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A CAREFUL REMODEL REMAINS AS SENSITIVE TO THE HOUSE'S NEOCLASSICAL ROOTS AS IT DOES TO ITS NEIGHBORHOOD.



BY WENDY ANN LARSON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KENNETH M. WYNER

THIS GRACIOUS, 1930S COLONIAL put its best face forward. But its owners immediately knew the house still had more to offer than curb appeal. Center hall colonials stand side-by-side in suburban neighborhoods outside the nation's capital, especially on the Virginia side. Their brick façades, columned entries, and symmetrical detailing hark back to the neoclassical architecture of the original British colonies. And like most classics, the traditional style continues to turn heads.

Inside, however, homeowners can be a little less smitten. Many find the historic floor plan, with its small, boxy rooms on either side of the central staircase, too tight and closed-in for the modern family. Eventually most opt to remodel, losing walls for larger, more open spaces. In the process, though, they risk losing the home's true character, too.

A wide central corridor separates new construction from original architecture.



THE CLEVER CORRIDOR

These owners weren't willing to take that risk. Determined to stay true to their house, the couple turned to GTM Architects, Inc. in Bethesda, Maryland. George Myers, President of the firm, already knew plenty about the shortcomings of colonials from former clients. He also shared the owners' desire to maintain the home's charm and craftsmanship.

"We really started out by following that old rule—the one about doing no harm," Myers says modestly. "The original house's proportions were just perfect. We didn't want to do anything to mess that up."

To bring the 5,200-square-foot house up to present-day standards, Myers and his clients began with the two biggest interior problems: the lack of a family room downstairs and two bedrooms upstairs (one on each side of the staircase or



Yellow shading denotes added or renovated space to the first floor.



HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

The kitchen not only offers fully functional cooking and eating areas, but also provides and leads to work spaces for homework and paying bills.

wing of the house) that you couldn't get to without going through an adjoining bedroom and connecting bathroom.

Myers' creative solution was a 4'- $\frac{1}{2}$ '-foot wide hallway that runs the width of the house on floors one and two.

The clever corridor provides entry into each of four second-floor bedrooms. Downstairs—where it doubles as an elegant gallery space—the hallway provides transition between the home's existing rooms and its sizable addition off the back.

UPDATED SPACES

From the front door to the gallery, the more formal, characteristic rooms kept their original size and shape. The walls remained in place, though openings between rooms did get slightly wider to allow for a more open feel.

The existing rooms also received a fresh coat of paint—and then some. Bob Klecker of Spectrum Contractors first scrapped and replaced all the drywall, hardwood floors, and trim. The windows, plumbing, and electric are new, too.

"We upgraded the trim throughout," says Klecker, the Gaithersburg, Maryland, builder who completed a renovation of the owners' previous home. "As the scale of the house grew, we knew it could stand up to heavier millwork." The pronounced moldings, decorative arches, and custom built-ins were all made on site and in keeping with the original architectural style.

Julie Beatty of The Grande Finale worked closely with the homeowners to choose the softer trim—everything from wall coverings to fabrics to window treatments. "With four kids and a dog, creating a calm, peaceful home was important to my clients," says the Arlington, Virginia-based interior designer.



Playing off the home's architectural symmetry helped achieve that comfortable setting. "The couple would always tend toward warm, balanced colors with a short palette of intensity." Sticking with pale to golden yellows, soft greens and pinks, and occasional oranges or blues for visual pop lends the house a sense of continuity as you walk from room to room and from old to new. "The style of the rooms is symmetrical, too," Beatty adds. "None of the rooms is too formal or too casual."

Beatty teamed up with Lois Kennedy of Portfolio Kitchens when it came time to tackle the kitchen. The Vienna, Virginia-based kitchen designer recommended a total overhaul. The reconfigured space—a combination of existing and new square footage—now adjoins a pantry, breakfast room, and study. Though equipped with the most modern conveniences, furniture-style cabinets, oak floors, and integrated appliances give the kitchen an old-world, traditional look.

