



By replacing a wall with a custom wood-and-glass partition, architect Matt Krajewski transformed a previously dark one-bedroom railroad apartment in Manhattan into a light-filled home. Compact furnishings, like a Mandal bed frame from IKEA with integrated storage, maximize every inch of the 390-square-foot unit, housed in a former tenement building.

Sum and Substance

An architect revamps a pint-sized Manhattan apartment for a couple on the go.

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PROJECT
Bleecker Street Apartment
ARCHITECT
Krajewski Architect
LOCATION
New York, New York

An alumnus of Richard Meier's studio, Matt Krajewski had recently begun his own practice when he was commissioned to transform a ruin of a 390-square-foot Manhattan apartment. Avoiding the anxiety of influence that might have plagued another Meier-trained architect, Krajewski embraced his longtime mentor's signature bright white minimalism. Recasting the legendary designer's "superstyle" in a fashion of his own, Krajewski flipped the tiny interior into a space-defying

home—all on a budget of \$130,000.

Krajewski's clients, a couple from Europe who are executives at a French cosmetics company, had worked with him before on renovating a town house in Jersey City. The owner and his wife, who hail from France and England, respectively, had been debating whether or not to plant roots in New York when they wondered, "Why not buy a small place in the city as a pied-à-terre? For us, Manhattan and the Village are the epitome of New York's image." In that

respect, the location of the apartment, on a quintessential Greenwich Village street, was a perfect fit. But the linear railroad configuration, with one tiny bedroom outfitted with a single set of street-facing windows, led the owners to look for a solution that would maximize the modest space and proliferate natural light throughout.

When the residents decided to renovate the apartment, which is housed in a former tenement building that dates to 1901, they naturally turned to >

renovation

Krajewski removed a second wall between the living area and the kitchen (right), opening up the elongated interior. All furnishings were purchased on a budget. The rug and Friheten sleeper sectional in the living room (far right), the Luftig oven hood, Norrsjön sink, Sektion cabinetry, and countertop in the kitchen (below), and the small dining counter with Glenn bar stools (below right) were all sourced from IKEA. The space-saving appliances are all from Bosch's 500 and 800 series.



“We designed a bigger kitchen that reaches into the next room, so it’s open to the living area and, in a sense, creates one space.”

—Matt Krajewski, architect



Krajewski, who was more than up to the challenge. Together, the three of them envisioned an open, flexible space. “It was pretty clear that we had to remove everything and completely gut the apartment,” says Krajewski, “including the flooring, which was severely uneven and riddled with holes.”

He replaced the hardwood surfaces with oil-finished white oak to brighten the interior and proposed a glass partition in place of a solid wall, which had previously prevented sunlight from reaching the kitchen and bathroom at

the opposite end of the apartment. A custom wood-and-glass divider, made with pristine white frames and square panels that subtly nod to Meier, now separates the bedroom from the rest of the residence. Its two sliding doors cleverly eliminate the need for swinging, and they operate by way of an exposed pulley system that provides a visual counterpoint to the interior’s sleek geometric fittings. Recessed ceiling lights obviate the need for floor lamps, further freeing up space.

Other critical gestures included the

introduction of a new kitchen counter, which consolidated the workstation into a single surface. The cabinetry and finishes were sourced from IKEA, and all of the compact appliances, including the dishwasher, are from Bosch’s 800 and 500 series.

A tall white wardrobe installed opposite the kitchen workstation offers a sleek catchall solution for the residents’ storage needs. Its compartments stow kitchen sundries as well as clothing. Like the workstation, it was sourced from IKEA, a not insignificant >

compromise on the part of Krajewski, who would have much preferred a custom-made unit composed of perfect cubic elements in classic Meier style.

The diminutive bathroom, located near the entrance, makes every inch count. In place of a tub, there is now a shower stall and a cube-shaped standing sink. Despite its minuscule size, the basin is set deep enough to accommodate a hanging trolley for toiletries. Other small but mighty features include a series of wall-mounted cubes that act

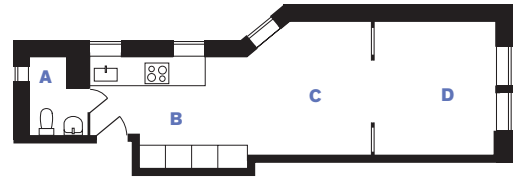
as a stairway the resident cat can climb to get atop a large storage module, his preferred perch.

As with all best-laid plans, the revamped one-bedroom apartment didn't turn out as they had intended. Originally meant as a pied-à-terre, it has become the couple's primary residence. "The space now seems bigger than it actually is," says Krajewski. "The ingredients are not complicated, but the way they come together is what makes them good." □

**Bleecker Street
Apartment Plan**

N ②

- A Bathroom** **C Living Room**
- B Kitchen** **D Bedroom**



A tall white wardrobe installed opposite the kitchen workstation offers a sleek catchall solution for the residents' storage needs.



In the kitchen, a single Sektion wardrobe from IKEA is used to stow both clothing and various food and dining items (left). Throughout the apartment, Krajewski replaced the time-worn flooring, installing new white oak planks by Hull Forest with a buffed oil finish

by Waterlox. In the bathroom, a compact Lillängen sink from IKEA offers a narrow profile for the tight space, yet is deep enough to accommodate hanging storage trays for toiletries (above). The toilet is by Fresca and the subway tile is from Mosa.

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES + WRIGHT