



20TH CENTURY HOME TURNS CONTEMPORARY

An addition, a kitchen remodel, and more closet space enhance this 100-year-old home.

The homeowners of this Minnesota home weren't actively looking to purchase a new home about six years ago, but they did tell one of their real estate friends to keep an eye out for beautiful homes in the Minneapolis, Lowry Hill area, if he thought they might be interested. The home that they were currently living in had a big yard—which was an important element to them—and it essentially had everything that they needed, however, when a federal-style, beautiful 100-year-old, 20th century home was put on the market, their friend knew that they would want to see it.

"We would periodically look at homes that were put up for sale, just to check them out and see if it would be something that we were interested in," said the homeowner. "When we saw this one, we noticed it had a huge yard; it was located minutes from downtown, and it is close to three nearby lakes in the area. Once we saw it, we loved it, but we knew that it would need a lot of work before we could move in."

"It used to be decorated with a lot of antiques and that just isn't our style. We wanted to make changes that reflected our decorating style," she said. "So, we decided to go ahead and purchase the home, but put a year of remodeling work into it before we moved in."

Michael Reel spent about a year working on the house before the fami-

ly moved in. "We completely remodeled the second floor," Michael said. "There were a lot of rooms in the house, but they were smaller and they wanted the children's bedrooms to be more equal in size. She also wanted to put in a 'Jack-and-Jill' style bathroom for them to share, just to name a few highlights of the remodel."

FOUND THE RIGHT REMODELER

Five and a half years ago, after a year of remodeling work on the home, the family moved in and they absolutely loved it.

Now, after living in the remodeled home, with their children aged 10 and eight-years-old, they called Michael Reel, Owner and President of MichaelReel Builders & Remodelers, and said they were ready to do more remodeling. They wanted to enlarge their kitchen area, possibly add an addition off of the kitchen, and make room for more closet space above the garage.

REMODELING THE KITCHEN

The homeowners felt their existing kitchen was cramped and outdated. The family wanted a contemporary/transitional feel that would accommodate frequent entertaining. Confined within the existing footprint and foundation of the home, an open-plan concept was developed by Domain Architecture & Design, of Minneapolis, to unify the kitchen and the family room.

"After spending time with the family, discussing their wants and needs, it was clear that entertaining is a big part of their lifestyle and they would need a kitchen/living area to compliment that. They wanted a plan that would open everything up to create a warm and inviting environment for their guests which is exactly what we were able to create for them," Michael says.

After gutting most of the existing kitchen, the sink island cabinetry was pushed into the family room to accommodate a larger main island and wider traffic lanes. Stainless steel shelves, spanning between the sink and island end walls, were installed to maintain the open design and establish a visual link between the kitchen and family room. Furthermore, the family of four is able to enjoy casual meals together at the new center island seating area.

The industrial-style kitchen is warm and inviting with its marble countertops and white oak floor—which was dyed black to match the rest of the first level of the home. "I wanted it to be industrial looking, but not cold; the exterior brick really warms it up, and I am very happy with the overall look," she says.

Now, it is fully equipped with stainless steel Wolf Sub-Zero appliances including oversized refrigeration, a downdraft double-cook stove top, multi-function ovens, a warming drawer, dishwasher, microwave, and icemaker. The appliance



package, combined with the new design, makes this kitchen ideal for both entertaining and every day life.

Additionally, the original dining nook was converted into a butler pantry where full-height sliding doors enclose the space when necessary. The homeowners also wanted a mudroom off of the garage and kitchen to complete the transformation.

A 'homework'/computer area was sectioned off of the kitchen to provide the children space to be on the computer or do their homework. "I love having this area for the kids," she said. "I can be in the kitchen cooking, and the children can be doing their homework, as opposed to being in a separate area of the house. I can keep an eye on them, but it also gives them more space to do homework."

