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RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

FOR ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS
OF DISTINCTIVE HOMES

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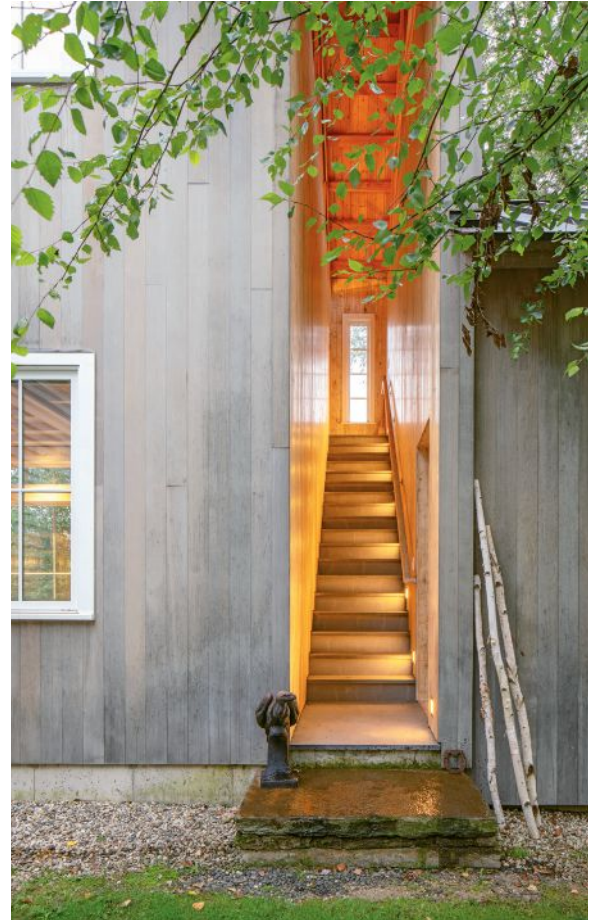
Second Lives



The Guesthouse

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
NICOLE MIGEON ARCHITECT

The owners of this recently renovated Western Massachusetts farmhouse place a high value on hospitality. For proof, look no further than the residence itself. “They have a lot of family, and there are not a lot of places to stay nearby,” architect Nicole Migeon, AIA, says. “To make it easy for everyone to visit, they bought this older house on a beautiful property with views of the mountains and river.” Dubbing it the Guesthouse, they enlisted Migeon’s assistance in an era-spanning restoration-cum-addition that optimizes privacy, conviviality, and the fullest experience of an extraordinary rural site.



“It was a beautiful house, probably built sometime between the 1780s and 1810,” Migeon says, but a lot of work would be required before the first suitcase rolled across the threshold. In typical farmhouse fashion, the original Federal-style house had been expanded over the decades, first with an ell and an attached barn, and later with a motley assortment of additions, none of which Migeon deemed worth saving. The siding and finishes were in rough shape throughout, and all the systems were ready for replacement, she says, “so we just stripped it all back, except for the farmhouse and the old barn,” removing the substandard additions and gutting



The Federal-style house had been added onto multiple times in its 200-plus years, but only the original portion was salvageable. A revised set of additions follows the path of the old while blazing new trails.



The architects retained the time-honored tradition of adding onto an old farmhouse with an ell, followed by a barn—but reimaged the pieces as more refined spaces.



the remaining structures to the framing and sheathing.

Migeon accommodated the clients' extensive program by judiciously reordering spaces within the main house and ell and filling the footprint between the ell and the original small barn—now dubbed the Fishing Barn—with a larger, barnlike addition. The main house's modestly scaled rooms and relatively low ceilings made it well suited for bedrooms and other private spaces, says Migeon, who preserved the existing center stair hall to define a ground-floor circulation spine that leads from the entry door through the original building to the new barn. "You can stand at the front door and see straight through the house and out into the garden," Migeon says.

Taking her cue from the clients' keen appreciation of older buildings, Migeon committed to preserving as much of the original main house and ell as possible. "If we could save something, we would," she says, "and if not, we would replicate it and make it quite similar to the way it would have been during that time period."

Still, builder Chris Seaver's crew removed a lot of material before beginning to rebuild. "All the siding, all the plaster ... right down to the bones basically," Seaver says. There's a new



The rebuilt ell contains all the service areas of the main floor and the dining room, freeing the original house for bedrooms and private spaces. Vintage materials were reconditioned whenever possible—including the handsome wide-plank pine flooring. Nicole designed the expanding dining table and complementary custom cabinetry.

