

Linden Hills Cottage

The client came to us with a program that required more space for their growing family. They loved the neighborhood and wanted to find a way to renovate their existing house to fit their lifestyle. Another important element was for the new architectural design to merge with the existing architectural framework of the neighborhood.

The existing home was small, consisting of tiny rooms, with most of the living space on the main level and basement. The “upstairs” consisted only of attic space storage, and the existing detached garage was to be phased at a later date. The newly constructed home incorporated new and existing foundation, which allowed for some key client requirements: more family space on the main level, more storage space, and the addition of bedrooms on the new second floor. The newly constructed home also features a welcoming front porch with a bench swing on the front façade, which is typical for the majority of homes in the neighborhood. The new landscaping and the blending of existing trees, put the finishing touches on creating a welcoming home on the site.

Throughout the design process, we studied the design through 3D computer modeling. By use of the model, we were able to carefully consider the overall mass and height of the house. The study revealed how matching the proportions of the adjacent homes allowed for the house to be a welcomed addition to the existing streetscape. Through design studies, we brought the gable of the second floor down and introduced dormers to reduce the overall massing of the home, which compliment the scale of the adjacent homes on the block. The model also revealed how we can bring in more natural daylight and openness to the house, connecting with existing architectural context of the neighboring houses.

The streetscape aesthetic of the house was critical in relating the architecture to the neighborhood. A range of design approaches were employed; the front façade is articulated in depth and detail through an inset porch with Douglas fir floor decking and bead board ceiling. This space creates a friendly and sociable gathering space for the family, friends and neighbors. Brackets were brought in to play, as well as stepped layers of siding and trim, with the street side touch of flower boxes. All these details on the exterior create a sense of detail that carefully considers the convivial nature of the streetscape. The exterior envelope was carefully considered to be compatible to the neighboring context as well. The colors for the cottage were carefully considered to relate to the houses nearby in conjunction with historical cottage colors. Wanting to make a house that will last and to distinguish itself aesthetically, specific materials were utilized; clad double hung windows and doors, cement clapboard siding and shingles and stone for the terrace.

The auxiliary structures, such as the front porch, north patio and new wood cedar fence, were designed to integrate with the new design of the home. The existing detached garage is located at the back of the site, and was never considered to be attached to the newly designed house. A new garage will be phased in at a later date, already designed to match the new house and to be located in the current location.

The owners wanted to retain the existing trees and green space they had on the site. The approach from the street utilizes an existing stair in combination with a new path to the front porch, creating more of an experiential walk to the front door. The new plantings boost the health and charm of the home, and in turn, the health and charm of the neighborhood.