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Design-Build

Harrison Design and The O'Donnell Group

Building anew is often far simpler than retrofitting an aging home with all the accoutrements of modern life. Yet architectural designer Frank Heery of Harrison Design set out to revitalize, rather than replace, a modestly sized 1950s-era Saltbox at the end of a long drive on a nearly 4-acre forested lot in Sandy Springs.

Constructed by White Oak Fine Homes and Firelight Homes with interior selections and specifications by The O'Donnell Group, the resulting 7,500-square-foot residence is as distinctive as it is romantic, thanks to architectural exuberance, inspiration from the Arts and Crafts Movement and strategic design decisions with wellness, entertaining and the eccentricities of the design-savvy homeowners kept in mind at every distinctive turn.

Originally a “five-four and a door” two-story colonial, Heery added several key additions to balance the original core, from a distinctive new office tower on one end of the house to a master bedroom wing on the other, its attached bath cantilevered over the verdant grounds like a floating glass box.

Also a new addition, a spacious front porch “serves the dual purpose of connecting the two additions, bridging the house together and connecting the kitchen, living area and front entry,” Heery says. Equipped with a new fireplace, it also provides room for both sitting and eating. A second glass enclosure contains a sculptural staircase that connects all three levels, offering lush backyard views while flooding the interior with natural daylight. And at the terrace level, a spacious new covered front porch with stone walls and arched steel doors open to a sprawling, terraced front landscape—reimagined by Maxwell Gardens and Floralis Garden Design—that overlooks the creek below.

The interior layout was likewise reimagined, the formal living and dining areas flowing into a cavernous new great room with a high exposed timber ceiling, white pine wall paneling and a wood-burning fireplace. The additions give the house a sense of history and a narrative. “You can imagine that it was added onto over time,” Heery says.