

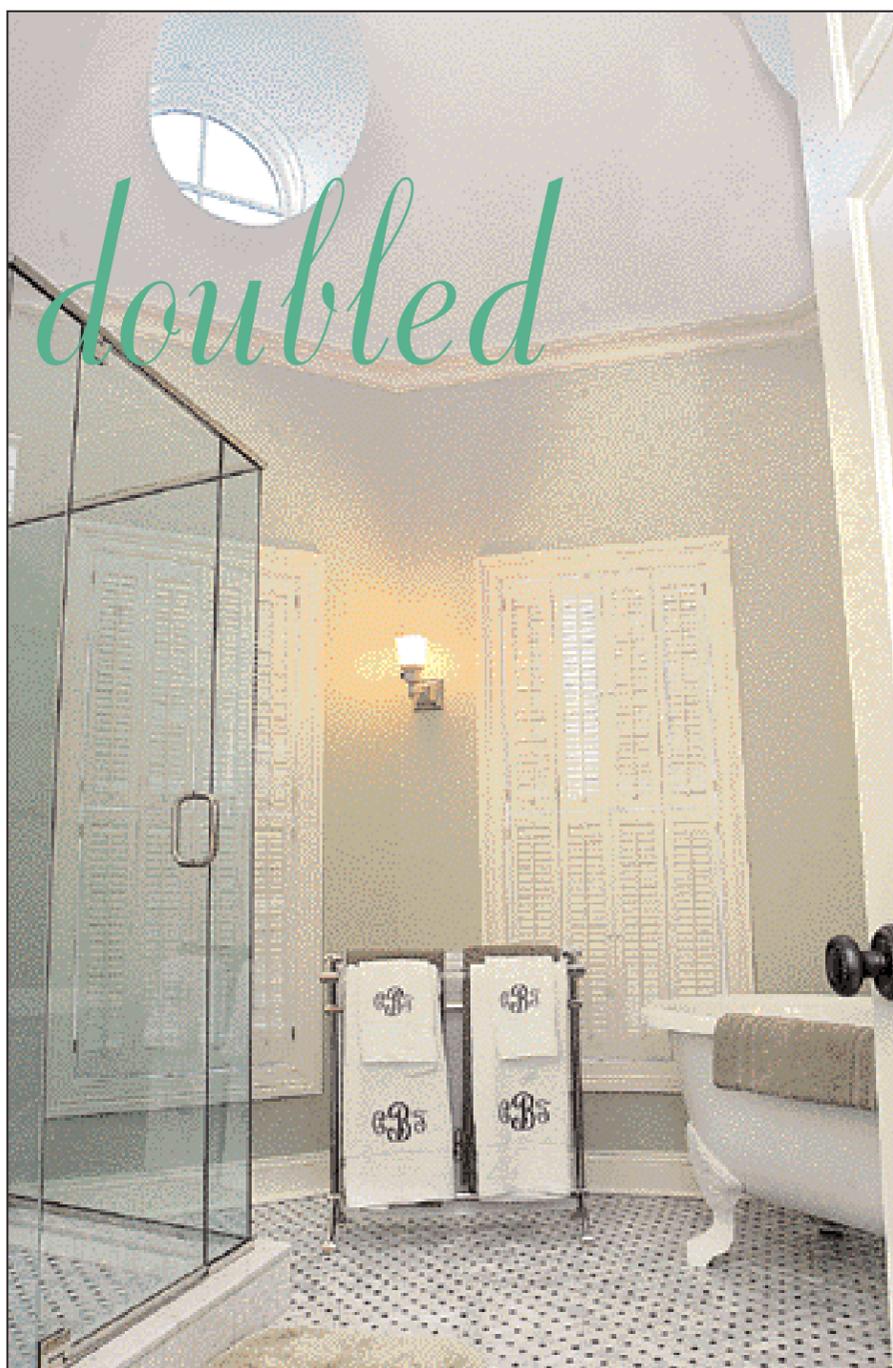
The size doubled

BUT THE CHARACTER AND INTIMACY REMAINED

by Jane K. Dove



Just the niche to enjoy breakfast in the sun-washed, spacious kitchen.



Bryan Haffele photos

Truly a master bathroom where pampering reigns.

