

Karen Vidal, of Design Vidal, is a brilliant designer. We absolutely love the extensive remodel of our house. We bought a 1930's traditional house with great bones and a stunning location, which unfortunately lacked a coherent style. The house had a mish-mash of styles from different eras, most notably an undesirable 80's overlay, and ill-planned additions which impeded the overall flow and balance of the living space. Karen took on the challenge with a strong vision, innovative ideas and incredible resources. Working with her was not only an inspiration, but fun as well. Her sense of humor got us through a lot of the stress that remodeling and the endless minutiae of decisions can cause a family.

We told her that we would like a Cape Cod-style house. Karen took that idea and ran with it down to the last detail. Karen created a stunning, cohesively designed Cape Cod-style house by adding interior trim and ceiling moldings, hardwood floors, remodeling a brick fireplace and stairway, revamping and adding bathrooms and enhancing each room with design accents from doorknobs to light fixtures.

The exterior of our house was given an extensive face-lift, with new decks replacing cement pads, railing and fence details, and new windows and trim. Karen also devised a harmonious front entry, in lieu of the original awkward and off-kilter one. She installed a grand Craftsman-style front door and added posts and railing to create a cozy front porch. A fence was added to enclose the yard, with a beautifully trellised front gate.

Karen's extensive design experience also helped us trouble-shoot our specific challenges. She ingeniously suggested we take a closet away from a wall, which our son's enormous room shared with his sister's much smaller room. By building our son a new closet on a different wall, we were able to shift a wall to expand the size of our daughter's room, to help with the size inequity. The space created perfectly fits her bed, which is critical, because otherwise her furniture would have overcrowded the space.

Also, we needed bookshelves to house an extensive book collection. We didn't know how to fit all the books in a way that complemented, rather than crowded, our living room. Karen designed built-in bookshelves with beautiful trim and integrated them to maximize floor space. Like all her ideas, the bookshelves "fit" the overall design of the house, as if they always belonged there.

We had the good fortune to be able to "custom build" closets and bathrooms. Our closets used to be 80's style, with mirror-covered sliding doors. Karen gave the closets beautiful four-panel square detail doors, with period crystal knobs. She organized the interior space as well, planning out shelving and built-in drawers to answer the varying needs of a shared master bedroom, office and children's closets.

The master bathroom remodel was dramatic. By moving walls, rearranging fixtures, installing gorgeous tile with custom niches, and adding a new spacious two-person tub with casement windows opening out to a deck and beautiful view, Karen transformed a drab, dark, cramped beige-tiled eyesore into a serene, light-filled master bath which has become our treasured at-home spa-retreat.

Perhaps our greatest challenge was adding a handicapped-accessible bathroom to a first floor room, where none existed. Karen moved a pantry wall to allow space for the bathroom and added beautiful tile, fixtures and a luxurious walk-in shower. The functional elements of the handicapped bathroom do not detract from the elegance of the room.

Karen's connections to local artisans and antique dealers helped us find unique and stunning design accents, which "finish off" the look of each room. Karen knew just where to find period light fixtures and reproductions. When we needed batch-elder tile for our fireplace, Karen knew where to go for the authentic accent tiles and led us to a talented ceramic artist who reproduced field tile to complete the design.

When people come to our house for the first time, they are struck by the grace and flow of the design and artistic detail. Anyone who happened to see the "before" version, when the house was on the market, are literally stunned by the transformation. Such a response is quite a testament to Karen's design talent. But, no one is more thrilled than our family, since we continuously appreciate the vision of Karen Vidal, which seamlessly integrated beauty and functionality to create our exquisite dream home.

Lisa Ginsburg & Lori Ball