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Breathing Room

An elegant North Oaks addition gives homeowners the extra space they've always desired.

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Lakeside views, roaming deer, and rambling paths that spill over their four-acre plot of land have provided continuous enjoyment for a pair of North Oaks homeowners. The interior of their house, however, had ceased to be quite so pleasing. What the homeowner calls "an 8-by-7 tiny little thing" of a master bathroom and the virtually nonexistent closet space typical of 1950s-era houses had always been a matter of annoyance. But when seven members of the extended clan all tried to fit into a cramped



family room after a recent Thanksgiving dinner and had no space to stretch out, it proved to be the proverbial last straw. "Our family is only going to get bigger," says the homeowner, alluding to the potential of future grandchildren from her two adult daughters. "We decided it was time to remodel."

The couple hired the Wayzata-based design-build firm Streeter & Associates Inc. to create an addition that includes a family space downstairs and an expanded master suite on the second

floor. It was important to the couple that the firm stay true to the traditional Cape Cod aesthetics of the house so that the addition would seamlessly blend with the existing structure. The result is an 800-square-foot addition that designer Jeff Lindgren terms the epitome of "elegant opulence."

Streeter Renovation & Design first approached the project by looking at the master suite. "It was a number of rooms all squished together: bedroom, closets, and bathroom,"

Opposite Page: The design of the cathedral-like window is meant to mimic the trees outside.

Above: Matching sinks are symmetrically placed across the room from each other.



Above: Light floods in through the many windows to make the new family room bright, while gleaming wood floors, green marble inlay on the fireplace, and wood shutters keep the space cozy.

explains senior project manager Jeff Ripley. “The whole area needed to be redefined.” To create a lofty sense in the bedroom, the designers punched up the eight-foot ceilings and rebuilt the rafters with an elaborate and sophisticated soffit perimeter. With extra space overhead, the bedroom extends gracefully upward. Additional space gleaned by expanding the room’s footprint encourages the feeling of grandeur.

As for the decor, the homeowner collaborated with interior designer Marie Meko of Durr, Ltd.

[Marie is now with Gabberts]. “I love florals,” she says. “When we moved in, there wasn’t one flower in the garden. Now we have peonies, hydrangeas, lilacs – the list goes on.” Soft blue and pink patterns of roses twine throughout the interior, flowing from chairs to carpet to curtains. With a small sitting area overlooking some of her plantings, the homeowner is able to revel in her flowers even before she steps outdoors. Set discreetly next to the bedroom is her husband’s office, a calm contrast in dark



wood and heavy furnishings as a masculine counterpoint to the bedroom's more feminine flourishes.

Heading from the bedroom to the bathroom, a compact hallway into which is tucked a small makeup area delineates the change between sleeping and bathing areas. Inside the bathroom, a half-barrel ceiling soars, painted blue to give the illusion of the sky. Crown molding on either side of the arched ceiling houses a light bar that washes luminescence across the barrel.

A soaking tub anchors the room at the far end with a sublime view out the windows onto some old oak trees and a sloping lawn. Matching sinks are symmetrically placed across the room from each other, and a two-person steam shower is inset with Calcutta Gold marble, decorated with turn of last century penny size tiles on the floor. Glittering crystal chandeliers and antique fixtures are dotted throughout, and ornate custom cabinets anchor the space in its traditional styling.

Above Top: The bedroom, with its twining florals and feminine colors, is a calm sanctuary overlooking the garden.

Above Bottom: The floor in the family room was dropped to create grand coffered ceilings and give greater overall height in the space.



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Above: Sitting on five acres of what Lindgren calls “a beautiful and picturesque lot,” the addition was planned not only with improvement of the interiors in mind, but also a view to make the most of the scenery.

Downstairs, the addition maintains the sense of style of the upper level, but takes it in a more social and less intimate direction. “The family room is meant to be a more informal gathering place off the kitchen, a place to spill over into to when warming up to a fire, entertaining family and friends or watching movies,” says Ripley. The centerpiece of the room is the cherry fireplace set with a gas insert. On both sides sits custom cabinetry that cleverly hides all the electronics for the room, including the

television, which is set on an articulating arm so that it can swivel and pull out when people are watching or disappear behind bifold pocket doors when not in use.

Blue paint on the walls, various patterned throw cushions, and wood floors warm up the room and keep it from looking overly serious. To offset the straight lines of the space, the designers incorporated plenty of arches, from the curving walkway into the dining room that used to be a patio door, to the built-in bookshelf



with a swooping arc at its top. Perhaps most striking, however, is the sitting area, a radius that measures sixteen feet and gives a panoramic view of the backyard. The couple make good use of this space, eating dinners here and playing scrabble or rummy cube to relax. "It's so beautiful to look out and feel like you're outside, watching birds and red fox and snapping turtles out the window," muses the homeowner.

With views from every room and light spilling into every corner of the addition, the

homeowners are finally as content with the interior of their house as they are with their lakeside surroundings. "We've been here for twenty-five years," the homeowner says. "And now we can stay here forever."

Above: As a finishing flourish to the project, the designers added new Cape Cod cedar shake siding, corner columns, and a coat of exterior paint to refresh the façade and enhance its traditional appeal.