

the kitchen & family room

The ground-floor portion of the addition to this 1939 home extends toward the backyard from the existing kitchen and is flooded with natural light by windows facing the south and west.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY FRED JERNIGAN

The Home of the Month series is a collaborative effort with the N.C. State University College of Design through its Home Environments Design Initiative. Featured homes, selected by an expert panel, highlight the benefits of good home design and represent the diversity of homes and home renovations designed by North Carolina architects. The articles, written by faculty, graduate students and alumni of the School of Architecture, bring to light the exemplary attributes of each home. Our goal is to offer inspiration and knowledge that can be applied to your living space.

Renovation in a whole new light



For the large openings that connect the addition to the backyard, Hardi-panels were used instead of the wood siding on the existing part of the house.

By WENDY REDFIELD
CORRESPONDENT

DURHAM

When architect Fred Jernigan and his wife, Sharon, decided their family needed more space, more light and one more bathroom, they faced a predicament shared by many residents of older homes in older neighborhoods: Should the family move or stay and renovate?

After looking at larger homes in the area, they quickly determined that they liked their neighborhood and loved their well-built, four-square, 1939 house. They further realized that modifying their existing home would be much more affordable than purchasing a new one of equal quality.

They have seen the growing trend of "tear-downs" of existing houses in their neighborhood to make room for much larger homes on the same lots, but the Jernigans say they never considered this a necessary or appropriate option.

The house sits on 0.18 acres in the historic downtown Durham neighborhood of Trinity Park. A narrow greenway maintained by the city runs along the rear of the lot, providing an unusual atmosphere of lushness and privacy in an area characterized by closely spaced houses and urban density. The original house featured four main rooms on each floor: two at the front, facing the street, and two at the back, facing the backyard.

Like others similar in layout and age, this house was a

the project

house in town

architect

Fred Jernigan, AIA;
781-8582, fjernigan@smithsinnett.com

Project location

1421 Woodland Drive,
Durham

Square feet

2,200 heated,
270 unheated

Budget

\$100,000 (for renovation and 500-square-foot addition)

Key attributes

Light; opening up to outdoors; renovation in historic neighborhood

Contractor

New South Building Co.,
1605 Skye Drive, Chapel Hill

RENOVATION

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collection of discrete, introverted rooms that didn't relate well to each other or to the outdoors. In addition to adding room, a primary goal of the project was to create living space that opened the house to its surroundings. An additional specific goal of the project was to eliminate the need for the couple to share their bathroom with their young son.

The solution, devised by project owner and architect Fred Jernigan, was to build a two-story,

500-square-foot addition onto the back of the house — about 250 square feet per floor. On the ground floor this created a sunny family room that opens to the kitchen. A



Architect
Fred
Jernigan

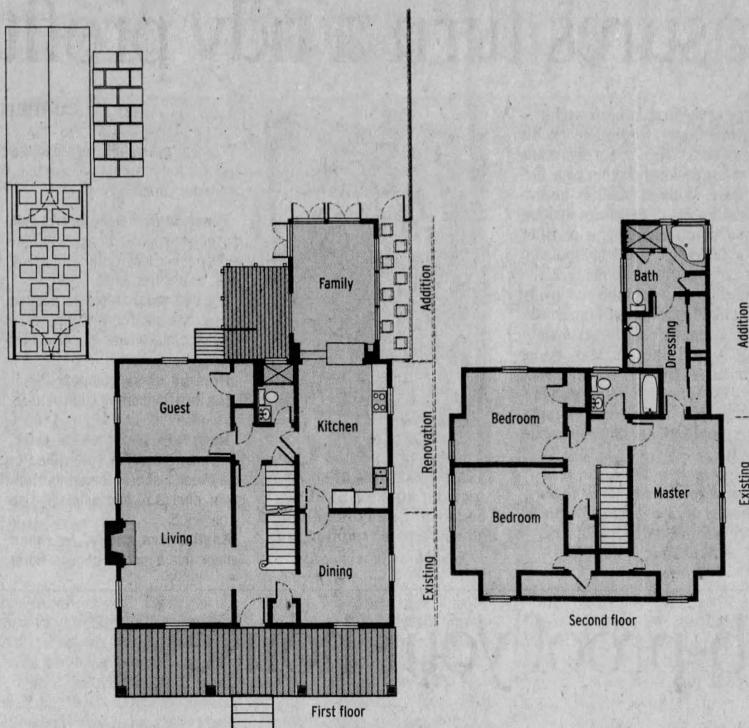
spacious new master bath and dressing area was added to the second floor.

