

Old Home *Love*

A 100-year old cottage receives an upgrade that boosts its curb appeal.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATE BENJAMIN

When you're expanding an older home, the challenge is to make the addition look natural, not just inside, but on the exterior as well.

This historic home in Birmingham, Michigan, is almost a century old, and it was time to expand some of the smaller areas in the home, including the basement, kitchen, eating nook and garage. Architect and builder Christine Ramaekers of MainStreet Design Build turned the 2,500-square-foot home into 4,000 square feet and made the extension seamless.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Christine worked with the current exterior elements to keep the cottage classic. "The brick and wood were existing elements," she says. "In order to create a seamless addition, we did not want to have a large box look without the detail of the previous elevations." The structure has a multidimensional look, between the extended brick façade, bay windows, gables and extended roofline on the side of the house. Christine also mimicked the brick on the front of the home on the new north wing, and installed half-round copper gutters and downspouts to maintain the historic look. "Attention to detail on the exterior was essential to keeping the charm and character of the home," she says.

SMART DECISIONS

The roof was the sticky point of this project. "The original home had a cedar-shake roof," Christine says, but it needed to be replaced, and wood-shake roofs are costly to maintain. So instead, they went with asphalt shingles. "The homeowner chose to use a product that simulated that look without the upkeep and expense," she says. It was a winning compromise that allowed for a more cost-effective solution without compromising the historic integrity of the home. Overall, the restoration and expansion look beautiful, from the inside out.



Know Your Elements

- **Bay window:** Any window that extends out from the side of the building, often with multiple panels.
- **Half-round gutters:** Round gutters with a U shape, which are traditional and work well with a historic aesthetic.
- **Asphalt shingle roof:** A roofing material made of individual asphalt shingle pieces, which overlap to create a square grid pattern.