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HOME

SASKATOON



Transformations
THE DESIGN OF URBAN SPACE

Frank Lloyd Wright Inspired Renovations Transform Saskatchewan Crescent Residence

THE WRIGHT STUFF

The large, sunken living room opens onto the terraced patio, facing the riverbank. The space is perfect for elegant entertaining, allowing guests to mingle from terrace, to living room, to dining room and through the kitchen.

As Betty Ann and Wade Heggie guided us through their Saskatchewan Crescent home, it soon became apparent that if any house in Saskatoon had stories to tell, this would be one of them. Through extensive renovation through the 90s, it's morphed into a handsome Prairie Style dwelling with reminiscent, updated touches of Frank Lloyd Wright.

Most of the elements of the house reflect Frank Lloyd Wright's style, but in different eras, says Betty Ann. The columns were inspired by his earlier works. Wallpapers are reproductions of his later collections.

"We didn't want to recreate Frank Lloyd Wright," she says. "We wanted to bring Frank Lloyd Wright into the next century."

"We wanted something where people could be in the dining room, flow to the living room and flow to the outside. We like to entertain. We've had dinners and dances on the front terrace. We've had a lot of fun with it.

"This is a house that belongs to Saskatoon," she adds with a laugh. "Everybody's got an experience in it."

It's a tradition carried on. Many people associated with the house have been well-



Wade and Betty Ann Heggie's Prairie Style home on Saskatchewan Crescent began as a 1950s ranch style bungalow. The renovation received an Architectural Masonry Award of Excellence in 2000. Architect/Designer: Edwards and Edwards Architects.

Engineer: Sawchuk Antonini Engineering Ltd. General Contractor: Hill Construction Ltd. Masonry Contractor: Hagblom Brick and Block Ltd.

known and well-respected, with strong roots in the city. Many of Saskatoon's most prominent citizens have socialized there. When the Heggies called architect Bill Edwards to ask about renovating the house, he fondly remembered playing pool in the basement recreation room, now used as an office.

This home was built by A.A. Murphy in 1952, an electrical engineer, who in 1911, was a partner in the firm which later became UMA Engineering; he was also a broadcasting pioneer who founded CFQC radio in 1923 and CFQC television in 1954.

The 2600 square foot ranch-style bungalow, designed by a Vancouver architect, was set well back on the lot, leaving a large, prestigious front lawn facing the river.

The house was later owned by Murphy's son, Bill, and then by Urban Donlevy, founder of Mercury Printers, and his wife, Helen.



In 1996, Betty Ann and Wade Heggie bought the bungalow and commissioned architect Bill Edwards to renovate the property. The dramatic re-vamp were completed in 1998.

“When we purchased the house we felt that it was a long ways back on the lot, and we wanted to capitalize on the view, so we built out closer to the river,” says Betty Ann.

The extensive renovation expanded the house to 3400 square feet, reflecting the Prairie School style of architecture made famous by Frank Lloyd Wright.

“We added a fair bit of space in front of the house,” says Edwards. The new design added a sunken, front living room area, a new entry portico and a closed-in porch area in front of the redesigned master bedroom. Interior partitions were cleared away to create a spacious, open atmosphere.

It was a bold move for the 1990s, creating an open concept that flowed through the

kitchen, dining room and living room, then into the outdoors. The architect created an axis flowing between the front and the back doors of the house, and a couple of cross axes on the house circulation.

“It’s very Prairie School,” says Edwards. “Betty Ann loved that style, and we were fairly articulate in understanding it and using that language. That was not an uncommon occurrence in a Frank Lloyd Wright house. The great room concept kind of skipped a few generations. You see it coming back now.”

“It had some classical style to it in the stonework,” he adds. “It didn’t have all the detailing, stylization and planning that a Frank Lloyd Wright house has; the way we articulated the roof, the large overhangs, the broad eaves and the modulation of the windows and the upper clear storey glass and the various heights of windows. Plus, just the way you approach the house, instead of

The kitchen was expanded to fill the original dining room. The open design allows natural morning light to flood the space. The elevated glass counter top serves as an eating area or buffet line.

Morning sunlight floods the kitchen with warmth. The work area features a curved table that can serve as a desk or rolled into the dining room. The bench beneath it can also be moved.



walking straight up to it, you notice you turn three or four times before you get to the front door.”

The Heggies also wanted the renovation to reflect their travels and interest in feng shui. It’s a marvellous blend of Asian and Midwest, creating a tasteful and elegant interior that uniquely captures the personalities of the owners while preserving the warmth and historical character of the home, and true to the organic nature of Frank Lloyd Wright’s designs.

The interior features long views, balanced by curves. There is also a balance of natural and crafted materials, including slate flooring from China, maple floors and cupboards,

and cherry, maple and mahogany custom furniture. Mahogany wall panelling from the original bungalow still finishes the walls. The dolomite limestone of the exterior was preserved as an interior finish. A pair of Manitoba Tyndall stone columns frame the space opened by the removal of a large picture window in the former living room.

“We were in an era when a bit of fun stuff was introduced into architectural design,” says Edwards. “They (the columns) may not exactly be a Frank Lloyd Wrightian thing, but we had to put something in to carry the roof. They became kind of a tongue-in-cheek feature, a little fun.”