

terra firma

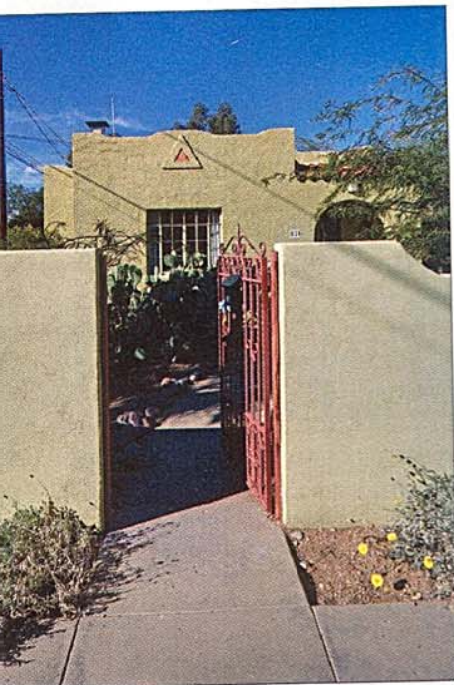
bill Mackey, RA, and his wife, Rachel Yaseen, are true urbanists. The Tucson, Ariz., residents don't own a car, preferring instead to walk or to get around on bicycles or via a golf cart—which, apparently, is street-legal there. It's no shock, then, that when the couple were in the market for a new house a few years ago, they bought an old bungalow in the heart of downtown. "A central location was really important to us," says Mackey, who works as a project manager for Rob Paulus Architect when he isn't moonlighting for his firm, worker inc. "We needed the house to be close to all the services we use."

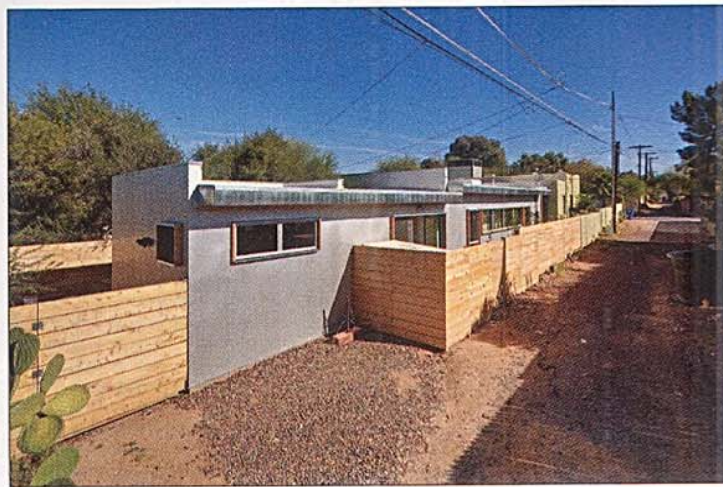
With a baby on the way, Mackey and Yaseen also needed more from the 808-square-foot, circa 1927 house than it had to give. Among other changes, they wanted to incorporate a strong outdoor component and extend the house in a way that would provide shade from the heat, which can easily hit triple digits in the summer months. But expanding the existing one-bedroom, one-bath structure—whose style Mackey describes as "California Mission Revival"—was tricky. A central challenge, he explains, was the property's "odd-shaped" lot, which "runs along an alleyway and measures 200 feet long by about 32 feet wide."

Mackey left the front of the house intact but unified the main spaces containing the kitchen, living room, and dining room; converted the bedroom into a library; and relocated the bath nearby. He saved the major moves for the rear, where he razed a small studio/garage to make way for extended private areas, including a studio for Yaseen, who teaches yoga. He tucked the addition along the south end of the property and used deep overhangs, "so the building shades the north side of the site," he says.

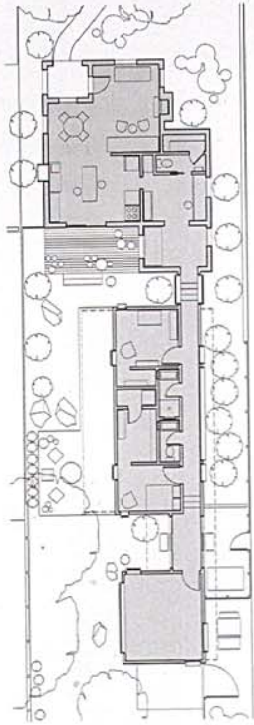
"The driving goal of the design was to make the interior spaces as small as we could, so we'd have enough outdoor area left over," Mackey explains. Large operable windows and doors bring in light and provide visual access to the courtyard, covered patio, porch, and

Bill Mackey extended the rear of his Tucson, Ariz., house along one side of his property and created a small, but efficient side yard in the process. The new volume offers shade from the afternoon sun, and a large overhang provides cover for the patio and fire pit (opposite). Hearty desert plants and rocks make for dynamic landscaping.





