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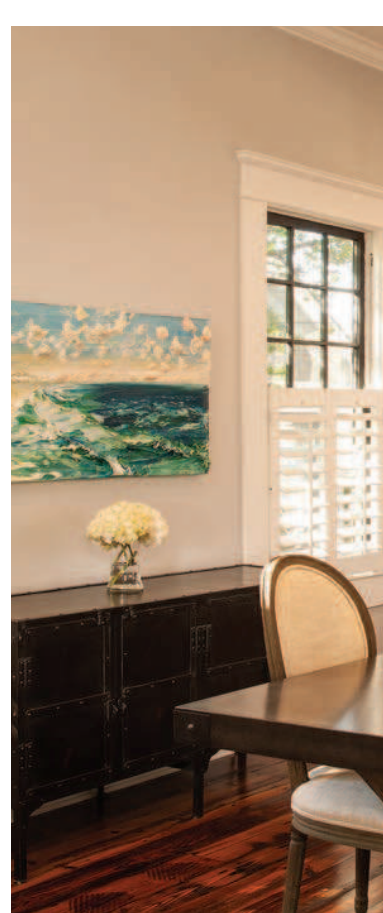
Smart home improvement starts here.



Remodeling Planner p.21

Questions to ask yourself,
inspiration from local projects and more

- Step by step through a Decatur whole-house renovation p. 38
- Master suites: the ultimate retreat p. 44
- Retaining walls expand landscaping options p. 51





HOME WORK

Step by step through a Decatur whole-house renovation

By Alma Hill

Photos courtesy of Renewal Design-Build

Amanda McMillan has two words of advice for anyone thinking about remodeling a home: **due diligence**. That's what she and her partner, Teresa Dau, did before their Decatur craftsman was even listed for sale.

They knew they wanted to live in historic downtown Decatur within walking distance to the square and that they wanted an older home they could update and customize to fit their lifestyle. While house hunting, McMillan and Dau also shopped for a remodeling firm. Their requirements: the firm had to be local, it had to be familiar with Decatur historic renovation policies, and they wanted a company that offered all design, project management and construction services under one roof so they could avoid having to work with multiple contractors. After checking references and looking at the company portfolio, they chose Renewal Design-Build, www.renewaldesignbuild.com, one of many whole-service firms in the Atlanta area.

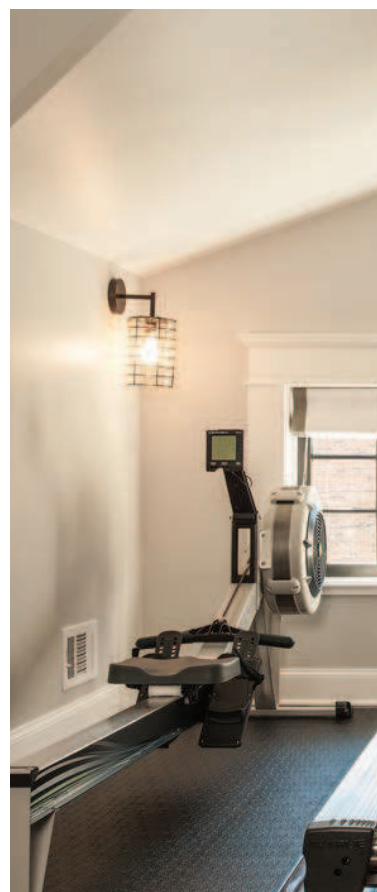
When McMillan and Dau did a walk-through of the Candler Street home they later purchased, they took the Renewal team with them to determine if the home could be remodeled the way they envisioned.

The must haves: an open floor plan with lots of light, a screened sun porch for indoor/outdoor entertaining and a spacious master suite with plenty of closet space.

The deal breaker: a backyard swimming pool; if one could not be built because of lot size or historic building regulations, McMillan and Dau would have walked away and looked for another home. ➤

BEFORE RENOVATION







“A surveyor came and counted every rock,” McMillan says. “They needed to know if they could install a swimming pool.”

McMillan and Dau communicated their vision to the Renewal team with pictures they downloaded from the internet.

Knowing your priorities is key, she adds. “Very rarely are you going to get everything you envisioned. Know the deal breaker and what can be accomplished.”

