



DEDICATION TO *Detail*

By Carol McGarvey | Photography by Tim Abramowitz

A JOB LOCATION'S MOVE TO THE WESTERN SUBURBS prompted a Clive couple to rethink their housing situation for a growing family. "I kept driving by this lot—one of the few remaining—in The Woodlands, and it just felt right, a spot we might enjoy living," says the husband. The Woodlands is located west of 128th Street and south of Hickman Road in Clive. They purchased the lot in 2006 and moved into their new home in December of 2008.

With a number of years under his belt in the construction business, builder Dan Knoup of DSM Homes decided to start his own company last year. The couple was among his first clients.

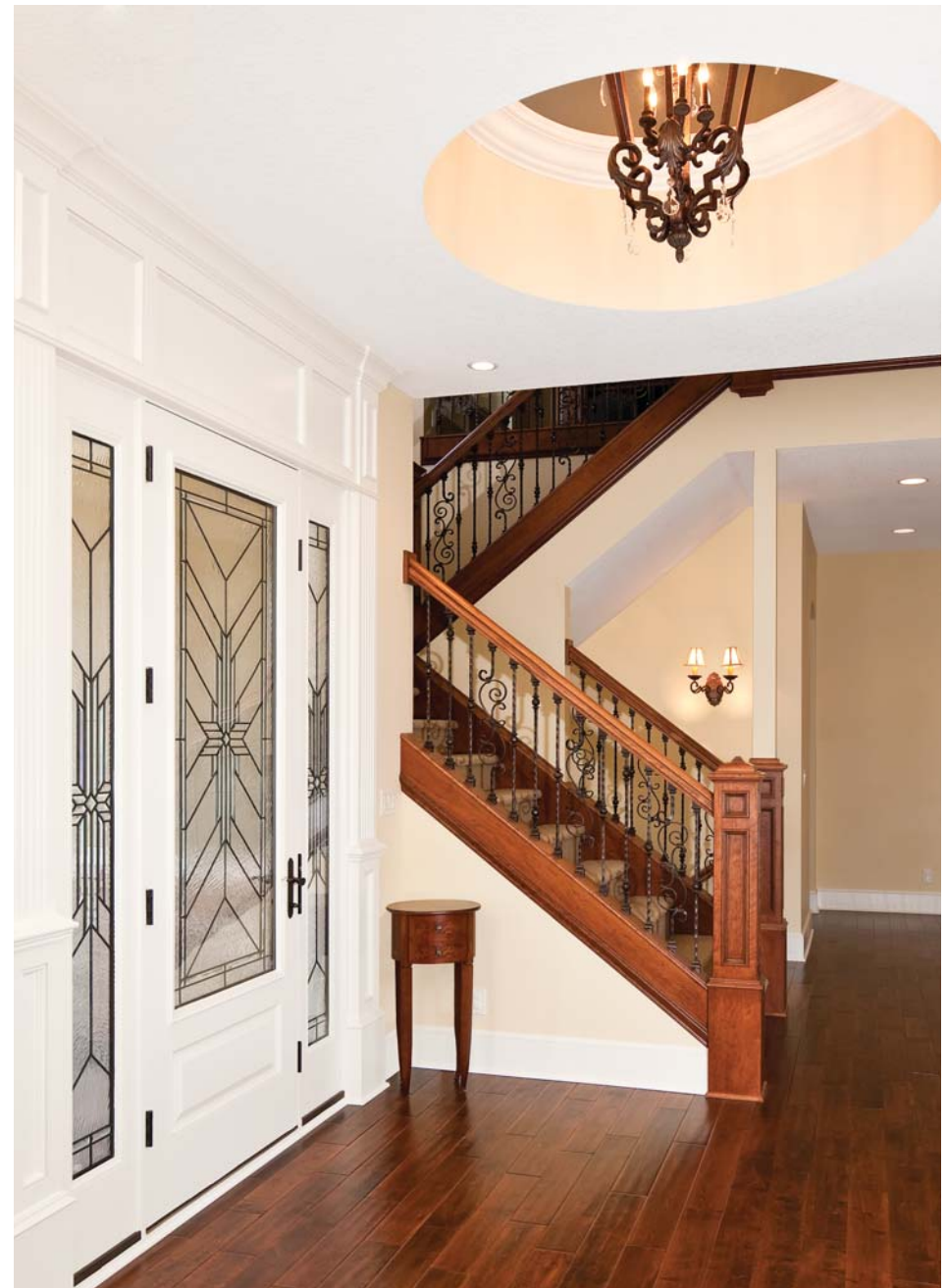
The resulting home is classy in its traditional touches, comfortable for a busy family with young children, and accessible for the husband, who has been in a wheelchair for most of his adult life.

