


FLAT-OUT MODERN



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**A bungalow so
perfectly of the 1950s
makes it impossible
to see its complete facelift**

**By Alex Bozickovic
Photography by Shai Gil**

On a leafy street in Toronto's tony Bennington Heights neighbourhood, dwarfed by McMansions and stately two-storey manor houses from the 1920s, stands a house that looks as if it could be June Cleaver's.

Local architect William Sheets built the gabled, L-shaped bungalow for his family in 1951. His widow sold it in 1999, and its new owners undertook a partial, albeit convoluted, renovation the very next year. In 2006, a graphic designer (her) and an industrial designer (him) – with a five-year-old daughter and a shared love of contemporary art and modernist design – saw beyond the imperfect reno and purchased the property. >

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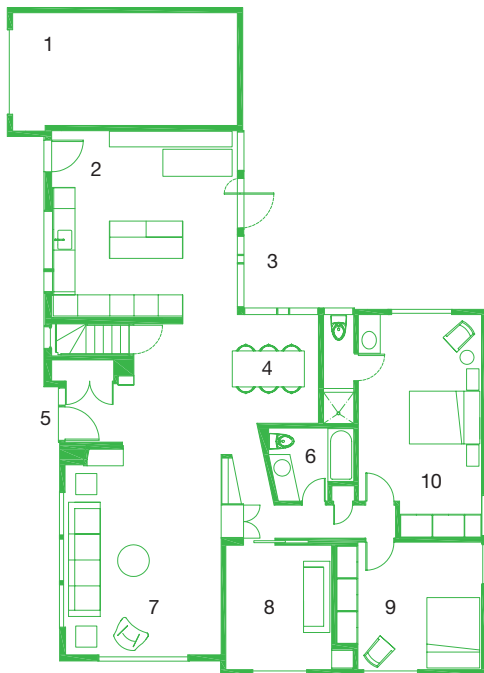
To bring in more light and a better view of the street, a window opening was enlarged by dropping the sill. Windows by Loewen; sofas by B&B Italia from Kiosk.



Custom millwork in rift-cut oak was installed throughout the home to maximize storage. Ligne Roset sofa from Kiosk.

The couple loved the simple, casual, single-level lifestyle Sheets' design afforded, as well as its segregated private and public spaces – all typical bungalow characteristics. They loved that it was set back from the street, on a mature lot with century-old trees and tremendous privacy. Finally, they loved discovering a rare jewel, for such homes are becoming harder and harder to find in the city. Increasingly, buyers eye the coveted lots, with plans to tear down the original structures and construct larger houses. Indeed, although two mid-century bungalows once abutted the home, its current neighbours are massive neo-Georgians.

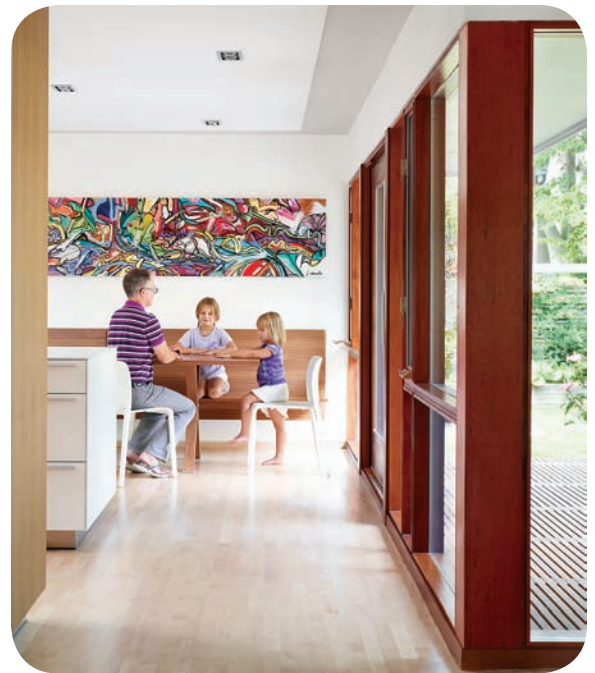
The two designers wanted to simplify and modernize their new home, and bring it into the 21st century without significantly disrupting its footprint. They sought to create a more spacious, airy and efficient kitchen; a living space allowing them to entertain and display their art collection; and a functional basement and play space. So in 2009 they called on Atelier Kastelic Buffey (AKB) – an integrated architectural and interior design firm known for mixing functionality with careful, minimal detailing – to embark on a renovation. The firm usually works on new builds, but the partners jumped at the project because Sheets' original floor plan was so thoughtfully conceived. >



Main Floor:

1. Garage
2. Kitchen
3. Patio
4. Dining area
5. Entrance
6. Bathroom
7. Living room
8. Den
9. Bedroom
10. Master bedroom

Kitchen table
by Speke
Klein. Matching
custom bench
in walnut
by Gibson
Greenwood.



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The hub of the home is Bulthaup's b3 kitchen system in laminate and walnut. Stainless steel fan by Sirius.

To restore the bungalow to its former glory, and bring it into the new millennium, AKB made subtle but transformative changes. The partners enlarged the living room's picture window and simplified its clerestory windows to bring more light inside and to frame perfect street views. In the den and the two bedrooms on the house's south end, they added functionality by installing custom millwork. In the smaller bedroom, for example, they re-configured a previously inadequate closet with extended shelves and inset drawers flush to the wall.

The fussy kitchen, which had consumed the front portico during the previous reno and had been cut off from the dining area by a half-wall, was also transformed. By pushing out the exterior wall two feet and aligning the previously staggered roof lines, the architects reunited the spaces and installed a Bulthaup kitchen, keeping clutter hidden behind closed cupboards.

Downstairs, a previously damp, dark basement storage space became an airy play area with a powder room and laundry units concealed behind sliding doors.

The home is now so inviting that the couple says everyone who enters it – from parents and grandparents to kids – notices and comments on its warmth. What's more, the renovation is so seamless that some neighbours can't even see where the work was done. The bungalow has stood here 60 years now, but its never looked better. ■



In the basement, laundry utilities and a powder room are concealed by lacquered wood doors by Gibson Greenwood.



The kitchen and dining space open up to a cedar deck and patio of concrete pavers – all original – in the backyard.