

SOUTH SHORE

HOME & GARDEN

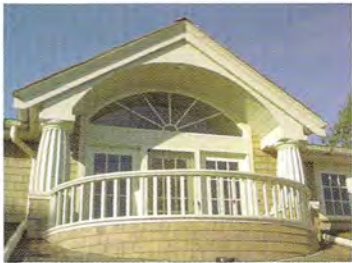
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A
Marriage
that
WORKS

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When an architect sits down to design, there's a lot to think about. Much research and investigation must precede design, which determines the design itself. "Free to Be" is very rare in the Architectural profession. True license of design is usually more a dream than a reality. Usually, when an architect is called upon to execute a design, it comes with some very specific requests attached by the client.

Often, an architect is called on to add to an already existing structure, and must make a "marriage" between the old and the new. Usually the "addition" is for a very specific purpose; to add something which the client feels he is missing. Often it is space, or the need for a particular functional component. When that happens, the architect cannot design the addition independent of the already existing structure. The two must be joined in feel, flavor, and design both inside and out. There must be a "marriage" between them. And as we well know, some marriages work, and others don't. We have all seen additions that look, literally, as if they were "stuck-on." Where no thought or consideration was given to creating flow or harmony between the old and new. This is the easy way out. Bim, bam, boom - it's done. This





The front of this 1840's farmhouse was fully restored to its original while the rear wing was almost completely demolished, redesigned and expanded. The enclosed porch is completely new, designed to snuggle up under the cool shade of the tree. The barn had a small addition with the contemporary garage added. (Left) The semicircular master bedroom balcony deck sits on the porch roof looking across the bay.

is not the way architect Jim Kelliher's firm designs.

Axiom Architects and its principal, Jim Kelliher have designed and overseen the development and building of scores of homes, institutional, and commercial properties. In 1978, after working as a Project Architect and designer, Jim formed his own firm. He began primarily with single-family homes, but quickly moved to multi-unit and commercial projects. With so many historic old homes in the area, the firm soon gained a respectable reputation for the restoration and adaptive reuse of existing buildings, as well as the

design of entirely new structures. Jim Kelliher has become a master at seamlessly blending the old and the new. It is often impossible to discern where one leaves off and the other begins. Jim admits that this type of work is a challenge, and generally takes more skill than a simpler totally new design. "Historic restorations are more confining - you are more limited to the language used in the 1800's. Today's space is more open and free flowing, and very different from the little cells that were needed in old homes for warmth." Just recently the Axiom design team was called on to fit forty luxury residential units into a nineteenth-century estate originally landscaped by Frederick Law Olmstead. The result was stunning. "The complex design successfully complements the estate's Richardson-style mansion and carriage house while preserving as much as possible of Olmstead's rustic greenspace."

When Jim works with an old building he seeks to retain the integrity of the original design, while still being able to bring something fresh and new to it. Deeply respectful of the architecture of the past, Jim recognizes that it often imposes limitations in today's world. He sometimes offers suggestions about matters of everyday living, such as carrying in of the groceries, and doing laundry - considerations often overlooked when a couple are planning their "dream house."

Over a period of meetings and getting to know each other, communication and trust develops.

After meetings and discussions, Jim usually offers three schemes. "One will be their scheme - and will show what they want to do and show how it works or doesn't - and the others are alternatives and adaptations." Jim values his clients, and feels that they are articulate and intelligent people, who appreciate the intricacies and quirks of working with an old dwelling. Architect and client are usually like-minded people who enjoy working together, and fall

in love with their project.

Recently, Jim and Axiom were called on to ply their trade and talent to two very different "add-ons." With one, they created a seamless transition from a very old and historic 1840's farmhouse, to a modern kitchen - family room addition. With the other, they literally encapsulated the pre-existing 50's Cape into the new dwelling;

creating in effect a huge and massive "addition" which in fact, is twice the size of the original house.

