

Building a New Home Inside an Old House

By Christine Hanlon • Photography: Doug Dealey & John Johnston



All Canadian Renovations brought this '70s kitchen into the new millennium. White cabinetry from Cabinet Clearance Corner injects a contemporary feel into the new space.

Patti Ferguson and Dana Erickson realized that before they could move into the 30-year-old house they had purchased in Southdale, the interior would need to be entirely renovated. "This was something we would never consider doing ourselves," says Ferguson. "We knew the scope of the renovation required the involvement of a number of trades. We preferred to deal with an experienced point person."

First, they approached Interior Designer Betty Haese, a long time friend. It was Haese who brought in All Canadian Renovations (ACR) to turn her designs into reality. "One of the reasons they hired our company is that they didn't have time to project manage the job," says Mike Kerr, one of three partners at

ACR. "They just wanted somebody to make sure everything happened. That's what we do."

For a year, the couple had searched for a new home that would accommodate their active family of five children. In the end, despite its age, the lakeside home with the large open lot met most of their criteria, especially the one at the top of the list: proximity to the schools for their children. "But it was a pretty tired house," recalls Ferguson. "In order to make it right, we needed a renovation."

A top priority was enlarging the front entrance. The former foyer was congested, without adequate closet space. The walls formed a narrow passageway to the kitchen. "Instead of leaving

it as a hallway, we created a nice open entrance,” says Kerr. “And it looks as if it was always there.”

Both walls and staircase were pushed back to enlarge the space. Two mirrored art niches now face the front door, with matching double closets tucked behind them. Although these changes were made early in the project, ACR advised the homeowners to delay the installation of the new oak railing until the movers had finished in order to prevent damage. “ACR had very helpful suggestions,” notes Ferguson. “They’ve been on enough of these projects to know.”

The renovator also knew that Haese’ design for replacing the cramped eating area in the kitchen with a curved peninsula would ultimately fulfill the family’s needs. Gutting the kitchen, ACR raised and enlarged the windows to accommodate the new countertop while maximizing the view of the lake. They also replaced dingy mahogany cabinets with an abundance of bright white units.

Redoing the upstairs bathrooms worked hand in hand with replacing the ceiling in the family room and installing bright fresh potlights throughout. ACR also trimmed the family room’s existing millwork to make it flush with the Tyndall stone fireplace. At the back entrance, a closet was transformed into a main floor laundry.

Throughout the house all the dark trim was removed, sanded and repainted in bright white. Internet lines were installed on all three levels, and surround sound wired everywhere, including to the outdoor hot tub. “Our kids are living in the wireless age,” says Ferguson. “A router system for their lap tops is important.”

Equally important was creating a private space for the teenagers to welcome their friends. ACR took the unfinished lower level and transformed it into a recreational living space with adjacent bedroom and full bathroom.

Ferguson points out that both Haese and ACR were respectful of budget and always gave them ample time to react when unexpected expenses arose. “We’ve found it to be a relatively painless process,” she says. “Mike and Tony were great. They are excellent communicators. We had no problems reaching them and having our questions answered. It was Betty’s designs and ACR’s work that brought it all together.”

ACR added a convenient games cabinet on the family room’s shared wall with kitchen.

Gleaming marble from Wells Marble & Bath adds a striking look to the newly renovated bathroom.

