

Small Is Beautiful

A FAMILY PRESERVES A HOUSE IN ARLINGTON WHILE CREATING A GREEN GEM

WRITTEN BY TRISH DONNALLY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY MORGAN HOWARTH

Wendy Mills and Mark Habeeb's new addition provides a beautiful view of the garden. The many windows preclude the need to turn on lights until late. The rug draped on the railing is from the Grand Bazaar in Istanbul. The rug on the ottoman, which is from Stewart Furniture, is from a market in Fez. The Lee Industries sofa and club chairs are from AmericanEye, and the Tufenkian rug is from J. Asher Carpet Couture. The painting is by Mills' mother, the late Adrienne Pletka.

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Evaluating Every Detail

When Wendy Mills and Mark Habeeb decided to remodel the home they'd been living in for 17 years, they were searching for a way to maximize the space they had. They wanted to replace an addition that had been added before they bought the house, which was built in the early 1960s, and improve the flow.

"At a time when small homes like our red brick rambler are being torn down and houses two to three times as big are being put on the same lot, we all believed in the value of a small, functional, exceptional home that respects the history and ethic of the original neighborhood, while providing the comfort and modern conveniences that make life easier," says Mills, who is the project information manager for The Nature Conservancy's Campaign for a Sustainable Planet. Habeeb teaches at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and works as an independent consultant on government relations. Their son Noah is 14. "We really wanted to maintain the integrity of what the house was. It is not all about square footage," Habeeb says.

The couple collaborated with Architect Matthew Ossolinski and Project Designer Michael Merschat,

both of Ossolinski Architects PLLC; Whitney Stewart of Whitney Stewart Interior Design; and Stan Sluga of Recon Construction to create a wonderful, light-filled, environmentally responsible home. "Although it would have been easier to use standard materials as a matter of course, everyone we worked with was eager to go through the learning experience of weighing the benefits and costs of using green materials. We had to make some difficult decisions, but we were comfortable that we made those decisions based on the best analysis available," Mills says.

In addition to saving the original house, which is in the Yorktown neighborhood of Arlington, VA, the family donated their old appliances, light fixtures, sinks, and a tub to ReStore, Habitat for Humanity's store that sells used appliances and other goods at a discount, in Gaithersburg, MD. "We desperately tried to recycle all the appliances and furniture. It wasn't easy. Nobody wanted our windows because they didn't want wooden windows. They only took the vinyl ones. That made it a much bigger effort. When you care about not just putting things in the Dumpster, you have to go to greater lengths," Mills says.

Buddy, the family cockapoo, relaxes on a Lee Industries sectional sofa from AmericanEye next to a pillow made from a recycled Vivienne Tam skirt. The Tufenkian rug is from J. Asher Carpet Couture, the copper kettle drum is from Gump's, and the Oyster Stick lamp is from Ella Scott Design. Adrienne Pletka created *Afterlife*, the botanical artwork of pressed flowers and leaves.

OPPOSITE: The kitchen, which is between the living and family rooms, features Energy Star-rated appliances and a floor made of Marmoleum, a sustainable material. The woven seats of the Janus et Cie bar stools are made of paper from managed forests in Sweden twisted around steel wire.





Chair and ottoman fabric
Summer Hill
Through Hinson & Co.
Aphrodite
Paprika
4026-08



Living room walls
Benjamin Moore
Lapland
AF-410

Eco-minded Alternatives

Ossolinski consulted with EMO Energy Solutions for an energy evaluation on the original house and the architectural plans, then Mills and Habeeb considered the different choices available. In the end, Ossolinski reconfigured the house, removing some walls, dramatically improving the flow, taking advantage of existing overhangs and adding others to control heat gain when he replaced the addition and added a foyer. Low-VOC paints, formaldehyde-free insulation, Energy Star-rated appliances, and 100-percent flue-gas desulfurized drywall were eco-friendly elements used in this project.

"Most of them didn't cost extra money," Ossolinski says. "Wendy and Mark spent a little more money to get argon gas between the double panes, because that has a higher energy efficiency than just a vacuum, but the drywall is the same cost."

By adding a family room with a 12.5-foot-by-10-foot wall of windows, Ossolinski fulfilled the family's wishes by opening the house to the outside. Stewart, who wanted to integrate exteriors with interiors, suggested a soothing sage green as the neutral to run throughout the house. "The green helps pull the back garden through the house to the front garden," Stewart says. Even the landscaping, now filled with native plants, was designed with sustainability in mind by Susan Abraham of Lush Life Landscapes.

"We only increased the footprint of our house by 400 square feet. We wanted to maximize space, not expand our footprint too much," Mills says. The family strived to reduce clutter and get down to essentials. "We're three people and we don't need more space." **ws**

Pratt & Larson Ceramics from Architectural Ceramics surround the fireplace. Dolls in the new foyer are from Ndebele. Matthew Ossolinski designed the center maple wall to stretch from the front of the house to the new addition. Existing floors were saved and filled in where needed.

LEFT: Chair and ottoman are from Janus et Cie.

RESOURCES

■ **EMO Energy Solutions**
703.205.0445
emoenergy.com

■ **Lush Life Landscapes**
540.729.4497
lushlifelandscapes.com

■ **Ossolinski Architects PLLC**
202.966.9449
ossolinskiarchitects.com

■ **Recon Construction**
800.642.7958

■ **Whitney Stewart Interior Design**
202.537.0050
whitneystewartinteriordesign.com

For more text and photos relating to this green home, visit washingtontospaces.com. On the homepage, type code: fa0839.