

Modern Passive House Addition by Sarah Jefferys Design



By Jon Dykstra



About Designer

Sarah Jefferys Design is a boutique design firm founded by principal Sarah Jefferys in 2001. Located in Manhattan's SoHo neighborhood, Sarah Jefferys Design has an extensive portfolio of projects and clients found throughout New England and the U.S. The firm focuses on residential, commercial, and small institutional design, including new construction, additions, and renovations.

Sarah Jefferys Design is also devoted to Passive House design and construction to create healthy, highly energy-efficient buildings. Sarah Jefferys Design recognizes the importance of design in daily life, with a focus on an elegant contemporary aesthetic that fuses elements of the past and present. Since its inception, the firm has perfected modern design featuring unique, minimalist, and warm spaces, each with an element of surprise and a finely-tuned eye for detail.

Every Sarah Jefferys project reflects the highest level of innovation with rich material palettes and technical sophistication. The firm prides itself on a personalized design process, creating beautiful, bespoke solutions to the unique requirements of each client. As a firm inspired by international design and cultures, and with respect for personal desires, constraints, environment, and budget, Sarah Jefferys Design encourages its clients to explore directions beyond their imagination.



Sarah Jefferys Design designed a wonderfully dramatic combination of old and modern that utilizes natural light and beckons in the property's lush nature and nearby Mohawk Mountain State Park.



The first-floor deck off the kitchen is placed beneath the cantilevered second-story and wraps around the back of the house. On the deck, a Maine Cedar Hot Tub awaits occupants to rest while taking in the nearly 360° views of the property and beyond.



Sarah Jefferys cleverly combined traditional and modern architecture to produce one united, cohesive design from an aesthetic perspective.



Jefferys created a masterpiece in rural West Cornwall with acute attention to detail, from each locally-sourced panel of wood connecting one room to the next, to the open, minimalist interior with strategically-placed windows and furnishings to maximize the views beyond, the artful play on color and texture that brings together aspects of both owners' heritages.



The two huge corner windows, one off each bedroom, that blur the distinctions between indoors and out are the showpiece of the modern addition, which is clad in horizontal cypress siding.



The living area includes a sculpture by Tim Prentice, William Bissell's uncle, and paintings by Jefferys' father and great aunt, which provide a personal touch to the space. A vivid orange and pink Jonathon Adler rug, Fabindia cushion coverings, and sleek CB2 black pendants add personality and warmth to the space.



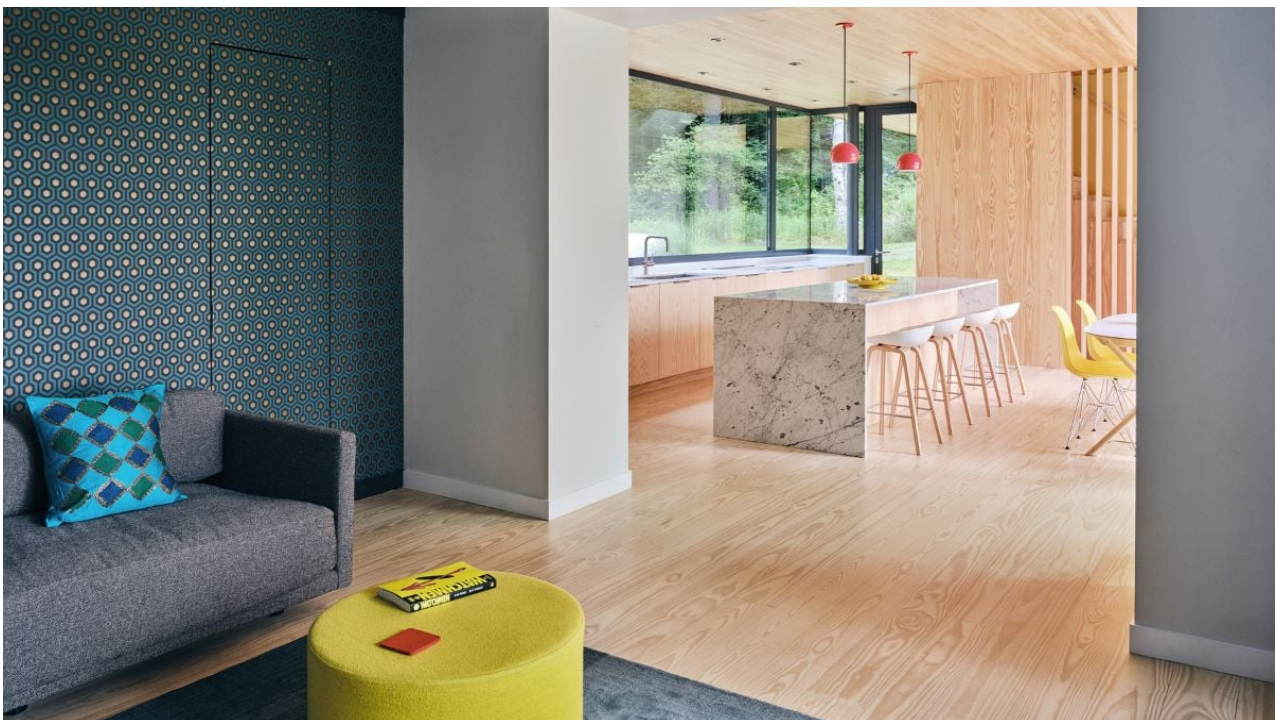
A spacious living and dining room with a vaulted cathedral ceiling and original exposed wood beams serve as a warm gathering space for families to gather in front of the minimalist fireplace, soaking in the views through an immense black-framed window.



