

DON'T RAZE RE-INVENT

DESIGN
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Traditional home updated in a fanciful design romp

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STYLING ACCESSORIES PROVIDED BY BOUCLAIR HOME

RE-INVENTING A CENTURY-OLD HOME for a modern family of four in Toronto's exclusive Lawrence Park North neighbourhood was a challenge that interior designer Catlin Stothers took on with gusto.

Built in 1912, the 2,800-square-foot, three-storey house passed through the hands of three generations before Ron and Jo Ann Dizey bought it in 2003. Rather than raze the building, which was crying out for an overhaul, the owners decided to renovate. The couple wanted

to modify the building without increasing its footprint, but hoped at the same time to create more space and let in as much light as possible.

Much of the interior was divided into small areas, so their objective was to come up with a floor plan that would make better use of available space and be more welcoming. A long, narrow corridor from the entry all the way to the rear of the house felt like a thoroughfare. The family dreamed of turning it into a functional and orderly space.

Stothers put her detail-oriented approach and problem-solving talent to work, getting the most out of the limited square footage. With touches of traditionalism and contemporary whimsy, her design catches the eye.

"I couldn't have done it without Catlin," said Jo Ann. "She gave me confidence and helped me stay true to the vision." 

Due to its angular format, the front room lacked the space to accommodate standard-sized furniture. A backless chaise longue and suspended Bubble chair are the perfect solution.



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Each room acts like a dramatic opening scene, dazzling viewers with plays of walnut timber, glass and stone finishes, textural fabrics and colourful art. Walls of understated white and soft grey are combined with distinctive and slightly quirky statement pieces, adding character and a sense of fun.

The original interior was very dark with exposed painted brick, wainscoting and heavy gumwood detailing. During renovation, ceilings were pushed up by one foot and walls were pushed

out. All the original decorative detailing and mouldings were squared off, leaving clean lines.

Gleaming white Statuario marble floors with radiant heating add luxury to the entry. Dark-stained timber flooring in maple continues throughout the rest of the interior, grounding the space and creating a pleasing contrast with the surrounding white. Unassuming plaster walls are dramatically juxtaposed with feature wallpaper that adds visual interest and further counterbalances the white.

In a room for quiet reading and relaxing that Jo Ann affectionately calls “the away room” are modern design pieces such as a transparent Bubble chair suspended from the ceiling. Other pieces convey whimsy, such as the wall-hung set of staggered miniature sculptures of climbing men, or the white ceramic poodle lamp with fancy feather shade. An office unit with floor-to-ceiling storage for Jo Ann’s office supplies cleverly conceals an old-style radiator. 





(Opposite) The family room's custom-made walnut storage units are paired with metal finishes, imparting a sense of drama and warmth. (Below) A sleek white console table is offset by a kaleidoscope of colour in the form of 500 balloons intricately wound around a wooden stool. The piece is called Balloona and is by Canadian artist Natalie Kruch.



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Designers know the effectiveness of a striking canvas: the focal point of the dining room is a painting of an owl in bright colours. It overlooks a custom-made, 10-foot-long, walnut table and bench seat that were tailored to suit the proportions of the room.

The kitchen adjoining the dining area has simple clean lines and a high ceiling. A spectacular pendant light called The Molecule illuminates an 11-foot island and its Caesarstone top. A new wall separating the kitchen

from the entry foyer was added along with a magnificent walk-in pantry and its hidden breakfast station.

The family room is visually linked to the kitchen by a dramatic floor-to-ceiling storage unit that forms part of a load-bearing wall. The walnut-veneered unit holds the homeowners' crockery. Entering the family room, the eyes lift toward an impressive cathedral ceiling and a Juliette balcony behind which is a study.

With their eye for detail and sense of fun, designer and client have created a balance between simplicity and eccentricity – an ideal marriage. **»**

The original walk-through closet and the ensuite were merged to allow for a more substantial and comfortable master bathroom. The Statuario marble and walnut finishes have been repeated upstairs to create continuity.