The detail-oriented couple was involved in every aspect of the building process, Knoup says. "If there was any question at all, we'd come back the next morning, and they would have it all thought through and would have worked it out. They were much more involved than many owners we have worked with and were in on every decision."

The trio's admiration goes both ways. The couple says that Knoup was so easy to work with, too. "He listened to our wishes and worked with us," the wife explains. "We were very hands-on in the design and building process, and he let us be. He worked with us so easily and accommodated our ideas."

Her husband agrees. "He spent so much time with us and was willing to set up appointments for us with suppliers so we could get all our questions answered. He didn't drive the agenda at all. He wanted to know what we wanted and did everything to accommodate our choices. It was a fantastic experience."

Top: Traditional details give a classy look to the attractive home in Clive. **Opposite:** In the entry, leaded glass in the door and a "rotunda" with a chandelier are welcoming touches.





Above: The hearth room off the kitchen is bathed in light from large windows. Its stone and brick fireplace is the focal point in the family gathering spot.

Opposite: Massive cathedral windows in the formal living room soaks in views of the wooded area behind the home.

LOVED THE PROCESS

The owners say they “absolutely enjoyed” the process of picking out the details for their home, as well as the furnishings. “Working on these details and accessories is like adding jewelry,” says the lady of the house. “We know that some others don’t like that aspect, but we truly enjoy that part. It’s pure fun for us. Let’s just say we went through lots of graph paper in making our plans.” The home, officially called a story-and-a-half, has about 7,000 square feet, including a finished basement.

The key to this home is universal design, making the space accessible to, in this case, a wheelchair. The wide hallways and open floor plans make life easier for everyone else, too. This home has an elevator as well, which allows the husband to go everywhere in the family’s living space.

Knoup says he has built five wheelchair-accessible homes. “With our aging population, this is something for everyone to consider. Accessibility just makes a home work better for everyone.”

The taupe home with white trim sits nicely on a corner lot, and a three-car, side-entry garage removes the all-garage-door front look. It also means that most visitors feel comfortable using the back door, which is just fine with the couple. It’s how both of them grew up in small-town Iowa.

The home’s main floor includes an inviting entry area with the interesting detail of a “rotunda,” which houses a formal chandelier. It can be raised and lowered to change lightbulbs or for cleaning. The living room with 12-foot ceilings and dramatic cathedral-style windows that look out onto a small wooded area is a welcoming spot for family and friends. A woodwork-style coffered ceiling lends a dramatic and sophisticated look. Soft gold walls with white trim give a fresh approach. Leather and tapestry furnishings add to the comfortable feel while still being kid-friendly.

The master bedroom suite, painted in soft bird’s-egg blue, uses three square windows over the headboard to bring in light without sacrificing privacy. The accessible bathroom offers roll-under access on both vanities and a roll-in shower for comfort and ease.

Another small room on the main floor likely will become a music room. The elevator, with its paneled interior, fits the traditional look and opens onto the entry hallway.





Clockwise, from above: A huge open kitchen offers room for the whole family to enjoy cooking. Granite counters and mixed wood cabinetry give a traditional feel. • Wall ovens and cabinet panels over the refrigerator give a smooth-line look. • The back entry and laundry area has cubbies and cabinets for storage. • The lower-level kitchenette makes it easy to entertain family and friends.

SPECTACULAR KITCHEN

The heart of the home is the large kitchen. Ideas came from clipping magazine photos and blending the look the couple wanted. Upper cabinetry is glazed antique white, while dark beaded board on the lower portion of the center island gives contrast and practicality. Granite countertops add rich tone, as does the Old World-style of the range hood, complete with corbel brackets for detail. Neutral-tone tile for the backsplash was chosen for its durability and longevity — “We won’t get tired of that neutral look,” says the wife.

She’s the baker in the family, and her husband loves to cook big weekend breakfasts. There are two microwave ovens, with one in a lower cabinet, an easy reach for him to use. For a formal look, the refrigerator is concealed with paneled doors to match the cabinets.