The Teuten's are not new to restoring old homes. "We like old houses," Diane smiles by way of explaining that she and husband Tom have owned, restored, and lived in about 17 of them. Although neither were brought up in an old house, they both discovered an affinity for "the charm ...we like the unlevelled floors and creaks." The home they currently occupy consisted of the main house, an out-house, a barn and pastures. Thanks to Jim Kelliher and the Teutens, although changes have been made to accommodate modern living, all of the buildings retain much of their original charm and materials. The barn has had some garage doors added to its side, but remains the same in size, shape, and location. The pastures are lovely rolling lawns. And the house? Well that is where the magic has happened.

Strangely enough, Jim was called in to help the Teuten's to "unmodernize."

All the original warm, old, wide pine plank floors were uncovered and reclaimed, and where new flooring was added it is matched meticulously to the old floors.





The kitchen was designed in a completely new addition with a high ceiling and full of natural light - the materials and feel, flow seamlessly from the 1840s restoration.



A portion of the existing home was opened up for the kitchen to get a feel for the turn of the century which included the bead board cabinets and furniture.



The exterior shows the original shed dormer and some old roofs but the new full porch and custom columns give the house new identity and elegance.

Changes over the years had left the house “too contemporary” to suit the new owners, who wished to “convert it back to a historic feel.” When Jim was called in, he did his homework and discovered a lot about the original house. Frequent “modernizations” had taken their toll, and the original structure had been greatly changed. Jim commenced to reclaim the past for the Teutens. The house became increasingly unfinished and rustic as it went further back. The kitchen was located in the rear of the house, and would have been merely a utilitarian space with a large fireplace for cooking. The kitchen opened out to the pastures and barn, and this is probably where fresh produce from the garden and meat and milk were brought directly in.

When owners and architect met, it was decided that they would keep the living room and dining rooms as they

were, but convert the old back kitchen and shed into a family room, and add a lovely large new kitchen, closed porch, and master suite above. What he came up with was a farmer’s porch and entry hall, which would lead into the kitchen or straight into the main part of the house. Outside he added from the main peak back, but in a design consistent with the original. Diane Teuten is proud that, except for a new window, the front of the house is all original. “We found the original front door in the barn, so this pretty much is how the house looked from the street in its original state.” All the original warm, old, wide pine plank floors were uncovered and reclaimed, and where new flooring was added it is matched meticulously to the old.

The new kitchen, large and airy, with high ceilings and windows that flood the room with light, is both old and



The Living Room is an addition - the area with shelves and columns is the old exterior wall. The fireplace was redone, but original.



Architects: Jim Kelliher, Rebecca O'Donnell and Candice Reynolds.

Steve Blodgett

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

At Axiom, we take pride in our reputation as a firm which is “strong on design.” We believe that a good design is an architect’s most important contribution to a building.

Since the building itself, and not the drawings or the model, is the real product, we take equal pride in our ability to get a building built. This is accomplished by working effectively with all the other people vital to a successful project...engineers, contractors, suppliers, interior designers, and landscapers...and from start to finish, the clients.

Over the years, our clients have asked us to take on a wide variety of projects: single family homes; multi-unit residential projects, and commercial projects to warehouses, hotel to manufacturing facilities, shopping malls to office complexes. Much of this work has involved the careful and often difficult blending of old and new, through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the design of new structures to complement them. One of our earliest projects, for example, was the award winning rehabilitation of the Jacobs House in Hanover, Massachusetts. The eighteenth-century federal period home and adjacent barn were completely restored, renovated and enlarged to create 7,500 square feet of luxury office space.

Whatever the project, our approach at Axiom has always been the same: work closely with the client, produce the best design we are capable of, devote absolute attention to the details, and generally do everything possible to get the very best building built.

“Running my firm puts a lot of pressure on me to spend less time at the drawing board and more time in meetings. But I became an architect because I wanted to design buildings, and that’s still what I want to do, so I make sure that I still play an active design role.”

new. The warmth of the maple cabinetry and wide pine boards under foot, retain the mood of the simple farm kitchens. Counter tops in the same tone as the cabinets and an old country worktable seem made for preparing large meats. Everywhere there is the ambiance of inviting warmth.

