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The most challenging, and yet most memorable, aspect of the project was building the home's basement ... see page 8



Photos by Jim Carchidi

Saved from destruction

1909 home took its own place on builders' show stage.

By Bill Orben

Once destined for the wrecking ball, a Lake Eola Historic District home has become a showplace that attracted more than 100,000 visitors during the International Builders Show in February.

In its former life, the home at 327 Broadway Ave. was office space for the Catholic Diocese of Orlando.

That all changed when Carmen Dominguez was asked to build the New American Home for the National Association of Home Builders' International Builders Show event in February, and she selected the lot at the corner of Broadway and Ridgewood Street.

Instead of destroying the former 2,400-square-foot structure, which the city would not allow, the home eventually was moved to a lot next door.

Enter Winter Park-based PSG Construction, which bought the home from Dominguez and transformed the small, unassuming structure into a home with nearly 6,000 square feet of living space and a pricetag of \$3.2 million.

Dubbed the Renewed American Home for the home builders' show, the two-building complex consists of a three-level main house with four bedrooms and 5½ bathrooms, and a two-level studio apartment with one bathroom.

The structure, described as a mix of Victorian, four-square gable and Colonial revival, sits beside the New American Home, a \$2.9 million, three-story urban loft Dominguez built for the builders' show.

Period-style revival

The entire renovation project contains about 15 to 20 percent of the original home.

While much of the home may be new, its plank floors, dark woods and period-style furnishings were intended to recreate a look the home had when it first opened its doors in 1909.

A wood staircase begins in the basement level and winds its way to the second level of the home and the main bedroom. Those dark colors disappear in the two children's bedrooms, which are painted in bright pinks, blues and greens.

The home also features a heavy use of wainscoting in the main level and in the staircase.

It's that use of trim that many visitors mention as their favorite feature of the house.

Although potential buyers know thousands of folks traipsed through the home during the builders' show and thousands more have viewed photos of the home on PSG's Web site, buying the show home does have its pluses — a Bose entertainment system, Dell TV monitors and computers, elevator, whole-house generator and outdoor living room.

To be sure, the \$3.2 million pricetag is just for the home. To buy the house as it appeared on the home builders' show tour would cost another \$262,281 for the Robb & Stucky Furniture and accessory package, \$11,500 for the built-ins in the basement family room, \$16,500 for the exercise equipment and \$14,200 for the 900 bottles of wine provided by ABC Fine Wine & Spirits for the basement wine cellar.

Photo by Jim Carchidi

'A big puzzle'

Constructing the Renewed American Home — a first in the home builders' show — was like solving a big puzzle, says Eric Watson, PSG Construction project manager.

See amazing space, page 8



First of all, the firm had to deal with standards the city imposed because the home is in a historic district.

Then PSG Construction had to use materials supplied by sponsors of the project.

In addition, Watson knew the renovation would go under the microscope of those touring the home as part of the builders' show.

The most challenging, and yet most memorable, aspect of the project was building the home's basement (see photos, right), which required numerous permits and unusual materials. That's largely thanks to the fact that basements are almost unheard of in Florida due to problems with water intrusion.

Paul and Stephen Gidus, co-owners of PSG Construction, say building a basement enabled the company to maximize



Photos by Jim Carchidi



the space that they could build into the home. The basement adds 1,400 square feet of space.

It was PSG Construction's task to find a way to keep water out of the ground floor that is 6 feet below ground level.

There's 3 feet of sand below the bottom floor and drains placed every 2 feet. In addition, the foundation is coated in a clay-like material that keeps water out of the basement, which now contains an exercise room, wine cellar, laundry and safe room.

When asked whether they had second thoughts about building a basement in Florida after getting knee-deep in the project, the brothers say they knew upfront they were taking on a challenge that ultimately would pay off.

So, are they ready to do it again?

"Yes," says Stephen Gidus.

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