

Trim: Craftsman Update to Interior Door Openings

In our master bedroom closets, the existing bifold doors were installed into drywall-wrapped jambs with no trims. This is a pretty common installation in our area (and many others), however, as part of the house remodel, the objective was to improve the vernacular of the interior design by using Craftsman-style trim detailing. One area of focus has been to install matching trims at all window and door openings, and using the same Craftsman vernacular in trim detailing elsewhere. My approach, outlined below, involved a custom refit of the door jambs and straightforward biscuit joinery to bring out a Craftsman update to an older home.

New Trims – Old (and Variable) Openings

The original 1/2" drywall was installed with a very heavy plaster and orange peel spray finish coating, adding anywhere from 1/8" to 3/8" to the thickness of the drywall, making for a very odd width door jamb for the master bedroom closets. The problem of installing new doors in the old openings was complicated by the fact that the original framing rough opening was slightly undersized, meaning you had to slightly bind the doors to close them in the opening. Once I ripped off the drywall, it became clear that I had to choose one of several options to make the rough opening the correct size for new doors – 1) reframe the opening (too much mess involving demo and wiring), 2) cut down the new doors to fit (okay, but it meant refinishing the doors), or, 3) making custom door jambs to a thickness that would bring the finished opening to spec.

New Custom Door Jambs

After installing the new linen closet door in a newly framed

doorway, we found that the pre-finished door was a close match to the existing trim color, and would not look any better with a brushed on topcoat. I made the decision to go with option 3. But, there is no trim stock available in the appropriate thickness. I found 1/2" X 3 1/4" finger joint base trim at HD. If I edge glued two pieces it would give me the appropriate sized stock I needed to cut the custom 5 3/8" wide, 1/2" jamba to size.

Biscuits to the Rescue

Attached are photos of the steps taken to make the finished board stock using biscuit joinery. Setup for the biscuit cuts was a little tricky since the biscuit joiner mouth is not capable of adjustment for thin stock. I set the boards on top of thin plywood and clamped the entire setup with a strong back (clear 2 X 4 used to mount my outriggers for the miter saw).



Board Clamp Setup



Board biscuits



Biscuit cut



Biscuit Joiner



Board setup