

Award-Winning Additions

A garage redesign and lush gardens complement the historic charm of this 1920s cottage.



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"I LOVE TAKING SOMETHING THAT NEEDS LOVE AND making it wonderful," Kara Kosinski says. "And my house needed lots of love. It was like a diamond in the rough that needed someone to dust it off." Kosinski saw beyond the exterior's peeling paint and backyard's chain-link fence, and fell in love with the home's good bones and original architectural elements, including stepped archways that frame the entrance to its rooms.

"The minute I saw it, I knew it was home," she says. "The moldings, the glass door knobs, the little pocket windows and the weights in the wood-framed windows were all still there."



above
The garage architecture was designed to work seamlessly with the historic home's style.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HILLARY BLACK



above

A beamed breezeway connects the main house to the guest room, which has an A-frame roof and two entrances. A decorative copper architectural piece and a copper rain chain of linked tulips set the stage for old-fashioned plantings, which include climbing roses.


below

A bare concrete wall in the backyard was turned into a verdant background when a trio of trellises were planted with grapevines, climbing roses and wisteria.



The renovation is the pièce de résistance for Kara and Molly. "We love being in the guest room. The dogs like to run in the backyard then settle down with us in the evening to watch TV."

Kara and Molly—as well as Lena, Ginger and Mister—are happy to call their Roaring Twenties cottage home sweet home.

"The house is not too big, it's not overdone and it's just the right size for us," Kara says. "And all of our guests tell us that it's comfortable and inviting." 

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REMAKING HISTORY

The right architect and contractor will enhance a historic home's aesthetic integrity.

The true value of the renovation of an old house is not being able to tell that any alterations were made. Architect Carol Tink-Fox chose to put the addition on Kara Kosinski's garage instead of on the main house to maintain what she calls the "cute cottage character" of the historic home. "By making a separate small building, we kept the new space historically in context," she says.

Here is what she did to link the past and the present:

- A steep-pitched roof and attic were added to the flat-roofed garage, which also has a historic designation.
- The home's exterior color scheme was repeated on the addition and garage.
- Heavy timber beams along the breezeway with diagonal braces evoke the feel of those of the main house.
- Windows and French doors open the guest room to the beautifully landscaped backyard. Because the garage is on a slab, unlike the house, there are no steps to go down to enter the garden.
- The old swing-style garage doors, which looked like barn doors, were replicated. Contractor Scot Lewis custom built the fully weather-proofed doors using tongue and groove pine with solid brass oil-rubbed bronze hinges.