

Ermel Home

BRINGING THE OUTSIDE IN

Screened-in porch anchors a major addition

THIS IS THE STORY OF A POSITIVE OUTCOME to the pandemic. It resulted in a house renovation and addition that included a soundproof office, a brand-new pantry off the kitchen, an additional bedroom and an extended screened-in deck. The lives of the Ermel family just blossomed to fit the new space that accommodated Bryant Ermel's pandemic-driven home office, four boys who are now 16 and under, and a working mom who wanted a shaded screened porch for eating and entertaining. The house grew from 2,914 square feet to 3,579 square feet, plus 270 feet for a new covered screened porch and 110 square feet for a new uncovered deck.

The Ermels, who live in the The Gardens subdivision off Cotton Hill Road in southwest Roanoke County, had toyed with the idea of a screened porch before the pandemic, but the cataclysmic event pushed thoughts to the forefront. Boys were attending school at home, Dad needed quiet office space, and it was nearing summer when the porch would get a workout. This formerly four-bedroom house was crowded, Ermel was working at a desk in the master bedroom, and "it got to the point where the two youngest boys needed their own space, so it all kind of came together," he said.



THE GARDENS, ROANOKE COUNTY

He called around for ideas and quotes, mostly, he said, out of curiosity. "We are not design people, so I needed drawings, ideas and pricing," he said. He settled on Building Specialists Inc. and the project was set into motion quickly. Construction began in July 2020 and concluded in January 2021, with setbacks due to pandemic-related lag time with some materials and weather.

Josh Beisley, who has been an estimator for Building Specialists for seven years, said this project was one that would benefit most families in this situation. The biggest issue, he said, was obtaining building materials in a timely manner, and in fact they had to switch from one window manufacturer to another due to availability, as well as the pressure-treated lumber for the extended deck.

The pandemic didn't really alter the builder's attitude toward safety, said Beisley, because Building Specialists has always been safety-conscious. "We were proactive about the separation of workers and owners during an occupied construction project such as this. We have always gone in and used plastic barriers and different levels of barriers."

The main attraction in Kendra and Bryant Ermel's expansion is a second-floor screened-in deck for entertaining — complete with gas fireplace.





AFTER THE ADDITION, THE ERMEL'S HOUSE GREW FROM 2,914 SQUARE FEET TO **3,579 SQUARE FEET.**



Among the new spaces in the Ermels' house are a covered porch; a home gym; a soundproof office; and a new dining area. The addition also allowed for the creation of a pantry off the dining area and a new bedroom on the lower level for one of the Ermels' four boys. The project took contractor Building Specialists about five months. The photo below shows how their house looked before the work.



"Due to the pandemic, we extended more protection, used separate entrances to the home whenever possible, and kept a strict log of employees were there each day. The workers were limited to 10 in number with a protocol of not sharing tools; they wore masks and sanitized touch surfaces."

Both Ermel and Beisley were pleased with the way the new construction blended with the original so that "it is a struggle to see the addition was not part of the original. That, and it is notable how much this project improved the home and gave them a very functional, usable space," said Beisley. He described how Ermel uses the home office daily and intends to continue to do so. The covered outdoor dining space provides shade, and the pantry is oversized to accommodate the family's needs.

Ermel said his big back yard helped fit the addition. He has a walk-out basement and then the first floor. Both were added onto. His office has a large window that overlooks the back yard as well as a separate entrance and additional insulation for quiet. An additional space has been turned into a home gym.

There were minimal challenges, even living in the home at the time of construction, said Ermel, because

Building Specialists made an effort to minimize the impact.

Although he said they might not have done this addition and renovation without the impetus of the pandemic, the entire family has benefited. The extra spaces fit well with the original structure, and even now that his boys are back in school, his wife still works from home and all enjoy the outdoor sheltered space of the deck.

He said when Building Specialists first came out to the house, an independent architect accompanied them, listened to the challenges and ideas, and provided insights and recommendations. A project foreman was on site during the renovation, and Ermel said "that person handled everything so that we didn't have to. We met every week for project updates, and we didn't have to manage anything other than picking out fixtures, lights and fans."

He said they had all the space they needed right now. "I'd love to have a swimming pool, but do I want to pay for that? Absolutely not."

Ermel declined to say how much the project cost, but while the original estimate had to be adjusted as decisions were made, he said Building Specialists was "right on the money." ★

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