



Fresh Start

Architect Anne Decker transforms a Foursquare in Chevy Chase, Maryland, into a functional and beautiful home.

BY NANCY E. BERRY | PHOTOS BY GORDON BEALL



Quite often during an old house renovation, the essence of the antique structure gets lost in translation. The historical elements that made the old house wonderful in the first place are discarded and replaced by inferior materials and details. The house is stripped of its character, its soul. Luckily for a 1905 American Foursquare in Chevy Chase, Maryland, this was not the case.

The homeowner, who recently purchased the house, wanted to bring it into the twenty-first century while keeping its integrity in tact. The owner's interior designer, Elizabeth Kannan, had seen award-winning architect Anne Decker's work and shared it with her client, who liked what she saw.

"The house needed massaging," says Decker, principal of Anne Decker Architects and master at creating timeless, beautiful living spaces. She sat down with her client to discuss the renovation's goals. "The house is listed in the historic district, with beautiful bones," notes Decker, "so there was a high priority for the renovation to be in keeping with the original house."

Another major consideration was to connect the interior with the outdoors—to create vistas overlooking the terrace and

Above and left: Anne Decker Architects re-creates an old Maryland Foursquare into a warm, welcoming home.



gardens and to develop transitional spaces such as open porches. The client also wanted functionality for today's lifestyle, calling for a home office and a master suite. The outdated interior spaces, both upstairs and down, needed reconfiguring, particularly the small kitchen.

"The house was very dark inside. Not only did it lack natural light, but also the wood trim and colors were dark and drab," says Decker. "We needed to lighten the whole space." With a team in place that appreciates old home construction—David Brown Construction, interior designer Elizabeth Kannan, and landscape architect Lila Fredrick—the house began its makeover.

To achieve these various goals while deferring to the home's historic rhythm, Decker created new living spaces infused with

Opposite: Decker introduced wainscoting to the hallway. Above, left: A new powder room was outfitted with a handsome vanity. Above, right: Older woodwork in the living room was revived with elbow grease.

interior details culled from the existing structure. "The main staircase had wonderful trim detailing, and we carried that through into the new hall and powder-room addition," she explains. New high vertical wainscoting with a simple recessed panel lines the hallway to the new kitchen. A window seat at the hall's end provides a comfortable termination point. The original heart pine floors were refinished in a dark stain.

Adding 300 square feet to the existing footprint, the new kitchen is much more functional, with ample storage and a breakfast nook overlooking the garden and terrace. The large island—topped with Imperial Danby marble in a honed finish that "lends an old house patina," notes Decker—offers plenty of food prep space. An oversized farmhouse sink continues the traditional elements.



The kitchen ceiling is clad in beadboard, a purposeful echo of the porch's ceiling material. A large built-in hutch, fashioned after nineteenth-century butler's pantries, displays china through restoration-glass-fronted cabinets and extends the kitchen's workspace with a long mahogany countertop. The trim and cabinetry, with simple recessed-panel under-counter doors and drawers inspired by the Shaker style, are painted a putty color, while the walls are kept a soft white. State-of-the-art amenities include a dishwasher located in the island and a 48" Wolf range. The custom range hood is finished with two-tiered crown moldings that continue throughout the room.

"We also reconfigured the second floor layout to admit as much light as possible," says Decker, who called for longer, relocated window openings to achieve this goal. New dormers with an expansive window on the third floor allow additional light into new guest rooms. To reflect the home's older details, the windows were custom-made with true divided lights.

Above: The kitchen was added to the existing footprint, expanding the house by 300 feet. Left: French doors lead to the new porch. Opposite: The new breakfast nook overlooks the garden and patio.



A luxurious soaking tub, basket-weave tile flooring, and subway tile walls create a relaxing master bathroom.



The architect borrowed from an existing bedroom to create the master suite, complete with a walk-in closet and dressing room off the master bath. The classic built-in wardrobe offers ample storage for clothes and accessories. New windows celebrate the freestanding tub, which is finished in nickel with a vintage tub filler faucet. A subway tile wall finish and honed marble basket-weave flooring pay homage to the home's age.

Broadening the connection between interior and exterior are two French doors, which both lead onto the new side porch—one from the hall and one from the kitchen. Decker kept the porch detailing classical with Doric columns and simple square balusters to match the existing house. Where stucco needed be patched or replaced, the contractor mirrored the original pebbledash stucco from the 1900s.

Today, the house is illuminated with natural light and has a stronger connection to the porches and garden. Each new element celebrates older details, enlivening the renovation with plenty of original character. **NOH**

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Above and right: Upstairs rooms were reconfigured to create a master bedroom and dressing room with ample clothing storage.

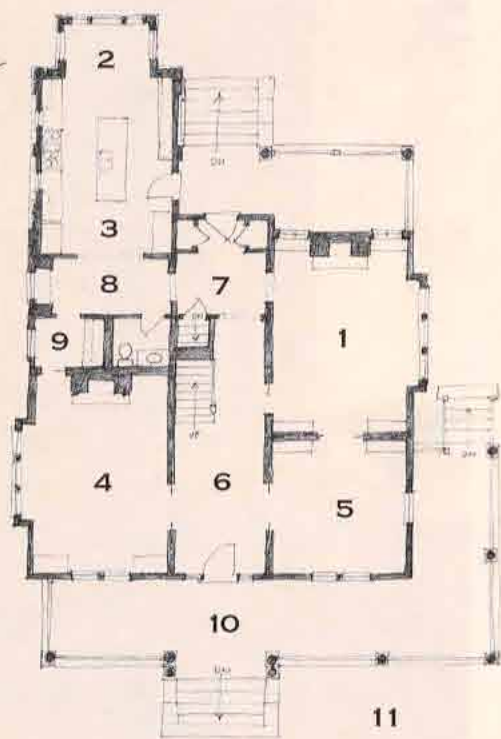




Outdoor entertaining spaces now abound—whether it's dining for six on the bluestone patio or a cozy lunch for two on the porch.

First Floor

- 1 FAMILY ROOM
- 2 BREAKFAST NOOK
- 3 KITCHEN
- 4 DINING ROOM
- 5 LIVING ROOM
- 6 FOYER
- 7 MUDROOM
- 8 HALL
- 9 BUTLER'S PANTRY
- 10 PORCH
- 11 LAWN



Second Floor

- 1 MASTER SUITE
- 2 DRESSING ROOM
- 3 CLOSET
- 4 MASTER BATH
- 5 ANTEROOM
- 6 STAIR HALL
- 7 SITTING ROOM
- 8 LAUNDRY
- 9 OFFICE

