

In-town house keeps pace with the times

By Corinne Abelt
staff writer

It may be history, but the home which Bernette "Bunny" Miller remodeled on Greenwood in downtown Birmingham has a hard-to-equal atmosphere.

Miller, a psychiatric social worker and assistant director of the Center for Contemporary Psychology, 950 Hunter, Birmingham, once studied painting at Cranbrook and thought about art as a career.

The interior of her home, built in 1917 with one major addition and a number of structural changes, shows her continuing interest in art.

In the tradition of in-town houses in metropolitan areas throughout the world, this one has little to no front lawn, a private rear courtyard and a sophisticated interior.

Miller said she plans to leave it all for a condo just down the street that will be less responsibility and provide a lower level apartment for sons who still come home to visit.

History or not, the Greenwood house is an excellent example of renovation and interior design done with a wisely used, ample budget.

Robert Endres, ASID, Birmingham, worked closely with Miller during the three months of renovation before she moved in.

WITH THE exception of one of the three bedrooms upstairs, the carpeting both upstairs and down is a mauve taupe, a foundation for Miller's color scheme of mauve, taupe, raspberry and almond. But, because of the variety of art works, woods, and charming accessories, the color scheme sets the scene, but doesn't steal the show.

Living and dining room are formal contemporary with louver blinds at the windows. A 1917 style fireplace in the living room was given an '80s image when all but the hearth was covered with flame proof dry wall and painted a light almond to match the walls. The hearth is framed with contemporary brass.

Directly behind the living room is the dining room with built in cupboards to save space and cure the clutter.

The dining room chairs are covered in a soft paisley print, matching several pullup chairs in the living room. The large dining table is a rich dark natural wood. Immediately beyond is a small library area which acts as a buffer zone and houses a desk and wall of bookshelves. The family room, down several steps marks, the beginning of the addition, designed by architect Robert Wine.

The family room, which overlooks the courtyard, has a story and a half cathedral ceiling. The brick fireplace wall is painted the same almond used throughout the house.

On the other side of the hall, which leads directly through the center of the house, is the breakfast room and kitchen, again a combination of natural wood, almond formica and laminate surfaces.

THE CENTER panel of the door leading to the courtyard was replaced by thick glass, so there's a good view of the outside from almost any angle.

Each bedroom upstairs has a special look to it, but it is the bathrooms that take the honors.

Miller turned what had been an open porch off the master bedroom into one



The family room of the 1917 house was added later. It overlooks a courtyard and covered patio area which is ideal for summer entertaining.

ing. The library forms a transition area between the old and new, dining room and family room.

of the most elegant bathrooms around. In the center there's a sunken, marble, Jacuzzi tub.

Walls and woodwork are a rich light raspberry with one wall covered in a soft, sparse flower print on a taupe background.

The walk-in closet for the master bedroom was created from wasted space in a needlessly wide hallway and vacant area under the eaves.

A front bedroom, made by tearing out the center wall between two

smaller ones, has the sloped ceiling on both ends. Under the windows facing the street, is a hospitable looking loveseat.

The draped background for a single bed along one end wall with natural bamboo blind for a pattern in the center. Miller said she first saw in Jacobsons in Birmingham, liked the idea and used it for this guest room.

The outside of the house with aluminum siding is mauve. It sounds like it ought to fit — and it does.

A true example of an eclectic approach, the house worked because the owner had good taste and it genuinely

reflected her personality. It is an extension of her and she enjoys being creative.



In the guest bedroom, a cove ceiling becomes an asset instead of a liability when draped with a honey beige and white print and accent with a

bamboo shade. The thick beige carpeting also covers the window seat where Bunny Miller is sitting.



Bunny Miller had a porch off her master bedroom enclosed and turned into a glamorous bathroom which is done in gray and pink.

Staff photos by Mindy
Saunders

Meeting a challenge grant

Art Association improves grounds and building

By Corinne Abelt
staff writer

The noticeable improvement in the landscaping at Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association (BBAA), on Cranbrook just north of 14 Mile, is matched by interior renovations as well.

The art association received a \$50,000 challenge grant from the Kresge Foundation last fall and responded by raising more than \$115,000 through a fund drive headed by Criss Goad.

Exterior work includes the new driveway, walk, parking lot, installation of additional lighting and the landscaping which is nearly complete.

Interior improvements start with newly redecorated office area and continue into the main gallery and classrooms. Work is still under way on the new floor and wall carpeting in the main gallery.

A complete gallery kitchen is near completion, and work continues on windows and floors in the classrooms.

The first show in the new gallery will be the Detroit Society of Women Painters and Sculptors and the Birmingham Sculptors Guild, Saturday, June 18, to Saturday, July 9.

KEN GROSS, executive director of the art association, said, "I was present when the first renovation occurred in 1976 when we added the two classroom buildings. Now it's safer, more beautiful and more functional."

range plan for the future."

He said that these latest improvements were designed with that long-range plan clearly in mind, and Gross added the plan calls for a five-year progression of related improvements.

The plan, the application for the Kresge grant, the receipt of the grant, the successful fund-raising campaign and the actual improvements all happened so quickly that even the key people still occasionally shake their heads in disbelief.

Klein said, as if to explain this type of miracle work, "There's a great spirit in this place and that's what's exciting about it. And this was accomplished at a time when the whole economy was depressed."

Gross said a lot of the action started when architect Leo G. Shea of Birmingham came on the board.

"As a responsible professional he noted there were problems here with outside lighting, the stairway and other safety violations," Gross said.

Officers and board decided to use the 1982 25th anniversary celebration as a way to launch a drive for funds for improvements on Shea's strong recommendation.

Klein said, "All the factors came together at the right time — the 25th anniversary, Ken Gross, a mature staff, the plan and an enthusiastic fund-raiser."

THE IMPROVEMENTS in the classroom were one of Goad's reasons for working on the fund-raising campaign, because she's a student there. The improvements include installation of sinks and windows along with improved floors and ceilings.

Goad said, "The only thing we felt we wanted to do that we can't do now is air conditioning."

However, that's part of the master plan, and provisions are being made for that in the current improvements.

Rosemary Squires, chairman of the anniversary celebration, said, "I feel visibility in the community is very important to the ability to raise funds, and we were quite visible because of the 25th anniversary celebration."

Goad said the fund raising became almost a family affair for her. Daughter Linda did the graphics for the stationery used for the letters.

Goad's mother, Hortense Adams, also a BBAA student, wrote to her fellow BBAA founders for help as well as many friends.

And although Goad handled corporate solicitations herself, she and Gross gave a program for service club groups whenever possible, she said. "We decided to work with people we knew. I had a committee that worked. We had 100 percent participation from the staff, 100 percent from the board, and 60 percent from the faculty."

The campaign started in September and came to a successful completion on March 15.

What pleases all concerned with the renovation program is that it benefits everyone connected with the art association, staff, faculty, students, exhibitors and volunteers — even those who drive past will sense the spirit of community that blossoms there as readily as the new crop of flowering trees and shrubs.



Ken Gross (right) and Victor Klein met in the main gallery earlier this month to see the progress of the work, which is now complete.



Rosemary Squires (right) and Criss Goad pause from their constant round of Art Association-oriented activities to enjoy the updated office area.