

after

BEFORE



Completed home



Before



After the fire

Callahan & Peters, Inc.

WHOLE HOUSE REMODEL, HIGHLAND PARK

Out of ashes, a home reborn

Any remodeler will tell you that a renovation rarely goes exactly as planned. So it was the case with this home, nestled into a gorgeous shady corner lot in the North Shore of Chicagoland.

The main level remodeling project began straightforward enough: The home, built in the mid-1960s, had not had any major renovations, although Callahan & Peters had previously remodeled the hallway and master bath. Feeling that it was time for a new kitchen, the owners called Callahan & Peters to look at a larger remodeling project.

The plans started with a new kitchen, says David Callahan, president. Callahan and the owners discussed more extensive renovations to the home's first floor, and explored ideas about expansion of the garage and upstairs. But they settled on a main level project that included a new kitchen and laundry room; updates to the family room; remodeling the dining room; and expanding the front porch. "It was, basically, a modernizing, updating of the first floor," Callahan says.

Two weeks into the project, which began March 1, 2005, tragedy struck; an accidental fire started upstairs. The fire burned through a portion of the roof; what escaped the flames was not spared severe smoke damage. "The result was the second floor was destroyed. We ended up with smoke and water damage on the first floor and in the finished basement," Callahan says, adding, "It's important to note that the fire had nothing to do with the remodeling work that was going on, on the first floor."

Work on the project screamed to a halt. Except for some cleanup, construction would not resume for more than three months. In the mean time, the homeowners sat down with Callahan and architect Jeffery Heaney, AIA, to reassess their remodeling project. "They got down to business right away," Callahan says.

"They made the decision to substantially change the look of this home as part of the restoration and renovation process that now had to take place."

Because plans and permits for the first floor were already in place, and custom cabinetry had already been ordered, the first floor plans went ahead as planned. "It wasn't possible to just negate all of that, and it made no economic sense to bulldoze the house and start from scratch...so we had to design the new house around what we had already planned for the first floor," Callahan explains. The second floor was expanded with a new bedroom, larger rooms, and a high roof pitch. The garage also got a third stall.

To expedite the work, the owners proceeded with it separately from their settlements with their insurance company. Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, construction resumed July 1, and the home was completed just in time for the new year.

"They ended up with a brand-new home, inside and out," Callahan says. "You could never tell there was a fire."