

Extreme Makeover: North Druid Hills

As told to Shandra Hill Smith

Photography by Doug Smith Photography

For the children's bathroom, some of the features Matthews incorporated include a custom vanity cabinet, granite countertops with undermount sinks and water-conserving plumbing fixtures.

Part One

Interior designer Corinne Matthews makes a living drawing up floor plans and recommending products, designs and makeovers for her clients. But this time Matthews is doing a bit of design work for herself. The Atlanta-based talent—and owner of Dream Room Designs, LLC (www.dreamroomdesigns.com)—is renovating the 1970s home she and her two small children moved into in the North Druid Hills area at the end of 2008. The transformation includes the kitchen, a bathroom, family room and foyer.

Here, in her own words, Matthews—a member of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)—outlines some of the home's strikes. In part two of *Extreme Makeover: North Druid Hills*, slated for the fall issue, she'll detail the fixes and share more on additional areas undergoing renovation.

The renovation

My feelings on the renovation are mixed. I'm absolutely loving the end product. The hardest part is living through it, especially with two young children. To my surprise, making selections for myself has also proved to be one of the most difficult tasks. I guess I figured since I do this every day for my clients, it wouldn't be much different for me.

Although the house was dated and pretty ugly when we first saw it, it was in the location that we were looking for and it had all the space we need now, as well as in the future. The original owners added 1,200 square feet in the late 1980s, bringing the total to just over 4,600.

In addition to being very dated, the house was very energy inefficient, as evidenced by the utility bills. The primary goal for the renovation is to use as many "green" products as possible, as well as produce a more functional layout—and, of course, to make it more aesthetically pleasing.

The kitchen

The kitchen was depressing and very uninspiring to cook or eat in. All of the cabinets, appliances, flooring and lighting were removed. One of the windows was removed and replaced with a smaller window so the cabinets could be extended to the end of the kitchen where the prior eat-in area existed. The original kitchen lacked workspace, cabinet space, good general lighting and task lighting. The refrigerator was missing the door shelves and leaked water continuously despite having no connection to water. The freezer had no shelf in it so it was like one large box where you had to pile all the food on top of each other. All of the burners on the cooktop leaned to the side so everything that was cooked burned on one side and barely cooked on the other. The cabinets did not have adjustable shelves making it difficult to store food which doesn't come in a one-size-fits-all package.

The bathroom

The bathroom had avocado yellow countertops and sinks and vanities that were about 29" high (back breaking for anybody over 5' 0"). There were shower doors with so much mold and mildew it would probably take a sandblaster to get it off. The doors were inconvenient since I have to bathe small children in the tub. The bathroom also lacked a mirror and had very strange sconces that were mounted on the ceiling instead of on the wall. The ventilation fan, while it worked, was so loud you would have to raise your voice eight or nine decibels to hear yourself think when it was on.

The future

This makeover is the start to bringing this very dated house into the 21st century by creating a well balanced, eco-friendly and visually pleasing design that is both functional now and for years.

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Resources

Interceramic www.interceramic.com

WAC Lighting www.waclighting.com

Lowe's www.lowes.com

RM COCO www.rmco.com

Benjamin Moore www.benjaminmoore.com

The products in Matthews' makeover include custom cabinets, GE Profile appliances, granite countertops, Interceramic glass tile (for backsplash), Halo 4" recessed can lights from Lowe's and pendant lights from WAC Lighting.