Cozy Cottage Home Addition

2026 NARI-MN RotY Awards | Residential Addition $250,000 - $500,000

Before The Remodel

These homeowners loved their cozy, “cottage-like” home with its gorgeous wood floors and 3/4 acre yard, filled with 31 years of dedicated gardening and landscape work. It was warm and cozy, and everything about it was “home”.

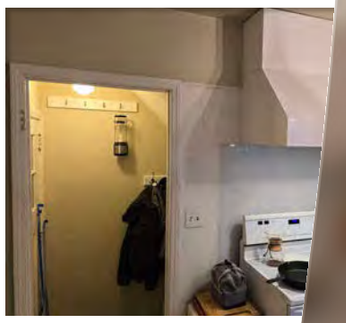
However, there was no access to their beautiful backyard and new patio from the house, and they were tired of walking guests through the garage with food and drinks to get there.

For years they dreamed of being able to entertain and easily carry the conversations (and hors d'oeuvres!) right outside. They also longed for guest accommodations to host family overnight, a garage large enough to park their cars in (and avoid repair bills from mice nests in car engines!), and simply a place to hang coats that wasn’t just hooks along the basement staircase. They also yearned for both a brighter interior and exterior for their home.









Before The Remodel







"We never had neighbors over.
We were embarrassed in a sense that you had to go through the garage,
and we didn't really have a family room area to entertain people."

Homeowner Needs

What They Disliked | Pain Points

- The garage only had room for one car… but barely even that!
- Backyard and patio access were only possible through the garage
  - Which meant carrying food through the garage to eat outside…
  - Which meant guests had to carry plates of food through the garage to eat outside - *embarrassing for hosting*
- No guest accommodations - could not host family
- Lack of alternate living space if one homeowner wanted to retreat to a separate working area or quiet space
- Very little natural light on the north side of the house
- Shoes were always piled up in the kitchen
- Due to the entrance configuration, coats had to be hung on hooks along the basement stairs - felt unsafe and clumsy
- No view of their treasured yard, cultivated & maintained for years
- Only one bathroom - desired a second one for guests
- The garage wasn't fully enclosed, leaving car engines prey to rats



"Everything was piled up right in front of the door and it became a part of the kitchen very quickly."

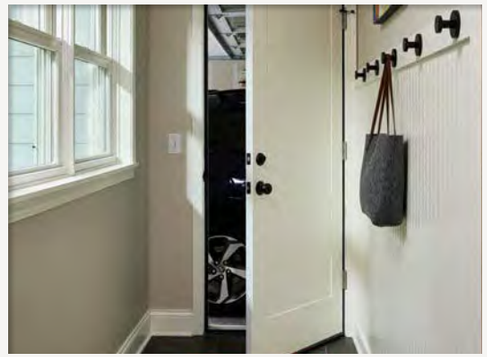
Home Addition Project Summary

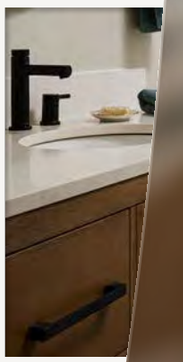
New and Updated Spaces Include:

- New, large, attached two-car garage (fully enclosed!)
- New sunroom/family room
- New mudroom area - with sitting space
- Guest accommodations!
- New bathroom - directly adjacent to guest area
- New front entrance - better flow, great curb appeal
- Quick and effortless access to the backyard
- Pocket door in guest area for privacy
- Direct views of their luscious backyard, immediately upon entering the home
- Clear, smooth pathways throughout - including a direct path from kitchen to sunroom to patio
- New main entry and garage entry - both lead into a mudroom, not the kitchen!
- New, attractive exterior - bright, inviting, modern, and friendly
- All key homeowner needs met, plus heated mudroom and bathroom tile, new windows, doors, roofing, siding and insulation!

