

Eclectic Industrial

Timber Innovations constructs a new basement space that is warm and intimate yet open and affords privacy without walls.

by Paul Driessen



Custom-made steel brackets hold a floating glass panel in place and complement the metal backlit handrail along the remaining stairway wall as well as a black lacquer finish on the new wood stairs.

THE homeowners wanted their traditional, 1980s house to reflect a modern, ascetic aesthetic. Its unfinished basement provided a blank canvas and presented an ideal place to begin updating the residence, whose dated look did not properly reflect their style.

Seeking to add an area for entertaining as well as a guest suite to their unfinished basement, the clients envisioned an inviting and industrial look with places to work, exercise, entertain and relax. Making the most of the available space, we designed a level that includes a home theater, kitchenette, guest bedroom suite, home office space and a personal gym with sauna and spa area.

Grand Entry

A lack of natural lighting, a support post that could not be moved, and a cracked foundation were the major design and construction challenges we faced during the project. Our work onsite began once the “safer at home” mandate was lifted; fortunately, the basement had a separate entrance. A safe work environment was maintained by limiting onsite workers to ensure physical distancing and by entering/exiting via the separate entrance.

The original entry to the basement was just an enclosed staircase. We produced a grand entry by replacing the inside wall with a floating glass panel that is held in place with custom-made steel brackets fabricated in-house, a metal backlit handrail installed along the remaining stairway wall, and a black lacquer finish on new wood stairs that allows the grain to show through.

The landing wraps around to become the bottom shelf of a floating bookshelf. This reading nook helps connect the hallway area to the rest of the space and adds color and softness to the modern design aesthetic.

Starry Night Sky

To the right of the staircase landing is the doorway to the home theater. Straight ahead is the exit to the garage. An electric bike—serving as both artwork and practical storage next to the framed comic strip



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COMPANY INFORMATION

Timber Innovations
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PROJECT INFORMATION

Location: Appleton, Wis.
Project cost: \$136,265

Back-lit vertical columns feature wall sconces and break up sound waves by creating corners and reducing echo.

canvas—adds a touch of fun to the industrial vibe.

Soundproofing was the main requirement of the home theater. Acoustic fabric panels were placed on the walls; sound panels were installed in the ceiling; and plush, sound-absorbing carpet was laid on the floor. Back-lit vertical columns were added to mount wall sconces but also to break up sound waves by creating corners and reducing echo.

Ceiling panels with small LED lights create a starry night sky for the home theater. LED lights were installed on the step up to the second row of seats, and all the lighting is manipulated using Control4 Home Automation.

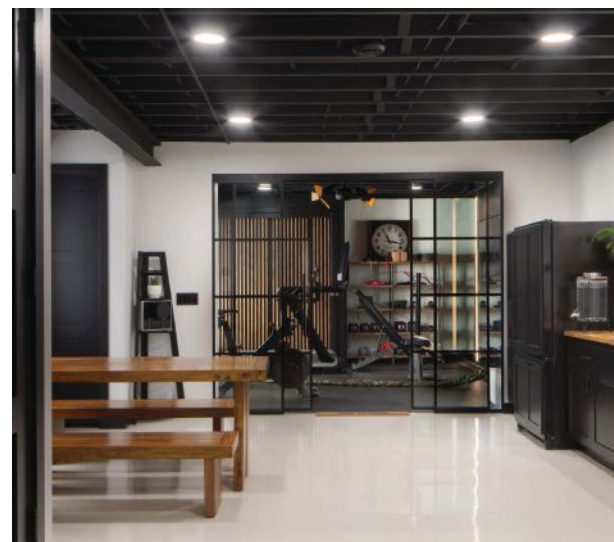
Full Illumination

A white epoxy floor carries through from the hallway to the kitchenette. Natural lighting filters in from the window in the bedroom. Recessed, overhead lights throughout the space are two-phase: The outer ring illuminates like a night light, and the central bulb provides full illumination.

The back wall of the new bedroom had a floor-to-ceiling crack that needed to be repaired. To the left of the crack, we cut an egress window out of the foundation to bring in natural light and meet building code requirements.



The back wall of the bedroom contained a floor-to-ceiling crack that needed to be repaired. An egress window cut out of the foundation to the left of the existing crack brings natural light into the new bedroom and meets building code requirements.



This window brings in natural light, and the glass wall and bi-directional doors allow the light to spill into the kitchenette. The support post on the left in the glass wall could not be removed, so a post was added on the right for symmetry. In front of the glass wall on the right is the new home office workspace.



A galley-style kitchenette keeps the room open and flexible, and its countertop matches the wood of a picnic table from the upstairs kitchen. An empty corner became the ideal spot for a serious home gym.

**THERE IS A
COMFORTABLE FLOW
THROUGH THE SPACE
WITH THE FLOORING
DELINEATING EACH
AREA RATHER
THAN WALLS.**

Besides bringing in natural light, the oversize window well serves another important function as an emergency egress. The form fits the design aesthetic while steps make it easier to exit. Rather than an exposed ceiling as in other parts of the basement, this room's plastered ceiling works as a sound insulator.

Proper Form

The galley-style kitchenette keeps the room an open and flexible space. This area is perfect for entertaining or for an early-rising guest to prepare their own breakfast or snack. The countertop matches the wood of the picnic table, which was



Design Elements

The sauna/spa, next to the gym, is an open space defined by a raised cedar platform and a black lacquer floor. The large window brings in plenty of natural light, and borrowed lighting extends outside the space. Similar to the egress window in the bedroom, this window well has steps up to ground level.

Perfect after a hard workout or a tough day, the sauna is right next to a large, luxurious shower. An etched glass shower wall provides privacy, but the glass makes it feel like an open space. Natural light pours in through the new egress window.

The shower has a zero-clearance door, three showerheads and a mono pitch drainage system, which channels water towards the wall and eliminates the need for a drain in the center of the floor. The wooden bathroom vanity and backlit mirror repeat design elements from other rooms in the remodel.

Paul Driessen is a master craftsman and owner of Timber Innovations LLC, founded in 1994.

brought down from the upstairs kitchen.

Behind the picnic table was an area of the basement that had an office cubicle wall “hiding” the hot water heater and another electrical box. This empty corner of the basement was the perfect spot for a serious home gym with a wall of mirrors.

Backlit mirrors help check proper form, and a flat-screen TV helps pass the time. A black closet door with raised wood slats carries the wood detail from the kitchenette into the gym, provides some storage and conceals an electrical panel. The ceiling is exposed and sports an industrial-style ceiling fan.

Multiple Functions

The result of the remodel was a versatile living and entertaining space. A large crack in the foundation was repaired, and two windows with emergency egresses were added to bring in natural light. There is a comfortable flow through the space with the flooring delineating each area rather than walls. While it is an ideal entertainment space, the basement could also function as a private apartment.

At the end of the day, the homeowners were more than pleased with the outcome. They not only desired a multi-functional entertainment space but also a semi-private luxury suite for when their parents come to visit. **QR**

A raised cedar platform and a black lacquer flooring define the sauna/spa. The shower has a zero-clearance door.

