

# enhancing homes... building relationships



**W**ith three young children, Lauren and Chaz decided that they had outgrown their nice comfortable home in Lancaster's Grandview Heights. While they could have expanded their home, they didn't. And rather than upsize to an equally comfortable bigger home, they instead decided to shake up their life a bit. To the surprise of their family and friends, they bought a very old Lancaster County homestead—complete with a livestock barn, a chicken coop, a smokehouse, and much to their discomfort, a slaughterhouse.

While the whole homestead thing was surprising enough, what really had everyone scratching their heads was the condition of things. Everything was in dismal shape—the house and all of the out buildings needed a ton of work.

[Hmmm...city folk enjoying their radically new country life in a very old, dilapidated property at that. Is it me or does anyone else who watched TV in the late '60s immediately think of the long-running comedy, Green Acres?]

It was such a downgrade from their former home that the kids, out of embarrassment, refused at first to invite their friends over to play.

As you'll learn from the interview that follows, Lauren and Chaz had plans for the place. They didn't know specifically what they wanted to do, but major renovations were certainly on the horizon. And, unlike most

who purchase a fixer upper in such disrepair, they didn't rush into things. Instead, they deliberately delayed work until they had a chance to live the home—to get a better feel for what they had and how they wanted to live it. Approximately a year later they were ready.

Due to budget limitations, Lauren and Chaz decided to address the home renovations first. That initial contract went to highly recommended Bill Patrick, owner of the small design-build firm

## SPOTLIGHT

### project description

Type:	Whole House Renovation and Garage/Carriage House Addition
Contractor:	<b>EG Stoltzfus Designed Homes &amp; Remodeling</b> (see ad on inside front cover)
Trade Partners:	Century Spouting Company, Inc. (see ad p. 38) Good Electric, LLC (see ad p. 40) JG Graybill Plumbing, Inc. (see ad p. 40) Kevin Stoltzfus Hardwood Floors (see ad p. 40) Martin Appliance (see ad p. 32) R & L Siding LLC (see ad p. 38) Shank Door Company (see ad p. 39) Yale Lighting Concepts & Design (see ad p. 22)
Scope:	<p>When these Manheim Township residents found this 19th Century Cape Cod, it needed quite a bit of love. One of the problems with the home was that it had been remodeled during the 1970s and the addition simply did not match the architectural styling of the home.</p> <p>The challenge with this remodeling project was to come up with a design that honored the original architecture of the Cape Code and blend in the less-than-beautiful 1970s addition. Furthermore, we needed to accomplish this within the homeowners' budget and style.</p> <p>Some of the highlights from this 19th Century whole-house renovation included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We opened up the floor plan of the 1970s addition to become a large open space that included the kitchen, informal eating area and family room.</li> <li>• A master bedroom suite was created on the first floor; this was part of the homeowners' long-term "aging in place" plans for their home.</li> <li>• At the time of the remodel, the couple had three young children. We placed their bedrooms on the second floor of the original part of the home.</li> <li>• Because there was only a crawl space under the 1970s addition and the original 19th Century basement was stone rubble, finishing a basement for a game room wasn't an option. The solution to this was to build it over the addition.</li> <li>• The home was zoned for two systems (first floor and second floor). This provided comfort and even heating and cooling throughout the home.</li> </ul> <p>For the more recent three-car garage/carriage house addition project, our design was focused on a structure that would blend in with property. The first floor garage consists of three bays and a work space totalling 864-square feet. Upstairs is an open space 625-square foot guest suite complete with a full bath. To accommodate the homeowners desire for additional natural light to allow the space to double as an art studio, a bank of windows were installed on the back wall to supplement three dormers in the front.</p> <p>Included in this project was the addition of a side porch to provide both a functional feature as well as an aesthetic upgrade to the home's original two-story flat wall.</p>



Chaz: It wasn't easy—things were in pretty bad shape. The house was vacant for three years before we bought it and there wasn't much upkeep done—inside or out. As uncomfortable as it was, we knew we wanted to sit with it for a bit before we made any decisions on what we wanted to do.