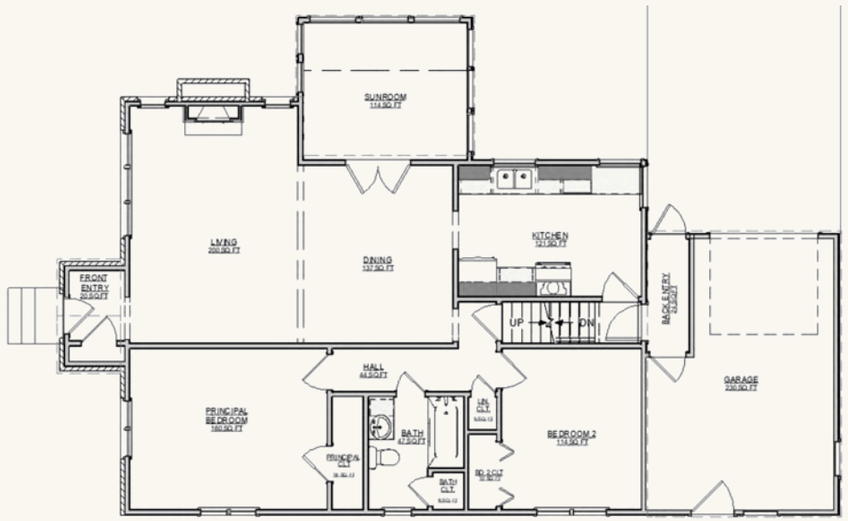




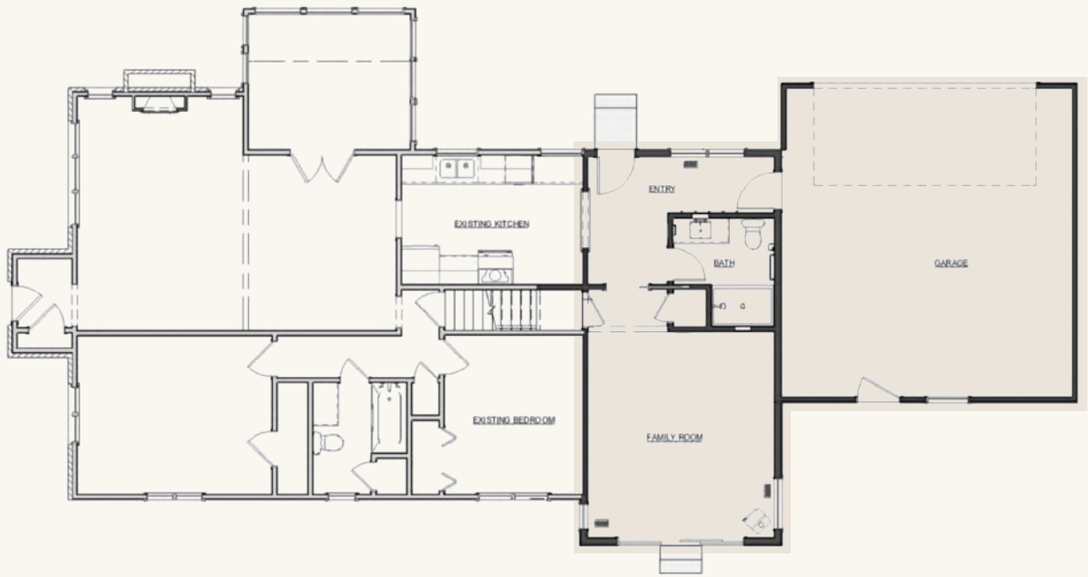




Floor Plans - Before & After



Before



After

Exterior
Before

Old, worn stucco:

- The homeowners were concerned about how to integrate new siding into the existing exterior without it looking different or clashing

Dark and dated:

- They longed for something bright, fresh and modern

Lack of curb appeal:

- Homeowners desired an exterior that looked and felt warm and inviting

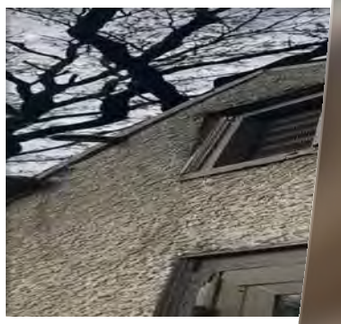
Doors and windows:

