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SAVING SPACE

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before
and after

a private screening

A sleek shoji screen conceals a room's multiple functions in a compact condo.

TEXT BY LAURA MUIR

THE PROBLEM: A small extra room in Noreen Flanagan's 1960s condo seemed a smart spot to create a study-cum-guest room, but it lacked the inviting and peaceful ambience she wanted. Its original modern 1960s look had been eroded with updates like an unappealing floating floor. A folding louvred door closed off the space from the adjacent living room and disrupted the otherwise open concept. Another doorway opening onto the hallway had been blocked off by wallboard. Noreen wanted the room to be a multifunctional space that was still minimalist, stylish and discreet.

THE SOLUTION: Noreen knocked out the wall containing the covered doorway and a closet, then repositioned it, annexing a few inches from the hallway behind to create

an extra 19 inches of depth in the room. Wanting to take advantage of the new 9-1/2-foot-wide empty wall, Noreen called on John Broere and Mark Gomes of Box Design and Build. They suggested keeping the space streamlined by installing a sliding shoji screen that would conceal a fold-down Murphy bed and built-in desk. "Noreen has a very clean, minimalist sensibility. The shoji screen has a nice Japanese feel to it that goes very well with her aesthetic," says Broere.

Broere and Gomes built the shoji screen in a traditional manner using cedar framing and rice paper panelling with a plasticized film on the rice paper for durability. The two screens are "framed" with a cedar panel on the bottom and a cedar bulkhead above, which also camouflages a vent.

LEFT: The caramel-coloured pillows and throw and crisp white bedding on the Murphy bed echo the space's blond woods and the shoji screen's white rice paper. Accessories on the headboard and a painting by a Japanese artist further the Japanese aesthetic. When not in use, the Murphy bed is concealed behind the shoji screen. Lamp, Artemide; vase, Teatro Verde; painting by Li, Art Interiors; white bedding, shams, coverlet, Au Lit.

BELOW: To open up the space and help

the guest room flow visually from the adjacent living room, homeowner Noreen Flanagan removed the old louvred door into the room and widened the doorway. Noreen installed a pocket door, which can be fully retracted to keep the space open. The sliding shoji screens, which conceal the Murphy bed and the built-in desk, slide shut to give the room a serene studio look. It's here that Noreen practices yoga. Wall paint, Cement Gray (2112-60), Benjamin Moore.



Photography by Ted Yarwood

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before and after

CONTINUED



ABOVE: The workstation's maple desktop is 5' wide and 19" deep; its depth doubles when a second desktop is pulled out from underneath. When tucked away, the lower desktop acts as a drawer and can hold extra supplies. Two puck lights discreetly set into the shelves above illuminate the

work area. The grid-like design of the upper shelves echoes the shoji screen's pattern. Eames chair, Herman Miller; Lucite trays, magazine holder, glass vase, Teatro Verde; stapler, memo pad holder, Angus & Company; lamp, Light Options; Design Ideas pencil holder, magazine holder (on desk), Scantrade.

The Murphy bed, constructed of maple, is fitted with a headboard where Noreen can place a reading light. Broere and Gomes created a work station beside the bed by installing two maple desktops, a stationary one and another that pulls out from underneath, doubling the desk space when in use. Built-in shelves hold books and baskets.

THE COST: \$10,000 (including shoji screen, Murphy bed and built-in desk)

FINAL VERDICT: The soft, natural tones in the room (the blond of the woods, the white rice paper, the cinnamon-stained parquet floor and a soft grey wall colour) give the space a tranquil feeling. Floor-to-ceiling windows (not shown) that look out onto a treed park add to the Zen quality. "I wanted this room to function as a work area, a guest room and also a place where I could practice yoga," says Noreen. "This is a very simple but elegant and extremely functional design for this little room. When I'm in here with the shoji screens closed, it's a very quiet, meditative space." **H&H**