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DAVID LAUER PHOTOGRAPHY



▲ Design Platform put a modern addition on this traditional brick home (see opposite page for a peek inside).

DESIGN PLATFORM

Jonas DiCaprio

BY DANA R. BUTLER

Jonas DiCaprio's parents—residential developers, builders and real estate agents in Minneapolis—designed and built custom homes from the mid 1970s through the early 1990s. “I grew up on construction sites,” he says. “I witnessed my parents’ ups and downs with the real estate and construction markets and thought, I definitely don’t want to be in construction.” Getting a degree in architecture in Boston led to summer internships on the historic island of Nantucket. “It taught me a lot about preservation and restoration,” he says, “which I have taken into my firm, Design Platform.”

DiCaprio's firm is a full-service design-build company. “We do both residential and commercial projects in Colorado, as well as nationwide,” he says. “We have a diverse group of architects, builders and craftspeople on our team.” The focus is on modern architecture and construction, which he defines broadly as working to make the design reflect the time in which it was built and respecting the elements of the building or the neighborhood that already exists.

The firm takes a client-centered approach to every project, defining and prioritizing needs before any design work begins. “We strive to follow that

ZAC HENDERSON



- ◀ (Top left, below left and bottom) This 1950 midcentury modern ranch project in Montclair involved the restoration of the original 1950s structure—including retaining the original brick inside and out—and a large, modern addition.
- ▼ (Below) This addition (see opposite page) made for more storage and a casual dining area in addition to a seating area around a fireplace (not pictured).



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line between meeting those priorities, staying within the defined scope and budget and delivering a unique and creative finished product,” DiCaprio says. “We do that through a combination of preservation, restoration, renovation and, in some projects, addition—when it comes to the residential work.”

This contrast of new and old is apparent in a number of recent projects, including a late 1800s Highlands Victorian for which the original brick structure was maintained and a very modern interior created. “We also recently renovated a back house to a property that had originally been a blacksmith shop from the early 1900s,” DiCaprio says. “The building had been untouched, and we created a very warm and unique Airbnb rental that has an interior you would never expect if you approached this building down the alley.”

Another example is the Cuba Cuba restaurant expansion in the Golden Triangle. “Our addition abuts two of the oldest homes in Denver,” says DiCaprio. “Caroline Wilding, our lead architect, worked very hard to design an addition that was in scale with the surrounding structures and honored those original historic homes by keeping our distance from them.”