- Dated, drafty, and ready to be updated









Exterior
After

- The new exterior is bright, friendly and inviting - just like the interior
- The original exterior was painted the same white as the new, integrating the existing brick and stucco with the new LP siding, creating a single, cohesive, attractive, new exterior
- The vertical siding was carried across the new back entrance to the corner of the existing home for a balanced, seamless integration - refined and fresh throughout
- The "eye brow" roof at the new back door was designed to break down the scale of the addition and make the entry feel cozy









The New Roofline

- This project is a fantastic example of a home addition that successfully created a new roofline to perfectly complement both the existing scale and style of an existing home
- The use of scale was critical to making the large garage addition feel appropriate with the small cottage home
- The new roofline starts below the existing one to establish a clear division
- What started as a difficult design and construction challenge ended up being a design feature that complements the entire home, helping frame and complete the new entrance







Our clients were concerned about how to integrate a new roofline into the existing one, while feeling original, cohesive, and like it belonged. In the end, seamless integration was achieved - *even the roofer complimented the integration!*

The New “In The Woods” Sunroom
(the old garage)

This couple loves having their new family room space to host overnight guests (or sleep in themselves!), with a cozy, “bedroom in the woods” feel. With the addition of a pocket door, guests have complete privacy - plus, “their own bathroom” just steps away!

Highlights:

- Warm, bright, cozy living space - doubles as guest accommodations
- With the addition of the fireplace they can be warm and cozy all winter long, and in a space that feels almost like being outside!
- Fills both old and new spaces with sunshine and light
- Ideal for entertaining - and easily carrying the conversations outside onto the patio
- Tranquil, art-filled area to relax in while admiring the perennial gardens and trees outside, which they planted themselves and have lovingly watched grow over the years
- Perfect for relaxing in while enjoying morning coffee, lounging in PJ’s at night, or catching up with neighbors
- Serene living - no matter the elements, free from bugs



"We enjoy every second of every day out here.
It's just transformed our lives, really."



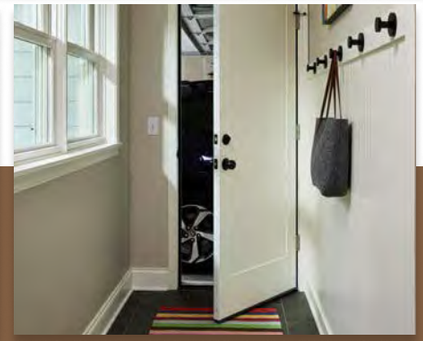
The New Garage

Enclosed, spacious, and connected - with room to park in!

- Upgraded with thermal insulated garage doors plus insulated ceiling and walls
- No more shoveling snow off cars or cleaning out mouse nests - time and money saved!
- Access to backyard with room for gardening supplies
- Connects to a mudroom “drop zone” - space for shoes and groceries, no more wet grocery bags from rain!

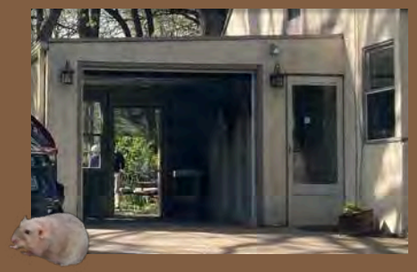








Before



- Cramped
- Single car space
- Not enclosed
- Unfinished, dark, lean-to addition
- Insect and critter prone

Garage Before/After



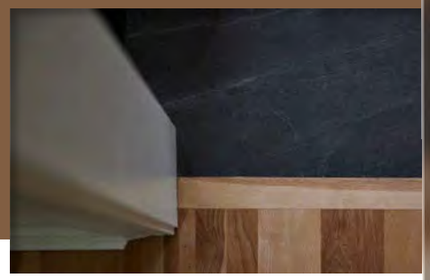


The New Mudroom

Features:

- Direct connection to the garage
- Heated tiles - warm and cozy
- Room for a bench - and chairs!
- Modern look - and cohesive with the rest of the house
- Light-filled and bright
- Large enough to set groceries, tuck away shoes, hang coats, drop packages - all separate from main living spaces
- *And*, more space remains at the connected main entry!



