

Architectural Details ♦

Robert Carl Williams Associates
Pittsfield, Vermont

April 1997

Special Renovations/Additions Issue



BEFORE: Here at Advanced Animations in Stockbridge, a totally plain entrance did not do justice to the creativity of the work going on inside.

Photos by Bob Perry



AFTER: With additional front office space, the new entrance does the company and its image justice, yet blends seamlessly with the existing building. A far more pleasant approach...

Maybe you've been thinking about adding on to your existing home. Maybe your home could use some updating, or maybe you're thinking about purchasing a home that needs renovation. Whether you're ready to renovate and add on now, or not for another year or two, this is the time to begin your planning.

Experts say that one year out is the optimal time to begin your renovation/addition planning. Any less, and you may be rushed more than you'd like, with less time to devote to thoughtful consideration of your needs, wants and final outcome.

In this issue of *Architectural Details*, we'll help you get started. We have tips on finding the right architect, on your decision-making process (and there will be a million decisions to make) and some pictures to show you just how much is possible with renovation.

Getting Started...

1. Review your existing floor plan for overall perspective.

It is virtually impossible, even for a good architect, to gain insight on the reorganization of interior spaces without looking at the overall.

2. Retain the good and throw out the bad.

Things to save include those with sentimental value, that represent good construction and that are expressive of a traditional character or original design. After these decisions, the renovation should strive for identity of detail, colors and materials which complement the original structure and design.

3. Match the character. This way, the architect can identify the new construction closely with the existing building. Well-designed

renovation always complements the existing structure so the finished building is more rich in content of exterior forms, more visually pleasing and better serving of the owners' needs.

4. Be careful not to overbuild. It might not be economically wise to invest excessive money in a property which cannot appreciate in value because of the neighborhood.

5. But listen to your heart... If a place is "home," then it might be worth any price.

6. Hire an architect who has done other renovation work you like.

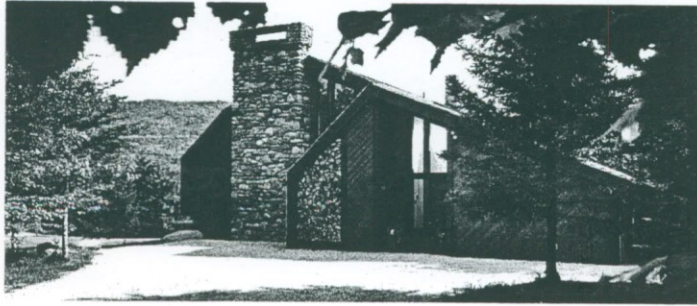
Good design is not a luxury. It's necessary for successful renovations.

Published by
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From Dated Chalet To Elegant Country Home



BEFORE: A builder's version of a Swiss chalet, this home neither suited the owners' lifestyle in its interior spaces, nor blended well with its natural surroundings. The attached garage and entry area does not feel gracious or welcoming.



AFTER: The owners wanted rustic elegance, both in the interior spaces and the conversion of the exterior. A blend of massive fireplaces, sweeping greenhouse windows, textured surfaces and turned-down wing walls was used to homogenize the original discontinuity, creating a structure that blends beautifully with its magnificent surroundings.

How To Find The Right Architect For You

- 1. Begin your selection process as early as possible.** An architect can help you clarify the goals of your project, thus saving much misdirected work. The architect can also do site studies, help you through the necessary planning and zoning approvals, survey existing facilities, help with project financing and budgets.
- 2. Hire the architect first, then the contractor.** This way, your contractor will be an efficient member of a cohesive team, building the precise project you and your architect have designed. Competitive construction bidding, possible only with the aid of architectural drawings and specifications, assures you of getting the best price/value. In fact, the difference in price between competitive bids is often more than the entire architect's fee.
- 3. Find out which design firm created the buildings that you admire.** There is no better way than choosing the architect who has designed your favorite homes.
- 4. The architect is a creator: make the best use of your architect by allowing him/her to bring creativity to your ideas.**
- 5. Base your decision on confidence.** The relationship you are about to engage in should be one of professional and business competence. It is important that you have confidence in your decision. The architect/client relationship should be a comfortable fit, for both of you. Then the project has the promise of being an enjoyable, exciting process.