A minimalist countertop design runs parallel to a generous four-seat Carrara waterfall island, while a playful modern dining table and bright yellow Eames chairs sit next to a grand floor-to-ceiling sliding glass door and under an oversized translucent yellow Kartell pendant, creating the illusion of dining with nature.



For an unobstructed view, the kitchen only has under-counter cabinets. Throughout the house, locally produced wide-plank pine flooring wraps around the kitchen cabinets and forms vertical slats, hiding the new stairway up to the second story in the extension. A four-seat Carrara waterfall island and a floor-to-ceiling sliding glass door are separated by a simple countertop design.



The ancient stone den, with teal and gold David Hicks honeycomb wallpaper, exposed joists, and an old fireplace, merges with the new modern kitchen in the stone cottage and expansion.



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The addition's minimalist, Scandinavian-inspired interior design allows the surrounding nature to dominate visual attraction from every angle.



Locally obtained wide-plank panels adorn the bedroom floor, enhancing the natural surroundings seen through the floor-to-ceiling corner window.



The full bathroom is a minimalist haven with a view of the surrounding environment.

Co-owned by lifelong friends – Sarah Jefferys, founder of [Sarah Jefferys Design](#), and William Bissell, owner and founder of Indian home furnishings company Fabindia – the 3,400-square-foot home located in West Cornwall, CT was designed by Jefferys to meet the second home needs of each family. Completed in June 2021, the home showcases a unique approach to Connecticut countryside design, marrying the charming 1948 English-style stone cottage with a new, ultra-modern passive home

addition. With very few modern, energy-efficient homes in the area, Sarah Jefferys Design created a dramatic union of old and new that maximizes natural light and beckons in the lush landscape of the property.

Meticulously renovated by Jefferys, the 74-year-old stone cottage features two second-floor bedrooms and two bathrooms. A large living and dining room with a vaulted cathedral ceiling and original exposed wood beams serve as a gathering spot in front of the minimalist fireplace. The stone cottage and addition become one where the original stone den meets the new modern kitchen. This connection is a celebrated first-floor focal point of the home created to maximize views while bridging the differing ceiling heights between the old and new structures.

The open-concept kitchen and dining room in the addition, which adjoins the den, features oversized windows and doors on the north and south sides of the room. The kitchen exclusively utilizes under-counter cabinetry for an unobstructed sightline. Locally-sourced wide-plank pine flooring throughout the house wraps up the kitchen cabinets and forms vertical slats, screening the new stairway up to the second floor in the addition. A minimalist countertop design runs parallel to a four-seat Carrara waterfall island and floor-to-ceiling sliding glass door. The seamless indoor/outdoor experience is continued by the first-floor deck which extends off the kitchen, located under the cantilevered second floor, wrapping around to the back of the home.

The dual living spaces, each with its own internal staircase which leads up to the bedrooms, provide a comfortable way for the two families to share the house with privacy, yet the option to gather. The second floor of the modern addition features two bedrooms, a study nook, and one full bathroom. Clad with horizontal cypress siding, the highlight of the modern addition is the two oversized corner windows, one off of each bedroom. The minimalist, Scandinavian-inspired interior design of the addition allows the surrounding nature to dominate visual interest from every vantage point.

The passive home modern addition is airtight and features a fully-insulated building envelope using high-performance triple-pane Ikon windows and thermal bridge-free construction. This energy-efficient construction saves more than 70% of heating and cooling compared to typical code-compliant buildings in the USA. A minimal heating and cooling system are used along with heat emissions from appliances and occupants to help keep the home at a comfortable and consistent indoor temperature. As a result, the passive design offers wonderful long-term benefits in addition to energy efficiency, including improved indoor air quality and a quiet, healthy home.