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—Nicole Migeon, AIA



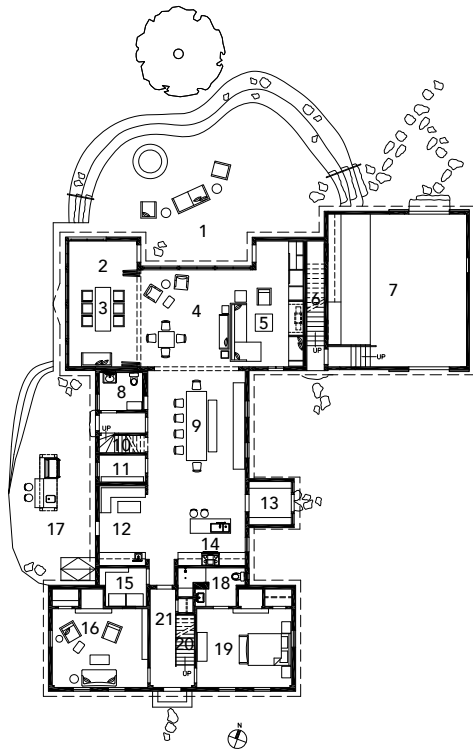
[zinc] roof, new siding, new exterior and interior trim, new insulation, new mechanicals.” Seaver’s team replastered the walls and ceilings, refinished the original pine plank flooring, replaced damaged interior trim with material milled to match the original profiles, restored original fireplace mantels, and matched any doors that were beyond repair with period replicas. “The door hardware and hinges are historically correct,” Seaver says. “The traditional thumb latches were made by a local blacksmith.” Migeon, who executed the interior design as well as the architecture, specified wallpaper and furnishings that preserve the period atmosphere, with only the occasional



minimalist modern lighting fixture as a knowing gesture to the present day.

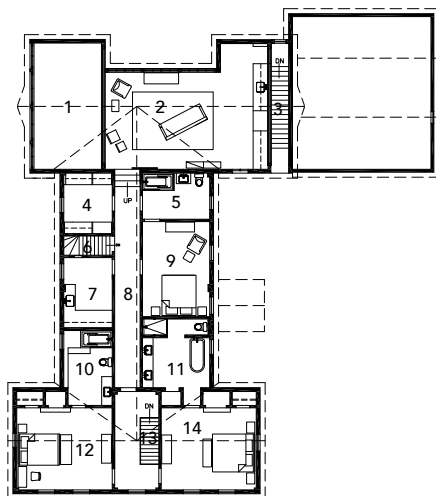
Migeon took greater liberties with the ell at the ground floor, clearing existing partitions for an expansive space that includes a kitchen, a lounge area with a bar and banquette seating, and a dining area whose custom farmhouse table—of Migeon’s design—expands to seat up to 16 people. The open plan supports the contemporary concept of cooking, dining, and entertaining

FIRST FLOOR



FLOOR PLAN | 1. Terrace Seating | 2. Screened Porch | 3. Dining | 4. Entertaining/Game | 5. TV | 6. Slot Stair 2 | 7. Fishing Barn | 8. Powder Room | 9. Dining | 10. Stair 2 | 11. Pantry 2 | 12. Bar/Lounge | 13. Mud Porch | 14. Kitchen | 15. Pantry 1 | 16. Reading | 17. Outdoor Kitchen | 18. Bath 1 | 19. Bed 1 | 20. Stair 1 | 21. Entry

SECOND FLOOR



FLOOR PLAN | 1. Open to Below | 2. Artist Studio | 3. Slot Stair 2 | 4. Walk-in Closet | 5. Bath 4 | 6. Stair 2 | 7. Laundry | 8. Hall | 9. Bed 4 | 10. Bath 3 | 11. Bath 2 | 12. Bed 3 | 13. Stair 1 | 14. Bed 2

as combined, communal experiences. Yet here, too, the finish materials and detailing remain firmly in period character, including painted, flat-panel custom cabinetry and the original wide pine flooring, patched where necessary with salvaged material of the same vintage.

The aesthetic frame takes a bolder turn as one moves from the dining area to the new barn, which Migeon based on the regional vernacular of hay and tobacco-drying barns, finding a common ground between agrarian simplicity and minimalist modernism. “The clients wanted an open space for people to come together, communicate, and entertain, to have fun and play games and watch TV,” says Migeon, who designed a clear-span interior divided only by a folding glass partition that opens the ground floor entertainment zones to a two-story, screened dining space. The barn’s second floor is devoted to the owners’ private art studio, which is accessible from the outdoors by a sheltered, open-air staircase that slices into the building volume.

