

## Urban Creekside: A New Home in Fulton

There are times when tearing down an existing house and replacing it with something new makes sense. This was one of those times.

The old house was really a cabin that sat on a very valuable creekside lot. The owner had lived there for 19 years but desperately needed more space. He was determined to stay in the neighborhood. His first choice was to remodel and expand the existing structure, but, after careful exploration of various remodeling options, he came to the conclusion that remodeling was neither cost effective, nor workable. The house was torn down.

The lot faced south with stunning creek views to the north. He wanted an understated front elevation marked by traditional forms, yet modern details. Although the neighborhood was a celebration of architectural diversity, the object was to create a dwelling that comfortably blended in, with perhaps just a hint that the real magic occurred just inside the front door.

The result was an unpretentious, one-and-a-half story structure when viewed from the street. Two soaring gables drew their inspiration from a grove of majestic red cedars right behind the house. Its traditional stucco exterior served as the backdrop for a clear cedar front porch and custom garage door, and the anodized aluminum windows implied that there may be something special about this house, albeit in an understated manner.

The rear elevation is something very different. As the lot drops off steeply to the creek below, a lower level walkout was a logical choice, creating the appearance of a two-and-a-half story building from the rear. It is in the rear of the house where the inside really connects to the wonderful natural setting outside. A glass wall stands between the dining room and the creek. A balcony is suspended off the master bedroom. Panoramic windows run the length of the lower level. And a modern deck hangs off the kitchen.

The interior of the house is a testament to the use of natural materials, and the craft required to set them in place. Although the main level is a contemporary open floor plan marked by simple lines and geometry, all the spaces resonate with warmth and light. Recycled fir beams set the tone, and antique heart pine floors lend a feeling of permanence. All the cabinetry is clear, vertical grain maple, simple, yet elegant. Massive bluestone fireplaces anchor both the main level great room and the lower level family room.

A focal point of the interior is a central stair that extends from the basement up to the second floor. The entire stair system is supported by engineered 3 inch square fir posts which extend vertically from the top of the house to the bottom. The result is a cage-like structure that allows natural light entering the house from the south to pass through its central core and provide warmth to the rear of the house. A translucent glass wall at the master bath accomplishes the same thing.

The end result is a new home which provides 3200 square feet of living space on three levels. With its careful utilization of understated traditional forms and natural materials, it is a new home that looks as though it has been there for quite some time, and will be there for quite some time to come.