



AS TIME GOES BY

Written by Jon Shadel » Photos by Will Enos » www.kraftcustomconstruction.com

A decade after an architecturally sensitive renovation, this classic cottage still retains its charm.

This cottage in Salem, built in 1927, looks like it was plucked right out of a fairy tale. Neighbors refer to it as the Tulip Cottage because of the floral motif on its stained-glass window, and the home certainly has all the trappings of a bygone era. This charm is what first caught Randy Fishfader's eye.

Fishfader, a retired teacher, had often strolled by the cottage, wondering what it might be like to live there. "For more than 20 years, this had been my favorite house in town," she says. But when the home came up for sale twice in those two decades, she twice decided against making an offer.

"It had a tiny living room and no dining area," she explains, "and since I like entertaining friends, I knew it wouldn't fit my lifestyle. As much as I liked the character of the home, I just needed more space."

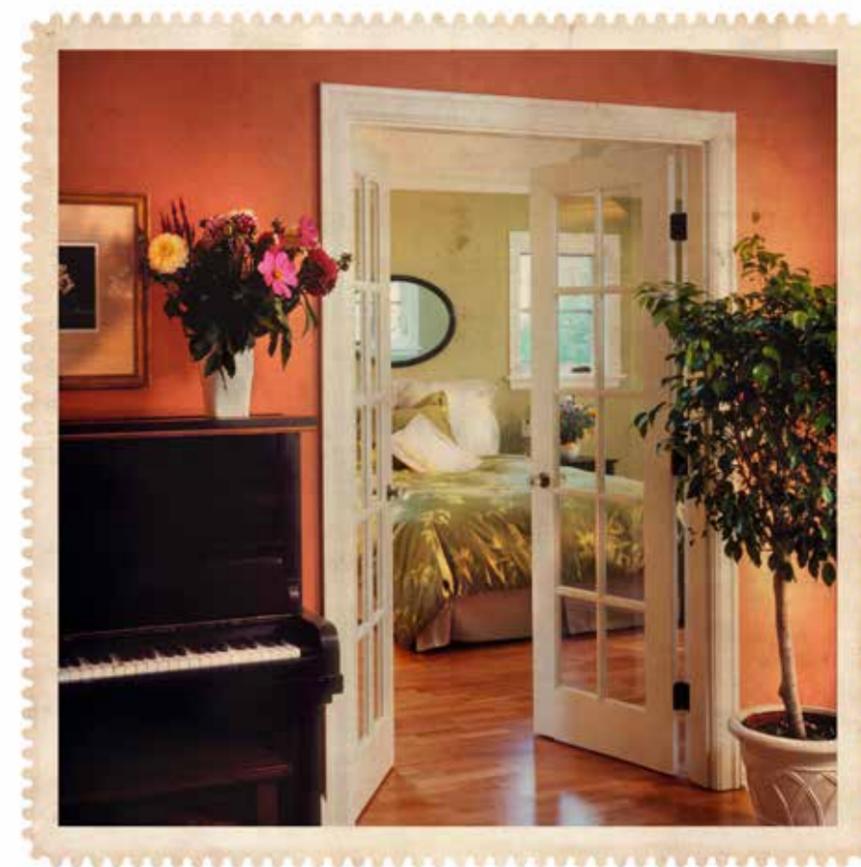
Still, the cottage never lost its appeal, and when Fishfader heard through the grapevine that it would

be put on the market for a third time, she jumped at the opportunity. She contacted Robert Kraft, president at Portland-and Salem-based Kraft Custom Construction which has been in business for over 34 years, and asked him to tour the home with her. "I wanted to see if he could help me make the home more of what I wanted it to be," Fishfader says.

"In its raw state, the home had such a strong architectural language," Kraft says of his first impression, "but based on scale and detail, it spoke to a smaller, more intimate style." The challenge, he says, was trying to maintain that feel while giving Fishfader the space she needed to comfortably live in the home. "The charm of the home could have easily been lost if the design were left in the hands of someone less architecturally aware of its needs."

Thankfully, Fishfader was confident in Kraft's vision for the space, and she bought the home. Kraft then brought in local architect Karl Anderson of Anderson Shirley Architects, who understood the design parameters of this project. Anderson created a design that gave Fishfader much-needed space while matching the original scale and architectural style, even mirroring the arch motif throughout the addition.

Kraft and Anderson answered Fishfader's needs with smart and sensitive changes. Firstly, the cramped living room was enlarged





with a floor-to-ceiling bay window, giving Fishfader the space she needed to entertain. The family room was transformed into a dining room; the clunky wood-burning stove was removed, and the fireplace was framed with a white mantel. An addition was added for a guest room and bathroom, expanding the home's square footage. Outside the addition—which perfectly matches the original home—overlooks a new patio (matching the original), and a new porch adds more outdoor living space.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about this project, though, is how well the renovation has stood up

over time. A decade after the project was completed, it still looks as good as when it was photographed for a front-page feature in *This Old House* magazine.

“This project was done so well that we never lost the original character of the home,” praises Fishfader, “but the quality of Kraft Custom Construction’s craftsmanship makes it so that, even 10 years later, everything seems as fresh as the day it was completed.”

“Based on scale and detail, [the home] spoke to a smaller, more intimate style.”

Fishfader credits this not only to Kraft’s craftsmanship, but also to the design and planning that goes into each project.

Kraft goes one step further, explaining that it’s the planning process that ensures long-term value for the project, especially when it comes to historic renovations and compatible additions. “A lot of people think they can slap together a design and skimp on the planning process,” he laments, “but the planning process may be the most important part.”

For Kraft, this detailed craftsmanship and careful planning means he leaves the homeowner with a project that, 10 years later, still holds its own. For Fishfader, she gets to enjoy the space every day, entertaining friends and looking out her windows at the peaceful surroundings.

“From my bay window, I can see the governor’s mansion,” Fishfader says with a giggle, describing how her refreshed space has helped her settle into a neighborhood she loves to call home. “My neighbors love the renovation,” she adds, “and whenever I invite them into my home, they can’t tell what was original and what wasn’t. That’s all thanks to Kraft’s attention to all the right details.”