



MODERN APPROACH

Compact Hintonburg
infill designed
to evolve with
young family's needs

RHYS PHILLIPS
OTTAWA CITIZEN

Developers and real estate professionals frequently cite baby boomers entering retirement as evidence the demand for condominium units will continue to grow. This large empty nester demographic, often afflicted with the travel bug but facing the inevitable consequences of aging, are seeking a more manageable urban apartment lifestyle.

Or so the argument goes. The problem, however, is the evidence doesn't support this assumed wisdom. Studies by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. as well as countless other research indicate baby boomers overwhelmingly want to age in place. They simply prefer to stay put in their existing homes, gardens and neighbourhoods. This may seem a rather peculiar observation to begin a review of a very striking Modernist custom house designed for a youthful professional couple and their two boys not yet 10. But a home that supports both the evolving needs of a family as it matures and the couple's desire to remain comfortably in their home well into their later years was exactly what Robert Stacey and Jolanda Turley sought. "We wanted to never want a different house again ... this was going to be our last house, and it had to be designed in such a way that Jolanda and I could get old in it and the kids could grow up in it with comfort," says Stacey.

See MODERN on page 2

PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN LALONDE/PHOTOLUX STUDIOS

A dramatic overhang and orange-stained cedar lend weight to the modern home, which sits well back from the street.

The focal point of the living room is high-efficiency gas stove, accented with bronze panels featuring text from philosopher Martin Heidegger, a gift from architect Paul Kariouk.



HOMES & CONDOS



PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN LALONDE/PHOTOLUX STUDIOS

The mostly neutral decor gets a punch of yellow in the custom kitchen cabinets, while an accordion window allows two-thirds of the front wall to open.

MODERN LIGHT EVERYWHERE



A further hit of yellow is found on the box that houses the ensuite bathroom, which appears suspended over the opening in the floor.

Continued from page 1

With this starting point, they carefully plotted out exactly what else they wanted in a new house. The list included staying in the Hintonburg community they love but away from the negatives of the century-old home they inhabited: poor energy efficiency, choppy rooms and heavy on repairs.

They also wanted an environmentally sustainable house with open, flowing space that eschewed little-used rooms such as a formal dining room. Bedrooms could be relatively small but communal spaces would be larger and awash with lots of natural light.

To round out the home's core priorities, the couple had different, but not conflicting, wants. Stacey wanted a modern design as he "detests" faux-traditional styles.

"My view is that a house ought to reflect its time and place," he argues.

Turley did not disagree, but placed her emphasis on flow and utility.

"We wanted a modern-looking (but cosy) green home, with all the necessary space partitioned in such a way as to balance privacy with sociability and to minimize the buildup of mess and clutter we experienced in our last house," says Stacey.

It had to fit on a skinny 30- by 130-foot lot on Bayswater Avenue with rear lane access, but they realized they had "no idea how these spaces would be arranged," says Stacey.

After interviewing a raft of architects and designers and one false start, they chose designer and Carleton architecture profes-

sor Paul Kariouk. They liked the way he spent considerable time with them exploring exactly what they wanted. And they were impressed with both the beauty and variety of expression in his work. Their house, they felt, could be both modern yet unique.

Kariouk proposed a simple rectangular box pushed toward the rear of the site that might best be called a hybrid approach.

Although the 2,700-square-foot house has two primary levels, it's neither a two-storey nor a bungalow with a classic finished basement. Instead, the first floor sits just below ground level on the rear laneway side and then plows further into the ascending grade as it moves toward the street. Part of the front yard is sculpted out to create a lower terrace with a gentle slope up toward the front lawn.

The upper level, set moderately higher than a standard first floor, is given extra presence by having its ceiling rise from eight feet at the rear to 14 feet by the street. This approach creates a chimney effect that draws heat up and out the massive front window in summer.

On one side of the facade, a massive beam atop a single wall pushes outward to provide support for a wide, precariously balanced flat roof. The roof and wall shelter the entrance and a large terrace from both inclement weather and summer solar gain.

The terrace is important for the home's presence on the street. The front facade is pulled well back from the standard profile for the street, a gesture designed in part to open up views to Bayswater's original and very picturesque 1870s farmhouse close by. The covered terrace, a modern take

on the farmhouse's porch, will be popular in warmer months and create an openness and connection to the community.

The upper floor is the family's main communal space but also contains a master bedroom, a generous, sky-lit bathroom and a large home office to ensure one-level, bungalow-like living for the couple as they age.

The lower level features two bedrooms (plus a guest bedroom) and a bathroom for the boys, along with an informal family room with an all-glass facade that opens from floor to ceiling onto the sunken front terrace. This area is intended to morph into the boys' teenage space.

"As they get older," says Stacey, "I think they'll take over the basement and make it their lair. Everything Jolanda and I need is upstairs on the main level."

The upper-floor kitchen and a dining area share the voluminous front space that looks out through a floor-to-ceiling window to the street. An accordion window allows two-thirds of the front wall to open to welcome fresh air and summer breezes. It also facilitates conversation between the chef in the kitchen and those sitting on the eating porch.

Custom kitchen cabinetry by Karhu Fine Cabinetry is bright buttery yellow, accented with equally rich walnut panelling and trim. Naturally stained wood panels and doors are used judiciously throughout the house to add warmth to the largely white, gallery-like walls and grey-tiled floors.

The living room spans the house's middle section. Its focus is a high-efficiency wood stove fronting a ceramic panel that,



The basement, with its open-web steel trusses, is expected to morph into the boy's teenage space and includes their bedrooms.

as a gift, Kariouk had inset with bronze panels inscribed with text on architecture by philosopher Martin Heidegger.

A broad, L-shaped void in the floor opens to the lower level along the living room's back side. Seeming to float in this void is a simple yellow box that contains the ensuite bathroom.

Interior clerestory windows on this box allow light from large skylights in the bathroom to flood the core of the home with natural light, even teasing it far into the lower level.

Open riser stairs of steel and wood descend through the void to the boy's domain while a long whimsical catwalk bridges the opening to provide access to the rear office.

The spatial bravado of the house is thanks to its Insulated Concrete Form (ICF) structure. As the name implies, it replaces wood framing with rigid insulation forms separated by rebar into which concrete is poured. The decision to use ICF was made

based on Stacey's extensive research on alternatives to wood-framed homes.

Despite its extra cost, he says, it met the family's objective for high insulation value, solidity and soundproofing.

In addition to a concrete floor base with radiant heating, ICF required open-web steel trusses that have been left largely exposed in the lower level, putting the home's wires and pipes on partial display.

Overall, the home is a fine example of a collaborative process that meets a family's well-defined functional requirements and aesthetic preferences.

From the funky orange stain on the cedar exterior (after all, Turley is Dutch-Canadian) to clean interior lines brushed with natural light, to sustainable design and a unique delineation of family space, the house truly belongs to its family.

Online: See more photos at ottawacitizen.com/homes