



“The house is timeless because of the materials—handmade clay roof tiles, limestone accents, and wood-mold brick.”

—BUILDER JOHN BRYANT

The only changes to the front exterior since 1927 are an extension of the terrace and the addition of two French doors with a big window between to capture city views along with a Parterre garden by landscape designer Peter Falkner. The design team added a canopy to protect the openings from sun and weather. “We used copper roofing that really ages gracefully and becomes more beautiful over time,” says architect Jason Dunham.

Past Made Present

Built by the man best known for bringing industrial advancements to the rural South, this Redmont home shines even brighter after new owners update it to fit their lifestyle focused on family gatherings.

Text by LACEY HOWARD / Photography by JEAN ALLSOPP

In the 1920s, Redmont Park was one of Birmingham’s first suburbs, stretching along the ridge of Red Mountain. It was here, in 1927, that local industrial titan Dr. Thomas Martin built a red-brick house with views of the burgeoning city to the north and south over Shades Valley. The home’s original architects, from the firm of Miller, Martin, & Lewis, had designed many of Birmingham’s well-known buildings, such as Avondale School and Birmingham Public Library, as well as many structures on the campuses of Birmingham-Southern College and The University of Alabama, including Denny Chimes.

When the current owners first viewed the property in 2015, they immediately knew it was perfectly suited for their empty-nester lifestyle. The home offered plenty of space to gather and celebrate with their six grown children who were starting



"We used a mix of old and new so it didn't feel totally traditional," says designer Liz Hand Woods of the living room. Antique chairs and benches are balanced out by the contemporary coffee table. The art above the commode is a self-portrait of the homeowner's great-grandmother, who was a turn-of-the-century German artist. Two 18th-century French trophy lamps square off in opposite corners.

to have children of their own. However, it was a year before the previous owner would sell and then another 18 months of planning, renovations, and decorating before the home was complete. "We wanted to make it livable and personalized for the new owners," says architect Jason Dunham of Nequette Architecture & Design. "The main changes involved opening up views from the interior, adding a family room on the back, and expanding the master bedroom closets."

To capitalize on downtown views, Dunham and his design team created a large window (once a solid wall) flanked by

French doors that open from the living room onto the front terrace. At the back of the house, the new window-wrapped family room was constructed as a second story atop a carport that took the place of an uncovered patio off the kitchen. "The architects also redesigned the front entry's grand staircase, which completely transformed the look and feel of the home," says builder John Bryant of Francis Bryant. "The new floating, plastered stair with iron handrail is stunning and really sets the tone for the house."

Even with all of the changes made, the design team purposely kept certain things the same as a way of preserving the



The new window-wrapped family room sits atop a carport. "When you are in the backyard sitting on the pool terrace at night, the addition lights up and becomes a beacon on top of the brick base," says Jason. **BELOW:** Family room furnishings are kid and dog friendly," says designer Liz Hand Woods. Motorized shades block light and offer privacy. The former terrace's limestone pavers were repurposed as the fireplace surround.



"I love the contrast of light and dark," Liz says of the wife's study that includes charcoal-gray lacquered walls and white wing chairs. A vintage marble coffee table anchors the seating group. The grids of artwork are by local artist Jane Timberlake, and the piece over the mantel is by Ralph Harmon. Original leaded-glass doors enclose bookcases.

