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Charming and fresh

PRESERVING HER COTTAGE'S ORIGINAL CHARACTER WAS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE FOR AN AUSTIN HOMEOWNER AND HER REMODEL TEAM

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Architecture by Tim Cuppett, Cuppett Architects

General Construction by Royce Flournoy, Texas Construction Company







Deep in the heart of Austin's Tarrytown neighborhood is a charming 1930s cottage. Last year, homeowner, Sharon Wilkes, decided an update was in order and added just over 600 square feet to her originally 1500-square-foot home. But from the seamless blend between old and new structure, it's hard to tell a remodel even took place.

Wilkes, who owns an upholstery manufacturing business, discovered the cottage on a walk through the neighborhood. She says it was love at first site. She instantly called her friend in real estate to make sure, if the house ever went up for sale, Wilkes would be the first to know. As fate would have it, about twelve years ago, the cottage was put on the market. Wilkes, who was traveling at the time, had her mother scout the home for her, and on her mother's okay, purchased it — interior unseen.

Until a couple of years ago, Wilkes lived in the cottage largely as it was when she moved in. But the time had come for a little updating.

"I wanted to do everything to scale," Wilkes says. "I wanted people to walk by my house and not have an idea that I built on to it. I get stopped all this time with people staying, 'I love what you've done with your house, I can barely tell that you've done anything to it.'"

For the remodel, Wilkes enlisted the expertise of Austin-architect, Tim Cup-

The original fireplace was redone with the intention of making it the focal point of the living room. Because the front door of the original structure opened directly into the living room, Wilkes added an entry hall to give the main entrance an air of importance.

opening pages The original and new structures of this Tarrytown cottage blend seamlessly together and incorporate the outdoors into everyday living as much as possible.

A glassed-in interior courtyard joins the original structure and the addition.



top Since Wilkes previously updated the kitchen area, for this remodel she did very little – just adding a few mirrors to lighten up the room.

left Solid upholstery, fun fabrics, and color create a transitional aesthetic.

right “I really wanted to use a lot of the things I had purchased on trips and from my family,” says Wilkes. Being in the design industry, I’ve always been looking at stuff thinking, ‘Once I do my own house, this is what I want to do.’” In her more traditional dining room, Wilkes showcases several of her beautiful antiques.



pett, who she had previously worked with on her country home in Wimberley. She had four specific requests for her cottage: she wanted the rooms to flow from one to the next, lots of windows, a courtyard, and the outdoors to be a part of indoor living.

Initially, Wilkes thought she wanted a second floor, Cuppet says. But he talked her into a master-suite addition that would be connected to the original cottage by a glass room. With a new master bedroom and bath, the existing rooms were repurposed: the old master became a guest room, and the original guest room became Wilkes's study. Before the remodel, the front door opened directly into the living room, so an entry room was created to give the cottage's entrance a sense of importance.

For the actual construction work, Wilkes brought Royce Flournoy of Texas Construction Company onto her remodel team. Flournoy paid particular attention to stone and grout detail to match that of the original structure, Cuppet says. Additionally, striving for authenticity, he reworked doors, windows and trim. Dedicated to reusing materials, Wilkes sought out salvage doors from the 1930s: an old door from a cafe in South Texas divides the new entry hall and her study, and an antique, South Texas motel door marks the entrance to the master suite. The lock allows one

to choose between "Engaged" and "Not Engaged," to announce whether the room is occupied or not.

To make her master bedroom a soothing retreat, Wilkes painted the walls a darker color and used light-colored, but rich and textured fabrics, such as the velvet bedspread. Wilkes was careful in her bedroom furniture selection. The headboard is one of her designs. "A headboard does such a good job in a bedroom because it finishes it off, but it doesn't overwhelm a bed," she says. The pink chair is a tribute to Wilkes's favorite shade of pink. "Having a pink chair for a girl is just fun. It puts you in a good mood when you wake up and look at that luscious color." And as it turns out, the chair's vibrant pink shade matches the roses just outside the window.

A glass entry hall connects the new master suite with the original cottage. With two windowed walls and stone floors, the transition room gathers natural light and is one of Cuppet's favorites features. The painted two-drawer chest and mirror was a house-warming gift from Wilkes's mother when she purchased the cottage. "I really worked hard trying to incorporate all these wonderful antiques I've spent my life collecting," Wilkes says. She repurposed many pieces she already owned and added solid





upholstery, fun drapery fabrics, and color to create a transitional aesthetic. “I wanted the house to look fresh, clean and young. Sometimes if you have too many antiques, it drags the house down.”

In her remodel, Wilkes got an updated home that retains its charming feel. “I love the new part because it’s exactly what I wanted, but I love the old part because it’s so wonderful that I was able to keep all that,” she says.

Wilkes, who has often been asked when she would tear the cottage down to take advantage of incredible lot, never dreamed of doing so. “I have this wonderful little gem, I’m not about to tear this thing down.”

Older homes, that have not been butchered, are very easy to work with thanks to their simple layouts, Cuppetts says. “It is possible to preserve a house and respect the things that are good and make it work functionally.”

With larger and larger homes diluting the character of older neighborhoods, Wilkes feels a certain obligation to her little cottage. “In a town like Austin with such great history, I hate to see homes like mine disappear. To have a cottage built in the 1930s is really special. And, I feel a real responsibility to do my best by it.”

The two sinks in the master bathroom – repurposed from an old fountain – were purchased in New Orleans. An antique mirror sits behind them.

left Wilkes used textured fabrics – like the velvet bedspread and plush rug and lively patterned fabrics for the draperies – to add movement to the otherwise soothing master suite.

bottom left A large, walk-in closet is almost every girls dream and Wilkes’s – with a window seat and hardwood floors – has the same charm as the rest of the cottage.

bottom right The master bedroom’s neutral colors – taupes and whites – make for a quiet retreat. The luscious pink chair in the master bedroom not only adds a pop of cheerful color, but it matches the roses outside her window.