Bill: This was a very wise and practical decision. Without actually living it, it's extremely difficult to try to project how you ultimately want things to be laid out. Your live-in experience, even though it wasn't easy, provided valuable insight into our design work that we wouldn't have had otherwise.

Lauren: When we moved in, it was pretty rough—especially considering the cozy,



BEFORE

of William J. Patrick Inc. As you'll hear in the following pages, Bill's performance didn't match his reputation—it exceeded it!

Fast forward a few years and the homeowners were ready to begin work on phase 2 of their plans by building a three-car garage/carriage house. Because Bill by this time had closed up shop to join local builder EG Stoltzfus and assume duties as the Senior Designer & Manager of their Designed Homes & Remodeling Division, the homeowners were convinced that he wouldn't be an option. Their thinking was that Bill was now part of a "big" company and that they wouldn't get the same level of service and personal attention as he provided during the house renovation. Besides, they assumed, big companies aren't interested in small projects. As you are about to learn, they were wrong on both counts.

**Let's start off by going over your history with this home.**

Lauren: Well, we purchased it in November of 2005. We bought it with the intention of doing a major renovation but rather than dive right into developing plans we decided to live in it for about a year to get a better sense of what we wanted to do. We wanted to get a good feel of the house and its relationship to the property and how we wanted to live it.



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well-maintained home we left in Grandview Heights. The entire place, inside and out, was old and very run down.

Chaz: I remember it well. Our kids were in elementary school at the time and they refused to have friends over because they were embarrassed of the way it looked. It truly was a sad looking place at the time.

Lauren: I remember that old disgusting slaughterhouse that couldn't have been more than 5 feet or so from the back door. We took it down almost immediately.

**What can you tell us of the home's origin?**

Lauren: We believe the original structure dates back to the early 1800's and the first addition appeared sometime during the 1890's.

Chaz: The final addition, which had a rancher appearance, came in the 1970's. The gentleman who lived here was an engineer and based on the drawings that he left behind, it appears as though he did the design work. He was probably expanding the first floor living space to make accommodations for his later years.

**When you bought the property, you said that it was a mess and that the kids were ashamed of it. What was the attraction that prompted the purchase?**



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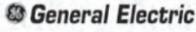
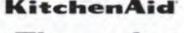
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Lauren: We had a third child and knew we had to redo our house in Grandview Heights or move. We simply needed more space. As for this property, I really liked all the land that came with it. And even though we weren't sure about keeping the old barn, I really liked it. I also loved the location and its proximity to the things in our daily life. There's protected farmland in front of the house and we live at the end of a dead-end country road. Despite the condition of things, the property had a lot going for it and much greater potential.

Bill: This was quite a change—you guys had a nice tidy life in Grandview Heights.

Chaz: And as much as I loved it, we definitely needed more space.

**What kind of reaction did you get from your friends and family when they saw the condition of the house and its property?**

Lauren: Many of them thought we were crazy.

Chaz: Pretty much everyone did when we first bought it. All they saw was how much work it was going to be.

**So how did you get connected with Bill Patrick?**

Chaz: As time went by and we became better acquainted with our "new" home, we started thinking more and more about what we wanted to do. In talking with friends and former neighbors from our Grandview days, Bill's name came up. One set of friends knew him personally and, for us, that carried a lot of weight.

Lauren: We talked to other people and got a sense of



the work that Bill had done before we approached him.

**During the selection process, did you consider other contractors?**

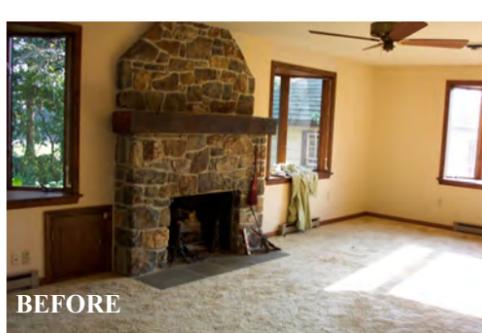
Chaz: That was certainly our intention. We were going to have several come to take a look, give us some ideas on designs, and quote it. But once we met Bill, those plans were immediately tossed. We knew he was the right guy for us.