Walls in the kitchen are a toasty brown with white trim for a fresh look. Just off the kitchen in one direction is the hearth room with a stone and brick fireplace as a focal point. A big-screen TV is attached over the mantel. Radiant-heat flooring keeps the area comfortably warm. Another small area off the kitchen is a butler’s pantry and kitchen office.

Yet another spot that shows planning is the laundry/mudroom. “People often use this as the main entry, which we enjoy, so we wanted it to have good detail,” the husband points out. It has a slate-tile floor, as practical as it is rich-looking. It features cubbies for keeping jackets, mittens, hats, and backpacks in order and sage green beaded-board cabinetry doors with bin pulls for a classic touch.

On the second floor are an open loft area, which has turned into the family office space, children’s bedrooms that showcase built-in storage, an important element to this home, with a Jack-and-Jill bathroom between them. A guest suite with its own bathroom for grandparents and other visitors gives privacy away from family activity.



LOWER LEVEL

The lower level — daylight windows and strategic placement of windows in the stairwell offer abundant natural light — doesn’t seem at all like a basement. The Old World-style glazed walls give a highly finished feel. A three-sided glass fireplace visually separates the family room area from what will be the pool table area. A possible bedroom now is a toy room, and a space under the stairway will become a crafts area.

A kitchenette area with wood paneling and dark alderwood cabinetry offers a perfect spot for both family snacks and full-scale entertaining. With a two-level counter and a full-size refrigerator tucked away in a small alcove — again with a window for more natural light — the kitchen becomes a delightful addition to the space.

Knoup says the home is heated by an efficient geothermal system, the installation of which slowed down the building process just a bit because of last year’s heavy rains.

Digital camera technology turned out to be a helpful building tool. “Because my husband wanted to be involved in every detail, but the elevator hadn’t been installed yet, we would take digital photos of upstairs and downstairs progress so that he could see and comment on what was happening,” says his wife. “It actually worked out beautifully in the whole process.”

“It was amazing how this aspect worked out so well,” Knoup says. “He truly wanted to monitor what was happening, and digital photos worked perfectly.”

With their attention to detail, the family couldn’t be happier with the results. “Working with Dan Knoup was so easy,” the couple insists. “We knew what we wanted, but he brought it to life. We are thrilled with the results.”

RESOURCES

- BUILDER | *DSM Homes, Dan Knoup*
- LANDSCAPING | *Country Landscapes*
- CONCRETE SURFACING | *Centurion Stone*
- APPLIANCES | *Factory Direct Appliances*
- CUSTOM MILLWORK | *Fine Line Woodworks*
- FLOORING | *Flooring Gallery*
- LUMBER, SIDING | *Gilcrest/Jewett Lumber*
- ROOFING SUPPLIER | *Lumberman’s Wholesale*
- WINDOWS | *Prairie – Pella Windows*
- CABINETS | *Showplace Kitchens*



UNIVERSAL DESIGN DETAILS

Universal design considerations were a huge part of planning this home, but more and more they will become part of the design of many homes. Particularly as the population ages, there will be more attention to universal design, also called inclusive design, design for all, and barrier-free design.

The whole concept comes from the belief that the wide range of human ability is ordinary, not special. Think about it. Technology labels that can be read by someone with low vision are easier for everyone to read. Building entrances that work for wheelchairs also work for someone pushing a baby stroller or someone else moving furniture.

Ron Mace, one of the original leaders in universal design, described it this way: "Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design."

The movement was part of federal legislation introduced in March in the House of Representatives (HR 1408). The Inclusive Home Design Act would require that all newly built single-family homes and townhouses receiving federal funds must meet four standards:

- Include at least one accessible ("zero step") entrance into the home.
- Ensure all doorways on the main floor have a minimum of 32 inches of clear passage space.
- Build at least one wheelchair-accessible bathroom on the main floor.
- Place electrical and climate controls, such as light switches and thermostats, at heights reachable from a wheelchair.
- Web sites to check out regarding universal design: UDEducation.org and UniversalDesign.com. **WFI**

Clockwise, from top: The master bedroom offers a serene space.

- With traditional paneling, the elevator goes to the home's three levels.
- The home features abundant storage, such as under the window seat and in shelves on either side of the window.
- The accessible master bath has two roll-under vanities.

