

New England Cottage

Coastal New England Harbor House by Patrick Ahearn Architect LLC









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To celebrate New England architecture's history, the objective of CNEHH was to use historically motivated architecture to create a new home that looks as though it has stood the test of time, rooted in its site and appropriate in scale with its surroundings.

Dating back to the late 1800s, gambrel cottages have dotted the shoreline of New England and over time, as families expanded and prospered, the cottages grew and accessory buildings were added to create a larger program including boathouses, carriage houses, outbuildings, etc.

Summertime brings two of life's sweetest pleasures—spending time with friends and family. Not having to choose between the two is a luxury. The home-owner's, a couple with three grown children, wanted multiple outdoor living spaces to entertain guests, so they can host their friends on one side of the house while their children can host their friends on the other side. There are a total of four outdoor spaces on the first floor allowing groups of all sizes to have unique and separate experiences, all while enjoying the same beautiful ocean views.

On the North side of the house is a covered porch, with an outdoor fireplace, connected to a party room perfect for hosting larger dinner and cocktail parties. The disappearing Nano doors between the porch and the party room create an open flow of space from indoor to outdoor ideal for entertaining. The design team incorporated a lot of windows in the party room to make it feel like it was a porch that became enclosed over time, while the open air porch is truly open air. Well-designed outdoor spaces are viewed as an extension of the home so brick and beadboard run from the covered porch into the party room to create a seamless transition. The covered porch proceeds to step down onto an intimate bluestone terrace area, in lieu of grass, creating a three tiered series of spaces to entertain within one significant outdoor living area.

On the Southern side of the house and you will find the grown children entertaining their friends in the larger pool area. The pool area was strategically tucked away to create an intimate experience separate from other possible co-existing forms of entertaining and to preserve privacy from passing boat traffic in Edgartown Harbor; however, the area maintains beautiful ocean views and aligns perfectly with the sun. Guests can spend all day outside with the amenities this area offers including the pool, hot tub, outdoor grille, dining area, and a pool cabana featuring an indoor fireplace. Bluestone is carried from the pool terrace into the pool cabana to create another indoor/outdoor experience.

While the major entertaining spaces foster more significant social activity, family members and guests alike can take a break in the shade. The central covered porch offers a more relaxing, quiet setting with rocking chairs perfect for smaller groups or summer reading. Adjacent, there is a screened-in porch providing the opportunity to enjoy the

outside during inclement weather.

One of the design team's favorite key aspects of this project is how they recreated the “implied history” and hierarchical scale for newly constructed structures. The main house established the dominant element, the carriage house wing served as the secondary element, and the cabana as the third element. Hidden from view while facing the front façade, the carriage house is connected to the main home by a breezeway which implies that the two buildings were once independent from each other.

The gambrel architecture was a natural choice along the coastline, partly due to the 26' height restriction but also allows the maximum square footage on the second floor while maintaining a lower building height thus reducing the potential over massing in scale. Uniformly designed in the gambrel shingle style, the grand seaside residence is intimate in scale and is organized by the implied symmetry that celebrates the long views to the water.

The past is echoed through the use of traditional materials including weathered cedar shingles, stone veneered foundations and chimneys, and New England bluestone terraces and fieldstone walls. Equally as significant are the additions of a widow's walk and over sailing eaves despite the advancements in technology. Both architectural elements were previously considered a fundamental element in New England architecture along the coast; widow's walks were installed to provide a sea captain's wife with an elevated lookout to watch for the return of her husband and oversailing eaves were crucial during foul weather prior to the invention of gutters. Today, they serve to aesthetically enhance the architectural language and to pay tribute to celebrate the past. Similarly, despite the significant advancements in energy efficiency over the past few decades, the windows are historically accurate with muntins separating the double panes, adorned with a traditional framework of mullions, and thick historic sills.

The interior finishes recall the grand shingle style homes of the turn of the last century, yet live in a more casual way as people wish to celebrate island life today. This is evidenced particularly by the extensive use of full height millwork paneling and antique oak reclaimed flooring and paneling. Architectural elements – beadboard, traditional paneling, strongly cased door frames, and wide cased wooden beams - were used to introduce human scale. The water-facing façade of the home is bathed in unobscured daylight, which is made possible by fully glazed walls offering breathtaking views to the water. As the sun sets, chandeliers and pendants provide intimate and warm light, while grounding the primary gathering spaces.

All of the elements of a formal historic home are present however they are dressed down to convey a quiet sense of luxury with an effortless and natural sophistication.

