

# The new frontier: townhouse renovation – part three

## ■ Practices for more spacious, attractive and comfortable townhouses

By JOHN BYRD  
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Last week, “The new frontier: townhouse renovation -part two” featured the expansion of the middle of a three-level Merrifield townhouse. Part three will illustrate how a whole-house makeover in Clarendon meets the owners’ long-term needs.

Increasing the living space in a townhouse requires a demanding set of skills.

“There are usually structural and building code issues involved,” says remodeler Sonny Nazemian. “We often discover that the original builder did not optimize the space plan in the build-out, so there’s a lot of wasted square footage that can be put to better use.”

Nazemian should know, as founder and CEO of Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes, the remodeler has renovated hundreds of townhomes, frequently winning top peer awards from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, the National Association of Home Builders and Qualified Remodeler Magazine among other purveyors of highest quality work.

That being said, the investment incentive for renovating a local townhouse has been steadily improving. In the past 12 months, real estate assessments for townhomes in northern Virginia have increased at a faster annual rate (3.15 percent) than single family homes (2.36 percent) -- and with new metro stations driving demand, resale values are growing.

Add to this homeowner passion for both long-term occupancy and distinctive interior design and it’s clear that there’s a “sea-change” in attitudes about townhomes.

“Expectations for townhomes have evolved,” Nazemian observes. “As a company, we’ve been instrumental in introducing expanded plans with enhanced storage capacity, cleaner sightlines and designs that truly satisfy personal,



PHOTO BY JUNE STANICH

To gain kitchen floor space, designers removed a pantry, relocated the refrigerator, reconfigured a powder room and re-routed plumbing. The room’s centerpiece is a custom-designed 6-by-4-ft food preparation island and dining counter with three stools.

functional and aesthetic considerations. Townhouse renovation has become one of the real frontiers in northern Virginia’s very dynamic housing market.”

### Clarendon Whole house makeover satisfies family’s long-term needs

“We decided that this townhouse would be our long-term home when we adopted our daughter some years ago,” Michael Orazo says. “Improving floorplan efficiency and storage were high on the list. But we also wanted better lighting, Aging-In-Place considerations and “transitional”-style interior design.”

The goal: create a more fluidly interactive space-- without adding on.

Early on, Orazo began researching interior ideas-- while keeping an eye out for a building professional who got their vision.

“Once we found the Micheal Nash showroom, our path became easier,” the owner recalls. “Finishwork ideas and designers with relevant insights were at our fingertips, but we could browse at

will. Also, we were attracted to the fixed price policy.”

An early phase focused on what remodelers call “discovery”: assessing existing systems and how well they function, or don’t.

“A traditional production house is like a movie set,” Nazemian says. “A lot of what you see is designed-in to convey a lifestyle image, but the plan may not be functional as you want.”

To execute needed changes, the design team concentrated on finding more usable floor space within the envelop of the existing structure. The bigger task, however, was top-to-bottom modifications that would make better use of three components:

- A primary living area on the second level that included a rear-facing galley kitchen, a powder room, a dining zone and a front-facing parlor.
- Top floor sleeping quarters incorporating a master suite, second full bath and the daughter’s bedroom.
- A first-level consisting mainly of foyer, hall with closet and rear recreation room that segues to a back garden.



PHOTO BY JUNE STANICH

Before: Removing a pass-thru partition added 21 square feet of floor space.

comfortable stools, it’s also the spot for in-kitchen dining.

Next step: a more cohesive interior design in the great room.

A wood-burning fireplace with brick-facing mantle was replaced with a gas-burning unit embedded in floor-to-ceiling stacked stone back wall. The elevated ledge inside the boxed bay window was replaced with a three component window seat.”

Upstairs, two goals prevailed:

1. A more space-efficient master suite.
2. A similar solution for daughter’s quarters.

Given the importance of inches, designers created a niche in the master bath for a 3-by-3-ft linen closet. The team then designed a wardrobe system that neatly occupies the bedroom inside wall.

“His” and “her” closets with Shaker-style doors now accommodate everything on hangers. But there are also two built-in bureaus, and shelves for pull-out wicker

baskets.

The first-level foyer now provides storage for personal items as well as bench for changing shoes, coat hooks, overhead shelves. The re-tiled hall floor segues to a rear recreation room that accesses a back garden.

Here a bright cherry wood floor and accent wall coloring enliven the room. A built-in desk supports home office needs.

“Overall, we’re getting a lot more out of our house,” Orazo says. “The designers gave us helpful guidance that delivered a very good value. We’re pleased.”

For Information, call: 703-641-9800 or visit: [www.MichaelNashKitchens.com](http://www.MichaelNashKitchens.com)

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