

Soon after purchasing a 1940s home in the Mar Vista neighborhood of Los Angeles, Mohamed Sharif was approached by his new neighbors. “Are you a developer?” they asked, their concern evident. He assured them he was not, and that his family was there to stay.

A partner in Sharif, Lynch: Architecture and an assistant professor in UCLA’s Department of Architecture & Urban Design, Mohamed, along with his wife, orthodontist Rehana Khan, had no desire to tear down and start from scratch. Their aim was to modernize and enlarge the single-level, 1,330-square-foot bungalow >

For his own home in Mar Vista, architectural designer Mohamed Sharif retained the front portion of a 1940s bungalow (inset) and added an L-shaped, two-story volume (right) at the rear that includes a wing for his mother-in-law. “Adapting and reusing and being sensitive to the neighborhood context was important,” he says. The structure is sheathed in fiber cement HardiePanels. The decking is by Trex.

Staying in Character

A Los Angeles bungalow keeps its roots while growing to accommodate three generations.



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to accommodate their three sons—Karim, Amin, and Zayd—as well as Rehana's mother, Susan, without dwarfing the 5,500-square-foot lot.

Connecting the building to the outdoors was critical. "There was a beautiful backyard, but the only way to access it was by going down the driveway," Rehana says.

After zoning constraints led them to scrap plans for an accessory dwelling unit, Mohamed suggested they replace the rear of the house with a two-story L-shaped volume that would encompass bedrooms, bathrooms, a family room, and a maisonnette for Susan—a move that would nearly

double the original square footage.

"Keeping the front of the existing building relatively untouched ensured that its scale and appearance would not remarkably depart from other houses on the street," says Mohamed.

Since they'd continue to live in their rental during construction, Mohamed and Rehana both felt a sense of urgency. "Our conversations were focused and decisive because there was a healthy acknowledgment of Realpolitik—the time and money crunch," says Mohamed, who worked with contractor Refined Development to complete the job in less than seven months. >



"The windows are strategically located so you can see through the whole house from the street."

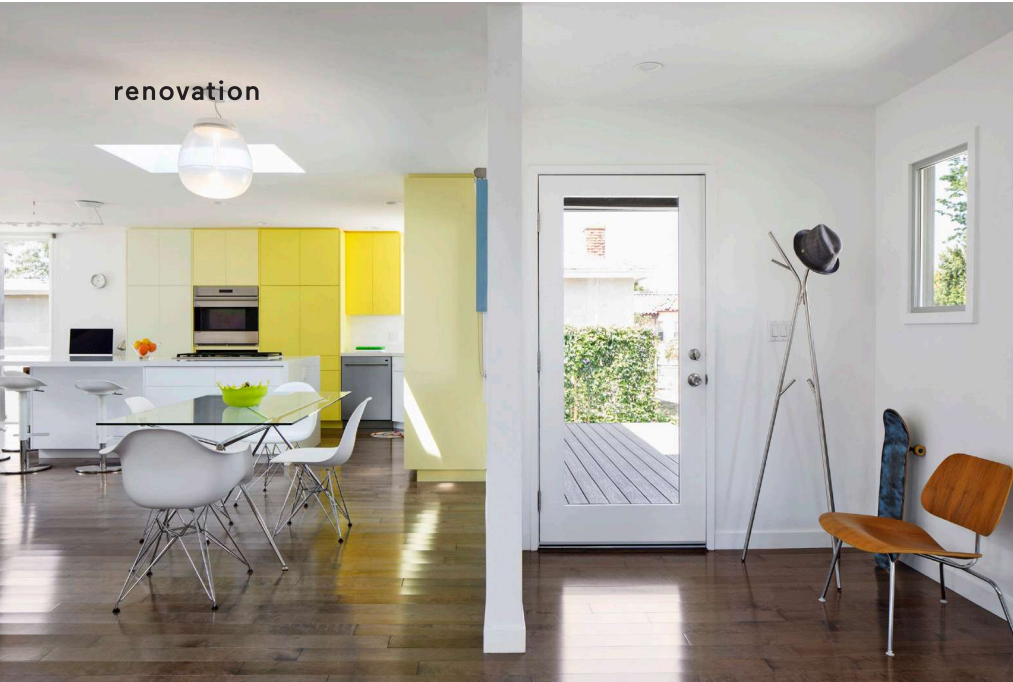
MOHAMED SHARIF, ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER AND RESIDENT



