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in



## Helena van Vliet, LLC

Restorative Biophilic Design

September, 2015

### A Love Story

They came, they saw, they felt this was the place. Their place. And so it came to be, that a family of five fell in love with a house unloved, indeed abandoned for years.

Though part of a sizable nature preserve, the house itself had fallen into serious decay. The land, unmanaged and wild.

Gloomy, decrepit and with narrow dark hallways, a maze of small rooms offered no indoor experience of the magnificent outdoors. The interior layout completely out of step with the life of a modern family.

But then we set out to turn this house into a home.

### Welcome

Formerly austere and unused, the courtyard with added French door connections became a central place of arrival and a favorite outdoor play and living room for this family, especially for their young children.

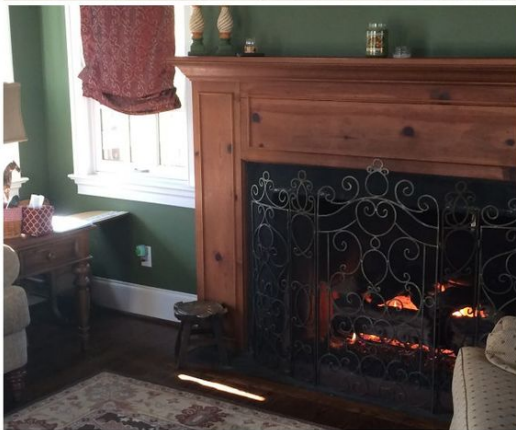


*Revived courtyard/outdoor living room with fountain. Helena van Vliet photo.*

The gentle sound of a fountain now welcomes, orients and guides visitors to the front door.



*Front door, courtyard view. Helena van Vliet photo.*





*Family entry with courtyard (after); added windows, French doors and eyebrow dormers. Helena van Vliet photo.*



*Family entry (before).*



*West view (before). Helena van Vliet photos.*



*West view (after). Balcony replaces stairway, 4 corner windows and 3 French doors added. Helena van Vliet photo.*

## **Bringing the Outdoors In**

In accordance with the principles of biophilic design, we re-connected the house with the land it lives on, to have it partake in the magnificent site:

Dynamic daylight, vistas, fluid indoor/outdoor connections, opportunity for exploration and discovery, experience in movement, sensory gardens and the sound of water.



*Master bedroom with added French doors and balcony overlook. Helena van Vliet photo.*



*Added corner windows, arches, alcoves, window seats and French doors. Helena van Vliet photos.*

## Transparency

Indoors, we raised several ceilings, removed and moved walls, eliminated service stairs and maid's quarters, enlarged and lifted many doors. We shifted the interior experience from one of closed-ness, to one of open-ness.

A multitude of French doors and windows were added and placed strategically to bring in views. In total, 21 new openings included six pairs of double French doors, three single French doors, nine new double-hung windows and three eyebrow roof windows.

Four new wrought iron balconies invite viewers to step outdoors, curved sculptures casting dynamic light and shadow patterns, adding vitality and movement.



*Patio (after) becomes outdoor living space after adding 6 pairs of French doors. Helena van Vliet photo.*



*Patio (before). Helena van Vliet photo.*



*Fireplace in kitchen area (before). Glare from French doors is uninviting. Helena van Vliet photo.*





*Fireplace in kitchen area (after). Light levels were re-balanced by removing service stair and replacing it with a new double bay window. Helena van Vliet photo.*

Throughout the house, the movement of natural ventilating air was as much considered as the movement of people.



*New garage with eyebrow windows. View from courtyard. Helena van Vliet photo.*



*Partial East elevation with new kitchen window. Helena van Vliet photo.*

A new garage was built to mirror the main house and to create an arrival courtyard. Garage eyebrow roof windows match those above the family entrance. Seen together, the 3 + 3 eyebrows create a welcoming, embracing “you’ve arrived in the middle” gesture for arrival.



And the Love Story continues...evolves...settles in...and time will add its touches...  
add fond memories of this unusual place and of the family that belongs here.

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