

**Masami Teraoka**



## My Houzz: Bridge Building Redefines a D.C. Row House

*A new rooftop deck and elevated walkway give a Capitol Hill couple an enviable outdoor haven away from noise on the street*

**CM Glover**

CM Glover is a professional photographer, writer, entrepreneur, and a Houzz...

“Serial renovators,” the label Marcia Silcox puts on her and her husband, Clark, couldn’t be more accurate. The couple has lived in their Capitol Hill row house in Washington, D.C., for three decades and during that time have updated several times: a basement reno in the late ’80s, a kitchen remodel in the mid-’90s and a living room makeover in 2007 that incorporated their collection of Japanese art (18th- and 19th-century prints) and antique Japanese chests.

Most recently, when the couple’s two kids moved out, they completed perhaps their most crowning achievement: a lively and modern rooftop deck addition above their garage, with a cool elevated walkway that connects to an overhauled kitchen addition. The latter addition was formerly a DIY breakfast room that was pulling away from the support wall and leaking water during storms.

**Houzz at a Glance**

**Who lives here:** Marcia Silcox, a public health consultant, and her husband, Clark, a lawyer

**Location:** Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

**Size:** 2,200 square feet; 4 bedrooms, 3 1/2 bathrooms, home office

**That’s interesting:** In this neighborhood many of the row houses have basement apartments, as the Silcox house did before they integrated it into a single-family home.



The clean lines and the openness of the couple's rear addition contrast the traditional facades seen up and down the alley.



Living is narrow in a row house. "We have 18 feet across in this house," says Marcia. So the couple strives to keep the rooms feeling open and airy, with a few key furniture pieces and a sense of flow from one room to the next.

Designer [Barbara Franceski](#) worked with Marcia and Clark to create their vision of clean lines with an Asian influence. The soft furniture corresponds to the line and color of the prints and the decorative accents of the tansu.

The two armchairs, Madison Occasional Chairs by [Donghia](#) (no longer in production) are upholstered in Priamo woven-texture fabric (color: Ice Blue) by Brunswick & Fils. Each chair is entirely upholstered, including the legs.



Large bay windows bring light into the living room, where a shopkeeper's tansu from the late 19th century with inked paper on glass sliding panels sits beneath modern Japanese calligraphy. The couple found all their [tansu](#) pieces in San Francisco.

*Sofa: Baker sofa reupholstered in Wicker Basket (color: 04) by Fabricut; pendants: Shiitake, designed by Douglas Varey for [Resolute](#)*



Inspirational books on Japanese art are all over the house. When Marcia was working with Franceski to incorporate their collection with clean, simple lines, she nicknamed their style "federal Zen."

Marcia's interest in Japanese art began with a college history class when she was 19. Clark, meanwhile, grew up on the West Coast with strong Asian design influences. Together they found "a patient dealer," as they put it, to nurture their interest. "We browsed for hours in a Georgetown shop, starting our collection," says Marcia.

[Naples ottomans](#) by Mark Newman provide flexibility when the couple entertains guests.



During the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s, artist [Masami Teraoka](#) worked on contemporary interpretations of traditional *ukiyo-e* print content and technique. Two of his large-scale wood and screen prints from his "Hawaii Snorkel Series" flank the fireplace. The [Catharine Clark Gallery](#) in San Francisco represents the artist.



To give more flexibility to the space and create privacy in the dining area, the couple installed [shoji screens](#) in 1993.

*Shoji screens: installed by Oriental Living, Bethesda, Maryland; dining table, chairs: Henredon (circa 1990s); light fixtures: [Chapeau 29, Resolute Lighting](#)*



[Architect Richard Loosle](#) suggested a practical solution for a row of prints that used to hang unevenly on the exposed brick wall: a small floating shelf. The framed art pieces are Japanese woodblock prints by Hiroshige from the "Hundred Famous Views of Edo."



Because windows are scarce on row houses — located on just the front and back facades — the couple added larger windows in the breakfast room to bring in much-needed light.

Table ([Pratt](#)), chairs: Room & Board



Marcia's favorite room in the house is the kitchen. "We both love to cook and bake and entertain," she says. "Next would be the dining room, where book groups, men's gourmet groups, fiber-art groups and friends frequently gather."

During the renovation the builders had to block off the entire area past the brick wall to keep the elements out while completing their work. When the work was finished, they removed the temporary wall.

New maple flooring in the addition coordinates with the existing maple cabinets. Complementary dark ash stained cabinets were also added.

Millwork: [Potomac Millwork](#)



Marcia asked for the turquoise Le Creuset pot on the stove for her birthday, because she knew it would go well with the blue accent wall.