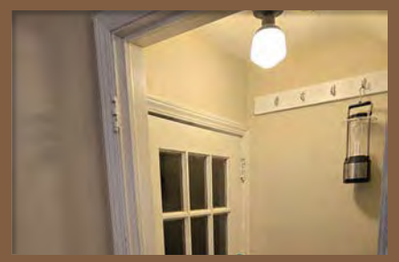






Before

- No drop zone = entryway (and kitchen!) clutter and chaos
- Coats were hung on hooks on a wall along the basement staircase
- Shoes piled up in the kitchen







Before/After





The New Bathroom

- The new bathroom is located directly adjacent to the guest room, creating a primary suite feel and function
- Heated floor tiles - more efficient than forced air systems
- Bedrosians Cloe shower tile - hand-made look, but at a great price point
- Classic modern look: Clean lines, neutral colors, natural materials - warm and natural feel
- Custom backsplash/side splash for the vanity to match the “off the shelf” countertop











Kovacs Alluria
Introduces a simple curve into a design full of straight angles



Alsup Vanity
Timeless, clean lines - modern cottage, natural texture



Tile-Ceraforge Oxide
Subtle texture and warmth in a natural looking material

Entrances & Exits

After the Remodel:

- Wide, spacious entrances and pathways throughout - front, back and garage
- Attractive, warm, clean and bright - both inner and outer views of all new entrances and exits
- A place for shoes!
  - *That's not a pile in the kitchen/at the door...*
- A place for coats!
  - *That's not hooks along the basement stairs...*
- Finally - the free-flowing access to the backyard they dreamed of having for years!
- Ease of movement and carrying things throughout - spacious, safe, great flow







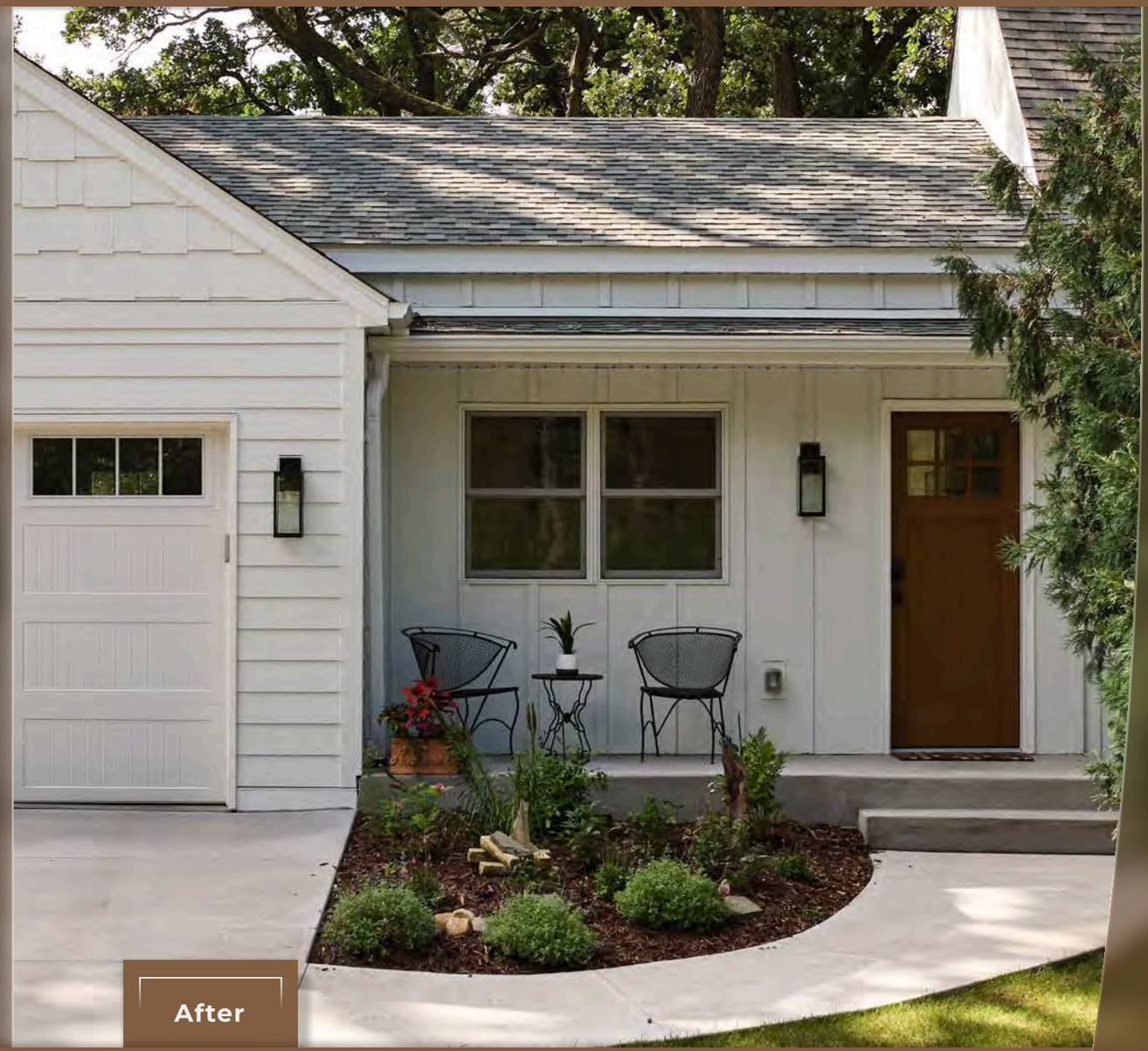
Before:

