



THE ELEGANT HOME

The Ovitt Residence

Preserving the Old While Adding the New

Vicki and Keith Ovitt thought they had everything planned out when they started working with architect Ron Hass to renovate their 100 year old Victorian home in Wheaton. Since the renovation was going to be extensive, they went looking for a home to live in while the work was being completed. During that search, they found out that a stunning Georgian home with heavy Italian and Greek classical details had come onto the market. They quickly changed to making this home their renovation project.

The Ovitt's goal was to create a home that was architecturally consistent but filled with modern amenities. They also wanted quality over quantity for a home that focused on appealing details rather than immense size.

There were some additions to the home. The original kitchen was too small and outdated for the family's needs so the space was converted to a walk-thru pantry and mudroom. Then a new kitchen, family room and sun room were added to the rear of the house creating a smooth flowing area for entertaining. On the second floor of the home, there were several changes to the floor plan to create a more open feeling. The cramped area at the top of the stairs was opened up by removing a closet to create a sitting area with columns. A large Palladian window was installed over the front door to allow natural light to fill the two-story staircase and hall. A balcony added over the first floor sunroom can be reached from the master suite and second bedroom. A bedroom was eliminated and changed into a laundry room. A new master suite was added in the space above the new family room and kitchen.

The exterior of the home received attention also. An elaborate covered entryway was added to accentuate the Adam style of the home design. Copper



chimney pots, leader boxes, flashings and down spouts are among the many impressive exterior details. Stone lintels were added over the old windows to match the lintels used in the addition to unify the old with the new sections.

An important requirement of the home design was for the home to be "very low maintenance," says Vicki. "We tried to use materials that require zero or low maintenance." The home has modern conveniences tucked away in its classic design. The latest heating, ventilation, air conditioning and insulation materials were used in the home. Closed circuit

cameras, whole-house sound, invisible speakers and an I-Pod-friendly, in-shower media center are among some of the home's high tech amenities. A media room was added in the basement complete with a projection screen and high tech sound system.

Most of the interior details were designed by the homeowners, Vicki and Keith Ovitt and builder Christopher Donatelli of Aventura Builders, Inc. (www.aventurabuilders.com) Architect Ron Hass was frequently consulted for help to keep the project in line with the historic period of the original home. Vicki is pleased that many visitors to the home have commented that "you can't tell the old from the new. It looks like the home has always been like this."

The couple has been successful in almost doubling the size of the original home and adding modern amenities while preserving the home's original design. "The whole project went so well," says Vicki. "Everyone worked together and it all fell into place beautifully."

-Interviewed by Judy Buchenot, Contributing Associate Editor