

Inset: The Forest Park bungalow was originally intended to serve as a temporary home for a family while their antebellum home was built. But plans changed after the Great Depression hit. This page: The Waltmans turned the one-story house into a spacious, two-story home that has plenty of room for entertaining.



Building Up

A Forest Park couple adds a second story to their home while preserving its historic aesthetic.

By Brannon S. Dawkins Photos by Brian Roberson

When Jason and Jenny Waltman, owners of Grace-Klein Construction, bought a 1930s bungalow in Forest Park in 2006, they planned to renovate and flip the house.

But for the past three years, the Waltmans have called the house their home.

"This home was originally built in the '30s as a temporary house for a family who was going to live here while their large antebellum house was built in front," Jenny says. The small, New Orleans-style house sat on the back of the property to make room for the large, family home.

"But then the Great Depression hit, and the large home was never built," she says.

When the Waltmans decided to purchase and

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renovate the home, they also committed to the 2006 Parade of Homes. So in 10 weeks, they transitioned the house from a one-level bungalow to a spacious two-story home with all the conveniences for a modern family while maintaining the home's historic character.

"When you're on that kind of a deadline, all of your materials have to come in exactly on time or it won't happen," Jenny says. After a weeks-long race to get the right materials and meet engineering and inspection deadlines, the house was finished on time.

The Waltmans worked with architect Brian Roberson, of bDot

Architecture, Inc., to keep the style similar to other homes in the neighborhood. Jason ensured the home had period windows, and the couple chose a historical paint scheme, inside and out.

Downstairs, pocket doors allow the family room and dining room on either side of the foyer to be closed off from the rest of the house. The downstairs bedroom was designed as an in-law suite, complete with a closet that can hold a stackable washer and dryer.

Most of the doors in the home are custom five-panel doors used during that time, Jenny says. The kitchen, complete with floor-to-



Above: Hard-pine floors stretch throughout the house. Pocket doors on each side of the foyer allow for a family room and dining room to be separated from the rest of the house. The family den is part of the original home's structure, and it now opens into the gourmet kitchen.



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Above: The kitchen's floor-to-ceiling cabinetry was custom made for the home. Right: The landing at the top of the stairs is outside of the master suite and children's bedrooms. The Waltmans enjoy using the space as a reading area.



“We have really loved living here,” Jenny says. And that love extends beyond the house and into the community and Avondale Elementary School, which their daughter has attended.

ceiling custom cabinetry, granite counter tops and a gourmet oven, opens onto the family den.

Adjacent to the kitchen, one of the original bedrooms was converted into a garage for storage and parking—an unusual amenity in the neighborhood.

At the top of the stairs, a sizable second-floor landing leads to the bedrooms. “People always wonder what this area is for, but we love this as a space to sit and read,” Jenny says. The Waltmans also chose to build the master suite upstairs, next door to the children’s bedrooms and a Jack-and-Jill bathroom. Each bedroom features a large closet fitted with custom closet organization systems. A walk-in attic provides additional storage space.

Each of the home’s four bathrooms features historic detail. Jenny selected antique furniture that was retrofitted as bathroom vanities. In the master bath, she also used three of the home’s original French doors.

“We have really loved living here,” Jenny says. And that love extends beyond the house and into the community and Avondale Elementary School, which their daughter has attended.

“We prayed a lot about moving into this home,” she says. “From the moment we walked into Avondale School, we were lovingly embraced with friendship, invitations to birthday parties, hello and goodbye honks in the carpool line, shared laughter and kindness. How could we have all this excess, along with so many working professionals, when one friend barely had enough food to survive and another lost their home due to a long season of unemployment?” Through their company, Jenny and Jason started a non-profit organization called Grace Klein Community. The organization pairs families in Jefferson County with families at three participating churches. The families are assisted with food, budgeting, job placement, coupon shopping, housekeeping skills, Bible studies and sharing the Gospel. “When we connect families and establish relationships, the stranger becomes the friend. We know their story, and they know ours, and we quit judging and start loving.”

“We know God had this house happen for this reason,” Jenny says. “This has been a whole world we would have been blind to.” ●

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