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News from the Neighbors

Chip & Lisa L.
Highland Springs Neighborhood (McCordsville, IN)

Remodeler's Corner

by Lisa Floreancig
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Ah, the seventies! The decade that gave us mood rings, lava lamps and leisure suits, also put its stamp on architecture and design. Influenced by the earth art movement which used environmental elements, 70s interior design featured open, airy rooms, rustic wood trim, and large stone hearths — think Brady Bunch.

Chip and Lisa L. and their young family aren't much into the seventies, but that funky style defined their northeast side home. Also, the house was in dire need of a master bedroom and bath — but moving was not an option. "Our lot is very unique. It's wooded and nearly an acre on a cul de sac. You're not going to find an available lot like that many places," said Chip. "We wanted to stay put, too, because we liked the neighborhood." And they didn't want to leave their school district.

Stilwell To The Rescue

After reading about Stilwell LLC, Architectural Design & Custom Remodeling right here in our "Remodeler's Corner" column last year, the Chip and Lisa contacted Stilwell and hired them to help guide them through the maze of design and remodeling.

"We had a rough idea what we wanted, but where we ended up was far from where we started," Chip said. Joe Stilwell, president of the company, had a lot of ideas Chip and Lisa liked which made them re-think their original plan. Stilwell did nearly a dozen architectural drawings and had a couple different floor plans for them to choose from. Because of easements on three sides of the house, it was agreed to build the bulk of the addition up rather than out.

The New Design

Stilwell added a new front entry and reversed the staircase. "The original house didn't have a formal entry and you stepped right into the great room," said Stilwell. And, when you walked in the front door you found yourself at the foot of the stairs. So the staircase was turned around away from the front door, making the upstairs area more private and accessible to the new master bedroom addition.

Off the garage, a mud room was added for coats and boots, and custom-made wood lockers were installed for the kids' book bags.



before



after

The upstairs was extended over the new entry and the existing garage. A new luxurious master bedroom and bath suite and a laundry room were added upstairs. Now the couple enjoys a roomy master bedroom and bath suite with an oversized soaking tub, large tiled shower, double vanity, and two huge master closets.

A More Classic Look

"Then we re-configured the first floor considerably and re-styled it to give it a completely different look," Stilwell said. Goodbye 1970s!

Walls were added to close in the cold open great room making it more secluded, and the wide-open stairway was encased. The rustic cedar banister and all the dark, rough hewed trim throughout the house was replaced with more traditional trim. This helped brighten the interior.

The massive stone fireplace that was in the great room was removed and the dated sunken floor was elevated. The exterior also has a more classic look now. "Adding the second floor and the way we tied in the roof lines changed the outside appearance," explained Stilwell. He added, "Our specialty truly is working with older homes, finding ways to both expand them and recreate them to meet the needs of the homeowner."

Things Went Smoothly

This project left few rooms untouched. Everything in the house except the office and kitchen was affected by it. "For the size of the project, I thought things went really smoothly," said Chip. "Joe was great to work with. Anytime there was any issue at all we would give him a call and most of the time he already knew about it and was in the process of getting it taken care of."

"We redid the finishes throughout the house," Lisa said. She liked working with Teresa Easterday, director of Sales and Design at Stilwell. "With her background in interior design, Teresa was a great help in selecting the paint colors, floor covering, cabinets and countertops, plumbing fixtures, and ceramic tile." Now the makeover was complete.

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