Since the house is in a historic district, three guidelines had to be followed during the remodel. The historic character had to be maintained; the frontal setback had to line up with the other homes on the block; and the footprint couldn’t be expanded because of lot coverage restrictions.

“We had to squeeze it all in a small envelope and keep the house looking historic on the outside while fulfilling all of (the couple’s) design goals,” says Michael Nualla, project designer.

The guidelines meant the homeowners had to forgo a main-floor powder room and a garage, but they got the swimming pool and other amenities.

The beautification process

Design phase: Five months (includes historic commission approval and permitting). Supplies, cabinetry, countertops and other building materials were ordered during this time to avoid delays after construction began.

Construction phase: Seven months

Note: Due to the massive scope of the project, which included gutting, renovating and building the rear addition, the house was not habitable until the work was finished.

The transformation

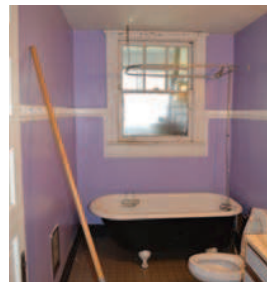
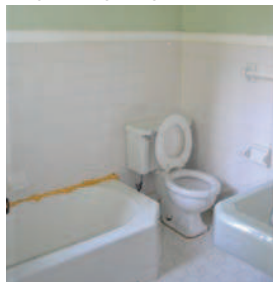
Before: Three bedrooms, three baths, two kitchens, two non-working wood-burning fireplaces.

After: Four bedrooms, three full baths; a home office and gym; a screened porch with a fireplace that leads to an outdoor room and a backyard swimming pool.

A luxury master suite was added in a second-story rear addition complete with a curbless shower, freestanding tea cup bathtub, double vanities, double walk-in closets, a skylight that floods the bedroom with light and sliding glass doors that separate the sleeping area from the bath to make the room appear more spacious.

The gourmet kitchen is fit for a top chef with black granite countertops with a velvet finish; an island with three-inch-thick black limba wood, a prep sink, wine cooler, 48-inch Viking range and two Sub-Zero refrigerators, one for food and one for beverages. ►

BEFORE RENOVATION





Step-by-step

- **Site prep** (included installation of a steel fence to keep people off the property while work was underway)
- **Demolition** (The home was gutted down to the exterior skin.)
- **Foundation work** and framing to rebuild the basic structure
- **A new roof** using architectural shingles was installed.
- **Mechanical work**, e.g. HVAC, plumbing and electrical wire installation
- **Building inspectors** reviewed the mechanical work to make sure the rough framing was done correctly.
- **Spray foam insulation** was put on the roofline to make the home tight and energy efficient.
- **Drywall** was installed.
- **Interior trim work** such as molding, tile and flooring (Wood floors made from heart-pine wood beams from an old factory in Chicago were turned into floor planks and used throughout the home.)
- **Cabinets and countertops** were installed.
- **Interior paint**, final trim and decorative fixtures such as lights, chandeliers and can lights
- In-ground **swimming pool** built
- **Landscaping**

With a renovation, “there are a lot of things happening at once,” says John Carpentier, the project manager who was on site every day. “If you don’t come at it all at once, the project changes from a one-year project to a two-year project.”

The extras

The 100-year-old windows had to be preserved on the front and sides of the house, so Renewal Design-Build removed, rebuilt and reinstalled the wood window sashes.

Wood siding, porch, handrails and columns were restored.

Five skylights were added to the house to maximize natural light.

A tankless water heater with hot-water recirculation was installed to make the home energy efficient

Kohler, Moen, American Standard and Santec products were used for shower valves, sinks, faucets and bathtubs.

The awards

The home received two 2013 Chrysalis Awards from *Qualified Remodeler* magazine for the kitchen remodel and residential historic renovation. The project also received a 2013 Decatur Design Award for a historic renovation that promotes excellence in preservation, design, sustainability and advocacy.

The kitchen was featured on the DeKalb Junior League’s 2013 Tour of Kitchens this past spring.

“We could not be happier. We are absolutely thrilled, and we love our home,” McMillan says. “They did an amazing job to make this place exactly what we wanted.” 🏡

Editorial Resources begin on page 67.

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