As cookie-cutter mansions continue to take towns in our area by storm, the lovingly and beautifully renovated turn of the century Queen Anne style home owned by Theresa and Craig Bowling in “downtown” New Canaan is a reminder that wonderful results are well worth the extra effort of thoughtful planning, outstanding design and faithful execution.

Like the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, this lovely lady of a house also holds a torch, beckoning those who long for freedom from huge, rectangular dwellings with echoing rooms, two-story foyers and ubiquitous Palladian windows to follow her example and instead achieve charm, warmth and individuality.

Changing Needs

The white-trimmed, creamy yellow clapboard house, which sits high on the corner of Lakeview Avenue and Summer Street, first caught the eye of Dr. Bowling, an anesthesiologist on the staff of Stamford Hospital, in 1998. Single at the time, she was looking for a small house with a vintage look and feel that would put her close to her work at the hospital and allow her to run errands, shop and get to the train station on foot.

Dr. Bowling saw a photo of the pretty house in the local paper, took a look and purchased it, all within a week's time. Totally content, she settled in and later got married. After about three years, things began to change when the couple decided to start a family. They agreed that the small house would not suit their needs for more space and started looking around but were shocked at prices for larger New Canaan homes.

Fortunately, an architect friend suggested that they simply stay put, adding on to the house they both loved so well. They were introduced to New Canaan architect John Mastera, who came up with an innovative design for enlarging the home to suit their new needs. And the plan was innovative in more ways than one: it called for the home

to be moved a distance of 50 feet to accommodate a new addition that would more than double its size.

Despite their trepidation about moving the old house, a decision that required the now-expectant couple to move out and rent for the duration of the renovation process, the Bowlings were thoroughly captivated by Mr. Mastera's plans; they preserved the charm and beauty of the original house, while adding the space a growing family would need. Gathering courage, they decided to have their vintage Queen Ann "make her move" last summer.

Fortune smiled, the move went off smoothly and their four-story home now sits graciously on its quarter acre, with its architectural details preserved and enhanced.

Gilding The Lily

As it stands today, the house contains about 6,000 square feet of living space on four floors, including a completely finished basement with plenty of daylight. A three-car garage tucked under the rear of the structure completes the ground floor.

Highlights of the upper floors, the first of which is wrapped by a wide porch, include an octagon-shaped family room, his and her offices, front and rear staircases, a master suite with a cathedral ceiling set with dormered "lunette" windows, additional bedrooms, and an au pair suite for the nanny who cares for the new addition to the



Both Theresa Bowling, with Avery, and architect John Mastera are well pleased with the final result.



Come summer, the Bowling family is looking forward to visiting with friends and neighbors on the wrap-around porch.

Bowling family, Avery. Avery was born late last August, about a month before the renovation was completed and her mother likes to tell her half-jokingly, "We built this house just for you."

Dr. Bowling is pleased with the scale and balance of the renovated home. "I wanted to open up the floor plan while still maintaining the Queen Anne details and warmth," she says. "The rooms flow nicely one into the other but they are not huge. They are spacious without occupying excessive space."

A walk through the house reveals a wealth of architectural detail and surprises, with nooks and crannies, unusually-shaped rooms, unexpected twists and turns, wide plank floors, and wide crown molding throughout. Another special feature is the turn of the century window design, two panes over one. The same three-paned window design is carried into the functional kitchen, with its glass-fronted cabinets.

The Lady Beckons

The home exudes warmth and individuality, from the rubbed oil bronze hardware used throughout to the claw-foot tub in the master bath. The ambiance is light, airy and gracious, with a beckoning quality that Dr. Bowling says her friends have all commented upon.

"We had a Christmas party and all of the feedback from our friends was so positive, it made us feel that we had really done the right thing," Dr. Bowling says. "I heard over and over again what a comfortable home we had—and that is exactly what we wanted. Every room in this house gets used on a daily basis; there are no 'walk through' rooms. We are both completely satisfied and there is nothing I would change, not one paint color or piece of molding."



The rooms flow beautifully, one into the other, with delightful surprises along the way.

