

# HOME GUIDE



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# NEW LIFE FOR A CLASSIC DESIGN

A renovation pays tribute to East Isles home's history

By Jen Larson Roesler



**A** stately row of windows marched across the first and second story of the Federal Revival home in the East Isles neighborhood, just as they did when it was built in 1921.

Identical shutters still framed each one, while the substantial front door still anchored the center of the façade.

Yet over time, a series of additions and remodels had chipped away at some of the charm and character the original design. Could the right refurbishment, with a few details from the past and nods from today, bring back a bright future for this classic home?

A little friendly envy of the curb appeal of the neighbors' home across the street was the nudge the homeowners needed to consult with architect Mark Nelson of the David Heide Design Studio for ideas on how to bring their Federal Revival back to life.

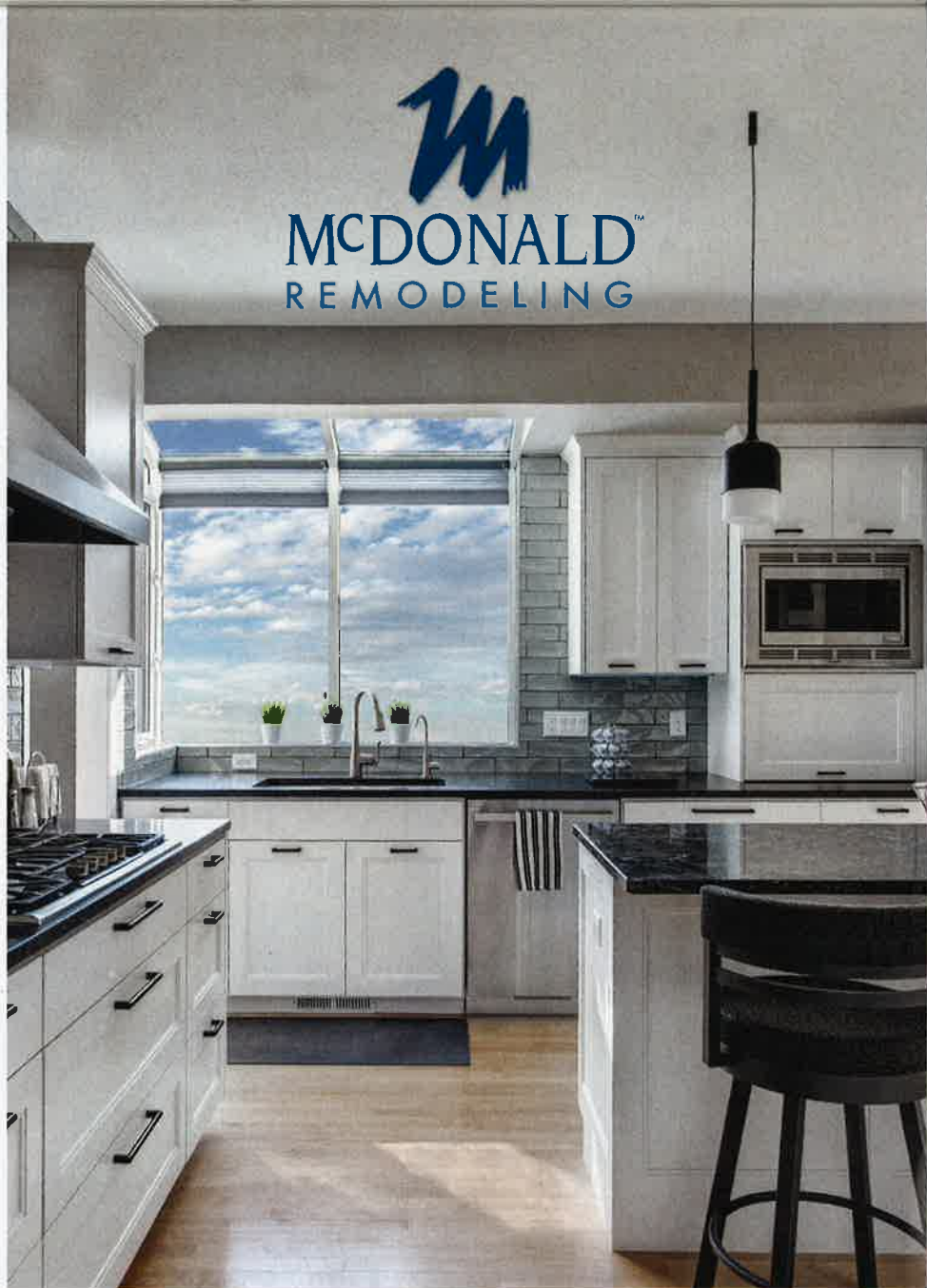
The homeowners not only wanted a more visually appealing façade; they were also interested in low- or no-maintenance exterior elements. Gaining some outdoor living space on the lot, which lacked a backyard, was also paramount.

"The home was a typical Federal-style house that had a two-story addition of slightly lesser height and depth," Nelson said.

"In the process of the renovation, the traditional millwork of the era had been either covered up or removed. Also, the addition — rather than matching the existing home — actually modernized and in a way 'suburbanized' the whole structure."

Nelson explained his approach: "Our firm specializes in refurbishing historic structures while adding new technology, materials, and ways of using spaces in order to make them viable for the next 100 years."

After researching Federal Revival home designs both in Minneapolis and on the East Coast, Nelson came →



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Photos courtesy of David Heide Design Studio

**"We restored the character of the original house and brought that style across the entire home. So now there is a true Federal Revival style —from the original home through the addition, to the new outdoor living space to the garage — and all are in the same vocabulary."**

— Mark Nelson

up with some unique solutions to bring back key architectural details while solving the modern-day challenges of maintenance and outdoor space.

New roofing replaced grey shingles with black asphalt shingles, which grounded the home visually and added back some missing gravitas to the Federal design.

Siding was replaced with a low-maintenance cement-board product that takes paint well yet requires little maintenance. A dormer over the front door was removed in favor of a traditional molded lunette, a distinctive hallmark of Federal architecture.

All-new aluminum-clad windows with black sashes combined modern hands-off care with a traditional hallmark of Federal design. Operable black wooden shutters were a nod to history and added a grounding element to the soft-green paint chosen for the home's siding.

#### **ARCHITECT PROFILE**

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The red front door also harkened back to a key moment in American history. "It's interesting," Nelson commented. "During the Revolutionary War, a red door indicated you were loyal to Britain, while a black door showed support for the colonies of the United States." Colonial sympathies aside, today, the red door adds a warm focal point for visitors to the home.

Finally, the garage door height was raised to be more in proportion with the rest of the house. A historic reproduction door tied the garage in with the rest of the home, rather than making it feel tacked-on:

Nelson designed a screened-in porch to grace the front of the home, accomplishing two goals in one: The porch offered the outdoor living space the family craved, while obscuring some of the discrepancies in the design of the addition, such as the windows being of different heights.

"It makes me very happy to see the end result," Nelson said. "The Federal style, in and of itself, is very welcoming."

While the symmetry and order remain, the paint colors, period details (down to a restored brick stoop, which he discovered was original to the home) and the screened-in front porch add to the comfort and inviting feel of the house.

"We restored the character of the original house and brought that style across the entire home," Nelson explained.

"So now there is a true Federal Revival style — from the original home through the addition, to the new outdoor living space to the garage — and all are in the same vocabulary."

"It all has such character and warmth," he said.

That was certainly true of the original style of Federal homes; and that legacy can now live on in this classic Federal Revival Minneapolis home — thanks to an enlightened renovation.

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