The family room, which is two steps down from the kitchen, has 9½-foot ceilings (compared to 8-foot ceilings in the rest of the house), large windows to the south and west facing the backyard, a wood floor and built-in wooden shelves. It adjoins the kitchen through a large opening in which a small bar-height counter is placed. The kitchen, renovated previously with new appliances, Schrock maple cabinetry and granite countertops, received ceramic tile floors at the time of the addition.

Upstairs, closets that had filled dormer windows in the master bedroom, blocking light and air, were removed, making way for the new master bath and dressing area. The dressing area has a built-in cast Corian slab-topped vanity and two sinks. The bathroom is spacious and light and features colorful tiled walls, a large corner whirlpool tub and thoughtfully placed windows and a skylight that provide ample light but maintain privacy.

The Jernigans, like many families undertaking home renovations, continued to live in their home during construction. "It was camping for three months," Fred Jernigan says. And Sharon Jernigan recalls the discomfort of never knowing when workers might turn up, when they would leave or whom one might discover working in the house upon arriving home. "I would sit in the car to get private time, or to make a phone call," she recalls. One workman in particular did a wonderful job but often started work at 6 a.m. and continued until 10 or 10:30 at night.

All clients of home renovations have cautionary tales, and architects aren't immune. One evening the family returned to the substantially completed renovation after a hockey game and found a balloon of wet paint hanging from the addition's ground-floor ceiling. A nail had



The new family room is two steps lower than the kitchen and adjoins it through a wide opening and shared counter.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY FRED JERNIGAN

pierced a plumbing pipe, saturating the bathroom floor and family-room ceiling below with water. The newly painted ceiling had to be removed to find the

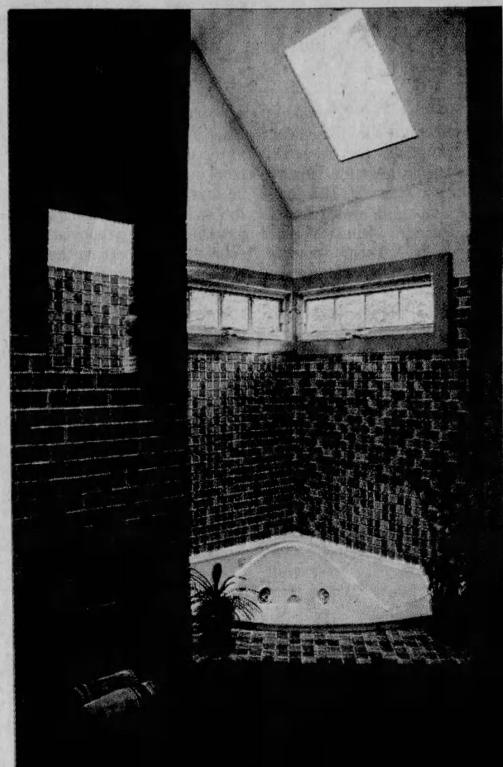
leak and then replaced.

Fred Jernigan says he learned a lot from this project. In his professional practice, he works primarily on large public buildings.

He says that his professional experience has given him the ability and determination to do something good on a tight budget and that he has always been sensitive in the use of color and light. These were valuable qualifications when it came to designing his own home renovation. The architect knew where not to scrimp (he used high-quality Pozzi wood windows), and he bought as many fixtures and materials as possible from local and independent distributors.

Jernigan's careful budgeting and design acumen paid off: A recent assessment of the home confirmed that the value added exceeded the renovation construction costs.

More important, the resulting spaces have substantially enhanced the family's use of the home. The new family room has become a hub of social activity when the family entertains as



The skylight and windows were positioned to give the bathroom plenty of sunlight while preserving privacy.

well as a quiet place to bring a book and enjoy the sun and views alone. A new wood deck and stair connect this room to the backyard, making the outdoors much more accessible.

However, despite the careful setting of project goals and thoughtful design process, one thing hasn't changed: young Ben

Jernigan still takes most of his baths in his parents' bathroom in the big whirlpool tub. Who could blame him?

Wendy Redfield is an associate professor of architecture at N.C. State and a registered architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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