**What was it that convinced you?**

Lauren: I felt as though Bill really listened to us. He asked great questions and he listened intently. I liked his design concepts and his approach. As he pulled more and more information from us, you could sense his thought process and that ideas were evolving. It was clear to me that it was a very thorough and thoughtful process.

Chaz: I felt the same way. In a very short period of time, Bill made quite an impression. We both felt a very strong connection with him.





cess. These were big questions that would not have been easily answered without our firsthand experience.

Lauren: One thing that comes to mind is the way we were thinking about scrapping one of the front doors. I think living here allowed us to see how practical it is to have that second front entrance.

Chaz: Yes, living here was definitely helpful. At first, although we had all sorts of ideas, we didn't really know the look we wanted. We weren't even sure what our buildings we were going to keep—including the barn. Having lived it, along with Bill's helpful insight, certainly made for better decision making. And, there were a lot of decisions that had to be made.

**What type of decisions are you referring to?**



Lauren: The thing about having an old property like this—one that has so much history—is the constant struggle between keeping true to the time period of the home and incorporating modern conveniences and your own tastes. For

instance, against the advice from a well-respected architect, we opted to install a front door with glass panes rather than a period-correct solid door. This was a real source of tension for me, but in the end, I really wanted the light.



**Let's move to the design phase, what can you tell us about that experience?**

Chaz: For the house project, I think the design phase lasted about six months. I should point out that at that time we were in a place in life where it was going to be a stretch for us to renovate in any meaningful way. Keeping the design within our budget was critical. Bill respected that and actually encouraged us not to push ourselves too much from a budget standpoint. He wanted to meet our needs and design the best possible renovation that he could within what we could afford. For me, that was very reassuring.

Lauren: Bill came through with many cost-saving ideas. Since a basement was not an option, we had to come up with alternative space for a teenager game room.

What was suggested was for us to forego our original thinking of a cathedral ceiling in the redesigned family room and to create upstairs space to accommodate the game room.

Chaz: For me, I was concerned that adding a second story, rather than going with our original thought of a cathedral ceiling, just wouldn't look right. As it turned out, Bill came back with a design that incorporated dormers while picking up the lines of the original house—it was brilliant!

**Talk about your decision to postpone doing any work until you had time to live it. What did you learn from that experience?**

Chaz: By living here we got a sense of how we wanted to move about the property—what areas outside needed the best ac-



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Bill: It's a tricky business trying to blend periods and styles together for an eclectic look that works. My feeling has always been when you get down to the basics of line, proportion, and function and layer those basic elements of design with homeowner preferences—it now becomes *their* home in *their* own style.

Lauren: And that was so helpful to hear from you back then. The struggle between what to honor and how to live was real. You helped me immensely in dealing with that tension.

Chaz: A perfect example of blending periods as Bill was just saying is the outside wall of our formal dining room. That wall with the exposed siding was actually the exterior of the original home. From the perspective of our new contemporary space, that wall, as well as the room behind it, is a very unique feature and a constant reminder of the home's historical past.

Lauren: We thought about replacing the solid entry door with French doors, but Bill suggested that we keep the period look. It was one of those back and forth things, but we're very happy that we went with his suggestion.

Chaz: With us not exactly sure what we were looking for, Bill's suggestions were always welcome and we respected them. I don't think we had a definitive picture of what the final product would look like...things just seemed to evolve as we got into it. Bill's guidance through the process was invaluable.

Lauren: It's not that we didn't have any particular taste in things—I know what I like. I was just very receptive to Bill's ideas.

Bill: This home is a culmination of styles and classic design elements that span a 200 year period and possibly parts of 4 different centuries. There's a lot on display here. In the redesign, which period do you pick to focus on? The challenge was putting them together in a cohesive manner that meets today's lifestyle of the homeowners. It was a fun challenge and I thoroughly enjoyed the exchange of ideas.

**Earlier, you said that the kids were ashamed to bring their friends home. Did that change?**

Chaz: Once we got started, things changed in a hurry.

Lauren: Actually, they fell in love with the place even

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before that. Once the initial shock was over, they quickly adapted to their new surroundings. They too fell in love with the property and all its space.

