

EXTREME Makeover: North Druid Hills Part Two

As told to Shandra Hill Smith

Photography by Doug Smith Photography

The transformation in the family room includes the additions of a built-in, eco-friendly fireplace by EcoSmart; lights, moulding and insulation from Lowe's; InterCeramic tile surrounding the fireplace and Benjamin Moore paint.

In recent months, interior designer Corinne Matthews juggled the roles of professional and client when she took on a major project at her North Druid Hills home. Matthews, owner of Dream Room Designs, LLC (www.dreamroomdesigns.com), renovated four areas of the 1970s home she and her two small children moved into in 2008—the family room, foyer, kitchen and children's bathroom. The main objectives were to create a higher level of energy efficiency through the use of environmentally friendly finishes and appliances, improve the functionality of the space, and make it more aesthetically pleasing.

Here, Matthews, allied member, American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), details the transformation of the family room and foyer in Part Two of Extreme Makeover: North Druid Hills.



"In the foyer, large, decorative raised panels on the walls help to provide visual interest while mimicking the large-scale tile on the floor," says Matthews.

Thoughts about renovation

This has been a very interesting experience filled with many ups and downs and mixed emotions. It has given me a better understanding of how my clients feel living through a renovation. Being without a kitchen for several weeks was the most difficult since it is such an essential room in the house.

Seeing the walls come down and things come apart during the demolition was exciting. Each time something new arrived, I felt like a kid waking up on Christmas morning. This was definitely the feeling when the kitchen cabinets arrived, when the countertops were installed and when the fireplace was finally finished.

There is also the not-so-exciting side of a renovation. The two things that I won't miss? All the dust and the inconvenience of not having the use of the space, especially the kitchen.

The Family Room

The family room and the kitchen are the main entertainment areas in the house.

In the family room, new insulation and drywall were added on the walls and ceiling. A new lighting plan, with can lights, accent lights and a ceiling fan, followed. The main feature of the new family room is a built-in, vent-less, eco-friendly fireplace.

Cabinets on either side of the fireplace provide both open and closed storage. The open storage is for the television components, as well as items I would like to display, with the closed providing an easy place for the kids to put away their toys.

The Foyer

In the foyer, the old vinyl flooring was removed and replaced with a durable, low-maintenance, easy-to-clean ceramic tile floor. I also replaced the thresholds and door sweeps to reduce the drafts entering through the front door. The old light in the foyer was replaced with a new light with energy-efficient bulbs. Large, decorative raised panels have been added to the foyer walls that mimic the linear feel of the large-scale tile on the floor to provide visual interest. Larger tiles make the space feel larger. Eventually the double-

entry doors will be replaced with energy-efficient steel doors that have glass to allow more natural light to enter the foyer.

Lessons learned:

Planning is key. The more comprehensive the plan before you begin, the smoother the process. I can't stress enough how critical it is to hire a professional. A good designer will find out what your individual/family needs are and incorporate those into the plan for the renovation rather than giving you a cookie cutter plan.

Know what you want, what you can afford, and where you're willing/not willing to compromise if you can't get exactly what you want.

Resources

EcoSmart www.ecosmart.com

Lowe's www.lowes.com

Benjamin Moore www.benjaminmoore.com

Interceramic www.interceramic.com

WAC Lighting www.waclighting.com

RM COCO www.rmco.com

Duralee Fabrics www.duralee.com

Johnston Casuals www.johnstoncasuals.com