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Pleasure Point home makeover is complete

By Jennifer Barley: Design for Living

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the final article of a four-part series following Paul and Cheryl Johnson as they remodel their Pleasure Point home.

Home sweet home.

Paul and Cheryl Johnson have moved back into their Pleasure Point home after a renovation and are enjoying the fruits of contractor James Hartje's labor.

The Johnsons began in December with plans to remodel the interior to create a more spacious feel. Their old, outdated kitchen needed a complete gutting, while a second bedroom needed insulation so their son, Fisher, could use the room. Their master bath had not been used in years and needed an overhaul. The entryway to the home was due for an update as well.

The Johnsons decided to redefine the 1,450 square feet of space within the existing footprint of the home using James Hartje Construction as the contractor.

Their original contract amount was approximately \$125,000.

The project is finished — one day earlier than contracted. "It feels so wonderful to be moved back into our home." Cheryl Johnson says with a huge smile.

The transformation has been amazing. From improved curb appeal of the entryway of their home to a now-beautiful bathroom, the changes are everywhere you look.

The entrance to the home now has a true Pleasure Point cottage feel.

The columns have been transformed with river rock, pulling out the colors from the entryway slate; a new front door brings together the Craftsman charm, and another light was installed to bring balance to the home. When you walk to the front door, you are greeted by warmth.

The new kitchen, dining area and living room just flows. By creating a vaulted ceiling and knocking down the walls that confined a tiny square of a kitchen — the volume in the room feels perfect.

In The Kitchen With Cheryl

Besides looking good, the house is more functional.

"It is amazing what a difference a regular-size oven, an extra-deep sink and a dishwasher can make on a day-to-day basis," says the busy mother of two. "Just in time saving alone, these changes helps me accomplish tasks faster."

Cheryl use to have to bake muffins one tin at a time in her old 1940's Wedgwood oven. Now her



□ The kitchen feels spacious and the two-tone cabinets help to keep the area airy and interesting. (Shmuel Thaler / Sentinel)

kitchen is a multi-functional hub that allows her to watch the kids and cook dinner.

The kitchen feels spacious and looks beautiful. The two-tone cabinets help to keep the area airy and interesting and cream-colored tile, set in a subway pattern, breaks up the Ceasarstone countertop and her upper cabinets.

"Sometimes it is hard to visualize how things are going to turn out," says Paul Johnson, "I wasn't sure if more than one person was going to be able to work in the kitchen at a time. But there is plenty of room for us to both be in here. I love it."

The Johnsons use to have to go outside and downstairs underneath their house to do laundry. Now, they have a state of the art stackable washer and dryer on the first floor of their home.

Room For Toys

Fisher's room has been made into a little boy haven. The ceiling was vaulted for the feeling of more space, a new window was added, and the closet has been organized to house lots of toys and clothes.

"In the past, Fisher's room could only be used as a daytime play room. The space had no insulation before, and it wasn't functional as a bedroom," explains Cheryl who is happy that Fisher now has his own room.

While structural work was not done in Janie's room, she did get a chair rail or wall border installed, new paint, a new dutch door plus an organized closet as well.

The paint colors came out well throughout the house. All of the trim work, ceiling, upper kitchen cabinets and wainscoting are painted a creamy off-white. The main house area is painted the color of a rosemary sprig. From each room, the paint colors flow from one area to another. Although not originally planned, the Johnson's ended up painting a warm color in every room in the house.

Master Bath

The master bathroom is now functional after seven years of non-use. The tile work is fabulous. Cheryl selected a staggered pattern for the floor, with the same tiles in the shower area.

A stone pattern added a sense of nature to the shower, which boasts two showerheads. The medicine cabinet has an electrical outlet on the inside to hide away electric toothbrushes. The cabinet knobs are smooth stones that tie the whole area together.

While You're At It ...

The Johnsons ended up spending 38 percent over their original \$125,000 contract, which is just about \$50,000 more than they intended.

"A project size can grow due to various reasons," says Hartje. Typically homeowners find ways to increase their overall project, anywhere from 10-60 percent. "Whether it is finding the unknown after a job begins or just having the confidence in the contractor to take on the additional work while the main project is under way, projects can definitely grow in size," according to Hartje.

"As the project was under way, there was more and more areas we wanted to address while the house was already in construction mode," explains Paul, "We kept saying 'while your at it,' but we always knew where we stood because Hartje was great about providing all requested change orders in writing."

After signing the first contract, here's some of the improvements the Johnsons decided to add on to the remodel project:

- The entry was replaced.
- Fisher's bedroom ceiling was vaulted.
- Wainscoting was installed throughout the main living space.
- Windows were retrimmed.
- New master bedroom closet doors were added.
- The entire lower portion of their roof was insulated and redone.
- New texture was applied to the master bedroom and back family room.
- All the wood floors were refinished.
- The entire interior of the house was repainted.
- Lots of behind the studs work was added as well to help the overall quality and structure of the home.
- Materials were upgraded as well.

"We are 100 percent happy with the way the house has turned out. It was money well spent," Paul says.

The Johnsons were lucky to buy their house in the late 1990s when things were a bit more affordable, but it's taken years to really make the house the way they wanted. The overall cost of the entire remodel was \$122 per square foot.

While there are many factors that can determine an average cost per square foot, such as location, foundation issues, quality of materials chosen; new construction costs can range between \$190-\$295 per square foot.

The Johnsons also feel fortunate to have hired Hartje.

"I would recommend Jim to anyone. The guy is an amazing project manager and attention to detail," says Paul. "Not only does he do a great job, I just like his personality and his approach. Very easy to work with."

Cheryl had more of the day-to-day interactions with Jim as it was up to her to pay close attention to every final decision that was happening to house.

"It was a pretty intense few months," reflects Cheryl. "The number of decisions that needed to be made quickly was a lot. Jim helped me to prioritize, and he always provided numerous solutions so I could make the best choice for our family."

Job Well Done

Now that they've moved back into their home, the pace for the Johnsons has slowed down. Although necessary, the Johnsons were happy to move out of their temporary rental where they have been the last five months.

"It feels so good to get back to our regular life," explains Cheryl, "it is like we have moved into a brand new house."

Hartje feels great about the work his team completed on the remodel.

"Paul and Cheryl were really reasonable to work with," reflects Hartje, "I look forward to working with them on their next house."

Hartje says doing the best job means taking into account all the factors of the job. He even framed in the wall for a new basement door at no charge to ensure the job was up to his standards. Even with the extensive work that was added to the contract, Hartje was still able to get the Johnson's back in the home

one day early.

"It is amazing to realize that Paul and I now have a home that completely reflects who are as a family," says Cheryl. And it is true; the house is warm, comfortable, casual and full of life. Just like the Johnsons.

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