- Awkward main entrance: a journey through the garage, around the steps, and into the kitchen
- Clunky access to the backyard and patio - another through the garage
- Homeowners felt uncomfortable with guests having to go through the garage to use the bathroom or into the kitchen for food

The Main Entrance



Before



After

The Back Entrance

“We have this gorgeous yard and patio that now we feel like we're really getting to enjoy for the first time, and not having to make a trip out there. We walk through the door out of the kitchen and it's just right there to behold and it's just beautiful."



Before



After

Materials Used: Innovative and Functional

Key Functionality & Aesthetic Benefits













- **Bedrosian Cloe White Subway Tile** shower walls - looks handmade, but at an affordable price
- **Large, Gray Porcelain Tile** in the bathroom - carries through the entry and mudroom for an integrated, unified aesthetic - while adding energy efficient heating!
- **Birch Hardwood Floors** - beautiful and durable, while matching existing flooring for a continuous, unified look
- **LP Smartside Board & Batten** (with horizontal lap and shake siding):
  - Intentionally used a mix of textures and patterns in the same material to add visual interest and aesthetic appeal
  - A mix of siding materials in the same color, though all white, maintains continuity and integration while achieving texture and style
  - Low maintenance and durable
  - Great function to shed water and protect the home, while also looking fresh, clean and bright
- **Moen Bathroom Fixtures and Accessories** - quality, modern, timeless
- **InSoFast Panels:** Stops thermal bridging while maximizing energy efficiency & sustainability - innovative crawl space insulation solution

New Floor Plan Aesthetic Contributions

To respect the proportions of the original 1948 cottage, the new floor plan design intentionally used the connecting mudroom and family room addition to establish distinct roof lines. This structural separation successfully breaks up the massing of the large garage addition, maintaining a balanced scale and creating a cohesive, harmonious overall look.