Chaz: And once the project started, they really got excited despite the

fact that the construction required us to consolidate our living space considerably. It was tight quarters—but very exciting.

**Switching to the garage/carriage house project, how did that evolve?**

Chaz: I was always hoping that that would happen at some point in our lives. We definitely wanted a garage, but it was a budget issue.

Lauren: We weren't in a position to include it as part of the home renovation project so we put it on our wish list. As it turned out, we didn't have to wait all that long.

Chaz: This is where the story takes a little twist regarding our choice of builders. We knew that we loved working with Bill and his former company but we also knew that he had joined a big firm—EG Stoltzfus. Although we liked and respected Bill immensely, we pretty much ruled him out for the garage project. My thinking was that with him joining such a big firm, we wouldn't get the same level of personal service and attention that we got on the house project—and this was no time for us to lower our standards.

Bill: I remember when you called me initially and asked me some questions.

Chaz: Well, that was after quite a while and after we already had our own architect do the drawing. Again, our assumption was that you and EG Stoltzfus were off the table. Shortly thereafter, our architect gave us the names of several contractors he had worked with and could recommend. EG Stoltzfus happened to be on the list. So, despite my reservations about bringing in a big company, we decided to get it quoted by three builders of different size firms. That was our plan. Then I called Bill and that was the end of the plan. Bill quickly convinced us

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that we had nothing to fear about him joining EG Stoltzfus and assured us that we'd get the same commitment and level of service that he provided previously. It was just amazing, we knew right away when we talked to Bill that this was right and was going to work. We didn't even get another quote.

Lauren: It was the same Bill, just a different company.

Chaz: And whether or not we got the best pricing, we won't know. What we did know is that we'd be getting a great product done in a professional manner by professional people.

Lauren: In conjunction with the garage project, we also included the construction of a porch on the side of the house. This was something we wanted addressed early on but it didn't fit in our budget for the first project.

Chaz: That side of the house was a flat, two-story wall. Believe me, it wasn't very appealing.



BEFORE

Lauren: That little porch makes a huge difference—I love it! I also love the way the carriage house turned out. Although it's set up to be a guest house, I'm also using it as my art studio. It's a wonderful space and a great retreat for me.

Chaz: Getting back to Bill and his commitment to us, I remember an issue with the porch roof. As it was being framed, I noticed that something just didn't look right. Anyway, Bill was quickly onsite and identified the problem—the pitch of the roof was incorrect. He immediately took charge and had it corrected. That sort of thing was precisely why we wanted him for the job. We knew he'd always have our backs. It was very reassuring.

**Let's continue with the construction phase—was there anything else that you'd like to comment on?**

Chaz: I should mention that I had a little construction business for a number of years early in life when we were first

married. And although I was really confident in Bill, this past experience of mine raised concerns as to who else would be on the job—especially since we were living here. With a project of this scope there would be a lot of people coming and going. In addition to security issues, I was concerned about them respecting our space, controlling the dust, and how they would be leaving the worksite at the end of the day. Well, those concerns quickly vanished. Everything was done top notch—they did a great job. Dust barriers were set up and sealed very carefully. At the end of each day, the worksite was clean and orderly. Everyone involved was very respectful toward us throughout both projects and we very much appreciated it.

Lauren: And they were all very nice to work with.

Chaz: Yes, they were very good people. I should also mention that both projects were managed extremely well. At first, I thought our weekly meetings were a little overkill, but they proved to be very helpful in keeping us informed, going over the plans and advised of the schedule. As far as the schedule went, they pretty much nailed it. If there was a slight tweak, we knew about it ahead of time. That may not seem important, but as a homeowner living onsite, it was huge. Not to sound redundant, but the way the site was managed and how the process was managed was second to none.

Lauren: What I really liked about the process was the way things evolved. We would have our conversations and our weekly meetings and things actually changed as a result of those discussions. The length of the wall in the kitchen

is a perfect example. The wall originally was going to extend further but the more we talked about it and seeing things take shape, we decided that we didn't want our line of sight to the door blocked. This change, which we're so happy with by the way, was made possible by the process. Those meetings were very beneficial.

