



Titus home offers endless possibilities

By Barbara Schleppenbach

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Jim and Ann Titus are firm believers in the good neighbor policy.

In fact, when they decided to move from 1431 Kentucky, they kept the same neighbors and chose a home they had often admired in their walks around the area.

"We noticed the house and knew the Rees family who had lived here," Ann says. "We absolutely knew that they would have taken good care of the place."

The residence at 327 S. 16th offered exactly what they were looking for: Space, both inside and out.

"We loved the large yard that borders on the athletic field," she says. "The home is a basic four-square, so spacious, with huge bedrooms and closets. It was built for a family, with all sorts of little hallways and cubbyholes.

"Everything is so livable and comfortable."

Because the home was in excellent condition, the process of making it

their own was focused on updating — which often meant uncovering wonderful features hidden by previous decorating.

"We purchased the home a year ago in May, and started demolition on the kitchen the day we closed," Ann says. "Under four layers of linoleum, we found the original maple floor."

The Tituses learned a great deal from younger members of the Rees family, who had distant memories of oak floors beneath the blue and green shag rug in the living and dining rooms.

The family also passed along a copy of the original blueprints and specifications prepared by architect F.C. Ledebrock for original owner William H. Brackensick.

These revealed pillars had originally framed the entry from the foyer to the living room, with pocket doors separating the living and dining rooms. The pillars are nowhere to be found, and the pocket doors were located in the attic, where the Tituses are content to leave them.

The streamlined curves that now frame the boundary between the two rooms emphasize the openness of the main floor, which Ann calls "perfect for the way we live."

The home boasts abundant space and interior light, with a wide front window and a large three-window bay in the dining room that is repeated in the master bedroom level.

Several porches reinforce the interplay between outdoors and interior. The broad front porch makes a dramatic entry point and a space for 8-year-old Avery to play; a rear porch outside the kitchen invites the family to linger and enjoy sunsets after dinner.

An exterior door in the second-floor back bedroom once led to a balcony, a feature the family would like to restore.

Attention to detail is evident in every room. Quarter-sawn oak frames the windows, and the oak front staircase features octagonal balusters and a newel post with intricately carved square panels. The roomy closets hold many built-in

storage units that add to their convenience.

The Tituses are proud of the results of their first major project, which has yielded a modern kitchen with the look of the past.

"Work on the house never stops," Ann says with a laugh. "It's kind of a challenge — too much HGTV, too many ideas!"

She and Jim consider themselves "novices, who didn't know what we were doing, but we learned from neighbors and friendly contractors."

After living in a home that had been rehabbed by a previous owner, the pair enjoy "doing things the way we want to do them. This house is so well taken care of, it puts a little pressure on you. You can see so many possibilities."

Right now, Ann and Jim are savoring the process of turning those possibilities into a home for their future.

"You work a little bit and see what you find," Ann advises. "Go with what the house is telling you to do."