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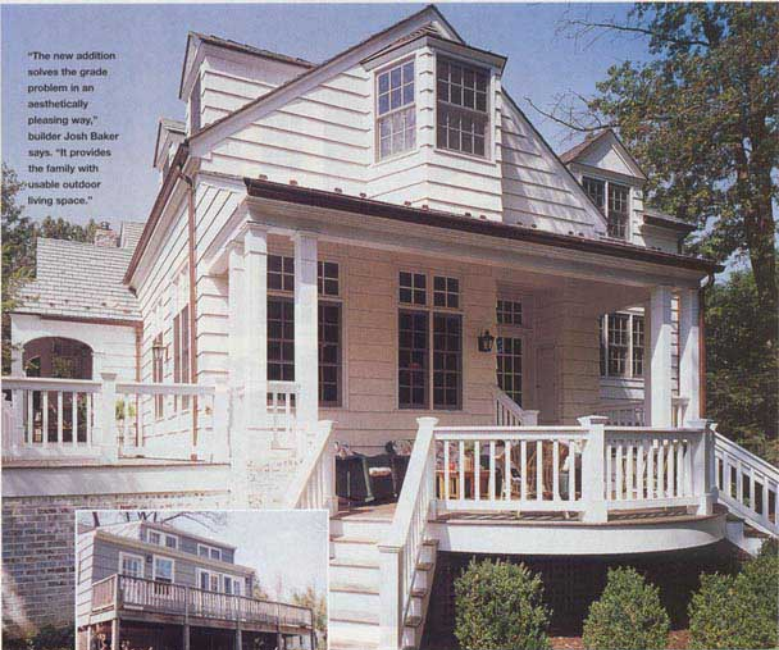
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"The new addition solves the grade problem in an aesthetically pleasing way," builder Josh Baker says. "It provides the family with usable outdoor living space."



BEFORE

BY LINDA KAST

surprise expansion

A charming 1930s Cape Cod facade disguises the addition that doubled this Virginia home's size while staying true to its simple roots.



Call it the dream job, and these were the dream clients.

Steven Kirstein and Josh Baker couldn't have asked for a more ideal combination. Their company, BOWA Builders, a design/build firm in Arlington, Virginia, specializes in historical renovations, so when a consultation for a plumbing leak evolved into a discussion about an expansion, the partners did everything they could to ensure that any additions they

made would fit the classic style of this 1930s Cape Cod home located in a bedroom community near Washington, D.C.

The clients' desire to welcome back their extended family—two grown daughters, their spouses, and several grandchildren—and the lifestyle that they wanted to enjoy after years of making do in their cozy but too-small home initiated the growth solution.

"They knew just what they wanted," Kirstein says. "They had lived there forever and wanted to stay there. But they

didn't want [an addition] to feel like a massive renovation. They wanted the house to look and feel like it hadn't changed since the 1930s." Taking the homeowners' desires to heart, the design/build firm's carefully executed plan ties 3,000 square feet of new space to the original 2,500 without sacrificing the home's cottage appeal.

The two principals discussed the homeowners' goals, surveyed problem



opposite From the front, the little Cape Cod-style home hides its transformation well. A fresh coat of paint and new synthetic slate shingles with snow guards to keep the white matter from cascading off the steep-pitched roof offer an appealing face to passersby.

left At the side of the house, an 8-foot bump-out extended the dining room. The designers also created a new side entry with sitting space that leads to a rear foyer. A 12-piece railing surrounds the rear deck.

areas, then devised two levels of expanded livability (see plan, *page 41*). On the main level, a new kitchen and breakfast area links to a stepped-down family room. Its partially covered wrap-around deck greets the outdoors with a wide embrace and a pair of staircases to the sloping rear yard. With a new master suite perched on the upper level, the homeowners have all the room they wanted and more.

The major drawback of the original design, Baker discovered, was not that the house sat high on a rear-sloping lot, but that attempts to connect the house to the outdoors had failed miserably. Saddled with a rickety, uninviting rear deck and a dangerously serpentine staircase, the back of the house and the yard were rarely used. Baker steered the remodeling project toward an addition that integrated

right The new sheltered side entry accented with archways and columns creates a thoughtful and fitting transition into the new family room. No detail was overlooked: The decking features Brazilian hardwood construction.



surprise expansion



the house and yard. He wanted to join interior and exterior spaces to satisfy his clients' big-living quotient without becoming pretentious from the front.

To retain the home's facade, the living room and foyer stayed put. However, the updates involved gutting the rooms, reinsulating, and running new mechanical, plumbing, and electrical lines. "The logical thing would have been to knock it down and start over," Kirstein says, "but

this couple had the ability and the desire to maintain the home's integrity."

Baker and Kirstein used a team approach that included an entourage of craftspeople and trade contractors to achieve the handcrafted look the homeowners were after. "They explored all their options," Kirstein says. "The look and feel [of the original house] dictated what they did."

