



GARDEN AVENUE RENOVATION

FINAL REPORT

July 2013

We are thrilled to announce that the Garden Avenue Renovation is complete! Building a major renovation takes time, and the moment that those final touches go in is pure satisfaction. Nick and Julia and the kids are all settled in and the home is filled with light and life.

The finishes in the house all fit within a clean and bright aesthetic, interspersed with accents such as the striped stairway carpet, the dark fireplace insert, and vibrant artwork on the walls. The mostly white kitchen is accented with glossy grey cabinetry and makes use of both IKEA stock and custom units. Wood touches bring warmth in the form of a butcher block countertop and a finished



plywood shelving insert.

The kitchen island is topped with quartz, a manufactured stone product that avoids the invasive excavation required by options such as granite and marble. Quartz is essentially silicon dioxide, which is a common material found on the surface of the earth rather than deep below. While it has the appearance of natural stone, it is extremely durable and doesn't need the high level of maintenance required of its natural counterparts. Another benefit is its non-porous structure, which is extremely durable and prevents the growth of mold and bacteria.

A unique aspect of this house is that we were able to reuse the original stairs and all original doors and door hardware. At the very beginning of the project, we took the time to measure and catalogue each of the century-old doors. As we progressed through the design and into construction drawings, we carefully accommodated the unique measurements of each door for inclusion in the final build. Together with the original "bones" of the house, the doors and stair bring warmth and connection to the past, and juxtapose the more modern aesthetic of the rest of the design and interiors.

Nick and Julia are particularly happy with the additional brightly lit open spaces, which provide for a much improved flow through the house for their family. Before this major renovation, the house was leaky and cold in the winter, and hot and steamy in the summer. Now, they are greatly appreciating their well-sealed building envelope that keeps them comfortable in all seasons of the year. Although they weren't able to fit a third floor addition into their budget, they do have new space in the now-finished basement, including a playroom for the kids. They still feel that a third floor would have given them all the storage space they need, however they also realize that it was simply out of reach of their budget.

What advice do Nick and Julia have for other homeowners considering a renovation? First and foremost, they say wait until you can do a full gut-job renovation. Had they gone with a partial renovation they wouldn't have had the results they wanted. Instead, they decided to wait until they could do everything in one go. Doing one larger-scale renovation enabled them to maximize what they could achieve, as demolition only had to happen once, and everything installed is final and won't go to waste in a future, secondary renovation.



Julia adds that it was worth it for them to prioritize their requirements and invest in high-priority items with quality products that will stand up to daily use over time. By prioritizing, they were able to afford what they really needed by reducing costs in other areas or eliminating unnecessary items altogether.

Final words from Nick? "Never live in the house while you're renovating ... even moving in too early tends to stall the completion."

For updated photos of the completed house, visit the project page on [our website](#).

*"You're in good hands with Tom and Christine
... they'll treat you like family!"*

- Nick

