



Architect: Kikinsky + Rappe Architects; contractor: Joseph Delich

Stoop Conquered

A new porch replaced a nearly hidden entrance—and put a friendly new face on this home BY KATE ASHFORD

When Betsy and Dave Sheikh discovered they were expecting a second child, their Chicago condo began to look cramped. In search of more space and good schools, they settled on nearby Evanston, a city just north of Chicago. They liked the character of the old homes in the area and found one within walking distance of public transit, on a street with mature trees and huge yards where families congregate and kids play. The house was the right size but had no porch—only a stoop that was nearly hidden by a large elm. “It’s kind of a front-yard neighborhood,” Dave says. “We knew we’d want to put something there.” The Sheikhs enlisted architect Scott Rappe to help open up their house to the street.

The new porch runs the width of the house, giving the family enough room for a table and chairs as well as toys. It’s outfitted with Ipe Brazilian hardwood decking and stairs (\$15,000) and cedar railings (\$4,500). The brick piers that support the roof are designed to match the walls (\$8,650). The main entryway was widened, with two new glass-filled doors that let more light into the foyer (\$8,000). And to give the porch a wraparound feel, the couple installed French doors in the sunroom opposite the entrance (\$5,500). The Sheikhs, now expecting a third child, couldn’t be more content. “My wife and I can sit out in the Adirondack chairs, our two boys can play out in the yard and the neighbors can come over and hang out,” Dave says. “The porch looks like it’s always been there.” Home prices have softened since the Sheikhs bought, but local Coldwell Banker realtor Don Souhrada considers the porch a good long-term investment. “They’re going to get more use out of the home,” he notes. “It was a smart renovation that really enhanced the home’s curb appeal.” \$



BEFORE



AFTER

Best Face Forward Although the front door is still off-center, the porch steps and sidewalk line up in the middle of the house to add symmetry. French doors in the sunroom further open the home to the street.

THE NUMBERS

BOUGHT IN 2004 FOR

\$965K

RENOVATION COSTS

\$200K

MARKET VALUE TODAY

\$1.2 million

WHERE DID IT GO? The Sheikhs spent about 60% of their total renovation budget on the new front doors and porch, including \$25,000 for landscaping and reorienting the sidewalk. Also updated: the kitchen, bathrooms and basement.

DOS & DON'TS A Front Porch

BY DUO DICKINSON

- DO** make a porch fit the size of your house—and be big enough to use.
- DO** mimic the style of your home when doing any major renovation.
- DO** pick large windows and doors to let in light under deep roofs.
- DO** make the front steps a prominent feature to draw attention.
- DO** use large, well-spaced plantings to marry house to yard.
- DON'T** treat a porch like decorative trim (less than five feet wide).
- DON'T** fake the materials, even if matching the original costs more.
- DON'T** allow your new roof to disturb your existing windows.
- DON'T** be a slave to symmetry, as long as the focal point is centered.
- DON'T** treat plants as limp fringe, too tight and too small.

Contributing writer Duo Dickinson is an architect in Madison, Conn.

PHOTOGRAPH BY LESLIE SCHWARTZ