



RESTORING TO BLEND OLD AND NEW

Mandy Moore and her husband had no intention of buying a house that needed a renovation because they had never even tackled a small project before. But they were adamant about living in a west Toronto neighbourhood and homes there were out of their budget. “We saw this home. It had tons of bedrooms and was a 100-year-old house on a corner lot,” Mandy says. Their Realtor offered some renovation tips and they bought the Arts and Crafts-style home in July 2016.

Mandy’s cousin, architect Jessica Beil Hindman, called the house awesome. “Jessica works in Charlotte, North Carolina, where there are a lot of Craftsman-style houses with lots of wood trim,” Mandy says.

While Beil Hindman worked on plans, Mandy and her husband began searching for a general contractor. A friend recommended Barbini Design Build.

“Amedeo put together a quote. We met a couple of times and talked. He seemed like he had the right experience with similar-size jobs. He had credibility and he is a nice person,” Mandy says, adding when you spend a year working with someone, nice is important.

Work began in January 2017. The first task was to lower the basement. The \$100,000 job took two months. “It went incredibly smooth. It was on budget and on time,” Mandy says. “Neighbours told us how the contractors were nice and never seemed to take breaks. We got off on the right foot.”

It was important to Mandy that the home be restored, with plaster, trim, wood floors, radiators and other original features retained. New electrical, plumbing and state-of-the-art air and heating systems had to be fished inside plaster







walls, which made the work more difficult and time consuming.

“We worked hard to retain the character that she loves,” says Amedeo. “New millwork and doors were made to look like the originals. Some doors are 100 years old, some are one.”

Most of the original windows, with their wood frames and century glass, were retained but some had to be replaced.

The new windows are aluminium on the outside but the mullions and frames on the inside are wood, Mandy says. At between \$60,000 and \$70,000, windows and doors were a big line in the budget. They opted for the expensive windows and she says they’re happy they did. “They look so much better. They were a bit of money but it was worth it.”

The living and dining rooms were in good shape, and just needed painting. The fine grained quarter-sawn white oak floors throughout the home were refinished.

A closet at the end of a hallway opposite the front door was removed and converted into a built-in cabinet because “Jessica said no one wants to look at a door when they enter the house,” Mandy said.





The cabinet is the perfect place to display their (Mandy's and Beil Hindman's) grandmother's collection of glass paperweights. She had collected them for 30 years.

The rest of the closet space behind was outfitted with white cabinets and marble counter tops, and turned into a butler's pantry.

A one-storey addition was built to enlarge the L-shaped kitchen. "The addition bumped out the crook of the L to make the kitchen rectangular," Mandy says.

The original kitchen was gutted and a servants' staircase was removed to reclaim more usable space.

Mandy didn't want a sleek and modern kitchen.

"I'm a big fan of the show Downton Abby. They had a huge wood work table. Our table has four legs and is 10-feet long. It's like an island but 10 chairs tuck underneath."

Mandy opted for honed marble countertops so the space wouldn't be too heavy with wood. Brass hardware matches the pendant lights above the table. She says she likes the way the brass looks with the blue lower cabinetry. A mudroom was added behind the pantry.

Her favourite room, "the kitchen came the longest way from what it had been," Mandy says. "People ooh and aw. It's functional and adds a lot to the house."

The staircase to the lower level was rebuilt under



the main staircase, in a space previously occupied by a powder room. Thanks to the near-perfect matching of wood and stain, it's hard to believe the staircase isn't original.

The carpenters would come with different wood samples and stains and hold up each trying to match it with the original wood, she says. Now that it's done, the staircase "looks like it's always been there. I was a little worried but it was worth it."

On the second floor, two closets were turned into a bathroom. Another bedroom and bathroom were converted into a master bathroom.

The window was originally off to one side but was moved to the centre of the wall, where it is flanked by vanities, and is above the refinished tub. "I asked my cousin if it was worth the money to do it. Jessica said, 'with the scale of the reno, this is nothing'. I was happy to have an architect I could trust."

They also hired local architect Angus Skene to do permit drawings and help with any questions or problems that arose. "We needed him on site a couple of times," she says.

A kitchen on the third floor was removed and the space was used for a closet and a bathroom. Each level has about 1,200 square feet, Mandy says. Even though the ceilings on the third floor are angled, the bedrooms are a good size.

The lower level includes an open family/play room, a guest room, a full bathroom and a laundry room. At the end of the hall is a built-in bookcase, which swings out to reveal a hidden mechanical room. "Amedeo figured out how to make it work," Mandy says.

Despite the amount of woodwork throughout the house, it's light and bright. "There's no wainscoting and the walls are white. I'm a white wall person because paint colour never ages well," she says. She prefers to add colour with furniture, pillows and art.

"I recommend Amedeo. He's on the ball. I can't imagine any project of his would go off the rails," she says. "He finds a way to make a project work and when I email, he calls back right away."



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