

# Merle Thorpe Architects

*presents*

NEO-CLASSICAL ADDITION  
in Washington, D.C.



Neo-Classical Addition  
and a number of our other projects  
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## NEO-CLASSICAL ADDITION

By Merle Thorpe Architects, PLLC

What makes an ordinary addition extraordinary? Like a good story, the answer lies in the details... or in architecture, the detailing. This project illustrates the point.

We were asked to enclose a screened porch and remodel a master bath, stacked within an existing addition. Without materially altering the structure, we enhanced the living interior spaces with bay and window openings, custom-designed built-ins and exquisite detailing and finishes. Outside, the bay and window openings served an additional design purpose, anchoring the composition of carefully selected and proportioned neoclassical exterior details to enhance the stability, symmetry and balance of the rear façade. As a result, the renovated addition hews more tightly to the neoclassical style of the main house, while enhancing the elegance of the terraced rear garden.



*Screened Porch, Before*



*Two-Story Addition, Before*

### **Garden Room Renovation**

Transforming the screened porch into a garden room required precise execution of myriad details to fulfill all the room's requirements, while becoming a gracious and pleasing living space. Two square bays enhance the room's sense of space by reducing the projection of a sofa and built-in desk inserted into the bays. Window openings and doors replace screened openings and Chippendale-detailed chair rails. The multi-paned glazed windows are operable, not fixed, and fitted with wood-sashed screens and levers to promote natural air circulation.



We also custom-designed two storage cabinets, one of which contains a copper bar sink and refrigerator. The cabinets provide storage, of course, but also discretely conceal an air handler, while a drawer in the desk stores a full size color laser printer.

The architectural renovation set the stage for exquisite interior detailing. The room's original brick walls and structural piers are covered by rigid insulation board and millwork surfaces, and then expertly faux-painted to resemble pale limed pine. Vintage terracotta pavers, salvaged from southern France, replace the original flagstone pavers. They conceal a radiant floor heating system to assure comfortable conditions in the Garden Room in colder winter months.





*Rear Elevation, Before*



*Rear Elevation, After*

The renovation added neoclassical architectural details that incorporated the new window openings and bays, while integrating the rear façade with the rest of the house. The new windows are stacked and ordered according to an established neoclassical rhythm that enhances stability, symmetry and balance to the rear façade. Continuous lintel architraves define the 1st and 2nd floor window openings and bays.

Above the bays (top right), a gable pediment and rake adds depth and shadow in a manner typical of neoclassical styling. At ground level, a new bluestone veneer plinth (below right) resolves the addition at ground level while connecting it visually to the adjacent bluestone terrace.



*Master Bath, Before*



*Master Bath Tub and Bay, Before*

In renovating the master bath, we re-proportioned its volume and height and took advantage of new window openings designed for the rear elevation. We lowered the cathedral height, and added a tray ceiling, wood beams and coordinated trim details. Transom windows define the spa recess, suffusing the room with indirect natural light.

Custom milled trims and a wood paneled tub surround complement all-new fixtures, fittings and surfaces, including a basketweave floor tile made with statuary marble and black onyx insets. Faux-paint finishes on the walls and ceiling complete the work, along with a dramatic chandelier.



*Master Bath Tub and Bay, After*

What makes an addition extraordinary? This project provides a case study in the use of architectural detailing to transform construction into spaces of exceptional beauty, comfort and function. Well conceived designs enhance the way the family enjoys its home.

ARCHITECTURE IS PERFORMED BEST IN COLLABORATION WITH OTHER INDIVIDUALS COMMITTED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE CRAFTS. TO THAT END, WE WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FOLLOWING STAFF, CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS:

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