

# From Dated to DRAMATIC

## HOW A CENTURY HOME BECAME CONTEMPORARY

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### MODERN FAMILY

Stately old homes can be full of history, charm and character, and highly prized for their unique features. When they're the right size and in a wonderful, family-oriented neighbourhood, they're an even better find! For Stephen and Anamaria, this was the case when they fell in love with a three-storey Edwardian home that offered them everything they wanted including location, size and loads of charm. Built in the early 1900s, it had a few deficiencies, but nothing these adventurous homeowners couldn't handle. They were determined and ready to turn this charming but dated house into a contemporary home with all the modern conveniences for their growing family.

Located in the west end of Toronto just north of High Park, the house is situated in the quiet natural landscape of lush ravines beneath a canopy of century-old trees. With leaded stained glass windows, light oak woodwork and doors, and golden oak floors throughout the main floor, this home had a country décor. Remarkably, the house had not been touched at all over the years, other than the kitchen and second-floor bathroom that had quite obviously been renovated, reflecting all the flavour and character of the 1980s! Clearly these two spaces would have to be tackled as soon as possible. But there was one more challenge — there was no main floor family room — and with two young daughters, that was essential to Stephen and Anamaria.

For this young couple, it was important to preserve the original architectural details including French doors, picture rails, beamed ceilings, wood staircase, wide trim, pocket doors and stained glass windows, and to retain the character of the house while reflecting their love of a contemporary and classic design style. With Jane's help and careful planning and designing, the homeowners began the renovation to make their new home beautiful and family-friendly.



### TRADING SPACES

The top priority was to create a family room. The original dining room next to the kitchen was transformed into a cozy room where the kids could play and the family could gather to watch TV. As a busy family with two young girls, the need for a formal living room would be a waste of space so eliminating it from the floor plan made perfect sense. The original living room at the front of the house became the formal dining room complete with original wood-burning fireplace. The large bay window, with its original leaded stained glass detail, gives the sense of more space and adds to the romantic feel of the elegant room.

### THE IDEAL KITCHEN

With the family room now conveniently located next to the kitchen, it was time to focus on upgrading and enlarging the most important room in the house — the kitchen. The entire back of the house was extended out eight feet. Although Stephen and Anamaria would have liked to extend it further, a free-standing garage in the backyard that had been recently converted into a three-season room limited the available space. But the eight-foot extension allowed ample room to create a comfortable, multi-functional family area for cooking, homework, entertaining, relaxing, dining and lounging.

In keeping with the vintage flavour of the home, white custom cabinets, contrasted against the dark hardwood floor, were built by hand to fit the space exactly. Their simple and elegant style offers a clean, contemporary aesthetic to the new family kitchen and beautifully complements the architectural style of the house. The new large window over the sink with leaded pane detail at the top reflects the style of the home's original stained glass windows. Glass garden doors let in lots of light and swing out for convenient access to the deck, backyard and three-season room.

The unique granite-topped, multi-purpose island was designed for enjoying casual family meals, doing homework, prepping food and entertaining. Its furniture-style design allows seating for four, making it an inviting and comfortable space to spend family time. A matching floor-to-ceiling built-in wall unit offers plenty of storage and display space with a dining nook that incorporates a table, chairs and bench seat. This area serves up more formal fare when needed. The new, larger kitchen had room for a small sitting area opposite the family room, complete with a built-in modern gas fireplace finished in the same granite as the island countertop. This little gem of a space plays an integral role in the overall design and function of the main floor. The dark hardwood floor runs through the entire main floor to unify the space while maintaining the integrity of the era of the home.

## UPDATED PERIOD FEATURES

It was tempting for the clients to maintain the original light oak woodworking, but in the end they decided that giving the trim a coat of fresh white paint would do wonders to brighten up the interior. All passage doors and the hand-carved details on the staircase were left unpainted but given an update with a darker polyurethane stain to enrich its colour and restore its original lustre.

A newly added powder room completes the functionality of the main floor. Details like deep crown moulding, classic black and white mosaic tile flooring, and classically shaped bathroom fixtures lend a vintage look. Wall sconces and pale robin's egg blue walls help to visually enlarge this petite space.

Period homes and storage are not synonymous. The simple solution to making the front foyer and main entrance to the house more functional and family-friendly was the addition of a built-in cushioned bench with full-extension storage drawers below and coat hooks added to the original picture rail. A clear glass lantern-style light fixture, pale gray walls with white trim, and dark floors create a grand but practical entrance that's sure to make a good first impression.

The harmonious shades of gray and charcoal used throughout the house are all connected by the sharp contrast of the crisp white trim. The home looks and feels fresh and clean but rich and contemporary at the same time as you move from one space to the next.



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## FAMILY BATH

Up on the second floor, the bedrooms are still a work in progress. Because they're rarely seen by guests, they're usually the last rooms to get attention. But the all-important family bathroom was in desperate need of an overhaul. The original 360 square foot bathroom included a sitting area that resembled a sunroom, a large jetted tub and no shower — not kid-friendly! A wall was installed to create a nursery on one side where the sitting room was, and a 90 square foot bathroom on the other side. The new bathroom was designed for a growing family complete with a built-in vanity with ceiling-height cabinets for storage, a paneled tub to match the cabinetry, and a glass walk-in, angled shower with adjustable sprayer for all members of the family, short or tall.

This renovated house is a testament to what can be done to preserve the unique character of a period home while creating an environment that meets the needs of today's modern family. If a house has beautiful bone structure and some unique architectural features, preserve and highlight them, and treat them well by cleverly incorporating them into the design of your space. It's these little details that give your home personality and make it more unique and ultimately more valuable over time.

