

# Before & After

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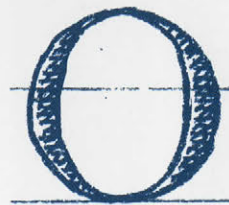
BEFORE & AFTER

# STAY IN CHARACTER

**Problem:** This 1780s Charleston house had ventured too far from its historic roots.

**Solution:** A return to historical accuracy, using classic elements with functional updates

**LOCATION:** Charleston, South Carolina **ARCHITECT:** Fairfax & Sammons; [fairfaxandsammons.com](http://fairfaxandsammons.com) and Beau Clowney Design; [beauclowney.com](http://beauclowney.com) **SIZE OF REMODEL:** 1,800 square feet **DURATION OF PROJECT:** 1 1/2 years



Olivia and Walker Brock looked at dozens of Charleston's iconic Single Houses before they found one with their coveted "Three Ps"—porch, privacy, and parking. Unfortunately, the house lacked a fourth "P"—period authenticity. "Over the years, things were added that were too ornate for

a small 1780s tenant house," explains Walker. "We took out crown moldings, appliques—even the hinges." Olivia, who has a master's degree in historic preservation, considered every detail, from the shutters to the light switches, to make sure they were appropriate to the home's era. By updating the kitchen and adding savvy built-in storage, they ensured the house got a 21st-century refresh while returning it to its simple origins.

**[FRONT EXTERIOR]** With the multi-storied porches restored, the couple replaced the existing period-discordant, ornate fence and iron gate with welcoming wooden ones. Clapboard siding was painted a light green with cream trim, and the fixtures were backdated with reproductions. Not least, the front door was painted a classic navy.

PHOTOGRAPHY FRANCESCO LAGNESE STYLING ERIN SWIFT



Louvered shutters were installed upstairs and paneled ones downstairs.

**[UPPER PORCH]** Olivia and Walker's house had gone from two porches to only one. With some sleuthing, they found an early-20th-century photograph showing the upper porch intact. They restored it for historical accuracy and gained some valuable living space in the process.



Here, Olivia used Mouse's Back (accents) and Light Gray (walls) by Farrow & Ball.

"This looks more orderly than having shutters that bisect the window," says Walker.



**[LIVING ROOM]** The homeowners removed thick, formal moldings and faux-plaster fireplace appliques and simplified the room's architecture. They also added bookshelves on either side of the fireplace and replaced louvered plantation shutters with solid panels hinged in three places to perfectly align with the windowpane muntins. They coated the walls in shades of gray for a warm, subtle backdrop and filled the room with accents that lend an English Colonial flavor.



Bookcases aren't just for books and trinkets. Colorful artwork hung in front adds dimension.

Two empty alcoves flanking the fireplace were put to work when the Brocks added built-ins.

**[DINING ROOM]**

For both period and visual consistency, the slate hearth in the dining room was replaced with Charleston brick. The space now reflects Colonial Williamsburg with darker moldings and lighter walls. Brighter colors were chosen in this room to compensate for its placement at the sunlight-starved center of the house.

Walker found the worn flag on the beach at Pawleys Island after Hurricane Andrew.

The scale of the French table and English chairs allows passage from the hall to the kitchen.

**[BEST RENOVATION TIP]**

“OVER THE YEARS, PEOPLE HAD ADDED THINGS THAT WERE FAR TOO ORNATE FOR A SMALL 1780S TENANT HOUSE.”

—HOMEOWNER WALKER BROCK



A custom headboard swoops downward to let in maximum natural light.

**[MASTER BEDROOM]**

The addition of a window in the master bedroom added much-needed natural light to the room but meant even less wall space for a headboard. By curtaining the whole wall behind the bed, the couple cleverly disguised the small space between the windows. To break up the expanse of curtains, they hung framed artwork in front.



New French doors flood the kitchen with sunlight and connect it to the back garden.

Scale pendant lights to the size of the island. This pair doesn't overwhelm the compact space.



**KITCHEN** The owners wanted their existing dark and dreary kitchen to look like it had been added onto the home in the 1920s. That meant shiplap walls, no upper cabinets, mahogany countertops, and unlacquered brass cabinet hardware and sink fixtures. They ripped up the 1950s floor and laid a new pine floor on the diagonal, sealed and primed it, then applied two coats of high-gloss gray paint.



BEFORE

Swaths of creeping fig soften edges around the sitting area.

Although new, this bluestone with flamed edges loses that "just-installed" appearance.

**GARDEN** Moving the air conditioner to the roof opened up a world of possibilities. The owners removed the too-wide plant beds and fooled the eye with beds running perpendicular to the façade, creating a square that feels like an outdoor room with European leanings.