Two stairways lead up to the second level, which houses three bedrooms. Jim has expanded the master to include a sitting room, large modern bathroom, and more closet space. By raising the

grabbed it, but soon came to realize that with a growing family and as owners, they would be using it much more than just for summers, and they needed more space. They brought their “problem child” to Jim, but as with many of his clients this family knew just what they wanted. From summers past they already knew how they would be using the property, and what features they wished to capitalize on. They came looking for a “summer house - comfortable, open, and free flowing,” and in fact, brought a clip-



The Guest Cottage

height of the ceilings he has created a more spacious feel all around. Each bedroom has a fireplace (the house has eight in all) “one of the niceties of an old house, which makes the narrow steep steps and small closets bearable” says Diane.

Those, and the wonderful old molding! All of this together, serves to unite the families and generations who have lived in and enjoyed this house.

In a very different vein, Jim was called in to convert and add-on to an old 50’s Cape set on the most magnificent waterfront site in a cove. The owners, a young family, had summered as renters next door and had always dreamed of owning on “this little piece of heaven.” When the cottage went up for sale they

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ping of a Long Island house which they liked. What they were looking for was a “contemporary house with a turn of the century shingle style feel to it.” And that is just what Jim gave them.

To comply with regulations, Jim and Axiom architect Rebecca O'Donnell, actually kept the original building, incorporating it into the design, and literally built the addition around it. Together with contractor Randy Bern of Chilton Development, they worked through the winter to create their magic. What they came up with was a remarkable change! Inside the whole house was opened up. Ceilings soar, walls disappear, windows invite light and views. Entering from a front courtyard, front to back twin glass French doors offer up a sweeping view



The Guest Cottage is a simple two room building with an open stud interior and full cathedral ceiling.

through the house, and out onto the lawns and bay beyond. A three-sided covered porch supported with custom designed classic, but modern, fluted columns wraps around the house and is softened with rounded shallow steps which create “decks” extended beyond the overhang. The back “porch” is cooled with ceiling fans, very much adding to the genteel feeling of a summertime gone by, and the entire house is shingled and stained to fit very naturally into it’s landscape. Comfortably nestled amid tall trees, the whole place resonates with the peaceful feel of an old fashioned campground.

Inside, Jim and Rebecca used ingenuity and creativity to create the look and feel that owners were after. Though fully insulated, they used an open stud design, employing a technique, which would add to the simple, uncomplicated lines reminiscent of “summers spent at the cottage.” To further enhance that feeling they used “a ton of beadboard” - on walls, ceilings, cabinets - all whitewashed, fresh and clean. Ceramic knobs, antique lighting, window seats, classic paned windows, clawfoot tub, glass front cabinets, kitchen hardware, and wicker furnishings all add to the turn of the century ambiance. The fluted columns are brought indoors and repeated on either side of the living room entry, and the open walls are fitted with shelves to display the owners beautiful collection of antique green milkglass. On the sec-

ond story, space was gained in the master bedroom by pushing it out into and over, the living room. By ingeniously using a set of interior “widows” light was stolen from the living room, yet the bedroom retained its privacy. High above the living room a bank of mechanically operated windows lets the summer heat out.

Outside, too, a feeling of casual gentility and easy living resounds. Landscape architect Keith LeBlanc purposefully kept much of the surroundings fairly natural. Clearing and cutting back overgrowth, he found some wonderful surprises, like the lovely stone wall in the back. Taking his cue from it, he used the same stone in a retaining wall for the front courtyard. Keeping the owners wishes in mind, he kept the look “low key,” with ease of maintenance and plenty of room for their two young sons to play. Standing amid the towering trees, even in the chill of this February morning, it is easy to envision lovely summer days spent sailing and swimming in this peaceful tranquility. Thanks to Axiom and the owner’s vision, this thoroughly modern house feels every inch the turn of the century retreat.

Jim Kelleher says that it is his goal to design a “smart house,” one that is “livable for the family... designed for comfort. A house doesn’t have to be huge - the rooms just have to make sense and be livable and manageable... that’s a successful house.” H&G