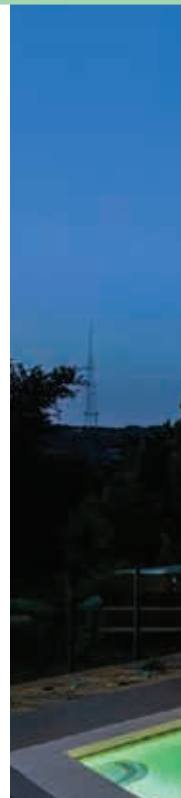




GREENBELT WITH ENVY

Top-to-bottom renovations have turned a dated 1970s house along the Greenbelt into a contemporary home that anyone could love

BY KATE HARRINGTON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS MCCONNELL





Two major themes in the renovation were the restoration of the great Greenbelt views and the use of rift-sawn oak millwork (opposite page) throughout the house for consistency.

SOMETIMES

What started as a simple renovation for the clients, a young couple welcoming a new baby, turned into a whole-house undertaking that transformed the 4,250-square foot home into an updated—and safe—space.

The house did have some things going for it pre-renovation. “The house is very well built and very solid,” says designer Jerri Kunz, whose company did the architecture and interior design. “It has a spectacular view of the Barton Creek Greenbelt, and that will never be built on.”

Despite the quality construction and the beautiful views, there was the small matter of, well, everything else. A previous owner had made some additions and decor choices that blocked the views and made the house feel closed-in.

“I like all colors, and I love brown and gold, but there are good golds and bad golds, and good browns and bad browns,” Kunz says of the pre-renovated home. “It’s one thing to have brown

bad things happen to good houses. That was the case with this 1970s home in Lost Creek that recently underwent a thorough transformation to turn it from dark and dated to light-filled and modern.

walls, but it’s another thing to have the entire thing painted like a 1970s cave.”

Kunz and David Wilkes Builders worked together to update the house, re-opening views that had been blocked, modernizing the entire interior and exterior and fixing poorly built additions that were not up to code. Without expanding the footprint, Kunz and Wilkes worked within the existing space to maximize flow and breathe new life into the home.

On the upper floor, which is also the main entry point and living level of the house, the renovation team took texture off walls and completely replaced fixtures and paint. The project added glass-and-steel front doors for a dramatic and light-filled entryway and gutted the kitchen. While the original lime-



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The main living area of the home was almost entirely overhauled with new walls, paint, fixtures and a completely new kitchen. One of the few selections to remain is the tile floor.

stone floors stayed, the rest of the materials were replaced. Kunz used sleek elements like glass, opaque resin panels and stainless steel to keep visual clutter to a minimum throughout the upper area.

In the remodeled kitchen, Kunz chose rift-sawn oak millwork on the upper cabinets to add a warm touch and contrast with the cool grays of the lower cabinets and Caesarstone countertops. An etched glass backsplash completes the kitchen's elegant look.

The kitchen opens into a living area, where the same rift-sawn oak millwork on the upper cabinets also appears on a wall that divides the living space from a smaller TV room and office. The latter includes a stainless-steel-clad fireplace.

Kunz installed the same oak throughout the house in stair nosings on the many small steps that divide the rooms, for both safety and consistency.

A vaulted ceiling and wall of windows make the open kitchen and living space feel airy and sun-filled and provide a stunning view over treetops. Sliding doors open onto a balcony that's lined with glass paneling to maximize the views. It's here where the homeowners, who wanted to remain anonymous for this story, can enjoy a meal outside.

The same type of transformation has opened up the lower level. Kunz and Wilkes converted a wall that had blocked the view at the foot of the staircase into a bank of glass doors. Those doors slide open, allowing the space to either be an interior sunroom or a cabana. Outside is a completely renovated pool deck.

The pool area became one of the biggest headaches of the project. The space around the pool had steps around the water, making the space hazardous and cluttered. The renovation team evened out the deck to make it safer and more dramatic and added a hot tub, outdoor kitchen, outdoor dining and lounge area.

Also on the lower level, the master suite was reconfigured to make room for a nurs-



From an office space with built-in shelves (left) to the tub in the master bathroom (above) to the interior sunroom (right), the once-dated home has been turned into a modern-day dwelling.



ery. Even the master bath has stunning views that Kunz worked to maximize, replacing a sunken tub with a freestanding tub that takes advantage of what's now a larger window.

On the home's exterior, the original stucco is still in place, but old brown paint has been replaced by a new oatmeal color.

While a large part of the house's renovation was aesthetic, there was also a significant infrastructure overhaul.

"The previous owner had done a lot of work to the house, but he used poor contractors, and every time we'd open up a wall or break into another area, we'd discover all these things that had been done cheaply," Wilkes says. "We fixed a lot of structural components, plumbing and electrical."

Throughout the house, the electrical and lighting systems got an update. The foundation also needed repair, and the home had drainage issues that needed to be addressed. Because of the house's age and its location on a steep hill, those were challenging fixes, but they were all necessary.

"You're nothing if you don't have proper infrastructure," Kunz says. "If you don't address infrastructure, it's like putting lipstick on a pig."

The result is a stunning remodel that's updated the classic home with a modern feel.

"Before, there was no balance between the dark inside and the bright outside," Kunz says. "We brought a great sense of balance... It's a much happier house now than it was when we started." ▲