ENTERTAINS FREQUENTLY: ADDITION ADDS SPACE

"With our children older now, we like to entertain quite a bit," she said. "We enjoy hosting Sunday dinners at our home with family and we needed a space where the family could gather in an informal atmosphere." According to Michael, they added about 400 square feet of space off of the kitchen, which allows them to comfortably interact and relax with their guests.

OPEN-CONCEPT TRANSFORMATION

The exterior design concept of the remodeled addition off of the kitchen

focuses on the structure's lines and proportions, Michael says. The addition added about 16 feet x 24 feet of kitchen space and the inclusion of the architectural details such as moldings, metal accents, and the limestone foundation were crucial in maintaining the design integrity.

Furthermore, in the midst of the addition is a large fireplace, which is the highlight of the remodeled area. "The chimney of the fireplace features a unique clay chimney pot that was an exact match to the color of the original brick on the home. This, combined with the veranda-like roof and the stately entry, captures the character and distinction of the homes' Federal style," Michael says. "The contemporary-modern style of the addition better fits the family's style and integrates well with both the interior remodels that have already taken place and the historic exterior of the home."

As far as the design selection, the homeowners looked at several options. "I wasn't sure exactly what I wanted for this new area. I found a fireplace surround that I loved so we built the design out from that. One of the great things about working with Michael Reel is that he would always ask me what I wanted and would take the time to truly listen and understand. He never said 'No, you can't do that.' He would always find a way to make sure I would be happy in the end."



The remodeled interior has a relaxed and casual atmosphere, surrounded by views of the patio and backyard. The full-height fireplace creates the rooms' focal point and its contemporary expression sets the overall tone without overpowering the room.

FROM STORAGE AREA TO DRESSING ROOM

The most recent remodeling project that the homeowners worked with Michael Reel on was to add additional closet space on the upper level, off of the master suite. "Before we moved into the home, Mike built an attached garage during the first remodel. Initially we used it as an attic/storage space area and that worked well for the time-being, but we needed more closet space in our bedroom," the homeowner said.

So, MichaelReel Builders & Remodelers transformed the unfinished attic above the garage into a dressing room to accommodate lack of closet space in the master bedroom. "The main design challenge was to create a layout that would instill a feeling of coziness within the 700-square-foot area," Michael says. "We also wanted to integrate in with the master suite and maintain access to the second-floor balcony."

The rest of the home's interior design elements and color palettes inspired the overall design concept. The beautiful new closet includes key architectural



details including wainscoting, cabinetry, moldings, and windows—thereby creating a uniform casual contemporary elegance that integrated with the remainder of the home.

More than 100 drawers, cubbies, and shelf openings were custom-suited to the requirements of the homeowners. “The closet turned out wonderful; I never thought that I would have a closet like this,” she says.

HAPPY WITH THE OUTCOME

After the latest remodeling project, the family is very happy with the outcome. “We couldn’t be more pleased with the results,” she says. “The kids love our home and I simply can’t imagine how we lived here before Michael Reel helped us make it truly ‘ours,’ to fit our lifestyle. Looking back I’m glad that we didn’t do all the work initially when we did the first remodel. Our life has evolved and as our kids continue to grow

older our needs change. With each project, we love the home more and more!”

Another highlight that the homeowners are happy with is the fact that the remodel doesn’t appear to be an addition. “You can’t even tell that an addition was added,” she says. “The way they integrated the old brick in the kitchen and incorporated our style throughout the home—it turned out wonderful.”

According to the homeowner, one of the reasons why she thinks the remodeling projects turned out so successful is because Michael really got to know the house, them, and the area. “When we did the first remodeling project, Mike really got to know the house and the neighborhood. He would walk around the neighborhood and introduce himself to the neighbors. He fell in love with the house even before we did, and I trusted him completely. He really got to know us and he just knew what I liked; and I really appreciated that. We still call him and ask him questions about the house, and he’s always willing to help! I highly recommend MichaelReel Builders and Remoderlers; they did a fantastic job.”



Sources for this Article:

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