

A BUILDTIME STORY

Well planned design produces stunning dream home

By Lynn Fenwick B.I.D.

THE STORY BEHIND A BUILD, whether it be a new home or a renovation of any kind is always interesting. Each story is different, because each client is unique and has their own specific needs and wishes.

This story begins with a phone call. Suzanne and Otto were referred to me by another client. A referral is always the best way to start since trust on a job of this size is so important. They were moving to Winnipeg and had purchased property to build their dream home. They thought they had a good handle on what they wanted, but preferred to have someone who would pull it all together for them and keep them aligned with their personal style. Suzanne and Otto had started plans, but nothing was final. Securing a designer in these initial stages of the design allowed for the plan design to be refined (massaged). This point in the building process is so important. By positioning the millwork and the furniture in the plan, according to the Suzanne and Otto's lifestyle and preferences, as a designer I could ensure they would have sufficient room for traffic flow and specific spatial allowances for the performance of the tasks necessary for that area.

I asked if we could meet to discuss the details and actually gave them 'homework' to be done before the meeting. I requested for them to create a 'wish list' – a list of what they wanted and required for their house – and asked them what sense of character they envisioned the home to portray. I proposed that they bring any photos or images that would best describe their style. I find this to be an incredibly beneficial tool for both the client and myself. There is truth in the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words!" Sometimes a client will say they are contemporary, but the images they have selected will tell me that they are more traditional. With images, we don't waste time and money on trying to find the client's style. We can get down to what is important – making their personal style a reality!

Luckily, Otto and Suzanne had done their homework prior to contacting me. That made the first meeting very productive. The character of the home was to reflect their own personal style; relaxed and timeless. They weren't looking for traditional, but leaned in the traditional direction with their millwork. The furniture was to be comfortable with clean lines.





is great for easy clean up. The slab glass sink is elegant and remarkably durable. The cabinet underneath allows for storage and the under lighting creates drama.

The space's unusual shape is highlighted by the wood detail in the ceiling. Small lights called 'beauty spots' were used to add sparkle - as were the pendants! There is a small unexpected detail behind the door in the form of a niche detailed in mosaic tile.

Separate play room that is easily accessed from the main area of the home

Suzanne and Otto requested a designated play area for the children. The couple needed it to be close to the kitchen, but not so close that the children were underfoot. It was to be large enough to allow for small trikes and tent making as well as a place filled with sun light that would spark creativity using all sorts of mediums. The turret was the perfect location! The tall wall unit holds all the

art supplies -and tents! The circular bench holds books and baskets. The two piece bathroom features a sink area with storage for cleanup.

A great room fireplace with a hidden television

The great room and dining room are open to each other. The clients wanted definition of the two spaces. Originally, Otto and Suzanne wanted the TV elsewhere in the home. They revised their thinking once they realized their lifestyle and the house design was to be 'function first.' It was still important to hide the TV. The unit we designed to bring attention to the height of the space. The honed granite horizontal fireplace detail was to ground the unit and define the great room area. The white panels mimic the detail in the kitchen cabinets and blend with the stone feature wall.

The open niche is highlighted from glass that is underlit as is the niche on the end of the unit.

Their wish list included:

Every space to function to the highest degree

Otto and Suzanne are all about clean lines and a classic space, but they were not about to give up function for the sake of design. Throughout the design process we weighed form with function.

A captivating foyer

Suzanne felt just including a curved staircase and high ceiling wasn't enough in the foyer. She was worried it would feel empty and cold. She also wanted a place for guests to sit and put on their boots. The selection for the entrance door definitely added some interest. Fenwick Interior Design added oval floating bulkheads placed on aircraft cable. The first bulkhead was placed close to the upper ceiling. Each subsequent bulkhead was set lower in the space. Spiral lights were placed through the

center of the bulkheads to repeat the spiral in the staircase. The effect connected the upper floor with the main floor comfortably, and created an exciting visual connection between floors.

The elongated corner bench was the product of the reconfiguration of the powder room. It added height, pattern and contemporary element to the space.

The tile was kept neutral to allow for any paint or wallpaper options that might be added in the future.

We are still looking for an area carpet (a home's character is never complete). It is always evolving, like the people within it!

Wow powder room

Suzanne wanted a contemporary powder room. It was to be more of a showpiece, but could be easily cleaned for everyday use. The quartz stone counter and deep apron return





Two offices

Both Suzanne and Otto have high demanding professions where they need their own offices. Otto preferred to be on the main floor where the action is. A door was all he needed if he wanted quiet. His office was located close to the kitchen. He preferred and needed lots of storage for books so it was logical to make the office to look like a library. He required four monitors and a great deal of room to spread out when he was working. The library fireplace was a benefit of the heating design of the home. Called a contra-flow masonry heater, the main structure consists of a 5-ton masonry mass faced. It will slowly radiate heat throughout the house for 24 hours following a single wood fire.

We used limestone on the fireplace and centered the sofa to engage the occupant with the fire in fireplace for those days when Otto wanted a more relaxed work environment. The ceiling detail was important to Otto. The final design incorporated the unique shape of

the room in a more contemporary way, with a nod to traditional.

Suzanne wanted an office that was more open and a space where she could keep an eye on things. The perfect spot was the upper level gallery! The gallery area overlooks the living room / dining room. We designed the portion facing the living room dining room for housing personal mementos and books. The less visible side was designed as Suzanne's office. Open airy and saturated with light, the space makes work so much more enjoyable!

The wish list also included

- » A large desk area and display board for children's artwork.
- » A kitchen for two chefs.
- » A salt water fish tank.
- » A master bedroom/ensuite getaway.
- » A walk in closet with automated conveyer clothes rack.

These we will have to leave for the next issue!

Their wish list and images provided

me with an exceptional understanding of what they wanted yet this spacious new home was a project in which I was allowed to have a lot of creative license. The collaboration with Otto and Suzanne resulted in a smooth work environment, creative design elements, and successful functional solutions. This busy young family did not sacrifice style for functionality. They have now lived in their new home for 4 years and have no regrets!



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