to grow tired of anything in my house. I wanted my home to invigorate me. That, of course, was my dream all along.” ♪

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William turned the former dining room into his bedroom (*above left*) because he favored its bowed window wall and surfeit of light. The built-in hutch (*top right*) hints at the room’s former role. Befitting a small urban home, the bathroom (*left*) is airy and chic with an all-white scheme and a window above the sink.