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GET INTO THE NEIGHBORHOOD



# Project Creep

For one couple, a small idea leads to a massive remodeling project

By Julie Foster

When Cassie Gilson and Loren Kaye began house hunting, they weren't too keen on leaving their Land Park neighborhood. That was until they saw a 1970s-era home in the Arden area. They immediately appreciated its proximity to the river, open layout and backyard and swimming pool. In 2004, they purchased the 3,000-square-foot home.

After a few years, they began contemplating a few small improvements. The entry lacked style and the front yard needed some serious resuscitation.

"I wanted to do a little something over the front door that would add just a little bit of architectural interest," Gilson says.

From this one idea, their much larger remodeling project requiring a team of professionals took shape.

"People tell you this all the time, but I think it bears repeating: Project creep is a classic thing that happens in remodels," Kaye explains. "Sometimes it happens because of choices you make, and sometimes it can't be avoided."

The remodeling team included Sage Architecture, interior designer Cheryl Holben, landscape architect David Gibson and general contractor Dave Puente. Sage designed all the cabinetry, beam work, lighting layout and exterior elevations and was involved with all aspects of material selections.

Modifications to the house and front yard took six months. The



The new entry and landscaping draw visitors into the home. At night the entry cap glows. Photos courtesy of © Sage Architecture, Inc.

couple's lackluster front entry got the star treatment. Sage Architecture's plan called for a reverse shed roof that pops up and welcomes visitors. Switching out the solid wood doors for ones with textured glass allows soft daylight to penetrate the interior and creates a warm glow at night. Wood beams transition from the outside

into the foyer, anchoring the entry to the rest of the house.

Gilson and Kaye began with a good idea of what they wanted to achieve, but they still ended up making many decisions on the fly.

"When there were issues about the project, I feel like everyone came together and there was no ego, just

an ongoing collaboration all the way through," Gilson says.

Another issue was the amount of light in the front portion of the house. It was dark because Gilson kept the plantation shutters closed at all times due to the not-so-enticing "sea of cement" view of the street. Landscape designer Gibson solved this by removing the numerous plants right next to the house. He planted a handful of olive trees to create a natural, lacy curtain between the house and the street. Short walls concealed parking spaces in the front yard. With the front yard spiffed up and more user-friendly, the plantation shutters were retired, and beautiful Loewen windows now grace the front of the house. A set of French doors replaced the windows in the dining room, allowing access to a new deck.

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Gilson's work schedule is hectic. Her interior designer helped keep the project on track and organized.

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Other improvements include marble countertops and new cabinetry in the kitchen. A sleek banquette provides an elegant built-in seating area linking the kitchen and living room. Beam work installed in the living room ceiling alleviated the

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1. In the foreground, the new decorative beams with hidden uplighting warm the entry.
2. Neutral tones in the living room and accent lighting help to highlight artwork.
3. Decorative floating shelves between the living room and dining room open up the space.

*Photos courtesy of © Sage Architecture, Inc.*

too-empty feeling and gave the room a sense of scale. The living room’s river rock fireplace was rebuilt with a sleek new look.

Gilson’s work schedule is hectic. Her interior designer helped keep the project on track and organized. “Cheryl ran the project and told me when I needed to make decisions. She was able to translate what I didn’t like about something into real solutions,” Gilson says.

Throughout the construction, the family stayed in the house. Gilson and Kaye praise general contractor Puente and his subs. “They went the extra mile to make us comfortable, even installing a door that sealed off the



1. Homeowners Loren Kaye and Cassie Gilson sit at the new built-in casual banquette area adjacent to the kitchen.
2. The banquette and its table were all custom designed. Floating shelves in a generous opening connect the living area beyond to the more casual spaces.
3. Decorative beams and plaster work at the new fireplace create an inviting outdoor space in keeping with the overall design theme.

*Photos courtesy of © Sage Architecture, Inc.*

construction area from the rest of the house,” Gilson says. “And they were really nice guys to have around.”

Each day, the couple revels in their new space. “We remark every day how much we love this house,” Gilson says. “And though we did not add a great room, second story or change the footprint of the house, the esthetic changes made make it feel like a different house.”

*If you have a home you would like featured in Inside Publications, contact Julie Foster at [julieincarmel@hotmail.com](mailto:julieincarmel@hotmail.com). ●*



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