

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

Mid-century paradise

THE MISSION

Flip a post-war residence's overgrown, sloping yard into a private oasis.

When this post-World War II tract house in Bethesda, Md., built on a garage and library, among other renovations, Olney, Md.-based Botanical Decorators was called on to ramp up the landscape surrounding the additions. It wasn't as easy as installing plantings to complement the freshly repainted siding and brick, though. The firm removed more than 275 cubic yards of soil and debris and created a private garden.

"The yard itself was a jungle, with 14-foot-tall azaleas engulfing the house and the garage," says Brian Hahn, landscape designer and project manager. "When we first saw the property, the grade sloped right to the rear door, where water would sit for days when it rained." The rear property line was just 38 feet away.

The library addition retained 30 inches of water. Botanical Decorators installed a stone retaining wall to capture another 30 inches.

The sweeping stone walls creates the illusion of space and privacy from the neighbors, too, Hahn says. "The walls provide a backdrop to the fountain, which is centered on the rear window of the library," he says.

The team excavated into the rear of the hillside to build the library addition. It took advantage of topography to create an upper lawn for the resident's dog. The pet also received an air-conditioned doghouse, located beyond the wall in a hidden area behind the renovated garage.

Previously, the old block structure, the garage, was buried into the grade and "leaked like a sieve," Hahn says. "The entire garage was excavated, water-proofed and finished in three-part stucco, along with a new roof and trim."

Botanical Decorators convened with the library architect to redesign the garage and reflect the architecture of the house, down to the detail for the French doors.



PHOTOS: BOTANICAL DECORATORS



3



4



5



6

THE WORK

- 1 | Nondescript and prone to problems.** This "before" shot illustrates the grade descending into the back of the house and the overgrown plantings.
- 2 | Elegant and approachable.** The finished project.
- 3 | Hospitality defined.** Jumbo cobblestone and exposed aggregate inlays compose a walkway to the rear of the house.
- 4 | Balance.** The garage's French doors and classic coachman lamps complement simple, clean plantings.
- 5 | Backyard entrance.** A custom-designed gate serves as an entryway to the backyard.
- 6 | Garden glitz.** The garden sits behind the pergola, backed by the retaining wall.

For more than 30 years, Botanical Decorators has offered custom residential landscaping services throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Learn more at BotDec.com.

