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# home design

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY NAT REA



Oak accents and modern materials mesh beautifully in this multi-use space. Open shelving keeps necessities in sight and easily accessible, while creating some separation between the kitchen and sitting areas.



# MODERN FAMILY



A perfect pairing of old and new: A historic house gets a modern addition that is respectful of its era and meets the needs of three generations. BY JENNIFER STEFFY SWANSON





**THIS PAGE:** The new addition blends seamlessly with the main house, which dates to the late eighteenth century. A side door on the addition serves as the main entry for the home and is accessible by stairs in the front or a discreet cement ramp, which faces the backyard.

**There is potential** for contrariety when modifications are made to a historic structure, a chance that the resulting hybrid will be an incongruous mishmash of time periods and styles. Although a similar sort of breakdown can happen in the architect-contractor-client relationship, particularly if said architect and contractor hail from different firms, there is no disconnect here. From the brick sidewalk out front, this eighteenth century Colonial and its newly rebuilt addition blend as seamlessly into the surrounding historic neighborhood as any other house on the block. The cohesive final product is a testament to the collaboration that took place between Christine Malecki West of Kite Architects, who designed the addition, the team at **Sixteen on Center** that built it, and the homeowners that took the initiative to make it happen.

Nestled in historic Pawtuxet Village, the main house—marked by a traditional clapboard facade—was built circa 1790 and was expanded upon in 1910. The ground floor of the two-story addition housed the kitchen and a single bedroom upstairs,

which was accessible through the kitchen by a very narrow and very steep spiral staircase. When Laura Sadovnikoff and Andy Blackadar purchased the house in 1997, it suited their family of four. The couple made their bedroom on the second floor of the addition, and their two children, who eventually made space for one more sibling, had bedrooms in the main house.

By 2010, the poorly planned addition, which sat on a dry stone foundation, was well past its prime. Its flat roof and dirt floor crawl space made for drainage problems that began affecting the integrity of the main house. A structural engineer determined that the ailing secondary structure was contributing to the decay of the main house. With two children away at college and their third in middle school, Sadovnikoff and Blackadar believed the opportune moment had arrived to make a change. Downsize? Far from it. The couple resolved to fix what was broken and, in the process, open the home to Sadovnikoff's aging parents. A house of five was to become a house of seven.



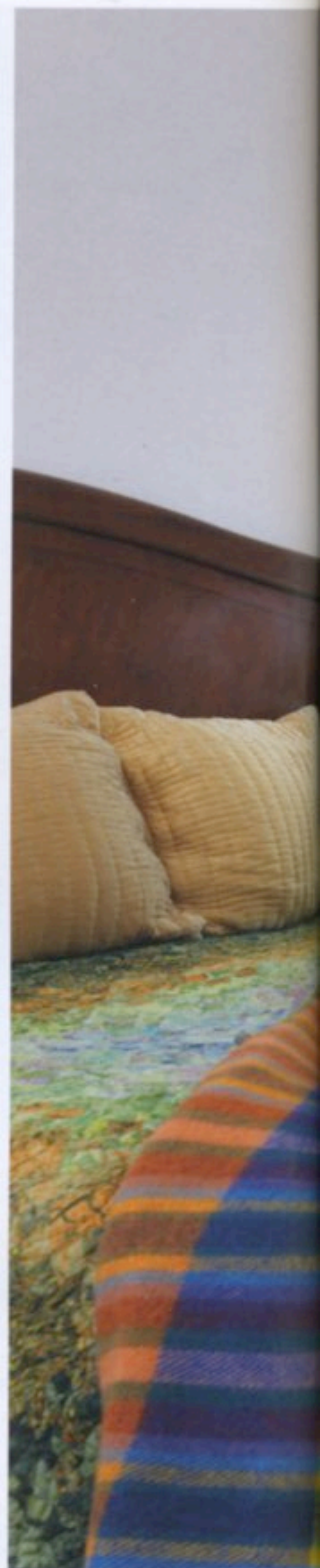


This nineteenth-century transom (top left), which had been tucked away in storage prior to the renovation, had sentimental value for Sadvnikoff. West was able to work it into the addition's design. Large windows and a thoughtfully designed layout capitalize on the southern light exposure and offer views of the backyard.





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** A wide staircase replaced the treacherously steep and winding stairs that led to the upstairs bedroom in the original addition, and built-in shelves make smart use of what would otherwise be wasted space. Three windows in the new master bedroom keep the room bright, and a built-in desk provides ample working space for two. The new master bath features an oversized tile shower and custom cabinetry built by Sixteen on Center.





“There’s a lot of artistry, from the craftsmanship to the design.” —LAURA SADOVNIKOFF



It can be hard enough for two generations to achieve harmony under one roof. For three generations to cohabitate comfortably in the same house requires forethought.

“Our goal was to do as much as we could to preserve the old structure, but to take advantage of contemporary design on the interior,” says Sadovnikoff. The couple took their concept to Kite, where West drafted a design to accommodate their priorities, among them were increased functionality and a space for each generation to call its own.

Sixteen on Center, a design/build firm based in Tiverton, set about building West’s design as they do every project: by beginning with a tight, well-insulated envelope. The original

addition was torn down completely and a slab-on-grade foundation was laid in place of the century-old crumbling stone. A radiant heat system in the floors is the addition’s only heat source, but combined with spray foam insulation in the walls, the structure is highly energy efficient.

Home to the kitchen, dining table and a sitting area, the ground floor space was designed to be a common room for all three generations to share. Upstairs, however, Sadovnikoff and Blackadar wanted a virtually self-sufficient master suite, where they could retire privately. They reclaimed the second floor of the addition for their bedroom, and an adjoining bathroom was added for convenience.





A black and white photograph in the mudroom shows the house the day the addition was demolished. **BELOW:** The addition looks much more modern from the back than the front. A ramp was also built to the back door to allow the homeowners' parents easy access to the yard.

**Construction:** Sixteen on Center, 816-0324, sixteenoc.com, see ad page 89

**Project Manager:** Shawn Harris, Sixteen On Center

**Architect:** Christine Malecki West, Kite Architects, 272-0240, kitearchitects.com

The former addition lacked an entryway, and the need for such a space was even greater with the family's new living arrangements. Sadovnikoff's mother is an accomplished concert pianist who still gives lessons. A hallway running behind the kitchen extends the length of the addition, from the exterior door to the main house. The hall can be closed off entirely from the kitchen and living space with convenient pocket doors, allowing students and other guests to come and go without disturbing the family space. In addition, a series of built-in shelves and cubbies right inside the main entry door organizes shoes, coats and personal belongings.

"At times there are five people living here, and at times there are seven, but it all works," says Sadovnikoff. "I love the juxtaposition of the modern interior and the historic exterior, the transition from old to new. It's really lovely to live in." ■

