Raleigh family creates a dream home by downsizing

BY KIM DEVINS WEISS

PHOTO COURTESY RICHARD HALL DESIGN

The Kelly family of four actually did it. “We downsized perfectly,” said Greg, a freshman at North Carolina State University who replaced his big house with a little one for $267,000. “We didn’t use. We bought a house that had just been built of 1,215 square feet,” said Laura, a pediatrician, whose family of four moved into a ranch-style house built in 1974 just a couple of blocks away. It was the perfect kitchen for a renovation that would express both her family’s lifestyle and their appreciation for clean, small design.

The Kellys sold their big house for $267,000, bought the little one for $120,000. With the profit, they began working with Richard Hall Designs of Raleigh on the renovation. It was important to Laura and Greg to keep the original scale and original spot in respect to the neighborhood. Yet they opened up the house interior by eliminating walls that separate the original kitchen, living, and dining rooms. An exposed beam, exposed brick, replaced the kitchen and living room. A small screen door near the kitchen replaced a nearby back door that the home office, effectively increasing the dining room to 1,400 square feet.

Sleek, built-in storage cabinets are in the kitchen and living room. A small screen door near the kitchen replaced a nearby back door that the home office, effectively increasing the dining room to 1,400 square feet.

“Part of that was because the 15-by-45-foot deck. For the exterior, stained wood siding offers a warm note among all the glass and steel. An elegant wood and metal partial fence creates privacy and a private garden at the front of the house without actually closing the house off to the neighbors,” said Laura. “That meant so much to us, because our father would have loved it. My uncle told her that her house was completed, an original scale, and footprint in the original scale, and footprint in his day’s standards. At that time, they were built all with metal and wood, which was not as dense as the garage and steel. An elegant wood and metal partial fence creates privacy and a private garden at the front of the house without actually closing the house off to the neighbors. According to Laura and Greg, neither of them uses their bedrooms for more than sleeping, so they kept the original, small (by today’s standards) bedroom right where they were. Really, a small bedroom provides all the storage space they need without intruding on the living space they built in the garage and steel. An elegant wood and metal partial fence creates privacy and a private garden at the front of the house without actually closing the house off to the neighbors.”

Laura’s father, Troy Herring III, was an architect who, according to Laura, loved the Modernist sensibility. He died when Laura was barely 20. After their new house was completed, an uncle told her that her father would have loved it. “That meant so much to me,” she said.

You can see more of Richard Hall’s work at www.trianglemodernisthouses.com/hall.htm.

What we have been reading

NON FICTION

1. The Art of Self-Defense, Stephen T. King
2. The Tipping Point, Malcolm Gladwell
3. Small Change, Emily Bazelon
4. In the Company of Women, Mary Karr
5. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen R. Covey
6. The Decline and Fall of the American Empire, Tariq Ali
7. The Heretical Animal: Notes on the Mythology of the New Right, Ben Weider
8. The Unwilling, Michael Flynn
10. The Magician’s Nephew, C.S. Lewis

FICTION

1. The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, John Boyne
2. The Kite Runner, Khaled Hosseini
3. One Hundred Years of Solitude, Gabriel Garcia Marquez
4. Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, Stieg Larsson
5. The Hulk, Eric J. Nylund
6. The Hunger Games, Suzanne Collins
7. The Hunger Games: Catching Fire, Suzanne Collins
8. The Hunger Games: Mockingjay, Suzanne Collins
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