

Sympathetic Addition

Winner: **Grandberg & Associates Architects, P.C.**



Project: Residence,
Westport, CT

Architect: Grandberg &
Associates Architects, P.C.,
Mt. Kisco, NY; Ira Grandberg
AIA, principal in charge;
George Gaspar AIA, project
architect; Craig Intinarelli AIA,
LEED AP, project architect

Interior Designer: AMB Design,
Salt Lake City, UT; Anne
Marie Barton, principal

General Contractor: ABC
Construction, Thornwood, NY

Matching Principles

A family of five living in a quaint 1920s manor house in Westport, CT, loved their home but yearned for more space. The 3,500-sq.ft. house, sited on two acres, was designed by notable New York City architect Walter Bradnee Kirby, who also designed the first Pepperidge Farm factory in nearby Norwalk. The exterior featured picturesque details, such as Connecticut fieldstones, terra-cotta roof tiles, clay chimney pots and French casement windows and dormers. However, as with many homes of this era, the interior had low ceilings, poor circulation and small bedrooms.

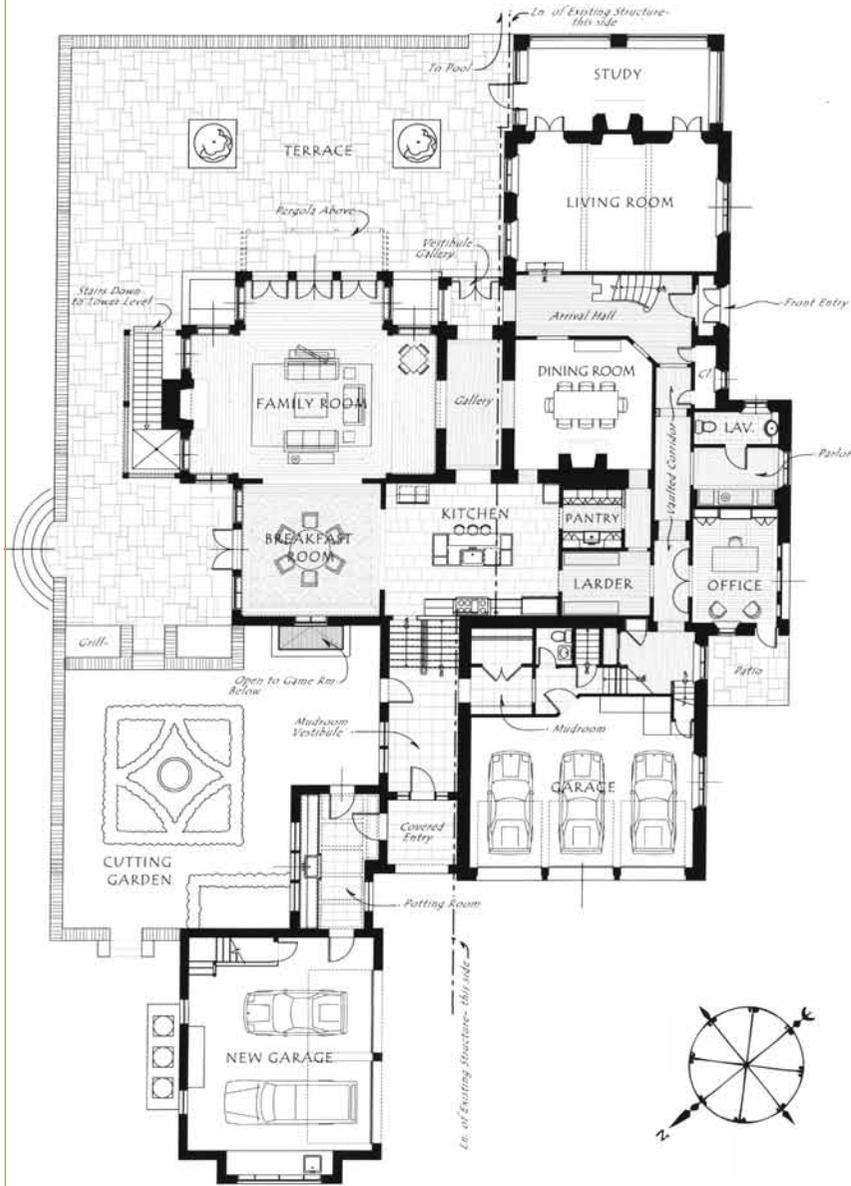
After a long interview process with several architectural firms, the homeowners selected Grandberg & Associates Architects of Mt. Kisco, NY, to design an addition. “They’re a family with three children and there were no communal spaces in the home whatsoever,” says Ira Grandberg, principal. “The interior didn’t meet their needs – it was dark and you had to walk through one room to get to another.”

