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Remodeling

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SUN-FILLED ADDITIONS

Living the good life —
sunrooms, screen porches, and more

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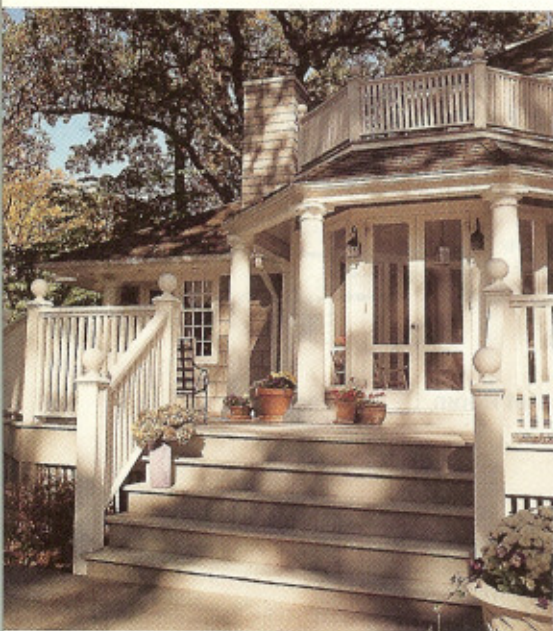


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LIVING CONNECTIONS

The Stephans expanded their entertaining and family-fun options by linking their 1900s home to the outside with a sheltering screen room and sprawling wraparound deck.

BY ANN WILSON



above Wide steps lead up to the new deck and screen room, which features railings on its roof that define a deck opening off the master bedroom.

Though summer's warm breezes will soon give way to the bitter winds of winter, this Chicago family holds out against cabin fever by escaping to their screen room, deck, and yard. Perched in lawn chairs, grown-ups bask in sheltered sunshine, while kids make a dash for exterior spaces armed with toy trucks and buckets of bubble-blowing equipment. The Stephans flock outside for parties and playtime whenever possible, stretching the living-is-easy season from May until October.

The desire for simple open-air pleasures motivated homeowners Margaret and Mark Stephan, of Winnetka, Illinois, to augment a recent kitchen and family room addition with an outdoor living and entertaining center. They worked with Chicago architect Charles Renner to create functional transitions between the addition, an existing sunroom, and the great outdoors.

"The kitchen gave birth to a family room," Renner says of the Stephans' 1997 remodeling project. "The family room gave birth to the screen room and deck [in 1999]. We had an opportunity to plan the

additions at the same time and work the two geometries together."

Mark asked for a screen room where the couple could entertain, protected from pesky bees and mosquitoes that converge on late-summer soirees. Because the house sat high on its foundation—almost 4 feet above the yard—Margaret wanted a deck instead of a ground-level patio. She wanted the deck near the kitchen and family room, so it could be enjoyed by the Stephans' three young boys, as well as other family and friends. The couple requested that the deck and screen room blend with the home's early-1900s architecture and boast a bit of Cape Cod styling as well. Moreover, it was important that the side-yard section of the deck be aesthetically pleasing when viewed from the front of the house.

"Our goal was seamless integration, making it look like our work was done by the original architect," Renner says. "Part of the [direction] we borrowed from the existing house. We used shingles like those on the original house on the addition. But the original house had no classical columns. We introduced them, placing



them at the back and front porches and screen room, and used them as a demarcation of entrances.”

Renner’s greatest challenge was making a united statement at roof height. He connected the underlying rooflines of the addition with those of the sunroom, using the roof of the gazebolike screen room as a hinging point. He joined the old to the new by reroofing the entire house with cedar shakes. He also linked the look of the newly constructed exterior walls with



above A screen room and deck fashion a family-friendly transition to the outdoors for this early-1900s home.

left The deck offers a bit of sunny privacy for homeowner Margaret Stephan and son Barrett.

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the rest of the house by installing like-size cedar shingles. After bleaching the original shingle siding, all the shingles were stained a weathered taupe—a nod to sea-seasoned Nantucket cottages.

Renner oriented the new screen room between the family room and the sun-room, incorporating doorways that encourage traffic to flow from both rooms through the porch and onto the deck's seating area, which juts from the side of the house. A 7-foot-wide staircase descends from this area to the yard, easily accommodating streams of coming-and-going kids and guests.

"The new [side] entry gives a lot of character to the house," Margaret says. "It's trimmed out the same [as the other entries], with the same moldings, and it feels as if it was here all the time."

The 800-square-foot deck takes a bend

and hugs the back of the house, where a door opens to the family room and near the kitchen; a stairway is a stone's throw from the garage. The deck's wood railings and finial-topped posts combine with the deep roof overhangs, colonial-style columns, cedar-shake roof, and a beaded-board ceiling in the screen room to outfit the space with the Eastern Seaboard flavor Margaret desired.

An interior designer, Margaret employed a decorator's touch and a mother's eye when furnishing the deck and screen room. For the deck, she chose kidproof, all-weather classic metal furniture, which staunchly stands up to the wear, tear, and pizza stains of three active boys and their pals, as well as cloudbursts and blizzards.