- The new floor plan brings direct sight lines from the front door to the gorgeous backyard, turning the garden sanctuary into the home's aesthetic core
- The sunroom addition, connecting indoors and outdoors, brings light and sunshine into both old spaces and new
- The large, sliding window doors of the addition highlight and draw in the natural beauty outside, creating a "bedroom in the woods" feel
- The tall, vaulted sunroom ceiling opens up the room, giving a larger look and feel and allowing even more sunshine to fill the house, extending all the way to the kitchen
- More wall space = more room to display their gorgeous art collection, painted by one of the homeowners over many years. Favorite paintings now have a home!
- The roofline of the new mudroom intentionally establishes two roof lines; the separation of structures maintains a balanced scale and look, creating a charming, welcoming, new front entrance
- The new floor plan eliminated the cramped and crowded look and feel - no more tight, narrow, shadow-filled spaces - dark corners were eliminated for more light throughout



Structural Aesthetic Improvements

Aesthetic Vision
Bright and airy, warm and cozy, light-filled new spaces that would highlight the yard and natural beauty outside. Comfortable and inviting, new portions to match and complement existing ones.

The New Roof Structure: The rambler style home has roots in the prairie style. We borrowed ideas from prairie style design, its predecessor, to not only solve a complicated roof problem, but create a feature and draw attention, creating a new, attractive, welcoming front entrance.



Line & Rhythm

- The exterior siding lines help visually optimize the addition's composition, balancing the new garage with the entrance. The contrast of horizontal and vertical lines differentiates and highlights the two focus points.
- Corner lines of the new vaulted ceiling focus attention on the new glass slide doors, turning the beautiful garden into a visual center of the addition’s composition, no matter if you have just entered the house through the new mudroom or are lounging in the sunroom.

Structural Aesthetic Improvements

Color and Texture:

- Use of neutral colors and contrasting natural textures creates an airy cottage feel.
- Airy white color of the walls was chosen to accent the natural textures of the tile and wood flooring and showcase the homeowners' art collection.





Balance:

- While the attached 2-car garage is large, the connecting mudroom and family room addition have intentional roof lines to disconnect the garage from the main home, creating a balance of scale and style.

Symmetry:

- Symmetry was used to optimize the visual mass of the new garage, adding visual appeal
- Symmetrical placement of the new sunroom glass door have been chosen to anchor the eye on the beautiful garden.

Continuity:

- The scale of the addition was designed to create seamless continuity with the existing structure. There is exquisite flow from one area to the next, as if it were originally built as one.

