

## **Walking the Talk – Farmer/Feldman Residential Remodel**

San Luis Obispo, CA

Marilyn Miller Farmer, AIA, LEED AP

Living in an 800 s.f. house plus separate 400 s.f. studio is great for two people, but as our family gatherings expanded to include four generations plus some extended family and guests, we began feeling pinched for space on a regular basis. Our decision to remodel our existing home within walking distance to work, shopping, and downtown civic life rather than build a new home on the periphery not within walking distance, was the initial ecological choice that served to showcase a number of other green/sustainable living solutions as well.



Model - Murray St. front entrance (north)



Southwest perspective



**Reuse Existing Buildings:** By enclosing a breezeway separating the existing two bedroom, one bath residence and studio, the existing living room/kitchen/dining expanded 50 s.f. and now connects to an adjacent 330 s.f. secondary living space previously the studio. The secondary living space steps down from the living room, and is easily subdivided with a Shoji screen for guest accommodations or separate functions.

**Design for Flexibility:** Adding a new second floor studio increased the flexibility of the spaces to include *multiple future live/work options* including working from home. This studio catches plenty of south sunlight and opens to a south *roof garden for growing vegetable, herbs and flowers*, and a private deck overlooking a creek. A barrel vaulted cedar ceiling with ridge skylight provides wonderful warm natural light and very cool moonlight through the length of the room. With an adjacent bath, the second floor studio is easily converted to guest quarters, separate game/play room or master bedroom.



Connected living spaces



New entry / expanded open living from south deck



New ADA bath

An existing first floor bedroom *with the addition of a new ADA master bath opening to the south deck access and overlooking the creek can comfortably accommodate a live-in elderly parent* as well as us as we grow old.

*Future downsizing* will be possible by a moveable barn door/shoji screen to subdivide the original house from the enlarged two story *rental studio with separate rear entrance*, providing the possibility for added income at a later date and enabling the possibility of extended periods of travel.

Custom French doors with hardware designed and fabricated by owner effectively double the living areas of connected spaces by opening out to the extensive south decks which overlook the creek. The new master bath custom door, the French Dutch kiss, was the result of the special collaboration between Jake Feldman, the owner and Skip Moss, the builder.



New 2<sup>nd</sup> floor studio, south deck / roof garden



Ascending west Zen views



Double Dutch/French Kiss

### **Energy/Resource Efficient Design Features:**

- Solar gain south windows, minimizing the north & west openings
- Skylights for natural light and solar gain
- New roof designed to accommodate future grid-tied solar PV system
- On-demand water heaters
- Low flow toilets/water fixtures
- Roof garden

**Environmentally Conscious, Healthy Non-Toxic Materials:**

Bamboo flooring  
Reclaimed urban forestry cypress roof/ceiling decking  
Recycled flooring for interior baseboard trim  
Reuse of windows

**Insulation:**

Recycled cotton batt insulation  
Cellulose insulation  
Rigid insulation

Skatelite (exterior waterproof backing - cone)  
Recycled plastic lumber (exterior trim - cone)

Water-based low VOC clear wood finish  
No VOC interior paint  
Biofiber composite agriboard - built-in shelving  
Ecoresin panels - shoji screen partitions  
Recycled glass terrazzo bath tiles  
On-demand water heaters  
Light dimmers  
Construction waste recycling  
Custom French doors & windows, hand crafted hardware

**Credits:**

**Architect:**

Marilyn Miller Farmer, AIA, LEED AP  
Habitat Studio Architecture & Planning

**Structural Engineer:**

Jake Feldman, PE

**Contractor:**

Skip Moss, Moss Construction

**Energy Consultant:**

Jennifer Rennick, Architect

**Photographs:**

Gary Dwyer, Photographer



New front entry / cone



Hand crafted hardware