“There’s a clear demarcation at the point where the ell of the original building ends and the barn addition begins,” says Seaver, whose construction team deftly shifted from historic restoration to Migeon’s equally exacting regime of neo-rustic minimalism. The barn’s interior walls are finished in reclaimed white oak that joins the pine flooring with a precise shadow-line reveal rather than a baseboard. The scissor trusses that span the art studio and the screened dining space below follow a traditional pattern, but with no visible mechanical connections. “They’re engineered trusses—rough framing lumber with steel plates stamped into them,” Seaver says, but



The farmhouse's fireplaces were restored and new bathrooms fitted out. The barn addition holds ground-level entertaining spaces and an art studio above.

The Guesthouse

Western Massachusetts

ARCHITECT: Nicole Migeon, AIA, principal in charge; Sebastian Quinn, RA, Nicole Migeon Architect, New York, New York

INTERIOR DESIGNERS: Kristeen Arnold and Rebecca Wu Norman, Nicole Migeon Architect

CONSULTANTS: Mike Koppenhafer, AIA, and Steven Papke, AIA, Fisher | Koppenhafer, Jacksonville, Florida

STRUCTURAL: Tim Owens, PE, McVeigh & Mangum, Jacksonville, Florida; David Vreeland, PE, Vreeland Design Associates, Bernardstown, Massachusetts

LIGHTING DESIGN: Nicole Migeon, AIA; Chris Ventresca, Ventresca Lighting Designers, Long Island City, New York

BUILDER: Chris Seaver, Seaver & Sons Custom Builders, Charlemont, Massachusetts

PROJECT SIZE: 5,000 square feet

SITE SIZE: N/A

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Taggart Sorensen, TCS Photography; Paul Teeling, Paul Teeling Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

CABINET HARDWARE: Schaub & Company

DISHWASHER: Bosch

EXTERIOR LIGHTING: Barn Light Electric, Hubbardton Forge

EXTERIOR PAINTS, STAINS, COATINGS: Benjamin Moore, Cabot Stain

FAUCETS: Rohl, Waterworks

GAS FIREPLACE: Spark Modern Fires

GRILL: Wolf

ICEMAKER/REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER/

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

INTERIOR LIGHTING (ARCHITECTURAL):

Contrast, Hevi Lite, Kichler

INTERIOR LIGHTING (DECORATIVE): Circa

Lighting, HelenBilt, Jamb, Ralph Lauren, The Urban Electric Company

INTERIOR PAINTS, STAINS, COATINGS:

Benjamin Moore

LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEMS: Lutron

RANGE/VENT HOOD: Wolf

SHOWER SPRAY: Kohler

SINKS: Rohl, Waterworks

TOILETS: TOTO

TUBS: Americh, Waterworks

UTILITY SINKS: Advance Tabco, Elkay

VANITIES AND PEDESTAL LAVATORIES:

Waterworks

WALLPAPER: Brunschwig & Fils, St. Jude's

WASHER/DRYER: Whirlpool



with every surface faced with clear Douglas fir. “It’s all ripped-and-glued miters on every corner,” he says, “so even to the trained eye, it’s hard to tell that they’re wrapped.”

To isolate the second-floor studio thermally and acoustically, the two trusses that bracket the space are fitted with glazing panels set into channels formed by the fir casing, a detail that succeeds by virtually disappearing. A similar detail retains the insect screening at the tall west gable wall, where the stained cedar siding opens into vertical slats that reveal the post-and-beam structure within and pattern the sunlight entering the building. At night, the effect reverses, “so you have the

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—Chris Seaver

lantern glow of the façade,” Migeon says. “It’s all about layering. You see the cedar screen and then you see the timber frame and then you see the sequence of trusses inside.” In a nod to the hay barn archetype, a cantilevered roof overhang supports a pulley-operated hatch in the cedar screen.

The barn’s interior stone floor continues outdoors in the form of connected patios that flow around the building. Punctuated by a recessed firepit at the north and a canopied outdoor kitchen at the west, the patios anchor the building visually, forming a stacked-stone plinth that descends to grade in waterfall fashion. It’s a fitting culmination of a project that unfolds in a deftly orchestrated sequence of spaces and experiences—from a centuries-inhabited site and meticulously restored historic house, to a virtuosic contemporary take on the connected barn, to a field of gardens and mature trees—that should make any visitor feel welcome indeed.—Bruce D. Snider