

LIGHTNING STRIKES

A RELOCATION,
A RENOVATION,
AND A COMEDY
OF ERRORS.
IN BOULDER,
COLORADO, THE
ADVENTURE BEGAN
WHEN EVERYTHING
WENT WRONG.

INTERIOR DESIGN BY AMY PIGLIACAMPO
ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIORS
CONSULTING BY MEDIUM PLENTY
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PROJECT ARCHITECT: ANDY PITTMAN



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AFTER STARTING THEIR FAMILY in Los Angeles, Corey Szopinski and Amy Pigliacampo realized they wanted their kids—age one and two at the time—to grow up in a place that was a little safer and a little slower. When an online real estate search yielded a foreclosed net-zero home in Boulder, Colorado, they jumped at the opportunity and bought it sight unseen. The couple is the first to admit, however, this required a dream much greater than a change of scenery.

“Ok,” Corey laughs. “We nicknamed the house ‘turd pile.’ It was all kinds of brown and

ugly. The guy that built the house was an engineering genius in many ways, but the aesthetics didn’t get the same amount of attention.”

Luckily, Amy had shifted her career from fashion to interiors. “I had a vision to simplify and open up the whole thing,” she recalls. “I knew if we could find a way to unify all the spaces, we could have a really versatile, modern home.”

Soon, though, the enormity of fixes couldn’t be ignored: the basement had a hard-to-identify leak, the stucco was cracking down to the sheathing, and the roof shingles were starting to cup. Amy was old friends with Ian Read and Gretchen Krebs, co-founders of Northern California-based architecture firm Medium Plenty, and was eager to bring them

DESIGN WITH INTENTION

“I love that it feels balanced and considered,” architect Ian Read says. “Given how disjointed the original house was, seeing how it has evolved makes us proud.”



FAMILY FRIENDLY

“Kids are a big factor in my approach and style,” Amy says. “I believe you can have a beautiful home and children. Durability is a consideration, but I think there are many lessons to be learned around taking care of our things and wanting them to last a long time.”



“ THE OPEN DESIGN IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO TRANSFORM WITH OUR NEEDS AND UNEXPECTED WORLD EVENTS ”



SUNNY DAYS AHEAD
“If I had to pick a favorite room it would be our solarium,” Amy says. “It’s the main feature you see when approaching the house and the former owners essentially used it to dry their laundry. I knew immediately that it would be my ‘California room’ and host tons of plants and hanging chairs. It’s such a treat to sit in there in January with snow outside and blazing temps and greenery inside.” It’s Bruno the dog’s favorite room too.

on board to help with the renovation process. “We bring our professional skills to the party but rather than insert ourselves too much into the project, we search for design solutions that will be best for the overall outcome,” Ian explains.

The family moved into the basement for the upstairs remodel when lightning struck the roof, smoldering for 24 hours before catching fire. The modest facelift morphed into removing the attic with a crane and rebuilding the second story. “While getting struck by lightning isn’t considered a good thing, it did free up some additional insurance money,” Ian says. Not to mention, it required a greater

transformation in line with their early vision. Only much later did Amy say, “the fire was the best part of our renovation.”

Medium Plenty helped with structural changes while Amy kept her focus on the interior. “We were pretty in sync throughout the process but there are always competing interests—budget, familiarity, original vision—that needed to be weighed,” the architects tell us.

Today, largely thanks to the firm’s in-depth understanding of construction and solutions-oriented approach and Amy’s “vibrant yet simple” outlook on interiors, the family is living the Colorado dream.

GROUP EFFORT
“We had challenges, a limited budget, and much ignorance going into this,” Corey admits. “Ian and team coached us through the whole thing and brought a lot of fresh ideas that we wouldn’t have come to on our own.”