

HISTORY The two houses are joined by a hallway and mesh well together

CONTINUED FROM F1

The next task was to create a home behind it that would not slavishly imitate the architecture of the past. "Also, you can't do an addition that would overpower the original structure, which is very small," Plumb said.

"So we decided to create two separate, but attached houses." While the contemporary design of the new house, with its taupe-coloured wood cladding, is dissimilar to the stucco-covered old house, the two structures are visually well-meshed.

"The old house remains on the street and the new one addresses the lake behind it," says Plumb, who worked with architect Gurdip Trehin on the design of the new space.

She also wanted to orient the structure according to the principles of feng shui, the ancient Chinese discipline of organizing spaces to facilitate the flow of chi, or energy. She turned to Tracey MacKenzie, a feng shui consultant and specialist in neuro design, who advised her to angle the house. "The new addition is skewed to be parallel to the shoreline," MacKenzie said.

Plumb designed the house to remind its occupants of the natural world that surrounds it. As a result, the ground floor is one large open space with generously sized windows that make the lake an ever-present feature. "There are beautiful visuals wherever you stand," says MacKenzie.

MacKenzie also worked with Plumb to create interiors according to the principles of the newly emerging field of neuro design, which addresses the five human senses. "Neuro architecture and design is about designing spaces that get the neurons to release endorphins," says MacKenzie.

Because human beings feel instinctively better in natural



The new part of the structure has a large expanse of windows that looks out over the water and a spacious back deck area.

PHOTOS: MARIE FRANCE-COALLIER THE GAZETTE



The passage between the old house and the new house.

surroundings whether they are consciously aware of it or not, organic and ecologically friendly materials were used: bamboo on the floors, slate in the bathrooms and entryway.

While the walls were painted white, they are covered in art, much of it pieces that Plumb created herself.

"Light should come in from two directions in a room be-



Plumb restored the original structure, at right, and then added a new one to the back of the property.

cause it nuances the space," says MacKenzie.

Plumb also had to address the question of the strong prevailing winds that whip off the lake year-round. "The wind was so strong that the doors leading outside to the deck, which opened inwardly,

began to deflect," she said. "We had to rebuild the door frames so the doors now open outwardly."

The main consideration, however, in the design of the home was accessibility. Plumb's mother, who is 97, uses a wheelchair.

"My grandson, Sam, who is 13, is also in a wheelchair," she said.

So an elevator was installed to connect the two storeys. And the open spaces of the ground floor allow Ivey and Sam to move around freely.

The floors and the walls of the bathrooms are completely clad in tiles and are open spaces with wall-mounted showers and floor drains to facilitate wheelchair accessibility.

The kitchen, designed by Patricia Bukowsky and Scott Muldrew of Cuisine à la Carte Kitchen Design, is a flow-through space.

"Scott recommended a free-standing island," Bukowsky said, adding that it contains a cantilevered surface to enable Ivey to sit at it in her wheelchair while her daughter cooks.

"The kitchen cabinets are a nodular point around which the whole house gravitates," says Plumb.

In keeping with neuro design principles, the kitchen island is slightly rounded. "Neuro design pushes the use of soft geometry," says MacKenzie.

"You want soft curves rather than hard edges. This links to the primitive part of the brain, the amygdala.

"Seeing sharp lines and edges in your peripheral vision puts you on alert. Rounded edges are less threatening. The softer your environment, the more comfortable you feel."

The backsplash of aqua glass tiles is a reminder of the lake beyond the window.

The restoration of the old property and the integration of the new one has been well accepted by the community.

"I wanted this house to reflect the vernacular architecture of the village in a contemporary way," says Plumb.

After a lot of hard work, she has met that goal.

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