Bill: That's why we are not strictly design-build. For most of our projects, the end is clearly seen from the beginning. But what happens on some projects, especially on unique projects like this one where so much space is opened up as we design, we build, we talk, we design some more, we build some more, we talk again... Although we had everything completely computer modeled, sometimes it isn't until you actually walk through and see where things are that you really see the light, the flow, the adjacency. Having the flexibility and the ability to tweak things as they evolve serves us well.



BEFORE





Lauren: And they can make a huge difference in the end. They certainly did for us.

**So with the transformation completed, what are your friends and family saying now?**

Lauren: Despite their early reservations, they came around. It was actually a lot of fun to see their reaction as things were happening. As they saw things coming together their comments became very positive. And with our new open space layout, we're

definitely hosting more. I think they like that aspect as well. It's great to host when you have the space—it makes it so much easier.

Chaz: Bill picked up on our interest in an open floor plan early on and did a great job incorporating the openness into the plans—especially the connection to the kitchen. Guests walk in here now and say to Lauren “this is definitely you!” It's become a place where people want to be, especially us.

**If you had the chance, is there anything you would do differently?**

Lauren: It's very minor in the scheme of things, but if we had to do it over again, I think I would push a little harder for a window behind the wood stove. Although we already get plenty of sunlight, I wouldn't mind a little more.

Chaz: The only thing I can think of would be having both projects done at the same time. Unfortunately, we just couldn't swing it at the time.

**Do you have any final comments for our readers?**

Lauren: I just want to say how impressed I was with how smoothly everything went. Bill and his team were great. I just love the outcome—everything turned out so beautiful.

Chaz: The biggest message I would like people to know is that we got the same level of service from Bill after he joined EG Stoltzfus as we got when he was working for himself. And even though he tried to reassure us that that would be the case, it was still a little surprising. We thought for sure that we lost him to a Goliath. I think that my assumption was that EG Stoltzfus was this incredible company that does big projects and that this little piddly project just wouldn't get much attention.

Bill: Although I understand why you may have had that perception, the fact is we're just a group of serious people who are committed to doing great work. With size comes specialization and, for me, it's liberating knowing that I don't personally have to deal with an accounting issue or a broken down van anymore. With size also comes a team of skilled professionals supporting me in the field—ensuring the delivery of a quality product. There is a stability that comes with a larger, broader team where you've got specialists within it. All this makes it possible for me to focus my efforts on what really drives me—developing relationships and the creative work that follows.

Chaz: Another thing I should mention is that one of our neighbors saw the whole process and they were quite impressed to say the least. This was no easy feat as they are very particular people. Anyway, they too were looking to do a project and we got them hooked up with Bill and EG Stoltzfus who ended up designing and building a beautiful addition for them. My take away from that experience was how impressive the EG team must have been to hold up to the neighbor's scrutiny—the ultimate test.



Lauren: For months, people were witnessing a first class job and they recognized it as such. For us, we couldn't be more pleased with the results—it's just fantastic! I think it must be very rewarding for Bill to be in a profession that impacts people's lives like this.

Chaz: We probably all heard of stories where the contractor and customer are no longer talking. Not us, we love running into Bill. We have nothing but good feelings—it's great!

Bill: Thank you, that's nice to hear. I'm at a point in my career where I have established some pretty long relationships with clients. In fact, I have one client for whom we've done 12 projects over a span of 21 years. When I think of it, I've had the opportunity to build a practice not unlike that of a lawyer, doctor, dentist or auto mechanic. Along with doing quality work, it's based on building relationships. As I mentioned earlier, I feel very grateful to have a career here at EG Stoltzfus where I'm able to focus my efforts and specialize in those areas that make such meaningful changes in so many lives. It's been very rewarding.

R&A

**ATTENTION READERS**

Homeowners Lauren & Chaz invite you to contact them should you have interest in learning more about their experience or the performance of their builder, EG Stoltzfus Designed Homes & Remodeling. To initiate that contact, please call the EG Stoltzfus office at 717.393.0212.

