

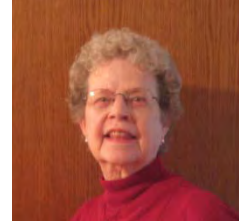
Jean

Accessibility Problems

- Bath
- Kitchen
- Entrance
- Bedroom
- Living Area
- Whole House
- Outside (Garage)

Personal Profile

- Jean
- Neuropathy
- Diagnosed in 1996
- Accessibility improvements made in 1998 and 2007



Accessibility Solutions

Jean and her husband Vincent live on a farm in rural Iowa. After taking chemotherapy for ovarian cancer in January of 1996, Jean was diagnosed with neuropathy in her feet, legs, and hands. The house was a two story home with the bedroom and bathroom upstairs, and the laundry in the basement. The bedroom and laundry were separated by two flights of stairs. Jean and Vincent did not know how quickly the neuropathy would progress and wanted a home that would accommodate her changing physical abilities. The couple decided to build an addition with a bedroom, bathroom, and laundry area on the main level. In 2003 Vincent was injured in a farm accident and broke his left hip and right arm. He made good use of the home modifications while recovering from his injury. In 2007 they added an attached garage to eliminate walking on icy sidewalks in the winter and to allow them to continue to age in place. Below are pictures of their home showing the front (Fig. 1), a side view of main part of the house (Fig. 2), the first addition that includes a porch (Fig. 3), and the second addition with an attached a garage (Fig. 4).



Figure 1
South Side



Figure 2
East Side



Figure 3
1st addition with porch



Figure 4
2nd addition (garage)



accessible.

Figure 5 shows the first addition that was built on the north side of the original house. It provides a new entrance that is protected by a long covered porch. The addition includes a master bedroom and bathroom (red circle, Fig. 6), laundry closet (Figs. 7 & 8), and a couple of large closets for storage and coats. The doors have lever handles and are wide enough for wheelchair access. Once inside, the main level is completely

Figure 5

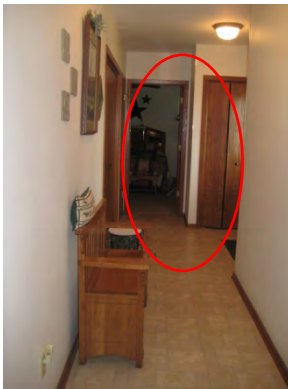


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Bedroom: The bedroom has low-pile carpet and enough space to easily roll a wheelchair on either side of the bed (Figs. 9 & 10). The closets in the room have wide doorways (red arrow, Fig. 11). Jean and Vincent also had an ironing board built into the wall (red circle, Fig. 11). It drops down and is easy to use while seated (Fig. 12).



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12

Bathroom: The bathroom is connected to the master bedroom (red arrow, Fig. 13). It has enough open floor space for a wheelchair to turn around in. Although Jean thought about building the cabinets with room underneath for wheelchair access, she decided not to compromise the amount of storage space (Fig. 14). However, the cabinet doors could be removed later if she needs to use a wheelchair.



Figure 13



Figure 14

Garage: The garage was finished in the fall of 2007 (Fig. 15). Jean and Vincent wanted a garage that was connected to the house. The three steps inside the corner of the garage connect to the covered porch (Fig. 16). This helps them avoid icy steps in the winter. If wheelchair access is needed in the future, there is enough space inside the garage to add a ramp or lift (Figs. 16 & 17). They also included plenty of space in the garage to store large items, such as the lawn mower in the summer and the snow blower in the winter (Fig. 18).



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

Financing the Project

- Personal Funds (Savings)
- Loans
- Grants
- Other

Lessons Learned/Advice for Others

When asked what she had learned from the home modification process, Jean said, “I learned not to put things off if you can.” Jean and Vincent did not encounter many problems during the remodeling process. They contacted Mary Years, Extension Housing Specialist at Iowa State University, for assistance in designing both additions.

When asked if they would have done anything differently, Jean said, “Mary encouraged us to put the garage on right away, but we weren’t ready; it would have been nice to have done though.” When discussing adding the garage later, Jean said, “It would be nice to not have to go outdoors to get to the garage, but at least it is covered.” The only other thing Jean said she would have done differently is, “I also would have put in double outlets by the sink in the bathroom so that we wouldn’t have to share the outlet.”

What Difference Did It Make?

Jean said, “It has definitely made it easier bringing both [the upstairs and the downstairs] to the same level. We also love to have the laundry so close.” She also said, “It is the simplest things: not going up the stairs and down the stairs – I really like that.”

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