

DOWNSIZING WITH STYLE

Buckhead Couple Remodels Smaller Home With Few Compromises

This retired Buckhead couple, both native Atlantans, had lived in a larger house on Habersham Road for 45 years before deciding it was time to downsize to a smaller, easier-to-manage home. They wanted to stay in the same Buckhead area where they already lived, had friends and family, and liked to shop and socialize. The couple looked at condominiums along Peachtree Road, West Paces Ferry, and Moores Mill before deciding they really wanted a standalone house on a smaller, easy-to-maintain lot.

“We wanted main-floor living with easy garage access but still wanted

graceful rooms with high ceilings, and finish details in line with our furnishings. We were used to larger rooms with the finer moldings and workmanship of an almost 100-year-old Buckhead house and didn’t find that in many of the newer, smaller places built more recently,” says the wife. She also wanted plenty of storage with a guest room, home office, and studio space, and a room their grandson could call his own when staying overnight. And as a long-time garden club volunteer, a small garden area was also on her wish list.

The couple had remodeled their older home several times over the years, adding rooms and updating the house and systems when necessary. After looking at a number of houses with Anne Morris of Dorsey Alston Realtors, they narrowed it down to several potential houses; they then had John Beach of Paces Construction walk through and discuss what they’d like to change, how much it would cost, and how long renovations might take.

John and his partner at Paces Construction, Richard Everett, both grew up in Buckhead and are now raising their families here. They only work in a few zip codes around the Buckhead, Sandy Springs, Vinings, and Brookhaven neighborhoods, and they are very experienced with remodeling and updating those areas’ homes. And as neighborhood residents themselves, they understand what’s important to clients and their families, along with how to manage their homes and possessions during renovations.

This downsizing Buckhead couple chose a 15-year-old house on a private cul-de-sac off Northside Drive, where 18 one- to three-story homes sit on smaller lots with a shared park area. And while this newer house was less than one-half the size of their previous home, it still topped 4,000 square feet but had everything they really needed on the main floor. An upstairs level had guest rooms and extra closets, and a partially finished lower level had a home office, exercise room, and studio space with lots of windows and additional storage.

Unlike some remodels, this house was in good condition but needed lots of cosmetic detail work to meet the clients’ needs. Fortunately, the mechanical systems, roofing, and exterior needed minimal attention, as did the upstairs guest rooms and garden-level office and studio space. Paces Construction was able to concentrate on extensive main-level work, where several walls were moved and added; hardwood floors installed; a new fireplace and two mantles were custom built; closets and cabinets added; windows and doors changed; moldings and lighting added; and painting and wall coverings installed throughout. A



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deck project and trellis construction were planned as phase two since they could be done less invasively after the couple moved in.

The couple brought in great resources in their friends, including local design expert Marie Warren for fabric and wall covering advice and landscape author Jim Cothren for garden and hardscape suggestions. “The wife, an accomplished artist in several mediums,” says John, “was great to work with because she could easily visualize unfinished areas and tell us exactly how she wanted things to look when completed. With world-class talent and the couple’s incredible furnishings and artwork, it’s hard not to end up with a real showcase project.”

“Often in older home remodels, we’re removing walls to create larger rooms and open spaces, but on this job, we actually added several walls, building cased openings to better define an open dining area and closing off a doorway and hall to the master bedroom to create additional closet space and more privacy,” says John. “We kept the soaring two-story living room, balcony, and dramatic window walls but added more traditional elements to soften the modern architecture and better match the clients eloquent design sensibilities.”

Additional moldings and trim work were installed, including many custom items designed specifically for this job and made on site. The living room fireplace alone included setting a new firebox and flue, reframing the wall to remove built-in cabinets, installing a matte black granite hearth with surround, and then building a completely custom 16-foot-tall mantle.

“John really enjoys the challenge of creating unique custom work,” says Richard. “When this client asked him to create a mantle fashioned after the famed Chateau de Groussay fireplace in France, scaled to fit their living room, he was in his element.” John used a combination of stock and custom millwork made in the Paces shop to create a dramatic backdrop for the couple’s Greek antiquities collection, which features a custom Cycladic bas relief figure cast in bronze to go over the fireplace.



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Other unique work for this job included building a semi-hidden door to a lower level, a fireplace in the dining room, and brass and lacquer trim around new bookcases in a sitting room. A sunroom with a cathedral ceiling had its doors and windows removed and a new cased opening built; a ceiling was wallpapered, and an epoxy tile floor was painted. The kitchen has new bar cabinets installed, and the master bath now has his and hers water closets.

The whole house was painted; oak hardwood floors were installed, and window tinting was installed to help protect artwork and furnishings from UV light and save on energy bills. Additional lighting was installed in several rooms, and several old family chandeliers were hung. In the master bedroom, two new closets were added, and another was enlarged. The grandson’s room upstairs had padded fabric walls installed, and antique iron scrollwork was added to upper balcony railings.

On the home’s exterior, a deck was updated and now has an added roof with cedar beams, skylights, and fans, so the couple can enjoy the outdoors while keep-

ing the cushioned furnishings dry. The deck now serves as a favorite breakfast spot for much of the year, and several trellises built for climbing plants let the garden extend up the home’s exterior.

“When friends and neighbors enter our house, they’re often amazed at how well everything works together and sometimes surprised at the mix of old and new elements in our house. John and Richard and their Paces Construction crew did a wonderful job of not just building what we wanted, but really helping us decide how to get the look we wanted,” say the home owners.

John reiterates that successful jobs are almost always the result of a talented team of people with a clear vision of what they want to accomplish, and actually doing the work is the easy part. The pictures certainly show the timeless elegance of this remodel and the home owners’ great sense of style.

Article Source:

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