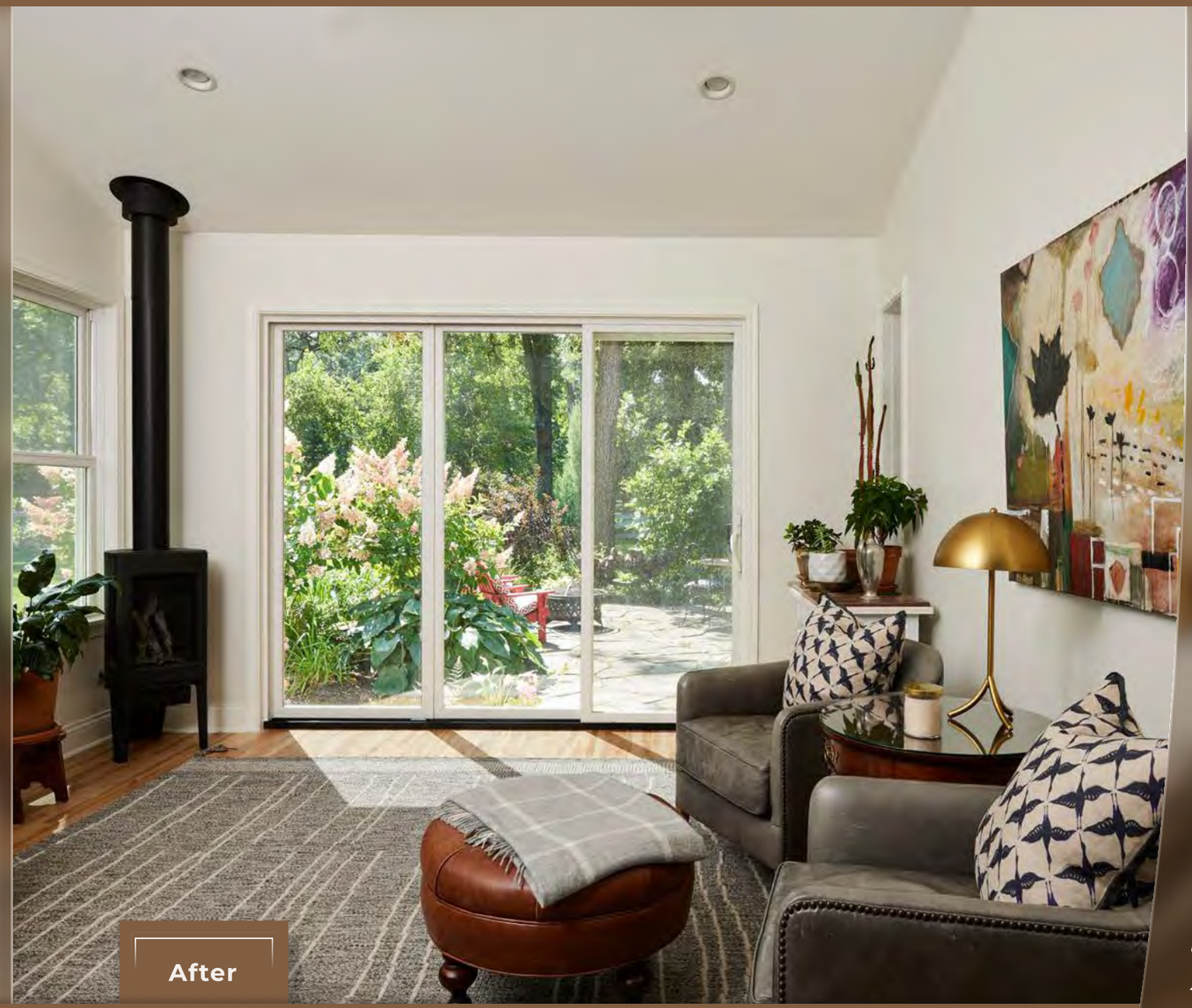
Light and Space:

- The sunroom addition centers on a meticulously framed vaulted ceiling, introducing light, air, and an enhanced sense of scale to the cozy cottage layout.

Structural Aesthetic Improvements



Before



After

Design Challenges & Obstacles

- Integrating a new roofline with the existing – while creating a look that was natural and unified, and would function well – was extremely challenging
- Integrating new exterior siding with the original stucco – without the new exterior looking different or odd – required smart design and thorough planning
- A defining challenge: How to create more space for modern living while still respecting the scale of the home?
- This house is built on multiple setbacks that no longer comply with current codes. We had to apply for multiple variances and campaign hard to achieve the addition as designed and desired
- The city has strict regulations on tree removal. The design was created with the existing 100+ year old trees in mind, and we worked hard to eliminate and disrupt as few trees as possible.



Construction Challenges & Obstacles

- Attaching the new crawl space to the existing basement was extremely difficult to achieve
- Protecting the many trees on the land, and as much of the landscaping as possible, required significant time, diligent work, great planning and true care
- Getting the new roofline to line up well with the existing one, and make it look like it was original and unified, was incredibly challenging
  - First, it had been a challenge to design a new roof that would integrate well. Then, it actually had to be implemented! - And in a way that stayed true to the design, seamlessly integrating old into new. It had to look great and work great - a significant challenge
  - The final look needed to be as if it was all one building, yet also with the perfect valleys to correctly kick water away at every point
- A very large, historic, majestic oak tree was originally mandated to be removed to achieve the design. Saving the beloved tree required petitioning the city and bringing in multiple tree experts.



Story of an Oak Tree

Historic Centerpiece
For over 30 years, our clients have cherished their property's 150-year-old bur oak tree. When planning the home addition, in order to create a safe, accessible entryway for aging in place, we hit a major roadblock.

Petitioning for Nature
City zoning required a setback that would push the new construction directly into the ancient oak's root system. Not wanting to compromise the tree, together with the couple, we consulted a tree physiology expert, then successfully petitioned the city for a variance. In the end, we were able to expand the home as designed and desired, while also saving the magnificent oak.



