

COTTAGE  
BEAUFORT  
SOUTH CAROLINA

# *Low Country Landmark*

Reordered spaces and  
a modest addition  
bring an 1890 home  
comfortably up-to-date.

BY MERVYN KAUFMAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY RICHARD LEO JOHNSON  
PRODUCED BY SANDRA L. MOHLMANN





Homeowner Laura Baker (in blue scarf), her design partners, and Renovation Style® field editor Sandra L. Mohlmann (in rear seat) make a carriage stop in front of Laura's clapboard cottage surrounded by ancient laurel oak trees draped in Spanish moss.

### *Small-Space Ideas*

This narrow, elongated room feels voluminous with the original flat ceiling removed in favor of this vaulted version that follows the roofline. Exposed beams add definition and a sense of human scale.



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## *Voice of Experience*

Laura Baker wanted a kitchen that would be highly functional yet relate well to the compact house. "For a cottage so small, we couldn't do a kitchen that would overwhelm the rest of the space," architect Jane Frederick says. "In a landmark district like this one, you have to be sensitive to its historic fabric and create an appropriately scaled design." The island and the appliance wall are 4 feet apart. "We wanted to make room enough so that when Laura has guests, she won't have them crowding her work space," Frederick says. The raised counter behind the sink is topped with scrap heart pine with double-ogee edges for a change in color and texture. Its height conceals kitchen clutter from the dining area.



DURING

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This Victorian cottage had been through a major life change. The 1,475-square-foot home in Beaufort, South Carolina, was built in 1890, then divided into apartments in 2003, when it became part of a bed-and-breakfast.

Interior designer Laura Baker bought the home four years later. Her life had seen a major overhaul, too. "My three sons were grown," she says. "I lived alone and no longer felt the need to take care of a big old house with a huge yard and garden. This house is typical of Low

TOP In one of two groupings in the expanded living room, new seating adds comfort and conversation ease—the armchairs swivel.

ABOVE LEFT Both seating areas are warmed by original fireplaces, each with a wood mantel that Laura calls "a crusty old piece I barely retouched."



### *Small-Space Ideas*

Countertop cupboards on each side of the range conceal the toaster, blender, and coffeemaker, giving the work area convenient storage. In the island, a dishwasher is beside the undermount sink and near pullout bins for trash and recyclables.

### *Small-Space Ideas*

A circular table functions well in a confined space because traffic can move smoothly around it, and chairs can fit snugly into its round form.





 For more deck and patio ideas, visit [RemodelingCenter.com/restyle](http://RemodelingCenter.com/restyle).

Country architecture, which I love. I also love its location: It's near enough to the center of town that I can walk to work or to a restaurant for dinner, and my church is right across the street."

Laura hired Jane and Michael Frederick, of Frederick + Frederick Architects, to turn the cottage back into a single dwelling—and to make sure the renovation fell within local historic district guidelines. That's why the white clapboard exterior looks much like the original, and the kitchen addition and carriage house containing Laura's garage were built in a compatible style. To distinguish old city structures from new, Laura explains, "the review board does not want you to try to duplicate your house," though the new structures fit almost seamlessly with the look of the cottage.

To give the house the amenities Laura requested, including an actual kitchen instead of two kitchenettes, the architects rearranged interior spaces so that two sitting rooms became one long living room, and two bedrooms and two bathrooms became one master suite with a generous closet, laundry room, and updated bathroom. The

kitchen addition required removal of an exterior wall, which was replaced with a boxed-in structural beam.

"Yes, we took out walls," Jane Frederick says, "but we also put walls back in." Those new walls shaped the master suite and the powder and laundry rooms located just off the kitchen.

An aging steel roof was torn off and replaced with a standing seam version (also steel) that should last for decades. Inside, original heart pine flooring was retained. Reclaimed heart pine was used for the new kitchen floor and where walls were removed in the original structure. "The old flooring was refinished and new flooring was stained to match it," Jane Frederick says. Because of the reordered spaces and added conveniences, new plumbing and wiring were needed to bring both systems up to code.

Laura's focus was on function and ease, which she and the architects achieved in a kitchen that measures just over 429 square feet. Most appliances reside on an inside wall in the galley space. The dishwasher, though, is in the marble-topped island, opposite barstools that provide casual seating. Beyond the island, a round Indonesian

**ABOVE** Stairs outside the new kitchen door mimic those leading to the original front porch. Tumbled pavers create a surface for the walled garden featuring containers of herbs and flowers. Laura designed the fire pit from the same tumbled pavers.





### *Small-Space Ideas*

White-painted plantation shutters in the bedroom and throughout the house add style and don't take up extra wall or floor space, saving room for furniture and wall hangings.

mahogany table from Laura's collection adds vintage flair to the dining area. Slipcovered chairs on casters mean easy maintenance and flexibility for this sun-lit space. Hung directly above the table is a new chandelier with timeless design. Tiny light bulbs behind transparent globes give formal dinners a romantic glow.