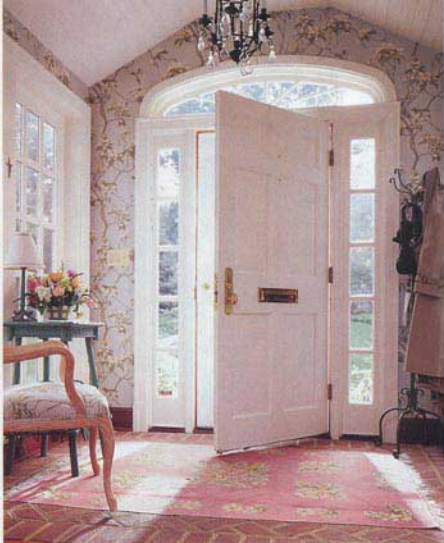
For style and storage, custom-designed full-height bookshelves flank the window opposite the original living room fireplace. Antique heart pine flooring was

installed throughout to maintain the flavor of the original house.

Because the original dining room was barely large enough to fit a table, the builders bumped out the exterior wall 8 feet, surrounded it with windows, and added built-in storage at the corners below the windows to house serving pieces and dinnerware. The kitchen and breakfast room shifted to the opposite side of the house, occupying space once used as a bedroom and a portion of the rear deck.



above The refreshed living room reveals an almost nostalgic glimpse at how the little cottage may have looked when it was built in the 1930s. The windows and pine mantel are original; the floors were replaced with random-width antique heart pine.



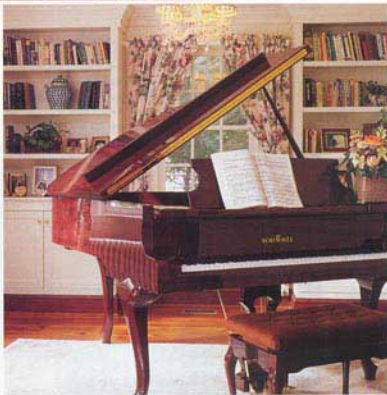
left Fresh paint revived the entry's beaded-board ceiling and the window and door casings. The chandelier and brick flooring are original to the house.

A bump-out wrapped with windows showers the breakfast nook with sunshine.

The most dramatic change occurred at the back of the house, where three steps down from the dining room, the rear landing affords an expansive view to the new family room and rear deck addition. At the family room's core, a finely crafted 18-foot mahogany wall with a custom masonry fireplace takes center stage. Flanking the fireplace, two 6-foot sections of cabinetry offer shelving for books on one side and compartments for media equipment on the other.

"More often than not, when there is an addition such as this, the fireplace is incorporated into an exterior wall," Baker says. "But in this case, we wanted to take advantage of the views to the garden and trees in back of the house. We needed a transition between the new family room on one level and the kitchen and breakfast room above it. By creating an interior

below To divide the long, narrow living room, the piano is positioned opposite the fireplace seating area, giving the space the feel of a music room. The finely crafted floor-to-ceiling bookcases store family photos, sheet music, books, and mementos.





above The dining table basks in a shower of sunlight streaming through five new wraparound windows. The storage cabinets and new mahogany baseboards pay tribute to the highly honed woodworking skills of BOWA's building team.

below The kitchen design favors efficiency and economy in its layout. A pair of upper cabinets meet the countertops for easy access to utensils. A three-shelf bookcase for cookbooks nestles into the end of the island.



above This side of the island cleverly holds a brass towel bar. The cabinets feature a crackle glaze as do the imported ceramic floor tiles. Even combined with modern appliances, the new kitchen retains the flavor of an earlier era.





UPPER LEVEL BEFORE



UPPER LEVEL AFTER

planning points

Steven Kirstein takes pride in the kind of work his firm does, and this house is a standout example. "The addition respects the home's original character," he says. Kirstein offers these planning suggestions for getting the best results in a historical renovation.

- Take careful measurements, do a structural analysis, and give weight to the findings. If you need to upgrade some of the under-pinnings, spend the money before you add the finishes.
- Look at your material selections closely. Choose things that combine well or mimic the home's original palette of materials.
- Creating warmth in your home does not require using ornate window or accessory options. Sometimes the simpler item can be the most striking and pleasing.
- Follow the site's dictates. The bulk of this expansion went out the back end.



