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Annexing a porch gains space for a beautiful new bath

The real estate ad said “three bedrooms,” but when Rob and Sarah Dailey of Atlanta went to look at the house for sale, one of the “bedrooms” turned out to be a screened sleeping porch that probably hadn’t seen use since the arrival of air conditioning. They bought the little 1920s bungalow anyway, and now, much later, are grateful for that unused extra space. The old porch was adjacent to the home’s one tiny bathroom, so they were able to annex it recently to double the size of the bath and add a much-needed laundry room.

After years of thinking about how to improve their bathroom, the couple called Small Carpenters at Large, an Atlanta design/build firm, and began a collaboration with designer Amanda Johnson and contractor Daniel Feig-Sandoval. “I had so many ideas of what I wanted,” says Sarah, “and, thank goodness, they talked me out of most of them. If we’d done it without their help, we would have made a lot of mistakes.” The pros were in complete agreement, however, with the couple’s wish for a light, airy aesthetic and vintage-style fixtures and materials appropriate to the period when the structure was built.

Because the couple did not want a vanity, one challenge was incorporating enough storage without cramping the open space with heavy-looking cabinetry. Johnson accomplished this feat by recessing storage in the wall at one end of the tub, placing shelves in a half-wall that cordons off the toilet, and opting for console sinks with wide decks and shelves underneath for stacking towels. The most innovative idea, however, was one of Sarah’s: a linen closet



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERICA GEORGE DINES



Beneath the old-fashioned console sinks, chrome shelves provide storage for towels. Details with vintage style, like the medicine cabinets and bead-board wainscoting, give the bathroom a period look that suits the age of the house.

Right: The toilet area gains some privacy from the shower and a half-wall. **Opposite:** A window offers bathers a garden view.



that opens into both the bathroom and the laundry. Dirty clothes can be tossed into the hamper from the bathroom side and later retrieved in the laundry room and thrown in the wash. Conversely, clean towels and linens can be stacked in the closet as they are taken out of the dryer, and then accessed from the bath.

The walls are lined with bead-board wainscoting that imparts an early 20th-century look; small hexagonal tiles on the floor do the same. All the millwork is painted a bright white, which contrasts neatly with the soft green walls.

Finally, although the front of the shower is glass, the sidewall is solid to

create privacy around the adjacent toilet. And because the Daileys use the whirlpool tub more often than they do the

shower, Johnson placed a window above it so bathers could enjoy sunlight and a view.

From the start of demolition, the project took almost three months, and because this is the only bath in the house, the couple had to move out temporarily. "We considered everything from renting an RV to taking solar showers outdoors, but luckily a nearby rental house became available," says Sarah. The remodeling was definitely worth the inconvenience. "This is the nicest room in our house," she says. "Now we're just hoping to do the same to our kitchen." ■

Good Relations

Follow these important tips to maintain a productive relationship with your contractor.

- ▶ Get recommendations for contractors from friends and neighbors. Look at finished projects and ask questions about the remodeler's character and workmanship.
- ▶ When interviewing candidates, look for someone you can talk to easily and whose view of the job matches yours. Find a person you'll feel comfortable having in your home daily.
- ▶ Ask candidates submitting bids to break down costs. If materials aren't specified, contractors may list low allowances that cover only the cheapest products.
- ▶ Go over the job contract to ensure that all required work is covered and materials are specified. Resolve questions like where supplies will be stored, who will get keys, and how and when the site will be cleaned.
- ▶ Listen to the advice of your contractor, who has on-the-job experience, when making design and materials choices. Put all final decisions in writing—it's too easy to later forget what you opted for.
- ▶ Meet for an update at least once a week to resolve any issues together, and ask the contractor for a timetable with deadlines for ordering products or making last-minute decisions.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to ask "acquid" questions. The biggest problem between contractors and homeowners is miscommunication.
- ▶ Count on making a few change orders, or alterations to your original plan, mid-project, and add 10 percent to your budget to cover them.
- ▶ To end the job, do a walk-through with your contractor and write up a punch list. When making your final payment, withhold double the cost of any unfinished features until they are completed.

Great Detail

Douglas and Joanna Scott, owners of a vibrant, art-filled Michigan home, felt it had one weak link: a dated Colonial-style stair rail that had become an eyesore. As fans of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, a Scottish architect and designer whose unique style drew on the Art Nouveau, Arts-and-Crafts, and Modernist movements, they asked Ann Arbor designer Gary Rochman to replace the railing with a new one in the Scott's style. Rochman's design combines the aesthetic with the practical: blacksmith Kyle Connolly rendered the organic and

geometric forms of the latticework panels in forged steel, riveted and hammered steel, and hammered bronze. Rochman chose bubinga, a type of African rosewood, for the handrail and the spheres that top the newel posts. Its silky smoothness and warm, rich color contrast beautifully with the metal surfaces. The railing matches the panache of the house and is, in fact, a work of art itself.



