

# Master Suite Enables Aging-in-Place

Solution addresses long-term needs arising from spouse's health.

BY JOHN BYRD

**F**red and Liz Saalfeld had occupied their four-bedroom 2,800-square-foot Colonial in Springfield for nearly five decades when the unexpected caused them to reconsider basic housing needs. Without warning, Liz Saalfeld suffered a heart attack. Her mobility — previously hampered by arthritis — now became seriously compromised.

Looking ahead, a wheelchair-access plan also now seemed prudent to Fred Saalfeld, who increasingly relied a pair of canes to get around.

The proposed retrofit was a tall order, however. The master bedroom was on the second floor; the laundry room in the basement. There was an open carport, but no extra storage space. The master bathroom was just too narrow for a wheelchair — assuming there was a way to mount the stairs.

Equally relevant, the home's surrounding landscaping was undeveloped, with a steep hill in the backyard. There were places to sit, but no quiet places to stretch out and relax.

Acting decisively, Saalfeld sought fresh ideas from local remodelers — eventually deciding on Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes who had previously remodeled his kitchen.

"Michael Nash was very responsive to our needs, and really understood Aging-In-Place considerations," Saalfeld said.

Part of that responsiveness arose from Sonny Nazemian, Michael Nash's founder and president, and a Universal Design Certified Remodeler (UDCR), who commenced drafting design ideas with the Saalfelds on the first meeting.

"Aging-in-place (AIP) is becoming one of the high-demand remodeling services segments," Nazemian said. "But it's a specialty area — and requires staying on top of ever-evolving ADA (American with Disabilities Act) regulations, and strict building codes."

From the first, Nazemian pictured an addition extending from the rear elevation. The Saalfeld would gain expanded sleeping quarters and each spouse would have their own walk-in closet. A wheelchair-friendly bathroom replete with in-shower bench, grab bars and hand-held body spray nozzles would be specially designed. The laundry room would be moved to the



**The Saalfelds added a wheelchair friendly master suite to the four bedroom colonial they had occupied for over 50 years. The 1,200-square-foot addition extends from the old rear elevation into a formerly hilly backyard. The new addition includes a laundry, a spacious ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) master suite with "his" and "her" wardrobe closets. The French doors access a flagstone patio, and newly landscaped grounds surrounded by a privacy fence. The addition also has a dedicated HVAC system**

first floor

At 1,200 square feet, the new master suite addition features a 14-foot cathedral ceiling and double French doors that segue to a flagstone patio. To create the needed 28' x 42' footprint, Nazemian excavated down three feet from the existing surface, removed six metric tons of earth and — to achieve the necessary compaction — planted a grove of Tock's shrubbery.

To control water runoff, designers introduced a French drain and swell linked to an infiltration trench.

With the foundation issues resolved, attention turned to the new addition's space plan and design. Exterior brick cladding was matched to the home's original masonry

creating a seamless enlargement of the existing house. Interior floors were, likewise, milled and finished to blend with the hardwood floors in the existing structure.

"The interior style is very consistent throughout," Saalfeld said. "It's very much one house."

To ensure natural light and comfort, Nazemian specified low-E, double Argon-filled glass for all windows including a pair of double French doors that lead to the patio. A smaller louvered door was created for the family's Irish setter who exercises in a side yard.

A new split-system HVAC unit was installed to provide the new addition with dedicated heat and air control. The solution proved to be a money-saver, since it concentrates temperature requirements



**The shower is equipped with grab bars, a bench and hand-held nozzles — all of which Fred Saalfeld uses in his daily bathing routine.**

in rooms where the couple spend most of their time.

The master bathroom (at 200 square feet) is a masterpiece of efficiency and warmth. The door from the bedroom is 32" wide with the 90 degree swing radius required by the ADA-regulations — yet the interior design is soft and earthy, porcelain tiling offset by walnut cabinet facings and a granite-topped vanity.

Best yet, a series of well-defined walkways link garden focal points with a mid-yard gazebo. Surrounded by a privacy fence, the grounds are a nicely protected Eden, perfect for quiet enjoyment.

For more information, call 703-641-9800 or visit MichaelNashKitchens.com

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**With a pair of walk-in wardrobe closets on the left, and access to a first level laundry and master bedroom on the right, the access corridor from the main house is spacious. The French doors open into the dining room. Michael Nash matched the original hardwood flooring to create a seamless unity between the old house and the new addition.**



**The louvered door on the right is for the family's Irish setter, who exercises in the side yard. All doors are at least 32 inches wide and have a 90 degree clearing width.**