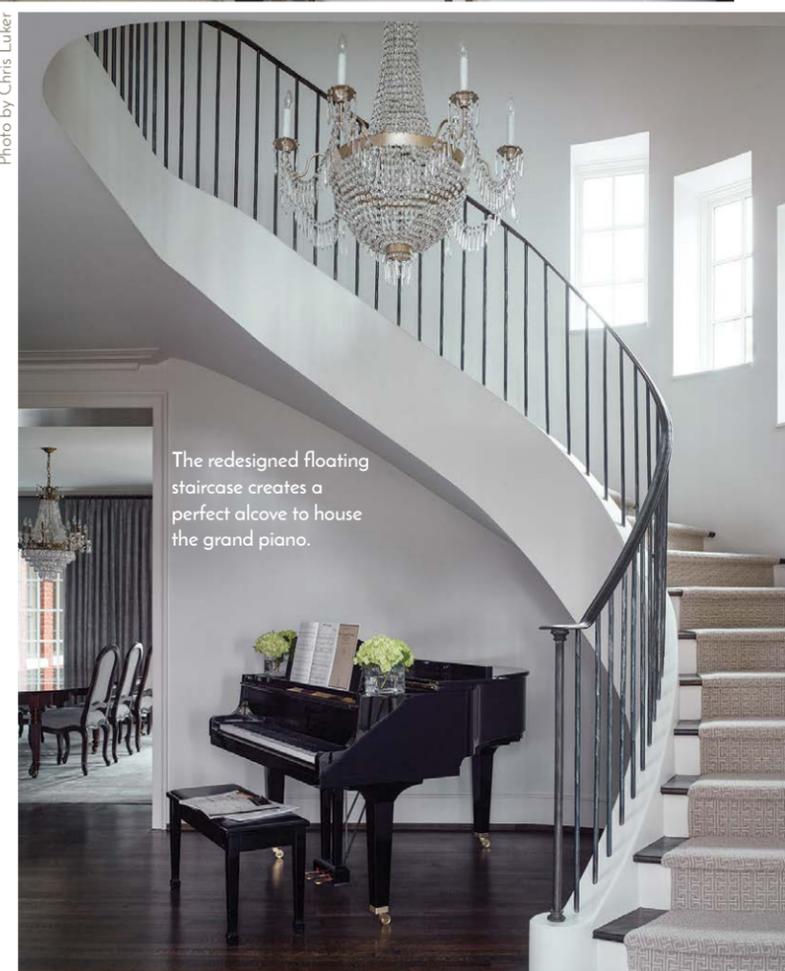


home's history. The front façade maintained its English traditional architecture, as seen in the arched front doorway with limestone surround. And the structure's original Italian Renaissance touches are still visible in details such as a double-arch window with twisted columns above the front entry. In fact, the street view of the home today is almost indistinguishable from 90-year-old photographs.

Another unchanged aspect is the historic home's original role as an escape from a bustling metropolis. Thanks to designer Liz Hand Woods' soothing, inviting interiors, the house almost forces an exhale from those who enter. "You feel and smell and sense the history when you walk into the house," says the owner. And because of the home's solid construction (two-foot-thick concrete walls, along with rebar and brick), it is completely quiet. As the homeowner says, "The dichotomy of looking at the city but feeling like we are in a private oasis is truly amazing."

RESOURCES: Interiors: Liz Hand Woods, 205.870.8005 **Architect:** Jason Dunham, Nequette Architecture & Design, nequette.com **Builder:** Francis Bryant Construction, francisbryant.com **Landscape:** Falkner Gardens falknergardens.com **Kitchen hardware:** Brandino Brass, brandinobross.com **Rugs: Foyer, living, study, & dining:** Paige Albright Orientals, paigealbrightorientals.com **Master bedroom:** 18th Street Orientals, 18thstreetorientals.com **Stair runner:** Hiltz-Lauber, hiltzlauber.com **Fixtures:** Fixtures & Finishes, 205.323.5616 **Firepit:** Concrete Farmer, 205.790.1481

Photo by Chris Luker



The redesigned floating staircase creates a perfect alcove to house the grand piano.



LEFT: The breakfast nook offers banquette and armchair seating at an oval table between the kitchen and the new family room. **BELOW:** The existing kitchen already had marble countertops and white cabinets. Industrial open shelving helps supplement the room's storage options. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** The husband's study has appeal with straight, clean lines on the furnishings and green grasscloth on the walls. On the terrace just off the study, sleek Janus et Cie outdoor furniture creates an intimate conversation area. An icy silver color palette in the master bedroom ties into the marble mantel. In the master bath, a contemporary tub and a new window seat offer spots to take in city and valley views. The water closet is enclosed by sand-blasted glass. On the back side of the house, French doors lead from the living room to the dining terrace. A concrete table with bases from Formations is surrounded by Janus et Cie dining chairs.

