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[Interior Design](#)
[Construction](#)
[Personal Space](#)

INSIDE

[From the Editor](#)
[Entryway](#)
[My Hudson Valley](#)
[Metro Life](#)
[Site Specific](#)
[Area Spotlight](#)
[In the Garden](#)
[Farm Notes](#)
[In the Kitchen](#)
[Get It Done](#)
[Home Style](#)
[House Horoscopes](#)
[Back Porch](#)

RESOURCES

[Real Estate Listings](#)
[Business Directory](#)



Melding Old and New
 The home, a beautifully maintained Sears cottage from 1928, features details in the windows and woodwork that the homeowners replicated in the addition, below.



THE RIGHT SPACE

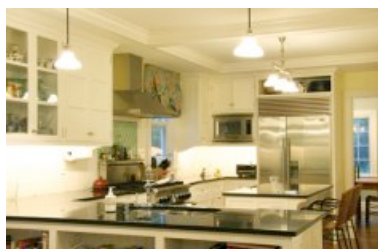
BY SUSAN HODARA, PHOTOS BY ANGELIKA RINNHOFER

When Scott and Amy Berger made their move from Manhattan to the Westchester suburb of Chappaqua in 1996, it was for their dog, Jake, "a golden retriever mutt who needed more space," explains Amy with a laugh. The house they bought, a 1,300-square foot, two-bedroom Sears home built in 1928—called the Willard and described in the Sears catalog as an English cottage—fulfilled their primary requisite: to be within walking distance of a grocery store and the train to the city. It was, says Amy, "sweet and charming in every way."



Six years and three children later, the Bergers confronted the limitations of their cozy abode—and the choice between moving and renovating. "The cost of homes was beyond ridiculous," recalls Scott, president of Arista Air Conditioning Corp. in Long Island City. "Plus, we wanted to stay in the same school district."

Enter Jeff Wilkinson, a practicing architect since 1991 and owner of Jeff Wilkinson R.A. in Beacon, N.Y., who was recommended to the Bergers by friends. Wilkinson's expertise lies in the integration of vernacular form and contemporary needs; as Scott puts it: "He has a great aesthetic sense in melding the old and the new."



Fit for a Growing Family
 The Bergers' much-needed two-story addition includes an extended kitchen that combines modern appliances and traditional cabinetry and moldings.

For Wilkinson, the job presented an enticing challenge. "Ten years ago, theirs would have been a starter home," he says, "but I love working on this scale. It's the opposite of a McMansion."

The Bergers came to Wilkinson with clear goals. "We wanted a master bedroom suite and a family room where the kids could play and do homework," says Scott. "We wanted to keep the traditional feel of the house while adding modern amenities."

Between July 2002 and March 2003, all that and more was accomplished. A two-story addition enlarged the house to 2,400 square feet, most of which is zoned with radiant floor heating. Downstairs is an upgraded kitchen, complete with Thermidor range, Miele dishwasher, and Sub-Zero fridge, all of which Scott

explains as "part desire, part cachet." Amy admits that some of the kitchen cabinet space is filled with homework supplies, CDs, and DVDs.

Attached to the kitchen, formerly the back of the house, is a family room and breakfast nook, and a mudroom that leads to a bluestone terrace bordered by stone walls. The basement is now a 600-square-foot playroom that Amy, now an at-home mom, says "makes all the difference. Without it, there'd be toys all over the house." Upstairs, both master bedroom and master bath are skylit. The bathroom uses built-ins to maximize its 8-by-8-foot dimensions; the bedroom features a walk-in closet and cathedral ceiling—with the blessings of the local historical society. "This house will be here for a long time," Amy says. "I wanted to make sure a cathedral ceiling was appropriate. They told me it was fine in the bedroom, but not downstairs."



A cozy breakfast nook with built-in seating.

Although their intention was to preserve the original bathroom, the floor had sagged, and the bathtub cracked as it was being removed. Under layers of glue and linoleum, however, they uncovered an earlier floor, tiled in white with small rings of black. "It was labor-impossible to restore it," says Scott, "so we redid it exactly as it had been."

But it is in the Bergers' decisions about details that the house's historic character is underscored. The base and crown moldings that the previous owners had stained brown were replaced with new, white moldings knife-cut to match a segment taken from behind a kitchen cabinet. Window casings, including replacements for windows in the existing areas of the house, were cut to mimic the casings in the plans of the Sears original, and hooked pulls were installed on every new double-hung to mirror those on the old windows. Even the framing around the doorways was redone to correct improperly installed edges: "The eased edge should be along the vertical side, and the sharp edge along the top," Scott explains. And the kitchen cabinets were field-painted rather than factory-painted "for more of a cottage feel," Scott says.

Continued
1 | [2](#) | [Next »](#)

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