Ceiling heights vary from 14 feet in the living room to 8 feet in part of the bedroom. The original rough-hewn knotty pine beams beneath the living room's cathedral ceiling were retained. These, along with the few antique pieces and French and English framed art that Laura brought from her former home, underscore the vintage flavor.

Windows throughout the original house were kept. A series of simple, matching double-hung windows in the new kitchen look out on Laura's walled garden, another Low Country touch. "I wanted something that would extend my living space to the outdoors, but I didn't want a lot of landscaping to keep up with," Laura says. Her garden is mostly herbs and flowers in planters and jardinières, which she changes seasonally.

Laura describes her personal style as "livable, comfortable, welcoming, warm, and cozy." Take one look at her handsomely restored home, and you know she got that.

RESOURCES PAGE 122

# The Plans, *Before & After*

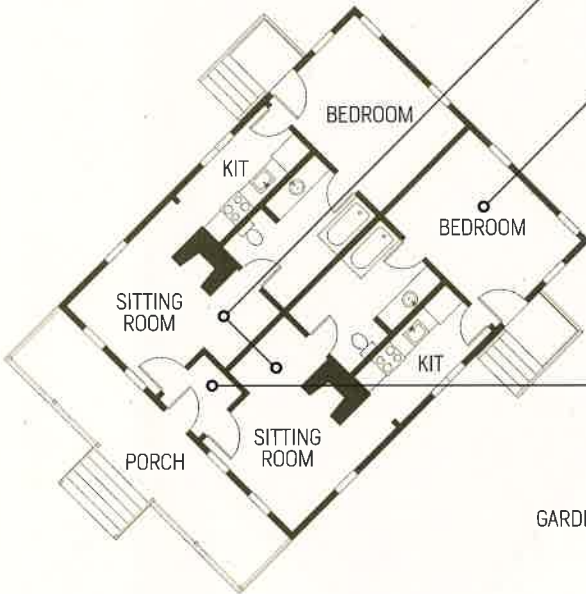
Though restricting the size of the kitchen addition, the designer-homeowner and her architects added 285 square feet to the 1,190-square-foot cottage, keeping the expansion well within what they knew the local review board would approve. Not shown is a new carriage house, erected just beyond the garden. This style-compatible structure holds a one-car garage, two storage rooms, and an upper-level apartment.

## BEFORE (DUPLEX)

The two sitting rooms would become one long space, but both late-19th-century fireplaces would be retained, as would the symmetrical theme.

One of the two back-to-back bedrooms would be retained, but its adjoining bathroom would be expanded and a closet added.

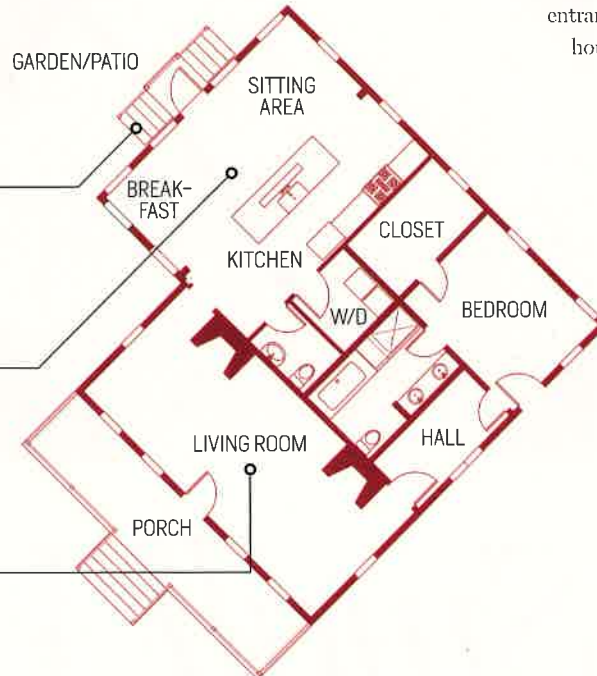
As an annex to a bed-and-breakfast, the cottage had once comprised two identical apartments served by a common entrance and a single house-wide porch.



**AFTER**  
Twin stairways that mimic the style of the cottage's original front steps lead down to the walled garden.

The new kitchen, breakfast, and sitting areas are extensions of what had been one apartment-size bedroom, bathroom, and kitchenette.

The living room now extends the full width of the house. It includes the two original fireplaces plus easy access to the new eat-in kitchen.



1,475 square feet

ARCHITECTURE FREDERICK + FREDERICK ARCHITECTS

INTERIOR DESIGN LAURA BAKER, M INTERIORS, M HOME AND GARDEN LANDSCAPE BUDS & BLOOMS LANDSCAPING NURSERY