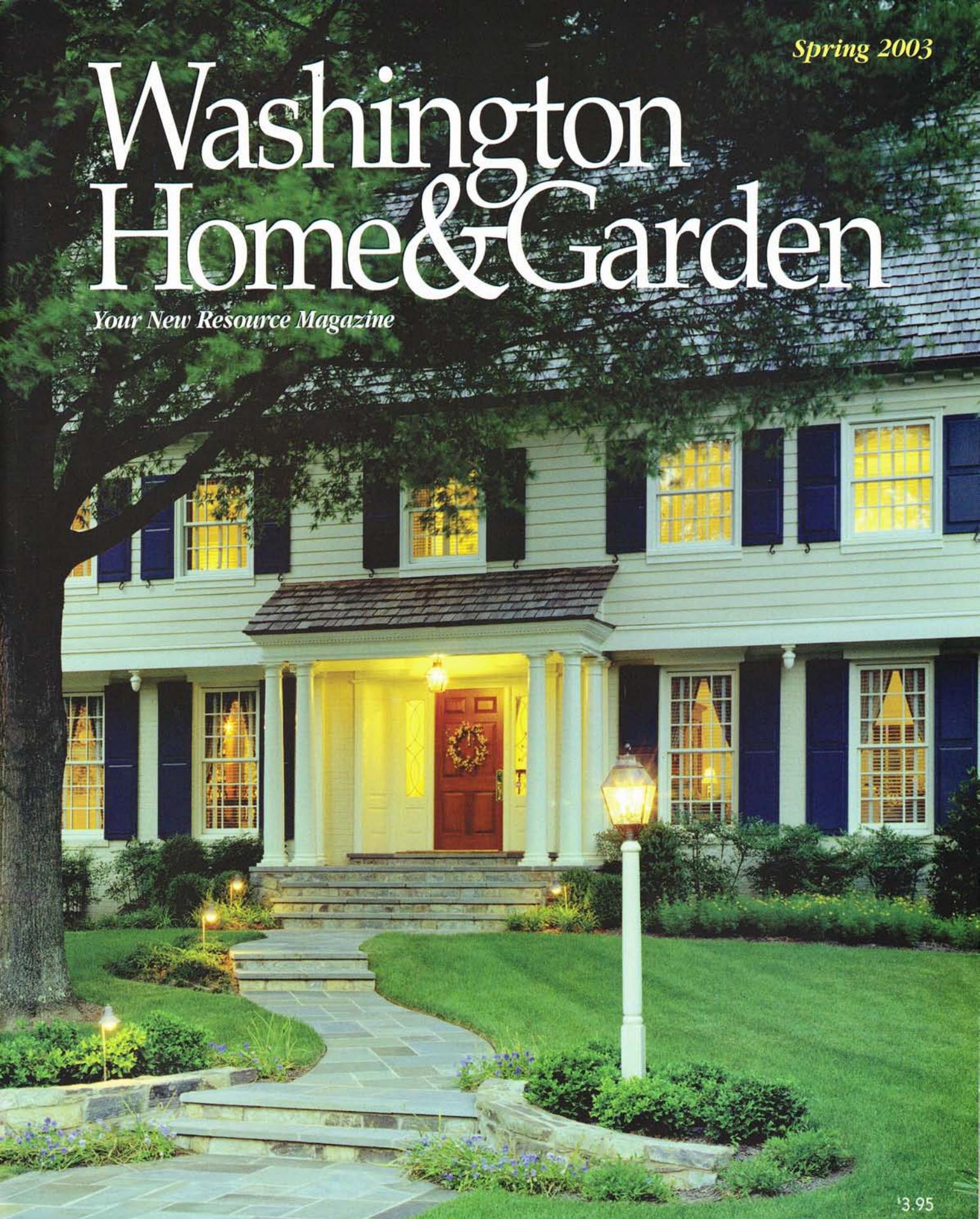


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PREMIER ISSUE FEATURES: *Rebuilding The Nest*  *Spend Time In A Garden*



After

Courtesy of Richard Leggin Architects



Before

We didn't have enough options or enough money to justify asking an architect to walk us through all sorts of unimagined possibilities. We hadn't worked hard enough to figure out everything we wanted.

Our needs, our budget and the structural limits of the house made the solution clear. We calculated how much cash we could raise by refinancing. We decided what we had to have—more bedrooms, a bigger kitchen and at least one more full-sized bathroom. We made a list of luxury add-ons, such as a big front porch and walk-in closets.

Then we put the package on the table for a couple of long, nuts-and-bolts sessions with Ted, our contractor. Some experienced friends had warned against discussing personal finances with him, but because our project was modest, we chose instead to put our cards on the table: Here is what we can afford.

The budget cap forced us to make almost all our tough decisions before our contractors—known today as Quest Construction—drove a single nail into wood. First was that the plan had to be simple to be affordable.

We arrived pretty quickly at Plan B—a straight addition, perpendicular to the existing house, on the space then occupied by our patio and carport. The “new house” would thus be an L-shape that opened to the driveway and partly enclosed a big silver maple beside it. The addition would be taller than the old wing but with a large attic space rather than a full-fledged second story.

These were some of the smaller decisions we made:

- The attic would be fully insulated but unfinished, a project for a prosperous year in the future. That made possible a cost-cutting fold-out wooden stair that pulls down from the ceiling. But it was located so as to permit a more ambitious stairway if we finish the attic later. We also sprang, at the contractor's suggestion, for twin dormer windows in the attic—a neat stroke of design that made the house appear much grander than it might have.