Daniel J. Pratt A.I.A., President Announces the 2nd Annual Robert Carl Williams Scholarship

In honor of the founder of RCWA, this \$500 cash grant is awarded for the highest academic and personal excellence in preparation for a career in architecture. Eligible students are high school seniors who have been accepted into a four-year architecture program to begin in the fall of 1997.

For an application form, write to: **Scholarship Application, RCWA, Box 949, Upper Michigan Road, Pittsfield, VT 05762.**

How To Get The Kitchen Renovation You Want:

Use the restaurant style "zone concept" for greatest efficiency. Here's how to make this concept work for you in your home.

1. Take inventory of how you cook and how other cooks will use your food prep space. You can prevent that pre-dinner minuet of dancing around each other.

2. Take inventory of your cooking equipment.

Then you'll know exactly how much cabinetry you must have vs. how much counter space you require.

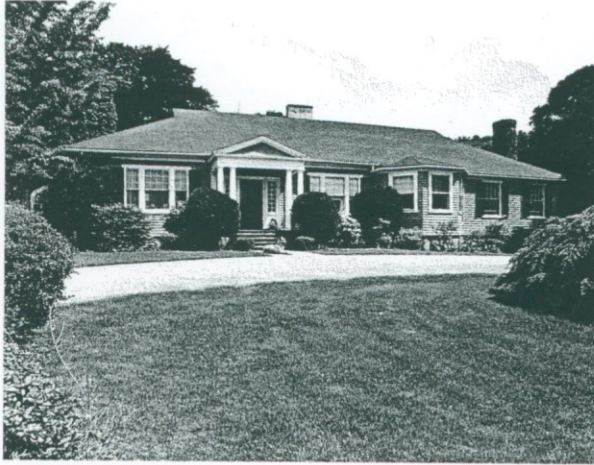
3. Assess your space.

Perhaps you could get by with the same space, but better organized.

4. Juggle the five main work areas - fridge/food storage, sink/clean-up, stove/cooking, food prep, and serving center - until you find the right match for you and your co-cooks.

Experiment on paper.

Turning A Single-Story Home Into A Grand Two-Story Mansion



BEFORE: Originally a stately two-story mansion, this house was stripped of its second story and left as an undistinguished ranch house. While the lines were not worth saving, the owners loved the land the home sits on in Massachusetts. The owners asked RCWA to enlarge, update and renovate the structure. The objective was to reinstate the dignity of the original structure.



AFTER: This metamorphosis represents a modern interpretation of the original home, never losing sight of its historical antecedents. While not a replica, the house carries all the promise of the comfortable country houses of the 19th century. Organization of the interior around a central hall relates to the traditional styles of the 19th century. But the kitchen occupies a nearly-all glass bay window projection with a glass roof - a vivid contrast between the controlled environment of cooking and the landscaped gardens behind the house.

Ask the Architect

Got a design problem or question? Send it to us and we'll answer in the next edition of *Architectural Details*.

Send your question to:

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How To Keep Your Project On Track

Take an active role in the planning process. Meet with the architect at key intervals during the planning process.

Make timely decisions. The most efficient time for owner decisions is during the planning process. Planning is an evolutionary process; that is, the plan evolves from less to more detail. During the design phases, an undecided client may mean loss of design time. During the construction phase, indecision and changes will add to construction cost.

Ask questions! You may feel that if you ask questions, it will imply that you don't know as much as you should. In the design phase, you're not supposed to know! Remember that it is your project: by asking questions, the architect can lead you to a better understanding.

Deal with problems as they arise. This sounds obvious, but taking care of small problems will keep them from turning into larger ones. Use your regular project meetings to take care of any possible discrepancies.

Have your architect observe the construction work. This is essential. It is part of the architect's job to regularly inspect the construction work and to consult with the contractor. This helps to assure that the plans and specified materials are being followed. **Remember, the architect is your representative and your advocate.** In many ways, a good architect will more than earn the fee by insuring that the client receives the full value.