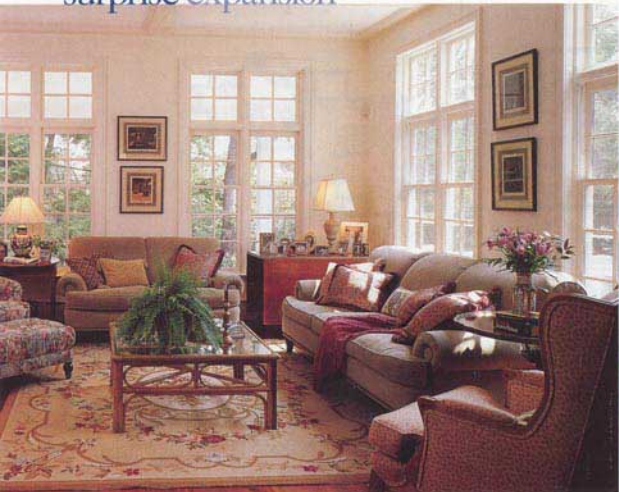
MAIN LEVEL BEFORE



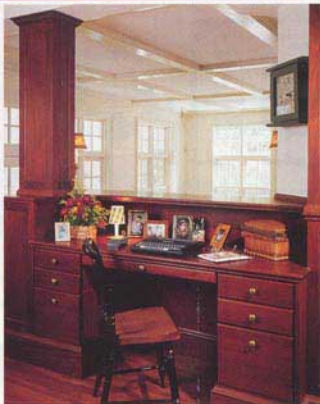
MAIN LEVEL AFTER



surprise expansion



above The 24-foot family room addition was designed to serve as the main living space. A casual traffic pattern encourages guests to circulate from the family room out to the deck, around to the rear foyer, and back through the dining room, kitchen, and breakfast area.



left From the workstation near the breakfast room, anyone working at the desk has a full view of activities in the family room below.

fireplace wall, we were able to leave sections open above the bookcase and media center and allow sight lines from the kitchen and home office area, as well as pour additional light into the rooms."

Attentive to the details, the carpenters anticipated family needs. The divider wall functions from both sides. A command-post desk sits near the breakfast room behind the bookcases in the family room; built-ins reminiscent of an old china cabinet fit near the kitchen and back up to the media cabinet next to the fireplace.





Usable elements are also carved into the back of the wall above the fireplace.

The connection between the family room and the new kitchen and breakfast area creates a wonderful traffic pattern. The compact kitchen feels as if it has always been there, and its efficiency allows for multiple cooks to work simultaneously. With beaded-board accents, a granite-top island, glass-front cabinets, and imported cottage-look tile, the kitchen serves as the home's core.

above The handcrafted mahogany wall measures 18 feet: A 6-foot central fireplace section is flanked by a 6-foot-wide bookcase on one side and a 6-foot-wide media center on the other.



left Fine millwork detailing puts the defining stamp on a remodeling project intended to blend with the home's original construction and style.



left The master bedroom, far from luxurious by today's standards, measures a modest 14-12 feet. Built-in dressers fill the dormer space beneath the windows. A bump-out bay at the rear of the addition creates a cozy reading area.

below In the master bath, amenities such as a linen closet and upper wall cabinets never undermine the design intent: Tie the new with the old. The arched tub wall, small hexagonal floor tiles, and molding details repeat architectural details found on the main level.

With a new master suite perched on the upper level, the homeowners have all the room they wanted and more.

The upper level expanded as well. Sitting above the family room and deck, the master suite juts out like the prow of a ship. Two dormers and a bump-out bay add definition, height, and space for built-ins. Mahogany-trimmed drawers were built below the windows of the two dormers. A seating area in the bump-out bay offers a tranquil overview of the yard below. Even in this private suite, the preservation of a cottage feeling prevails.

"The total remodel creates a comfortable space for growing old in," Baker says. "The house was completely designed with the family in mind." □

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 114.

Photographer: D. Randolph Foulds. Illustrator: Gary Palmer. Design/build firm: BOWA Builders, Inc. Field editor: Eileen Deymer.



DESIGN/BUILD: A TWO-FOR- ONE DEAL

The design/build concept means different things to different people. In some cases, the builder is also the designer of the project; in other companies, the design work is contracted out and executed by the builder. Josh Baker, principal with BOWA Builders of Arlington, Virginia, explains his firm's design/build designation this way: "It's really a process of bringing professionals together with complete accountability—from the start of the project to its completion." Baker offers these tips for finding the right design/build firm and making the connection work.

■ **Look for a firm** that uses highly qualified residential architects or designers. Ask who does the design work, and then look at both sketches and finished projects to determine if you like the solutions that were presented to the clients.

■ **Choose a company** based on its employees. If you can establish a friendly working rapport during initial meetings with the key contact with whom you'll be working and feel comfortable explaining your goals, then you've found a good relationship. The building team must communicate well.

■ **Find a company** that's comfortable doing jobs similar in scope to the one you're anticipating. Avoid companies that say they can do it all. Find one with expertise in the particular category under which your project falls. Whether it's a renovation or a second-story addition to a ranch-style home, look for a company that specializes in that project.



■ **Be sure someone** is on-site full-time to keep things moving smoothly and to ensure that the quality you expect is achieved.

■ **Check references**, not just with a phone call, but by going to look at a comparable project. People have different expectations, and another person's evaluation may not meet your expectations.

■ **Visit a comparable** job site during construction. Being on-site tells a good deal about the company: How clean is the site? How do the contractors behave? How keen is the level of professionalism?

above Although the staircase remained in its original position, the structure was rebuilt using mahogany stairs and hand-turned balusters. A new skylight floods the narrow corridor with light.

PHOTOGRAPH BY

surprise expansion