



DAYLIGHT DIGS
Steel, glass and concrete were used to create the enclosed addition. The sleek blackened metal fire orb can be turned to face in either direction.

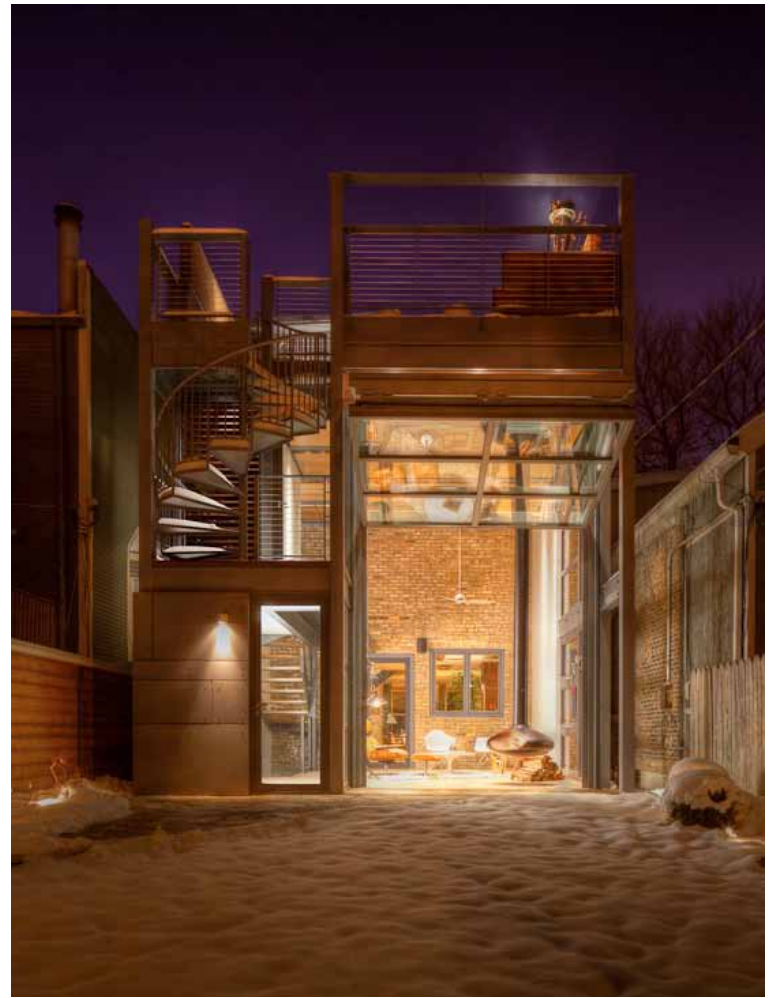
Escape Pod

A Wicker Park home's expansion plan calls for a welcome aircraft industry-inspired addition by dSpace Studio.

By Tate Gunnerson | Photography by Evan Thomas

Many Chicagoans battle rush hour traffic to reach their weekend getaway. George Menninger and Ann Cheeseman of Bucktown, however, choose to make their escape just steps away in their contemporary addition. Otherwise known as an "orangery"—as it's commonly referred to in England, where Ann's father and mother are from—they turned to architect Kevin Toukoumidis of dSpace Studio last year to realize their modern pursuits. "Their dream was to have an amazing sun-filled, multipurpose space for the family," Toukoumidis says. "That really inspired us and became the driving force of the addition."

Rather than open the entire home CONTINUED...



...CONTINUED to the addition, Toukoumidis designed the space as a stand-alone pod that attaches directly to the home's original brick exterior wall. "We wanted the addition to have its own character, to truly be a stand-alone element," the architect explains. The new rear wall includes a 17-foot-high, horizontally hinged bifold glass and steel door that can be opened to the backyard to create seamless indoor-outdoor living. "We adapted the door from the aircraft hangar industry, but used a local company to in-fill the door with glass to provide a visual indoor-outdoor connection," Toukoumidis says, pointing out that when opened, the door creates a protected space to enjoy the patio rain or shine.

To ease the transition from inside to out, Toukoumidis then custom-matched the concrete floors and exterior limestone pavers with a warm stain. And sacrificing the garage in favor of a larger grass patch proved to be a no-brainer for Cheeseman, a self-professed "lover of nature" who was willing to deal with

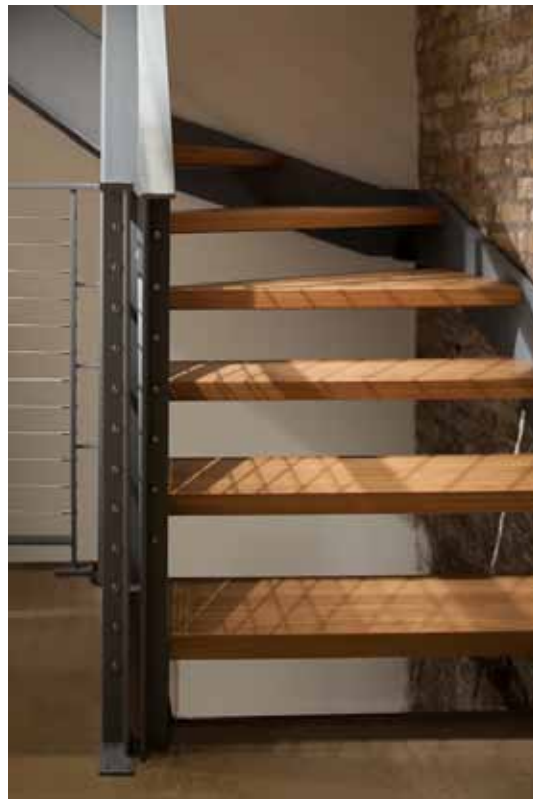
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street parking so the family could gain rear yardage.

Inside, a dramatic open metal staircase with warm red oak treads leads to a steel catwalk overlooking the living area. The catwalk continues outside to an exterior spiral staircase, which connects the garden on the ground level to an intimate roof deck just off the master bedroom atop the addition. "It's the most intimate roof deck we've ever designed," Toukoumidis says, pointing to the built-in planters for growing vegetables and the sunken hot tub that's conveniently located just outside the bedroom door. "It's peaceful sitting out there, especially in the winter," says Cheeseman.

A blackened steel fire orb hanging from the ceiling helps the main living area stay warm and cozy during the coldest Chicago winters, and is able to rotate 180 degrees to face the backyard if need be. Although the addition is not connected to the home's heating system, Toukoumidis convinced his clients to incorporate radiant floor heating tubes for additional warmth.

The way Menninger sees it, an addition that the whole family can use every day is the way to go: "Why would we spend two hours every weekend driving to a vacation home in Wisconsin or Indiana when we have our own little retreat right here in the city?" ■



GLOW IN THE DARK

From top left: Gears allow the bifold, mechanical door to be opened with the turn of a crank; to create true indoor-outdoor living, Toukoumidis designed a 17-foot-high glass door, which opens to the back patio. To soften the home addition's boxy architecture, Toukoumidis incorporated an exterior spiral staircase that leads to the rooftop deck; red oak stair treads and ceiling panels create a pleasing juxtaposition with the structure's exposed steel and glass shell.