The clients’ programmatic goals were to renovate and reorganize existing spaces, add a new family room, kitchen and breakfast room as well as a home office, potting room, mudroom and garage on the main level. Others included reorganizing the second floor to accommodate larger bedrooms with en-suite baths, and also building a guest suite and basement. In total, 4,000 sq.ft. were added to the house. “The main challenge the client gave us was to keep the integrity and ‘spirit’ of the original home but to completely transform it into a casual living environment,” says Grandberg.

A major portion of the rear façade was removed to allow for the addition. Samples of existing materials were selected for replication, while existing details were dimensioned and catalogued for future assemblies. After numerous trips to several quarries, the design team was able to combine different fieldstones and granite to seamlessly match the existing walls. “The hardest thing was to match the mortar, which was almost 100 years old,” says Grandberg. “Mortar is what distinguishes many additions from original houses



Grandberg & Associates more than doubled the square footage of a 1920s manor house in Westport, CT. Rooms were positioned to create a crenulated façade to minimize the scale of the new addition. Photo: Michael Biondo, www.michealbiondo.com



• FIRST FLOOR PLAN •
Westport, Connecticut Residence



The original residence, built in the 1920s, was designed by Walter Bradnee Kirby. Photo: courtesy of Grandberg & Associates Architects

because that's where you could separate the old from the new. We experimented with various mortars and sand mixtures until we got what looked like it had been there since the house was built."

The roof tile was originally manufactured by Ludowici of New Lexington, OH. Though the company is still in existence, the tile has been discontinued. "We searched all over the country to see if we could find any," says Grandberg. "The company found a building in Boston that was being torn down. We bought the tiles without seeing them but we were told that they were very similar. When the tiles arrived at the job site they were almost black. We experimented with various sandblasting techniques until we matched the exact color and patina."

Above: The 4,000-sq.-ft. addition includes a gallery, family room, breakfast room, kitchen, mudroom, potting room and garage as well as a finished basement; the new terrace and cutting garden unite the new spaces.

Floor plan: courtesy of Grandberg & Associates

Right: Measures were taken to match the terra-cotta roof tile, Connecticut fieldstones, mortar and the profiles of the windows and doors to the original architecture. Photo: Michael Biondo, www.michealbiondo.com





Above: The crenulated façade of the new addition allows for outdoor spaces, including this cutting garden, which leads to a new potting room and garage. *Photo: Michael Biondo, www.michealbiondo.com*

Right: A timbered portico covers a stairway that leads to the newly finished basement where pool changing rooms, a gym, and media and game rooms are located. *Photo: Michael Biondo, www.michealbiondo.com*



Existing windows and door profiles were documented and replicated by H. Hirschmann Windows and Doors of West Rutland, VT. Molds were taken of the existing chimney pots so that precise replicas could be made for the new family room. They were fabricated by Superior Clay Corp. of Uhrichsville, OH.

The new additions create a crenulated façade that breaks down the new “mass” of the home, also producing integrated patio spaces that wrap around and connect the informal interior living areas. The lower cutting garden connects the upper patio to the garage, mud room and new potting room, which features a custom stone counter, oak cabinetry, timber-beamed ceilings and antique stone flooring. On the upper patio, adjacent to the family room, a covered timber stairwell descends to the pool changing rooms, media and game rooms and gym in the newly developed basement areas.

The design team developed a series of new circulation axes throughout the first floor. Each of these axes establishes a defined sightline through the house as well as to exterior patio areas and exterior views. These “routes” also connect the interior open spaces. “You never walk into dead ends,” says Grandberg.

A new gallery is the pivotal point of the axes and forms a smooth transition between the original entry and the new family room, breakfast room and kitchen, creating a relatively open floor plan. The center of the gallery also opens to the existing dining room, which features a restored, ornate plaster ceiling and paneled walls. Details such as timber-beamed ceilings, white-oak flooring and window surrounds found in the existing living room and study were repeated throughout.

“The major focal points are the family room and breakfast room – they interconnect and flow into the kitchen, which is a little more edgy,” says Grandberg. “The clients wanted a design that was non-traditional with a softer contemporary look. We had to create something that picked up on the detailing, scale and use of natural materials. The shelves, hood and the island are all traditional materials but we scaled back some of the plushier details you might find on replications.”

“The clients wanted a design that was non-traditional with a softer contemporary look.”

The small bedrooms on the second level were completely removed to make way for a larger master suite, a laundry room, jewelry studio and three bedrooms with en-suite baths. On the third level, a guest suite with dormer windows is tucked underneath the roofline.

After 20 months of construction and several frantic searches for materials, the new addition is complete. The execution was successful in preserving the integrity of Kirby’s design while

more than doubling the original home’s square footage, so much so that the project has earned a 2011 Palladio Award. “We picked up the spirit of the home and tried to understand what made it stand out and we expanded on that,” says Grandberg. “Our new addition looks very much like it has always been there. The spaces pick up the scale and proportion of the original home.” – *Annabel Hsin*



The high cathedral ceiling and multiple windows in the family room create an open, airy feel. Photo: *Chi Chi Ubiña*