project: 825 N. Norton Ave., Tucson, Ariz.
architect: worker inc., Tucson
general contractor: Mega Trend, Tucson
project size: 808 square feet (before),
1,683 square feet (after)
site size: 0.17 acre
construction cost: \$114 per square foot
photography: Liam Frederick

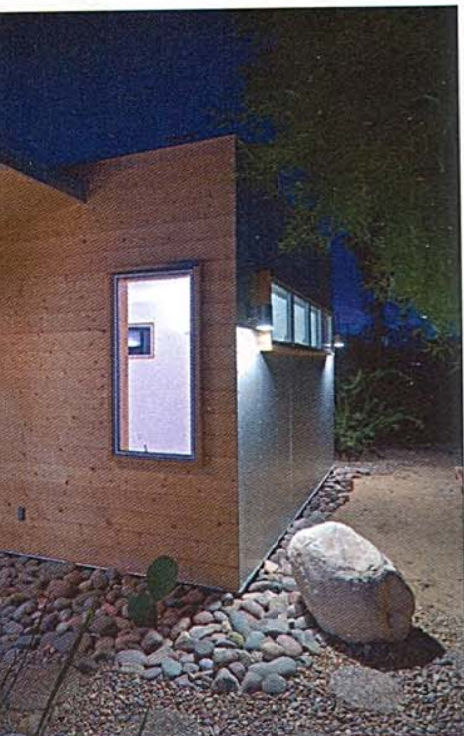


The home features an aluminum and spruce/fir (depending on orientation) rainscreen, as well as solar hot water and recycled cotton insulation. Photo-voltaics will be added in the future.

fire pit. "Every door opens up to a window," he says. Pebbles and smooth stones of varying sizes delineate walkable paths from non-walkable areas, and large boulders serve as seating and climbing objects for the couple's son, Wexler, now 3 years old.

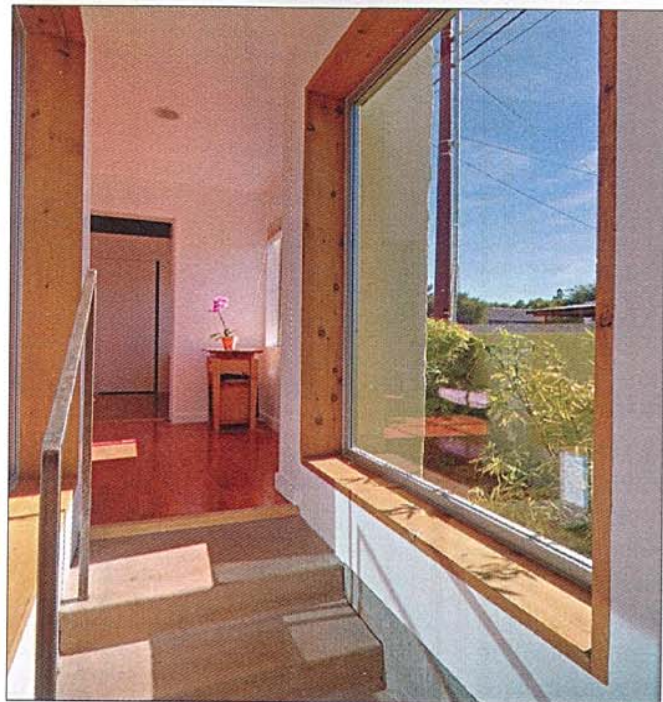
Yaseen, who handled most of the outdoor decisions, softened the site's hard edges with strategically placed potted cacti, bamboo, and flowering plants, such as yucca and orange jubilee. The whole south face comprises plants "that grow up in the summer and provide protection from the sun," Mackey says.

All in all, the spacious, light-filled addition Mackey designed and the climate-specific landscape his wife conceived create a desert oasis that rivals the allure of their downtown pastimes.—*n.f.m.*





Mackey used 8-foot-by-10-foot sliders and large aluminum casement windows to extend the public areas and preserve landscape views. The windows are set deep in a 12-inch Western red cedar box for shading.



single speed

When Bill Mackey says "My life is crazy," it's no exaggeration. The architect, artist, and illustrator designed the renovation of his home entirely by hand in the spare moments when his son was napping in the old studio/garage out back. If that weren't enough, he's also a co-founder of design co*op, a Tucson, Ariz.-based collective of local artists, writers, designers, and architects whose main goal is "to educate the public on the idea that the design of the built environment can improve quality of life," Mackey says.

Group members provide architectural services to Tucson's

Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in exchange for studio space, but they also have lectured, done pro bono work, and participated in community outreach programs helping schoolchildren with public art projects. "It's a delicate balance" trying to do all of these things, acknowledges Mackey, whose artwork includes pastels (oil on found wood), collages, and digital overlays on maps.

He'll need that balance even more next year, when he becomes MOCA's Architect-in-Residence. In that role he'll assist with any architecture-related issues that arise.—*n.f.m.*