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**divine
interventions**

robert m. gurney
and the modern spirit
of remodeling

universal design / philip johnson, client /
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old house and the new wing. The addition's sleek, metal-clad chimney, however, departs from the farmhouse's massive stone ones. And interspersed with the more traditional double-hung windows are thoroughly modern, fixed-glass, floor-to-ceiling units. "Fixed glass is a cost-effective way of getting more glass—and light—into the project," Gurney says. "There's no frame to add expense."

Inside the addition, the architect took his cue from the existing house's interior and used wood as the dominant material. As in the farmhouse, chunky columns and ceiling rafters lend rooms warmth and definition. Cleanly detailed cabinets and a decidedly modern fireplace surround (far left) take on more contemporary forms.

The floors are expensive sealed roffers (pine boards typically used in roof sheathing). Four different types of wood—mahogany, heart pine, Douglas fir, and the roffers—dress up the addition's interior, creating a subtly varied mix of shades and textures.

Now that the project is finished, Gurney sees in it a historical record of sorts.

"I envision the entire house as a sort of time line," he muses. "You have the old building dating from the 1800s. Now, the addition contributes another century to the home's identity."



Katherine Lambert

robert m. gurney,
architect
alexandria, va.

The offices of Robert M. Gurney, Architect, located in the Old Town section of Alexandria, Va., appear unassuming enough. But they're the site of a three-person practice (including Gurney's wife, interior designer Therese Baron Gurney) that chums out about 15 projects a year. Most of the work is residential; much of it wins awards. The nine-year-old firm is known for graceful, modern additions and renovations that don't miss a beat when it comes to connecting with the original house.

Those remodels compose 80 percent of Gurney's residential work, much of which is in nearby Washington, D.C. "The advantage of remodeling in a dense metropolitan area is that the house usually gives you something to respond to—neighborhood context, site concerns, existing building elements," he says. "Of course, that can sometimes work as a constraint, as well."

The firm has also designed new houses up and down the East Coast and some light commercial projects. Gurney tries to keep as many smaller projects on his plate as he can, for reasons many an architect can relate to. "Smaller projects keep me in touch with the importance of detailing and material selection," he says. "Also, they have a faster turnaround time—you get more of an instant gratification."

To allow light to flow more easily throughout the addition, the architect pulled the staircase out to the back of the building (above left and plan). The stair is raised a few feet so as not to break into the foundation; it can be entered from the north/south hallway that forms a border between the main house and the addition (above right).

project:
Farmhouse addition,
Lovettsville, Va.
architect:
Robert M. Gurney, Architect,
Alexandria, Va.
general contractor:
Foster/Herz, Hamilton, Va.



second floor



first floor

after

altered states

room from the loft bedroom, one had to go downstairs to the first-floor bath. And the bedroom ceiling was on the verge of falling in.

The owners asked Gurney to change this part of the house into a more purposeful space. They wanted the loft to be made over into a master bedroom, and they requested a family room with a fireplace where residents and guests could gather comfortably.

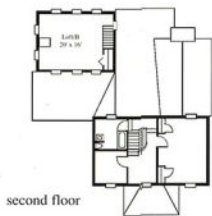
The architect started by demolishing the entire southeast portion of the house, saving only the stone foundation. "Leaving the foundation intact was our way of deferring to the original house," he says. Gurney then designed a rebuilt wing containing what the clients had asked for: downstairs, a large, light-filled family room with a central fireplace and built-in cabinets for a TV, stereo, and other entertainment equipment; upstairs, a new master bedroom suite with a master bath.

Gurney balanced the old and new portions of the house by introducing elements of the farmhouse into the addition, reinterpreting them to give the newly built wing a personality of its own. The wing is clad in clapboard siding, just like the existing house. But it's painted barn red, a hue that establishes the addition's separate identity while acknowledging the old farmhouse's roots.

The addition's double-hung windows echo the size and proportion of those in the main house. Its shed dormer, as well, evokes those on the existing building. And black, standing-seam metal roofs top both the



Photos: © Hoachlander Davis Photography



before

A photograph of a red two-story house with a white porch and a large tree in the foreground, with the word "states" overlaid in white text. The house has a dark roof and a chimney. The tree is large and has many branches. The sky is blue. The house is on a slight hill. The porch has a set of stairs. The house has several windows. The tree is in the foreground and is partially obscuring the house. The word "states" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font across the top of the image.

states

altered

three very different projects

realize a common goal of remodeling:

a home that embraces its owners' lifestyles.

by meghan drueding

welcome addition

Seamless additions that look like part of the original house aren't Alexandria, Va., architect Bob Gurney's style. Neither are irrelevant, Bauhaus-on-farmhouse ones. "When I'm doing an addition, I want to celebrate the fact that it's a new part of the house," he says. "But I also want to be sure to honor the existing structure."

The existing structure in this case was a 19th-century farmhouse in Lovettsville, Va., an suburb of Washington, D.C. The farmhouse, itself a

renovation of a 1700s log cabin, had a charming old stone foundation, a covered front porch, and a beautiful wooded site. The dilapidated southeast corner of the house, however, which rests four steps lower than the rest of the building, posed several problems.

The only connection between the lower corner and the central part of the house was a half set of stairs. The first-floor rooms, a study and a TV room, were dark and rarely used. To get to a bath-