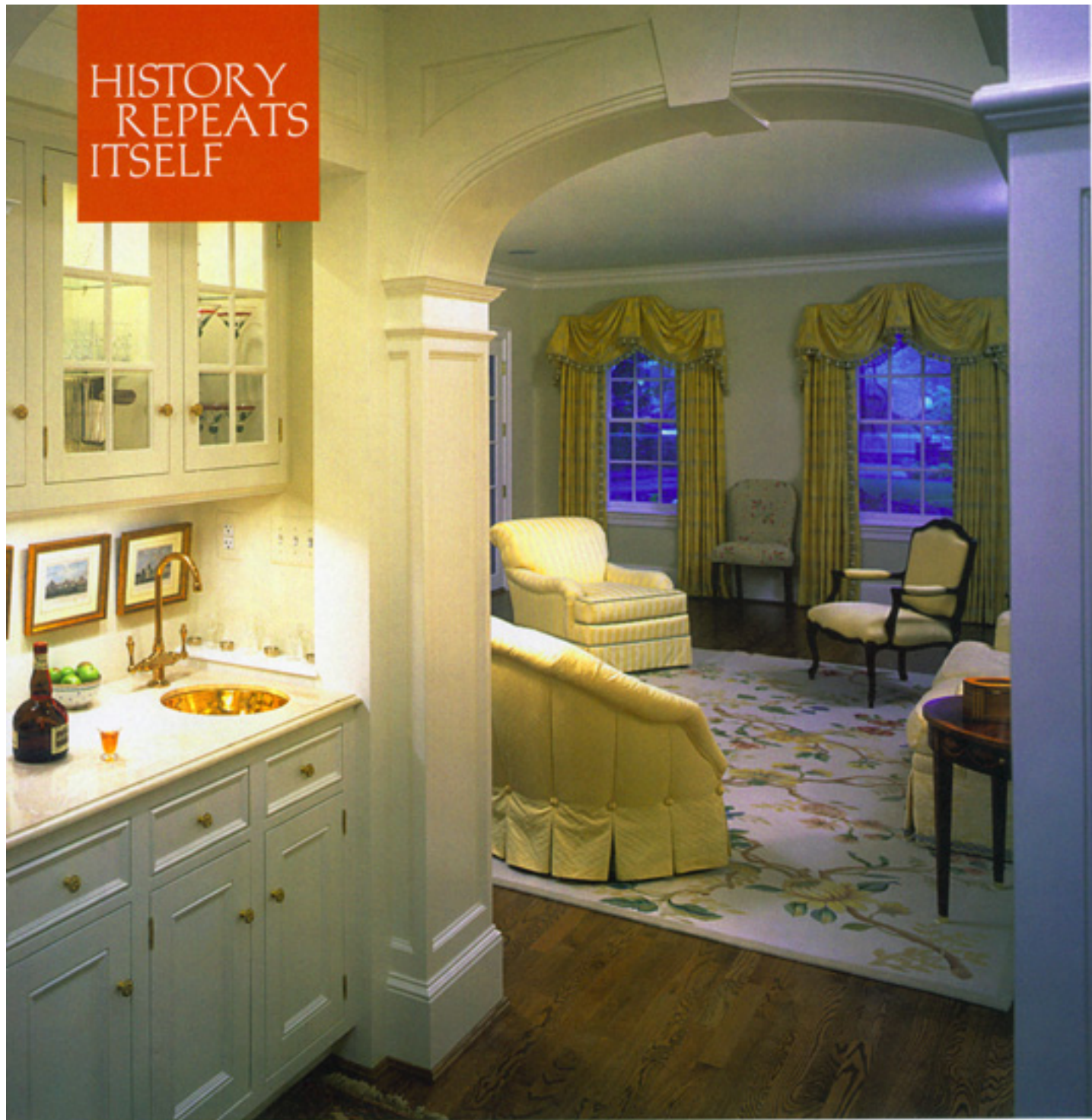
MODERN AMENITIES

"When we came up with the gallery idea, the rest of the addition fell into place," Myers recalls. "It created another spine of the house." The "rest" of the addition, as Myers puts it, lies on the



The master bedroom and bath suite is completely new construction (shaded yellow) located across from the home's existing bedrooms.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF



A butler's pantry adjacent to the existing living room makes formal entertaining easier.

other side of the gallery, where a floor plan more typical of today's homes subtly opens up.

The new family room—a must-have for a couple with four kids—gives everyone a place to hang out. The ample space, measuring 23' by 29' bumps out into a cozy sunroom overlooking an enviable backyard.

With its proximity to the new two-car garage and mudroom, the home's side door has become the family's primary entrance. Consequently, the second staircase, added off the gallery, now gets the most use.

Upstairs, the addition made room for a master bedroom suite across from the kids' existing bedrooms. Two of those rooms also have new bathrooms, and a second-story laundry area no doubt saves steps for the family of six.

Downstairs, 9-foot ceilings required such construction calisthenics as digging the basement below the existing foundation. The lower level now accommodates a spacious recreation room.



DOUBLE-TAKE

"We agreed that no part of the addition would be taller or wider than the main house," says Myers of his promise to the owners. Out of respect for the architecture and the surrounding neighborhood, the existing façade would remain at attention on its tree-lined street.

But as the addition grew, so did the challenge of keeping that promise. "Hiding the mass of the structure was the trickiest part of the project," Myers says. With Klecker's construction expertise, and a generous lot, the team of seasoned pros got the job done.

With that problem solved, the fun began. "We were a little more playful in the back of the house," Myers says. "We used more windows, and the overall

design is less symmetrical."

But Myers didn't have too much fun. "We chose the siding, brick, and slate for the roof to match the original materials in the front," he says. "It all echoes the traditional styling of the façade."

The addition eventually topped out at 5,400 square feet—making the house just over twice its original size. But the owners had no such intention. Throughout the process, they say, they didn't think much about size at all. They were too busy planning their dream house. ♦

Wendy Ann Larson is a writer in Bethesda, Maryland. This is Wendy's first contribution to ChesapeakeHome.

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