



REAL ESTATE

Should they expand their small home or leave the city for a bigger one? This family of four faced a tricky choice

Move or renovate? They needed more space than their small bungalow had to offer. What should they do? Their solution was to build in a new direction.

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Heather McDonald with her husband, Sergio Tapia: The couple, their two sons and rescue dog, Rita, now have a light-filled, spacious home built to their specifications and perfectly suited to their needs and lifestyle.

R.J. Johnston Toronto Star

By Carola Vyhnek Special to the Star

The family of four had two options to solve their space crunch: Move to a bigger house outside the city or enlarge their small bungalow in the east end. They chose the latter.

Last year, Heather McDonald and her husband Sergio Tapia hired contractors Malcolm Omoruyi and Shedrack Idemudia to gut and remodel the outdated main floor of their home and add a second storey of 1,000 square feet.

“It was more economical to put on a second storey and (it gave us) control over what it looked like,” explains McDonald. It also meant they could stay near schools and friends in the neighbourhood where they’ve lived for a dozen years.

The couple, their two sons and rescue dog, Rita, now have a light-filled, spacious home built to their specifications and perfectly suited to their needs and lifestyle.

They figure buying another home would have cost more than double the makeover's price of \$475,000. But expanding the aging house vertically wasn't all smooth sailing.

"When you're mixing old and new together, a lot of things can go wrong," says Omoruyi, co-partner of Idemudia, who owns full-service company [905 Reno](#).

While the bungalow's plumbing, electrical and off-kilter issues could be rectified, the weather was beyond their control, says Omoruyi.

"Rain had its own agenda" during the almost [eight-month project](#) 905 Reno completed last March. After the roof was removed, a crew stayed overnight to make sure the rain didn't get in through the tarps, he recalls.

The reno firm and [sister company Remodel My Home](#) do everything from bathrooms and kitchens to full-scale transformations throughout the GTA.

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The homeowners commend the contractors for being "helpful, flexible and accommodating" in realizing their vision. A worker even came back before Christmas to add a breaker for their festive lights, Tapia notes.

McDonald adds that a bonus in the process was the kindness of their neighbours, who rented the house next door to the family during construction.

"We absolutely love it," she says of the finished project. "It's been a very good experience."