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IN THE treetops

An addition connects a Stockton home to a garage — and its surroundings



The home is situated at the end of a long driveway and backs onto a stream. Architect Susan Rochelle designed a structure to connect the English Arts and Crafts-style home to a detached two-car garage.



Opposite: The homeowner wanted a vaulted glassy room that would take advantage of views of the surrounding greenery and the nearby stream. The woodwork mirrors the detailing in the rest of the house. Philip W. Rochelle Building made the rough-sawn western red cedar beams, posts, and gently arching corbels in the craftsman style. **Left top:** Windows allow a gallery that connects the glassy room to the garage to fill with natural light. Floor tiles are Italian porcelain. **Left bottom:** An alcove in the same room was designed as a quiet place to enjoy a cup of tea and the scenery outside. The trestle table is an antique by L.&J.G. Stickley with mouse-hole cutout plank sides and keyed through-tenons. The two chairs are Gustav Stickley originals.



An unusual addition to a Stockton home took full advantage

of an architect's ability to create a structure that forges an intimate relationship with its surroundings.

Susan Rochelle, a member of the American Institute of Architects and principal of Susan M. Rochelle, AIA, Architect, is known for designs that preserve a home's sense of place and time. In this case, she conceived a stylish structure that connects the English Arts-and-Crafts-style home to a detached two-car garage located about 40 feet away. It is, however, no simple walkway but a multiroom enclosure that, while functional, is also intended as a retreat where the owner and her guests may enjoy the nearby woods and stream.



Scenery of Greenery

The home, built in the 1980s, has an “easy communication” with its natural surroundings, Rochelle says. It’s located on a large piece of property at the end of a long driveway and backs to a stream. “The homeowner wanted the connection to look as though it was always part of the original design of the house,” Rochelle recalls. The house is characterized by highly detailed craftsmanship and intricate designs stained to expose the beauty of the woodwork.

That was right up Rochelle’s alley. This, like many of her architectural designs, “appears to have been built a long time ago, but the interiors and functionality of the space flow and work for the way people live today,” she says. To accomplish this, “I had to speak the language the house was already speaking.”

The addition was not as simple as connecting point A to point B. The residence is located at a higher elevation than the garage, which required Rochelle to spend “a great deal of time focusing on roof angles.” She met the design challenge with two short descending sets of stairs at both



Top: A laundry room was converted into a butler’s pantry off the kitchen and is used as a staging area for entertaining. A new laundry room, side by side with the butler’s pantry, is located in what was an enclosed porch. Behind the tile-lined console, a staircase leads to the basement. All tiles are handmade.
Above: A new bathroom was incorporated into the structure. Philip Rochelle made the medicine cabinet to replicate an antique craftsman-style mirror found in a photo.

ends of the structure that step down to meet the garage.

Vaulted Views

From the kitchen, a butler’s pantry and new powder room lead to what Rochelle refers to as the glassy room with a vaulted ceiling, a comfortable seating area, and nook. In a different setting this might be a sunroom, but here its wall of windows is shrouded in shady greenery. “The client wanted to have a glass room that would enable us to take advantage of the views and hear the stream as it trickles along behind the house,” she says. From the glassy room, a windowed gallery leads to the garage.

Rochelle says it was important that the builder had a similar sense of style and appreciation for what she was trying to achieve. “Ultimately, a strong team — the owner, the architect, and the builder — all have to be on the same page for a project to go smoothly.” In this case, the builder was Rochelle’s husband, Philip Rochelle of Philip W. Rochelle Building. “He and I have a very similar design aesthetic. When I draw something, he knows what it is I mean.”

The addition seamlessly fits in with the home’s existing architecture. “It’s important not to come along and make a giant statement,” Rochelle says. “It’s more important to have whatever you’ve done look as though it was always meant to be there.”

Iyna Bort Caruso is a freelance writer based in Rockville Centre, New York.

SOURCES Overall: architect, Susan M. Rochelle, AIA, Architect in Milford; builder, Philip W. Rochelle Building in Pittstown. **Gallery:** floor tiles, Charles Tiles in Stockton; light fixtures, Rejuvenation. **Butler’s Pantry:** console, Rotondo Cabinetry in Pittstown; decorative tiles, Studio of Moore-Merkowitz through Charles Tiles and Moravian Pottery & Tile Works in Doylestown, Pennsylvania. **Bathroom:** tiles, Moravian Pottery & Tile Works and Charles Tiles.

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