Easy-care painted rockers mix with indoor/outdoor wicker in the screen room to fashion a cozy cottage-style retreat. It's



above Because Margaret loves the look of columns, architect Charles Renner included the classic forms to define all entries into the home; the deck and screen room columns match those at the front and back doors.

right The widest section of the deck is shaped much like a ship's prow and was jogged to preserve a towering oak. The living-is-easy seating area is convenient to the screen room, with views of front, back, and side yards.



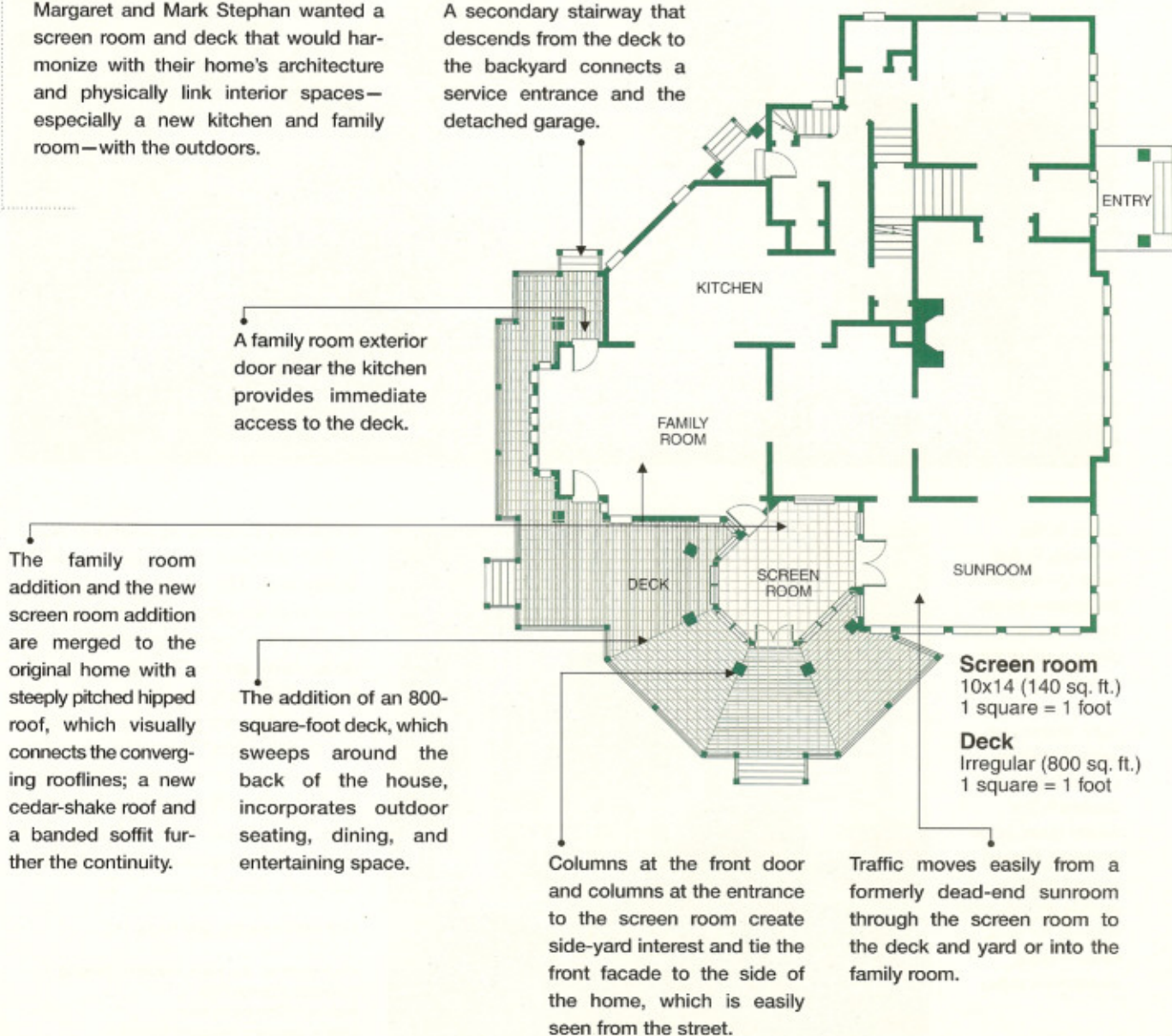
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Planning Points

Margaret and Mark Stephan wanted a screen room and deck that would harmonize with their home's architecture and physically link interior spaces—especially a new kitchen and family room—with the outdoors.

A secondary stairway that descends from the deck to the backyard connects a service entrance and the detached garage.



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above In the sunroom, arched molding—original to the space—frames French doors, which direct traffic to the screen room.

right Wicker and painted furniture provide laid-back comfort in the screen room. Large stretches of mesh without mullions provide unobstructed views of the yard, while keeping mosquitoes at bay.



a welcome shelter from annoying bugs.

The informal living spaces suit the family well. The original sunroom combines with the new screen room and deck for a perfect cocktail party setting. The deck, ideal for setting up race tracks, invites the kids to stay in sight.

“Now there’s a great place to go from the family room,” Margaret says. “The screen room is an alcove for dinner parties. And the boys use the deck all the time; they eat out there and play games. We use the sunroom more, too; before, it was just a dead-end room.” □

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 117.

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