Functional Structural Improvements

- There is now a clear, direct path from kitchen to outdoors to patio - easy to enjoy meals outside, with no need to trudge through an old garage!
- One can walk in the front door or garage door to a dedicated, organized place to hang jackets and tuck away shoes - even with space to sit
- New flex space that serves as additional living space or guest accommodations - complete with a new bathroom adjacent!
- New guest area functions as a private suite, even a separate wing of the house
- Spacious entryway and mudroom hallway - space to put down groceries
- Protected place for cars - no snow or pests
- Fantastic view of the beloved garden sanctuary (even the window around the corner of the family room was intentional to create 180 degree views)
- A design intentionally set up for a future kitchen remodel, placing the connecting doorway in a place that allows for more kitchen cabinetry

This couple went from being too embarrassed of their back entrance, lack of connection from interior spaces to the outdoors, and lack of space in general to host, to now proudly opening their home to neighbors and friends whom they had never entertained.

In an area of town seeing original homes torn down for large, modern new builds, the homeowners were protective of the home's character. After the addition was built, they were praised by neighbors for honoring the home and proving that additions can be a great alternate solution for better living.



Craftsmanship: Meticulous, Detailed, Innovative

Highlights:

- **Seamless Transitions:** Perfectly flat, level floor transitions were achieved in all areas of the addition and connection points. This was achieved even despite the challenges of working with an older home structure that was not level to begin with. The build & connection points had to be well thought-out and selected, with careful planning and expert work to achieve.
- **Precise Installation:** Tile installers were meticulous in ensuring tile work did not extend over the wood lip, resulting in a finish described by the homeowners as "absolutely perfect."
- **Superior In-Floor Heating Integration:** The tile height in the new entryway aligns perfectly with the existing kitchen floor - required great planning, collaboration and effort to achieve.
- **New birch hardwood flooring** was meticulously installed and blended to match the existing flooring perfectly.
- **Structural Alignment:** The seamless connection points between old and new structures ensuring the new addition successfully tied into the home was no small feat.
- **Exterior Craftsmanship:** Deep attention to detail in the **siding installation** created the cohesive, attractive and balanced appearance that integrates new and existing materials.
- **Seamless Roofline Integration:** A primary area of focus and structural achievement is the integration of the new addition's roofline with the original structure, creating a unified exterior profile. The roofing team noted it as one of the finest examples of blending new and old rooflines they had encountered.
- **Careful Coordination:** structural trusses were designed to create the high vaulted ceiling in the family room space - required careful planning and collaboration across trades.
- **Custom Millwork and Trim:** Elegant architectural details were added throughout the addition using custom-prepped Poplar Princeton casing and matching Poplar baseboards to ensure the historically accurate, continuous aesthetic look throughout.
- **Crawl Space:** Sealed, insulated & conditioned - high performance and innovative technique



This addition showcases exceptional craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail throughout, seamlessly combining new, modern spaces with the home's original classic character.

Life After The Remodel

This couple is overjoyed to have their serene, multipurpose bright and cozy sunroom in place of the old garage, a new, spacious garage they can actually park in, and a mudroom to keep shoes out of their cooking space. The room works perfectly for hosting family and friends, relaxing in the sun admiring their garden, or lounging by the fireplace with a good book. The large sliding doors open right up to the patio - perfect for carrying dinner easily outside or letting in fresh air and the sweet aromas of summer, just as they always dreamed of.

The direct and easy access to the backyard has truly been life-changing for this couple. They adore the openness of the new spaces and the brightness of the whole house. The former cramped and difficult layout kept them from entertaining, but these days, they find themselves delighted to host neighbors and guests regularly, and even spontaneously!—something they never did before.

"Everything's less frustrating. It's just... everything is a little calmer. Things have places, things belong certain places."

“We have this gorgeous yard and patio that now we feel like we're really, really getting to enjoy for the first time.”

