

DESIGN



Ric Johnson/RicJPhotography.com

An area off the living area features a music niche and a white oak half-floating staircase leading to the second floor.

Rebuild transforms space from midcentury to modern

New home in Fredericksburg retains ‘some echoes of the old’

By Richard A. Marini
STAFF WRITER

Chase Perry always loved visiting his aunt’s midcentury modern home on a leafy corner just a few blocks from Main Street in Fredericksburg.

“I just loved all those great big trees and the home’s mid-century lines,” said Perry, who runs a nursing home and hospice care company.

So when his aunt moved to Dallas to be closer to her grandkids in 2008, Chase Perry and his new wife, Jill, bought the place, living there happily for many years — until it got too small for them and their daughter, Ava, now 14.

“The house had only two bedrooms and one bathroom, and, you know, a growing girl needs her space,” said Jill Perry, a stay-at-home mom. “Also, Chase’s closet was in the dining room and my closet was in Ava’s room.”

After considering and rejecting the idea of building out of town, the couple decided to stay where they were and hired Matthew Lines, principal of Fredericksburg-based Tandem Building Corp., to build what is, essentially, a new and larger house on the same corner lot.

“It’s a new house, but it has



Ric Johnson/RicJPhotography.com



Tandem Building Corp.

Jill and Chase Perry were happy in the home they bought from his aunt, above. But when they needed more space, they chose to rebuild on the lot, top.

some echoes of the old,” Lines said. “The front corner is the same front corner, the garage is in the same place, and the pool was here so we built around it to make it cohesive.”

During the process they also moved away from some of the midcentury feel, transforming it into a sleek, contemporary dwelling.

Completed about a month ago, the new house has three bedrooms and 2½ baths, although they use one of the bedrooms as Chase Perry’s art studio.

Perhaps the most dramatic change was making the main living area into one large space.

“I think the idea of opening things up started when I said I want to be able to stand anywhere in the house and see Ava and her friends swimming in the pool,” Jill Perry said.

As Chase Perry explained, when this house was built in the 1950s, builders had a list of things a house needed, so between the front door and the fireplace was the primary bedroom, Ava’s room, a bathroom, and the living and dining rooms, all broken up into little compartments.

“There were seven doors in this tiny little hallway,” he said.

Rebuild continues on E8

Renovation turns Houston house into the perfect place for parties

By Diane Cowen
STAFF WRITER

For Chris Robertson in Houston, buying a new home was more of a real estate investment — putting his assets into something safe. At the same time, though, his “wants” checklist was specific: brick, but no stucco, not so many bedrooms and roomy enough for large parties.

He’d contacted a Realtor friend and expected the search to take a year or two. Instead, the sale of one of the example houses he sent his Realtor fell

through and his perfect party house was immediately available. Instead of taking months, it was just two weeks into his search. Two weeks later, in February 2021, he closed on a house in the Montrose neighborhood just west of downtown Houston.

Robertson had taken another friend, interior designer Paul Brockman, to look at it for an opinion on updating it. Brockman thought the home had good bones and knew of ways to save money on some things so they could splurge on others.

They also brought in contractor Scott Greenwood, who is Brockman’s husband.

Robertson, 51, moved from Salt Lake City to Houston in 2002 for his work in the energy industry; he’s currently a vice president at Vitol, an energy company, and is on the endowment board for Montrose Center, a nonprofit for which he does serious fundraising and volunteer work.

After taking care of some deferred maintenance — replacing the roof, gutters and most

Design continues on E3



Paul Brockman

Chris Robertson, an accountant and executive, occasionally DJs at a bar and at his parties. Now a new space on the third floor serves as a music room.

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REBUILD

From page E1

Also part of this new look is the kitchen, which had been relatively small but is now part of the larger open living area.

“I was tired of having a dog, a husband and a daughter all crowding me when I was cooking,” Jill Perry said.

To test the new setup, they hosted a Halloween party so friends and neighbors could check out the place.

“We had a lot of people here and it was very comfortable,” Chase Perry said. “In the old house you couldn’t entertain that many people.”

As part of the new home’s more modern look, the cabinets have no hardware; the doors are all push-to-open.

“I’m not a fan of hardware,” she said. “I wanted an extremely clean look.”

At the center of the space, the 10-by-3 1/2-foot island is topped with white quartz embedded with ghostly threads of gray. The countertop waterfalls down two sides.

At one corner of the house is a semiformal dining room surrounded on two sides by large windows overlooking the front corner of the lot.

“We wanted a lot of natural light, and we can close the curtains for more privacy,” Chase Perry said.

Three of the room’s walls are painted in Dylan Velvet. It’s a warm yellow from the previous house, so they have a sentimental attachment to it. The fourth is a vertical, wood slat wall that has midcentury vibes while adding warmth to a style that can, if one isn’t paying attention, be hard and cold. They liked the wood slat look so much,



Ric Johnson/RicJPhotography.com

While the kitchen in the previous house was relatively small, the new one is open and modern.

“I wanted an extremely clean look.”
Jill Perry

in fact, they did the same on the wall behind the fireplace.

“It’s the same reason we ran European white oak flooring throughout most of the house and why all the plumbing fixtures are basically the same,” Jill Perry said. “I like the continuity.”

One less immediately noticeable feature is the subtle downlighting located throughout the house. There are downlights in the wall cutout between the foyer and the dining room, under the stairway treads and beneath the fireplace hearth. Consisting of adjustable LEDs, they give the couple the option of creating different moods and brightness levels.

Off the living area is a two-story space with a music niche on the ground floor and a half-floating staircase to the second floor, where Ava’s bedroom and bathroom are located, like a private treehouse.

Another interesting detail is molding used in place of traditional trim. Called a reglet, it installs

flush to the walls and leaves a narrow groove that neatly frames the flooring, windows and doors for a clean, modern look.

“This is the one thing that people who know houses are really commented on,” Jill Perry said.

The primary bedroom has large windows overlooking the backyard pool and sliding glass doors so the couple can sneak out without having to walk through the living room.

“We like the idea of just being able to step outside and go swimming,” Jill Perry said.

The bath is outfitted with porcelain tile, including vertical tiles in the walk-in shower that mirror the wood slat walls elsewhere in the house. Clerestory windows let in plenty of light.

“It’s very calming because the light’s filtered through the trees,” she said. “At night you can look up and see the stars.”

And although the large walk-in closet also has a number of windows, a fancy chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling.

“Chase calls it my Chanel light, because he said it’s like walking into a Chanel store,” she said.

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