The rear of the house was expanded (inset) to include a family room and an open stairwell that leads to the kids' bedrooms (left). Operable and fixed windows frame views and encourage cross ventilation (above). "I wanted to work within the limits of ordinary wood construction," Mohamed says, "so it was a question of how big an opening we could make with wood." The Kao suspension light is by Bruno Houssin for Artemide.



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The result is a house that “doesn’t upstage the neighbors,” he explains. “Peeking above the existing roofline is a simple plane outlining the second floor of the addition.” Inside, the exterior and interior views were carefully choreographed and framed to “maximize a sense of depth and breadth,” he says. Old windows were expanded and new openings extended up to the ceilings, while operable skylights enhance the feeling of airiness.

Blue-gray fiber-cement panels were used as cladding for the addition, a pragmatic choice that yielded unexpected benefits. “Depending on the way the sun hits them, they can look like metal or just disappear into the sky,” says Mohamed.

Susan’s suite consists of a sitting area and kitchenette set across the deck from the family room. An internal stair leads to her corner bedroom. If she later

decides it’s easier to live on the first floor, the couple can swap their bedroom downstairs for hers.

Susan appreciates the options the space offers. “It’s completely private and peaceful, but it can connect by doors on both levels so I can be with my family and my grandchildren.”

Whether Mohamed and Rehana are making a meal in the open kitchen, enjoying the breeze from the garden, or watching Zayd play with his toys on the light-drenched stair landing, the couple are happy that their house not only suits the neighborhood, but also offers them flexibility to meet their changing needs.

“The multigenerational household didn’t always exist in this culture, but now it’s becoming an economic necessity,” says Mohamed. “For our family, this feels like the most dignified approach to all of us living under one roof.” ■

Mohamed removed the wall between the dining area and kitchen but kept a partition near the front door (top). Eames chairs join a Connubia dining table. An off-center skylight brings natural light into the living room (right), where the existing fireplace (inset) was refinished in metallic paint. A fiberglass Koishi pouf by Naoto Fukasawa for Linea sits by an Eames sofa. The painting is by Vanessa Prager.

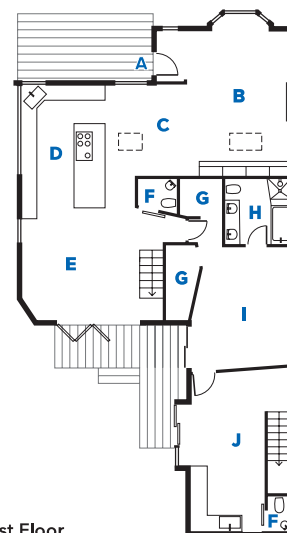


Sharif Khan Residence

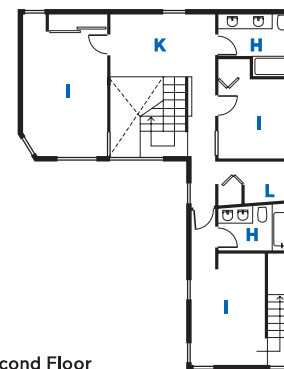
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ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER **Mohamed Sharif**
LOCATION **Los Angeles, California**

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|------------------|--------------------------------|
| A Entrance | H Bathroom |
| B Living Room | I Bedroom |
| C Dining Area | J Sitting Area/
Kitchenette |
| D Kitchen | K Play Area |
| E Family Room | L Laundry Room |
| F Powder Room | |
| G Walk-in Closet | |



First Floor



Second Floor

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES + WRIGHT