A pair of *shunga* (erotic) prints from the early 19th century hang above the couple's bed.



Marcia admits that she and Clark haven't spent as much effort on the sleeping areas, because they've focused most of their design efforts on the lower level. However, Marcia's love of natural fibers and fabrics comes through in the yarns draped on the chair and some natural hemp linen, from Hemptraders, on the bed.



Loosle used a piece of steel as a frame to define the new rear facade. The design element also allows Marcia to hang a canopy to provide shade on the balcony off her home office. Painting the frame bright blue defined the element as separate from the steel railings. The color lets the steel blend with the sky on clear days. For the railings and stairs, Marcia specifically requested a "Frank Lloyd Wright red," she says.

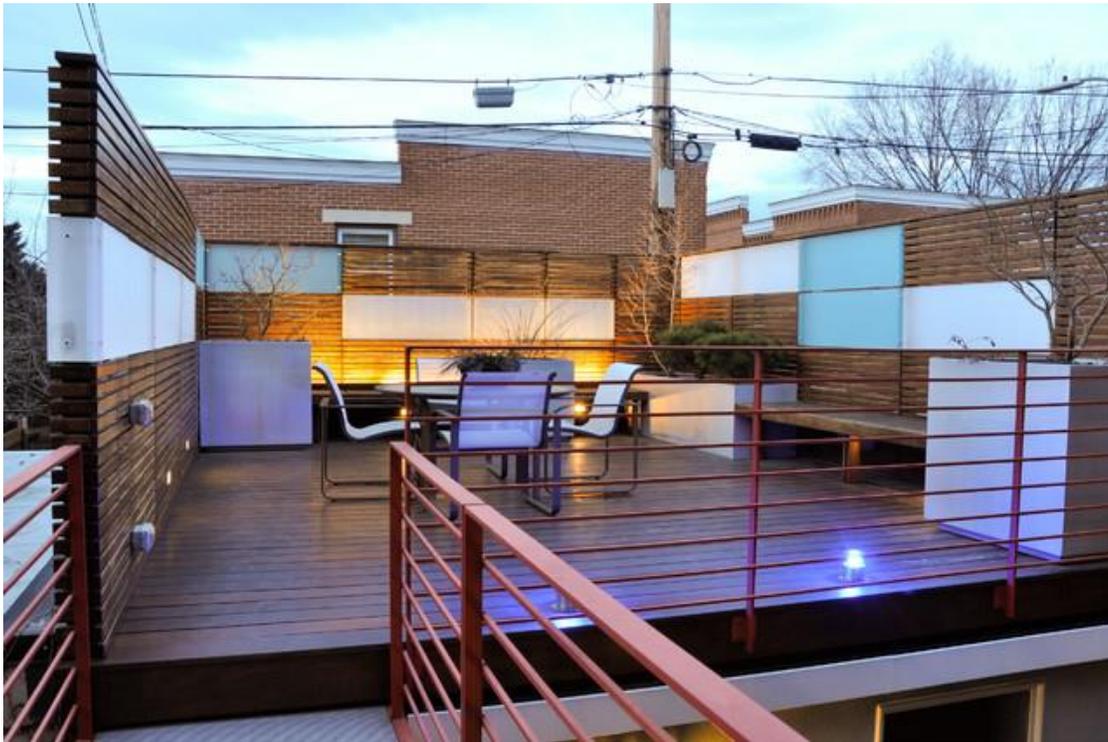


Prior to the renovation, whenever the couple wanted to carry food from the kitchen to their old wooden roof deck, they would have to walk downstairs, across the courtyard and up a small spiral staircase. With the new elevated walkway, their deck is significantly more user friendly.

The new roof deck sits above the garage. The couple used premium and durable materials on this renovation, such as ipe wood decking and fencing.



Marcia asked that an irrigation system be installed to simplify watering her plants. Also to help simplify the watering, the planters were designed with false-bottom inserts, so they require less soil than it appears from the outside.



Lighting from [Artemide](#) and [Flos](#) (the blue lights are Flos) enhance the ambience of the deck, as do various icy blue acrylic and resin panels.



Empty nesters Marcia and Clark Silcox enjoy the tranquility of their new outdoor haven away from the noise of the city street. With the smart bridge design, the space is now an extension of their kitchen.



The long-time homeowners are here to stay, appreciating both the community and convenience of their Capitol Hill neighborhood. "We know someone on nearly every block and know all the shopkeepers. We rarely need our cars, taking Metro, walking and biking," Marcia says.

Other than the nearby restaurants and civic organizations, Marcia is also happy to live close to what she calls "the crown jewel of the city," the Eastern Market, with its farmer's market, flea market and frequent live music.