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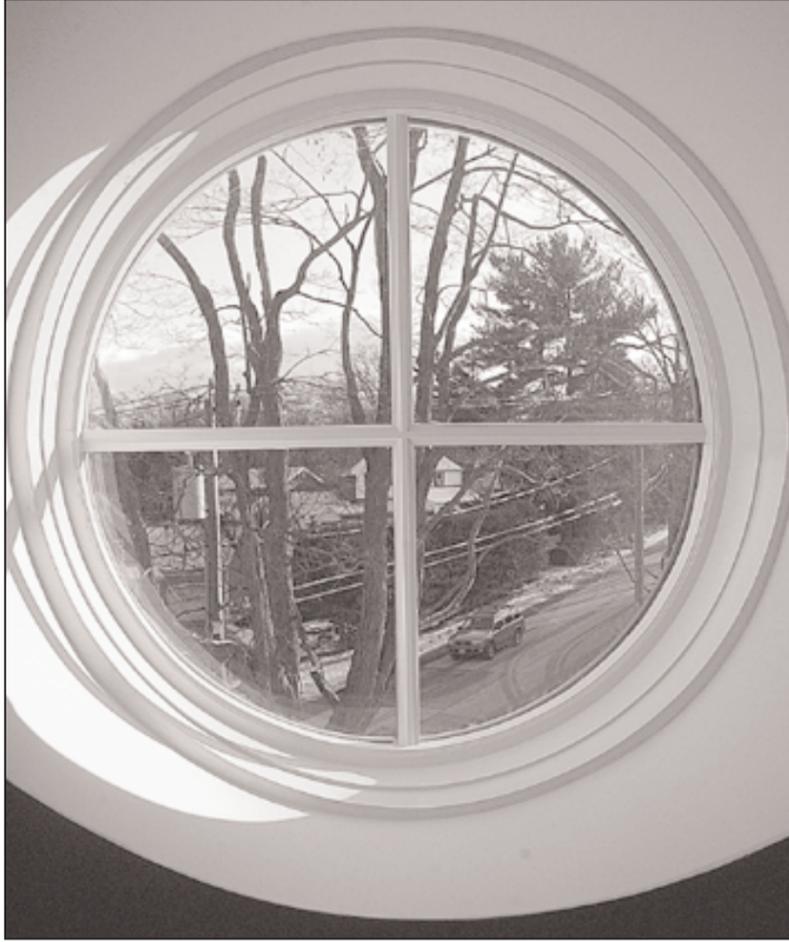
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Mr. Mastera commends the Bowlings for their commitment to their home. “I think Theresa and Craig are somewhat ahead of their time in what they have done here but I would like to see, and work on, more projects like this,” he says. “I could be wrong, but I think the ‘trophy house’ mentality has finally run its course. People now want functional and family-friendly homes. And architects really don’t enjoy designing homes with rooms they know are never going to be used.”

Neighborhood Character

Both Dr. Bowling and Mr. Mastera believe that the renovation of homes in “downtown” areas of local towns in Fairfield County is a trend that will increase over the coming years. “Home like this one are loaded with character,” Mr. Mastera says. “And people are starting to realize that we are bulldozing away a lot of the character of our communities when we destroy older homes. Unfortunately, the protests often occur after the fact, when it’s too late.”

Dr. Bowling agrees with Mr. Mastera. “We are hoping that the in-town houses around us won’t be torn down as people move on. It’s nice to have a mix of housing ages, styles and sizes. It creates a real neighborhood where you can actually meet people and talk to them. I regularly walk to the nearby stores and love it. And one of the features



From the third floor there's a bird's eye view.

of our house that I like best in terms of the community ‘feeling’ is the porch. We are looking forward to spending a lot of time there in good weather, socializing with friends and neighbors.”

Mr. Mastera expresses satisfaction with the way the Bowlings’ “lady” was transformed.

“What’s great is that the integrity of the old architecture was preserved and enhanced. We had a plan, stayed with it and realized our vision. Perseverance and the Bowlings’ courage about moving the house to accommodate the design elements really paid off in the end.”

For her part, Dr. Bowling could not be more pleased. “Everyone involved in this project was totally committed to achieving our twin goals of preservation and enhancement,” she says. “From our builder, Anthony DeLeonardo of Fairfield Contracting, to Sarah Blank, who did the kitchens, to Julie Durney, who is responsible for the interiors, everyone helped to put together this wonderful result. I can honestly say that I would do it all over again tomorrow, in exactly the same way. And that’s a great way to feel.”

Editor’s note: We’ll take a final look at the Bowlings’ house come spring, when the landscaping is complete. ♦