



ANDREA RUGG

## Tea Cozy

A playhouse enjoyed for generations is refurbished as a teahouse for reading, relaxing and refreshment *By Camille LeFevre*



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Rosemary McMonigal, AIA.

In 1925, the Weavers built a playhouse for their 12-year-old daughter, Harriet, on their property near Pelican Lake, Minnesota. The eight-by-ten-foot structure was placed a short distance from the main cabin so Harriet could have privacy, even spend the night there if she was brave. It was called the “One-Step Inn,” because of the one step up into the cabin.

Harriet grew up to have several children of her own. When her granddaughter Amanda turned 12, Harriet’s son John Weaver moved the playhouse closer to the top of the hill and Amanda

used the cabin for six years. In 1997, Harriet’s son Dr. Arthur Weaver bought the family’s Pelican Lake property and hired McMonigal Architects, Minneapolis, to create a master plan for the unusual site and its structures. The master plan included building a new guesthouse, remodeling the main cabin, and relocating and refurbishing other buildings, including the playhouse.

“The thrust of the master plan was to decide what has nostalgic value and should be saved, and how to best reorganize uses and resite buildings,” says Rosemary McMonigal, AIA, principal,



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McMonigal Architects. The architect relocated the playhouse, nestling it into the trees in a flat area between the main cottage and the guest cottage.

She specified a new foundation, siding, paint and roof for the playhouse based on the design details established with the other buildings. But she kept the interior character of the structure, as well as the original windows and door.

Meanwhile, JoAnn Weaver, Arthur's wife, an avid collector of antique toys and a Beatrix Potter fan ("her death date is my birth date," she says), renamed the playhouse Peter Rabbit's House. Today, she says, the one-room teahouse is a cozy place for reading, listening to music, painting with watercolors and, of course, taking tea.

A retreat for both adults and children, Weaver adds, the teahouse is also a showcase for many of her treasures, including games brought back from England and antique toys. With its wood floor, mismatched windows, wicker furniture and bead-board wainscoting (left over from another project on the property that McMonigal designed), the teahouse preserves and extends a vital part of Weaver family history.

"We are very strong on keeping connections with the family," Weaver says. "We've often said that we know Harriet would approve of what we've done with the teahouse, since she was so family oriented and left us such a legacy of love and the lake."



The summery playhouse (other side) now boasts new siding and a 1930s British tea sign (top), and is refurbished on the interior with bead board (above) used on another project.

**Peter Rabbit's House**  
**Weaver Point, Pelican Lake, Minnesota**  
**McMonigal Architects**  
**Minneapolis, Minnesota**