

A second century of style

Lex-Ham family updates their 1907 home in keeping with its Tudor Craftsman Revival design

BY JANET LUNDER HANAFIN

Amy and Chip Pearson found their almost perfect house four years ago. It was in the Lexington-Hamline neighborhood, and it was a house Chip had visited as a youngster. The Pearsons lived nearby and wanted to stay close to the neighborhood amenities they had come to love, so when the house came on the market, they jumped at it.

Designed by Franklin Ellerbe, the architect who founded the former St. Paul architectural firm Ellerbe and Co., the 1907 Tudor Craftsman Revival house was in good shape structurally, though it had undergone a couple of unfortunate additions over the years. The Pearsons did extensive work to the backyard in the first three years they lived in the home, but realized they would need to update the interior to fit their family's needs.

"Like most old St. Paul houses, there was a cramped kitchen and no first-floor bathroom," Amy said. As they explored their options, they realized "the neighborhood and the house were both worthy of investment."

They decided to restore and expand the house "to give it some architectural unity and add the function we were after," Amy said. "We touched almost every room, but we wanted to maintain as much as possible what was historic."

The Pearsons worked with David Heide Design Studio on the whole-house remodel and moved out for nearly a year while the work progressed. The previous owners had saved Ellerbe's original blueprints, and the couple gave a copy to Heide to help in the planning and donated the originals to the University of Minnesota.

The first task was to redesign the mechanicals. Pipes running through living spaces were moved inside walls or ceilings. Radiators were stripped and repainted a historically accurate bronze. New ductwork was added to the existing central air conditioning.

A rambler-like addition on the back of the house was removed and a three-



Chip and Amy Pearson relax at the counter that separates their kitchen and sitting room, part of a large addition to their Lexington-Hamline home.

story addition was constructed to square off the house and bring the massing more in keeping with the original design. The crawl space beneath the old addition was excavated to expand the basement. On the first floor, the family added a powder room, closet space and mudroom, an expanded kitchen and sitting room, and an office. A beautiful master bedroom suite with a spacious closet and bath with steam shower were added on the second floor, and the third floor has a new exercise room.

The home's original floors and woodwork were in good shape. The living room and formal staircase needed only minimal updating. An arched fireplace, which they love, and a keyhole design element in the staircase have been replicated throughout the house, along with a distinctive motif on the head casings above the doors and windows.

The redesigned, modern kitchen has all new red birch cabinets and woodwork that the designers discovered in the home's original plans. A single farmhouse sink, brushed nickel fixtures and stainless-steel appliances give the kitchen a traditional quality. Durable quartz-

ite counters help keep the northeast-facing kitchen bright. A round island has electrical outlets for small appliances and is Amy's staging area for making cookies and her traditional lefse.

A peninsula that also serves as a dining counter separates the kitchen from a cozy sitting area. The sitting area has the look of an enclosed porch with mullioned windows, a beadboard ceiling, small bar sink and comfy chairs. A state-of-the-art coffeemaker pulls out of the wall. A cabinet for mugs and coffee fixings, refrigerated drawers for soda and juice, and more storage for games and such help keep the area tidy.

Seeking to restore some of the home's history, the designers used painted stenciling in several rooms. In the kitchen, the crown moldings have been stenciled in natural wood tones to look almost like inlaid wood.

The dining room had already been expanded, but needed redecorating to match the rest of the house. One of the original drawings for the home showed wood wainscoting and burlap panels in

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The Pearson living room has retained its arched fireplace and original stairway banisters and trim.

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the room. The Pearsons opted for a grass cloth wall treatment that has a bit of glisten and historic stenciling to accent the dark oak wainscot and plate rail. Custom built-in cabinets with glass fronts provide convenient storage. A new window lets in more light, and its art glass motif complements a similar window at the top of the first-floor stairs.

The Pearsons added a laundry room on the second floor and divided a large bedroom in two (per the original design) to create a play room. They opened up the stairway to the third floor to add visual space and enhance its connection to the rest of the house. On the top

floor, in addition to the exercise room, they now have a media room with large-screen TV and Chip's office. Amy's sewing room is in the basement along with a game room, a storage area, a workshop and a catering kitchen for the parties the family loves to host.

"It's all kid-friendly," Amy said of the house, "and it's held up remarkably well."

"Chip and Amy's desires to keep the historic nature of the home while adding modern amenities will make this house stand the test of time and be a gem in the neighborhood for many years to come," said project manager Chris Christofferson. "They are incredibly committed to St. Paul and the neighborhood they live in."