

HOME & GARDEN

New 'vintage' homes take patience and a little rocket science

Lovettsville couple add two-story addition to 100-year-old home

By Dean Bartoli Smith
Special to The Examiner

Kristen and Tom Chang, of Lovettsville, Va., had been watching the construction of a large Victorian-style home around the corner from their 100-year Victorian. As they toured the site, they talked about the possibility of having a larger kitchen with an eat-in area in their own home, as well as a private master bath upstairs — certainly not standard construction a century ago.

"I was familiar with their house already," said local vintage home-builder John Broman. "I had observed their graceful curved wrap-around porch and actually used it as an inspiration for a similar porch on the Victorian house under way."

An aerospace engineer by day, Broman applies the same attention to detail in the homes he designs and constructs that he puts into building rockets. With fellow engineer Greg Myren, he started Piedmont Vintage Homes dedicated to re-creating the elegance of classic architectural styles. Their first home — a Queen Anne Victorian — sold in two days.

The Changs hired Broman to build a two-story addition onto their home.

"The goal was to build an addition that looked like it had always been there, from the inside and the outside. That meant weaving



BEFORE: Tom and Kristen Chang wanted more space and a larger kitchen in their 100-year-old Victorian home. They hired John Broman, an aerospace engineer, to build their two-story addition.

in floorboards with existing ones, duplicating trim, and siding and matching windows," Broman said.

A two-story bump-out off the kitchen provided the floor space for a large master bath upstairs. The bathroom features a 9-foot beveled ceiling with a hexagonal tray that raised it two feet and houses a crystal chandelier. The window sash pulls and poles are bronze, and the cabinets were made to look like antique furniture.

The new master bath sports a modern touch with a semi-frameless shower and a platform-mounted whirlpool tub that is tucked into the room with a 180-degree view of their property. He installed pocket doors that vanish into the wall with frosted half-glass panes at the top.

Broman peeked behind aluminum siding to measure the original trim details, made custom milling

Resources:

John Broman
Piedmont Vintage Homes
Lovettsville, Va.
piedmontvintagehomes.com
540-822-9412

Daniel Steinkoler
Superior Home Services Inc.
Washington
superiorhomeservicesinc.com
202-363-7304

John Waters
Traditional Home Builders
Annapolis
tradbuild.com
410-991-1834



knives to match existing interior trim and reproduced stone foundation details to get them just right. Architectural-grade Pella windows matched the original size and configuration of the existing ones.

Kristen Chang said Broman knows the suppliers and how to get things made by hand.

"We're two engineers who are old house fanatics," Broman said. "We don't get our materials from a mall. When someone says, 'What a beautiful restoration,' I am pleased."

That's the highest form of praise for brand-new construction.

Builders sweat the details the new old-fashioned way

Piedmont Vintage Homes is not the only builder in the region to take on vintage construction. Dan Steinkoler, a history major who attended American University, owns Superior Home Services and is rebuilding an 1853 town house in Georgetown.

"We're doing a 100 percent replication of the original template — down to the millwork, window and door casings, and transom," Steinkoler said. "The wood is coming from the same North Carolina forest that helped build America. We're using hand-cut hard pine timbers, no nails, and mortise and tendon framing."

John Waters, owner of Traditional Home Builders in Annapolis, prefers classic

architecture as portrayed in Georgian- and Federal-style homes. He believes windows in old homes are like the "eyes on a face" that need to be restored versus replaced. He is currently constructing a series of 18th-century outbuildings for a home in McLean, that includes pieces of a barn from Indiana.

"I'm passing down the craftsmanship that went into historic buildings — old moldings, millwork, timber frame construction — and all the sweat and toil that bears honoring," Waters said. "Homes today, you look how they are constructed with seams of sheet rock popping everywhere. I'm curious to see if they last 20 years." — Dean Bartoli Smith



AFTER: A two-story bump-out off the kitchen provided the floor space for a large master bath upstairs. The bathroom features a 9-foot beveled ceiling with a hexagonal tray that raised it two feet and houses a crystal chandelier.



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