

1. The renovation of the Mork-Ulnes house in San Francisco combines modern with vintage: a Le Klint pendant lamp by Poul Christiansen hangs from an 1896 rosette in the front parlor.



2. Missing balusters in the entry parlor were replaced with custom ones that were left unfinished.



3. Because the house was renovated many times in its 112-year history, it has hardware from various eras; the glass door-knob and brass plate are believed to date from the 1960s.

4. Casper Mork-Ulnes designed a headboard of reclaimed Douglas fir, complete with book crannies, to conceal bracing that was added during the renovation.

ON LOCATION

Updating The Haight



By MICHAEL CANNELL
THE long party is over on Clayton Street in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, where a hippie boardinghouse in a three-story Victorian run by an elderly lesbian minister is now a family home remade with a warmed-up modernism and the restrained inflections of Norwegian design.

The mural of a naked goddess that once dominated the entrance parlor is gone, as is the communal shower with its swinging saloon doors. But a few remnants survive, including a wrought-iron peace sign on the back porch and, in a bathroom, a stained-glass portrait of St. Peter that had been salvaged in the 1960s from a demolished church.

Today the trippy and the minimal have struck an unlikely harmony — like the sound of Janis Joplin howling over an austere Scandinavian stereo.

The house's most colorful aspect was its previous owner, the Rev. Sarah Davis, who was drinking tea beside her dog, Rambo, in the kitchen when Casper and Lexie Mork-Ulnes stopped by five years ago. The couple — he is an architect born in Norway; she, a furniture designer — had recently married and were at the end of a dispiriting home search. After 70-odd listings, they were ready to give up, or take a break. They dragged themselves on a lunch hour to one last place, an inauspicious 1896 Victorian obscured behind pink stucco icing. "It was the worst stucco job I'd ever seen," said Mr. Mork-Ulnes, the founder of Mork-Ulnes Design, an architectural practice, and a partner in



An 1896 row house that sheltered hippies now welcomes a modernist family.

9. Salvaged lumber was glued together to form the butcher-block treads of the parlor staircase; chips and nail holes were left exposed. The railing is made of shower-door glass and industrial hardware.

10. The double-height living area is spanned by a bridge made of original flooring from the attic. Furnishings include a 1954 Florence Knoll sofa and an Eames rocker.

11. A glass doorway framed in Douglas fir maintains a loftlike sense of space and light in the master bedroom. Behind the bed is an exposed chimney.

Modern Cabana, a maker of prefab sheds. "The house was the ugly duckling of the block."

Ms. Davis, then 81, was like an Armistead Maupin character: a former Navy aviation mechanic, drill sergeant and Peace Corps worker, she was a deacon in the All Saints' Episcopal Church. Ms. Davis, who was moving to an assisted-living facility, had bought the house in 1960 and rented rooms for years. Tenants and guests painted walls and ceilings with mandalas, Rastafarian basketball players and a tree root that morphed into a rabbit, horse and wolf. "It was like a bad acid trip," Mr. Mork-Ulnes said. "It had the musty Northern California aroma that you get in hotels built by hippie

carpenters on the Mendocino coast."

He was prepared to write the visit off as a lost hour, but his wife found her heart beating fast. "In San Francisco, Victorians are a dime a dozen," said Mrs. Mork-Ulnes, who designs furniture for Pottery Barn Kids. "This one had character and soul."

From the parlor the couple took a spiral staircase to the converted attic, where Ms. Davis lived with a wood stove and a chamber pot, and pushed through French doors onto a deck with views of the Marin Headlands and Mount Tamalpais. "I really think this is it," Mrs. Mork-Ulnes recalled saying.

They were the last words her husband expected. "I was taken aback," he said, "but I quickly



5. Casper and Lexie Mork-Ulnes worked on the house in stages, taking time out for the births of Finn, left, and Lucia.

6. The play area in Lucia's bedroom is concealed by a curtain of Ikea fabric that suggests a Scandinavian flag. The Case Study Easy Chair by Modernica is based on a Pierre Paulin design.

7. What had been a TV den in the house's hippie days is now a dining room, with Eames Eiffel chairs, a chestnut table from Sleuth Antiques in Sausalito, Calif., and a Jasper Morrison lamp.

8. The bedrooms are tucked into what was once a dark attic. Now, polycarbonate panels running along the top of the walls admit light into the hallway, and a glass doorway creates a feeling of openness in the master bedroom.



saw the potential." They bought the house for \$1.05 million with Mr. Mork-Ulnes's brother, who lived on the first floor for two years before moving.

The Mork-Ulneses are dedicated modernists, and their impulse was to bury the details and detritus under drywall. After sitting on the back porch with Ms. Davis one day after the closing, they chose a more challenging route: to meld the layers of history with contemporary design. "I had a strong sense that afternoon that we should maintain part of the aura," Mr. Mork-Ulnes said.

Over the course of five years, and the births of two children, they conducted a nearly \$200,000 renovation, replacing the warren of dark rooms with an open space while saving many items, like wainscoting, rosettes and rounded kitchen windows salvaged years ago from parlors of razed Victorians. The stucco was removed and the original facade restored. St. Peter still reigns, but not the goddess. "We lived with the mural for about six months, but Lexie couldn't bear it any longer," he said.

He lightened the upstairs by staining the new Douglas fir floors and trim with lye, a treatment used in his family's farmhouse outside Oslo, as it is throughout Norway to alleviate the dark winters. And they tried to perpetuate the hippie aesthetic with bits of warmth and texture. For example, they hired a cobbler to make shoe-leather cabinet pulls for the minimalist kitchen. "It was important that we not simply gut the house," he said, "but that our new interventions reinterpret what was there and build upon what had developed over time."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARA REMINGTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES