

HOMES

Dramatic increase in living space characterizes Great Falls whole house makeover



PHOTOS BY JUNE STANICH



The facade's architectural variances help to create many intimate gathering spots.

Great Falls homeowner Mike Martin wanted to reposition the facade of his over 6,000-square-foot home to create a more engaging look from the street. Remodeler Michael Nash introduced blue quarry stone that had been used in the earlier addition to vary the color scheme. Two porches with pillars on either side of the tower are a unifying motif.

■ Innovative interior design includes art gallery, gourmet kitchen

By JOHN BYRD
SPECIAL TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

When economist Mike Martin bought a 5,400-square-foot two-story contemporary on five acres of Great Falls, he knew there would have to be changes. Despite the enviable location and hillside view, some of the bedrooms were too small, as were the closets and master bath.

Above all, the house lacked curb appeal-- a problem when one is prominently situated on a bluff

above a road where neighbors drive by.

After a few years of occupancy, however, Martin hired a contractor to build a two-level addition. The builder followed a recommended plan to a tee, but not long after the addition was completed Martin's old misgivings recurred.

He hadn't liked the look of the original house, and the recently completed 600-square-foot wing hadn't improved the situation.

Essentially, he was now the owner of a nondescript brick box augmented by a wood-clad addition in a contemporary style.

"The problem was: the front door faced west; the street view is from the south," Martin explains. "Ascending the drive, you were looking at a side elevation that simply offered no cohesive style."

Moreover, Martin still hadn't gotten the "family-use" program he wanted, which called for a dramatic entrance and foyer, an upgraded kitchen, a home office, a larger master bath, an upstairs laundry, a large guest suite, a two-car garage and substantial interior upgrades.

Thinking of it now as a work-in-progress, Martin solicited feedback from both an architect and a builder, yet took no action.

"I had stockpiled a lot of ideas, but I was intent on finding professionals with a flexible approach...who would allow me to be in the middle of things," Martin says.

It was at this juncture that he learned about Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes.

Michael Nash was a refreshing contrast from his previous

experiences from the start, Martin recalls:

"They proposed a conceptual outline that nailed down the cost range, yet allowed me to make transparent line-item decisions as the project moved forward. The previous contractor only offered a fixed price loaded with details that I couldn't modify without incurring a change-order cost."

But what really proved exceptional about Michael Nash was their policy of "not charging for unexpected contingencies."

"This turned out to be a real value-added," the economist confides.

Finding Your Footing

As the second phase took shape, Martin's list of new and enlarged rooms called for a

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BEFORE Only the home's side elevation was visible when visitors ascended the driveway from the road below.



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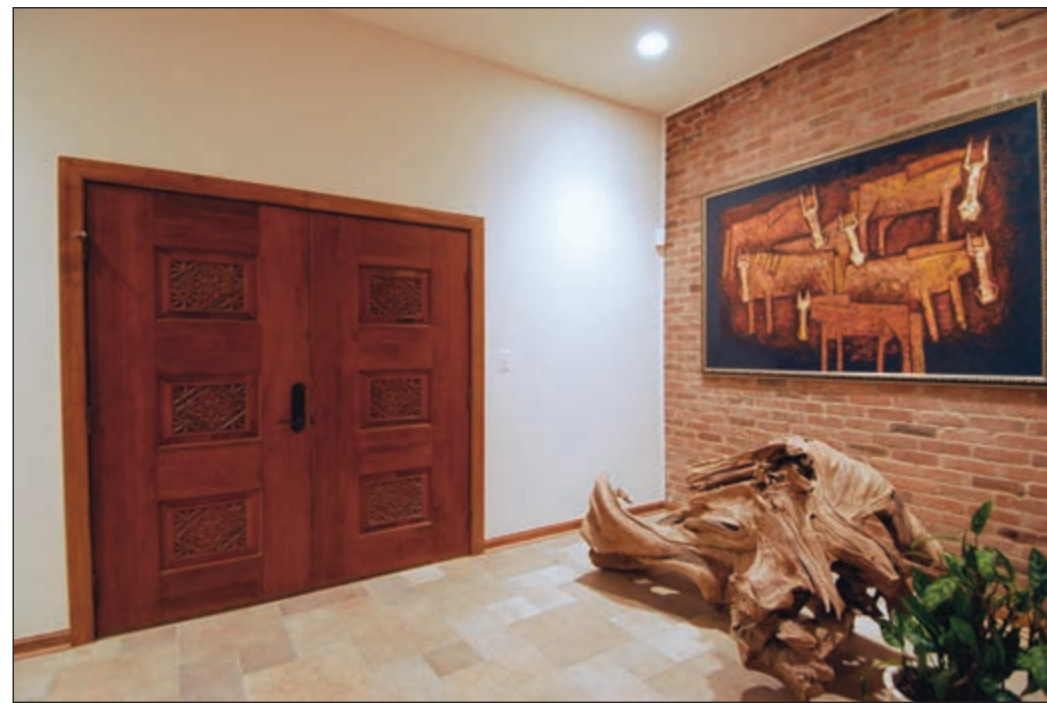


THE TOP TEN SALES IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

 MCLEAN 6450 OLD CHESTERBROOK RD, MCLEAN, VA 22101 \$731,000 4 bed, 2 bath	 MCLEAN 2014 FRANKLIN AVE, MCLEAN, VA 22101 \$3,200,000 6 bed, 5 bath	 VIENNA 603 GIBSON DR SW, VIENNA, VA 22180 \$540,000 2 bed, 3 bath	 VIENNA 401 MASHIE DR SE, VIENNA, VA 22180 \$1,685,470 4 bed, 3 bath	 RESTON 2358 PADDOCK LN, RESTON, VA 20191 \$629,900 4 bed, 3 bath
 RESTON 12200 DARK STAR CT, RESTON, VA 20191 \$775,000 5 bed, 3 bath	 FAIRFAX 4424 CORTEZ DR, FAIRFAX, VA 22030 \$407,000 5 bed, 2 bath	 FAIRFAX 4907 MAURY CT, FAIRFAX, VA 22032 \$804,900 5 bed, 4 bath	 CENTREVILLE 14628 BATAVIA DR, CENTREVILLE, VA 20120 \$445,000 4 bed, 2 bath	 CENTREVILLE 5505 LAVATERA CT, CENTREVILLE, VA 20120 \$815,000 4 bed, 4 bath



The new gourmet kitchen is finished in an elegant craftsman-style interior. Dark cherry-wood cabinet facings in conjunction with Brazilian Verde Marinese marble surfaces lend tonal and textural contrast. Diagonally arranged mosaic backsplashes, interspersed with copper tiles embossed with a floral motif add visual rhythm.



Recessed lights and periodic objects d'arte complete the appealing gallery-like ambiance that starts at the foyer.

HOMES

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2,000-square-foot addition, which he wanted to site on the existing structure's south side as a component in the home's new facade. Complications showed up early. While previous studies had suggested that the addition would require a three-to-four foot foundation, as the project matured, Fairfax County determined that the proposed depth was inadequate. In fact, the excavation eventually reached to 15 feet below grade—a significant increase in required operations costs.

"None of us expected the soil's compaction problem," Martin says. "But Michael Nash executed all the additional foundation work without even asking me for a contribution."

Further studies revealed the need to firm-up the grade on the structure's south side to accommodate a new driveway. A well had to be relocated from the front of the house to the rear. Structural supports and changes to utility lines were required. "But it was all in the budget," Martin affirms.

The Art of the Facade

The proposed addition's foremost consideration was architectural: how to present the home's new multi-level block within a balanced and well-articulated new facade.

Out of the gate, Shawn Nazemian, Michael Nash's designer, proposed changing the old addition's cladding from wood to brick. Martin had always envisioned a tower as the facade's defining component; Nazemian suggested using blue quarry stone which had been employed in the earlier addition to vary

the color scheme.

Stone, thus, became the defining facing material for both the tower and an architecturally-sympathetic stairway further down the slope.

Nazemian also designed the new facade's roof slopes, re-aligning the symmetry by bringing the tower forward. This led to a decision to sharpen architectural unity by incorporating two porches with pillars on either side of the tower.

The changes work nicely, the new facade "scaling back" the potentially overwhelming mass of the new front elevation.

"The idea is to give [the] viewer visually-varied components," says Nazemian. "The eye lingers because there are compelling constituent parts within a balanced whole."

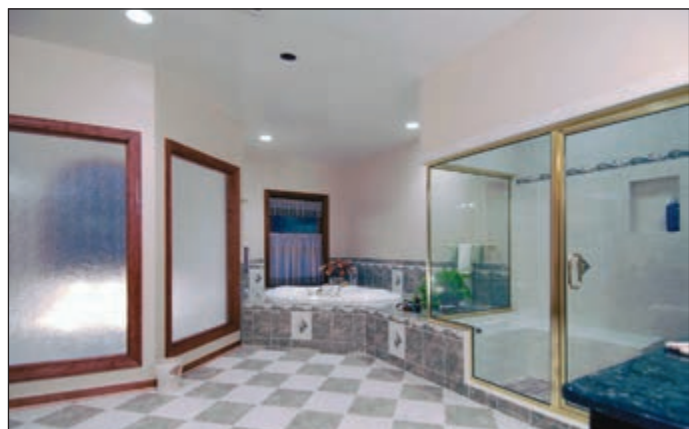
Since the re-designed facade impacted the home's interior, assigning alternate purposes to old walls inspired a whole series of innovative solutions.

The former west-facing brick wall, for instance, was incorporated into a spacious new foyer that un-

folds as a "procession" as one enters the new front door under the central tower. Referencing the brick's color and textures, the foyer flooring consists of thoughtfully-assembled, multi-hued flagstone panels. The large Palladian window in the tower at the entrance invites natural light and draws the eye upwards. At the opposite end of the corridor, a museum-sized piece of Indonesian driftwood draws attention forward.

Recessed lights and featured objects d'arte complete the appealing, gallery-like ambiance. To the left, through a pair of glassing-facing doors, one enters Martin's sizable home office and library; on the right, the old front door and double-hung windows have been converted into generous archways accessing, respectively, the living room and a hallway that leads to the dining room and new kitchen.

A west-facing two-car garage (behind the office) is accessible through a door that parallels the archway. The addition's second floor accommodates a guest suite, the laundry and a substantially en-



The master bathroom suites gains natural light by utilizing two discretely frosted 5-by-7 windows that peer into the entrance tower.

5 maintenance skills every homeowner should know

CONTENT PROVIDED BY HOUSE PROPERTIES

Maintaining a home, especially an older one, can be expensive. In fact, experts say homeowners should be prepared to spend roughly 1 percent of their home's value every year on maintenance.

The good news is, you can save on maintenance by completing simple tasks yourself. According to the experts at Underwriters, Inc. these include:

Cleaning the Gutters - To prevent costly damage to your home's foundation, landscaping and siding, remove debris and leaves from the gutters at least twice a year. Don't forget gloves and eye protection!

Open Garage Doors Manually - Don't call a garage technician the next time your power's out - simply locate the (usually red) cord, suspended from the ceiling-mounted operator, in

your garage, and pull it to disconnect the cord from the motor.

Removing Stripped Screws - Avoid causing more damage when screws slip from a screwdriver. Place a rubber band or piece of steel wool over the screw and then try to remove it - if that method fails, use a screw extractor.

Repairing a Leaky Faucet - Leaks can cost hundreds in wasted water. Before you call a plumber, try DIY-ing by shutting off the main water supply, removing the faucet's knobs, and checking the washers, stems and O-rings for signs of damage. Take these pieces to the hardware store to find exact replacements.

Stop a Running Toilet - Another plumber job you can do yourself! Remove the lid to the tank behind the toilet, and check the flush lever, rubber flapper, lift chain, float ball, pump and overflow tube. A running toilet

usually requires just a simple adjustment or replacement to fix.

If you can master these essential homeowner skills, you'll not only save money on maintenance, but also the expense of more costly fixes in the future.

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The now west-facing two-car garage is accessible through an interior door that parallels the archway. The addition's second floor accommodates a guest suite, the laundry and a substantially enlarged master bathroom suite.

larged master bathroom suite.

"The addition is a seamless complement to the old house—with a very functional first level floor plan," Martin notes enthusiastically. "The foyer is spacious and welcoming—a destination in its own right. The office gains privacy, and one doesn't go through the living room to get to the kitchen."

Reconfigured and Upgraded

If the addition accommodates activities that previously had no dedicated spatial component, it's the clever reconfiguration of existing space that lifts the house into the realm of luxury living. Co-opting a portion of the new addition, the Michael Nash plan allocates 270 square feet for a master bath-

room suite immediately adjacent to the existing owner's quarters while converting the former bathroom to walk-in closets.

Fundamentally, the new master bathroom is a luxury spa in every sense. Configured to borrow about a third of the new addition's front-facing rooms, the suite gains natural light by utilizing two discretely frosted 5-by-7 windows that peer into the entrance tower.

A whirlpool bath on a raised ceramic dais is neatly tucked under a front window. A large glass shower complete with L-shaped Tuscan marble seats provides a perfect chamber for relaxing after a steamy bath.

Built-ins include a walnut brown cherry wood vanity/wash

basin combination with a peacock green granite surface. Marbleized porcelain floor tiling in diagonal patterns emphasize the room's spaciousness while conferring unity.

"The interior design really went quickly," Martin recalls. "I could find everything I was looking for in the Michael Nash showroom, and they have designers on site. It's a very efficient process."

Martin also praises the on-site installers and work crew, the customer service staff, and Michael Nash president and CEO, Sonny Nazemian, who was available throughout the construction process:

"Sonny came over several times when I needed to talk over my concerns. It was reassuring, and always helpful."

Gourmet Kitchen

As if to highlight the showroom's range of interior design styles, Martin's new gourmet kitchen is finished in an elegant craftsman-style interior. Dark cherry wood cabinet facings in conjunction with Brazilian Verde Marinese marble surfaces lend tonal and textural contrast. Diagonally arranged mosaic backsplashes, interspersed with copper tiles embossed with a floral motif, add visual rhythm.

A dual-purpose island provides a cook's sink, dishwasher and food preparation area while a slightly lower lunch counter spares diners a too-close view of the clean-up.

In all, it is a pleasant place to call home.

The renovation also won Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes a "Contractor of the Year" (COTY) Award from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, Metro D.C. chapter. The project was named the Washington area's "best addition in the \$250,000-\$500,000" range.

Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes periodically offers workshops on home remodeling topics. For information: (703)-641-9800 or www.MichaelNash-Kitchens.com.

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