

# CHATHAM LIVING BY THE SEA



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# *Timeless* TRANSFORMATION

Architect Patrick Ahearn reimagines a modest 1970s house and gives it new life as a classic shingled Cape home with historical grace.

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The cathedral ceiling in the living room is artfully clad in graceful custom v-groove board panels that add elegance without stuffiness.



**BOSTON-BASED ARCHITECT PATRICK AHEARN**

has designed more than 100 homes in Chatham, from ground-up builds to historically sensitive renovations. This project falls somewhere in between: a 1970s-era dwelling so thoroughly transformed that it now blends seamlessly into the town’s iconic 19th-century architectural landscape.

“We totally reimagined the house inside and out,” says Ahearn, who has built his reputation on designing homes that look as though “they’ve always been there,” like this one. From the street, the once unremarkable facade now draws the eye—especially in summer, when the hydrangeas bloom and the window boxes spill over with greenery. Four divided-light windows flank a centered front door, their forest green shutters crisply offset against white trim and natural cedar shingles. A central brick chimney rises above the roof ridge, while a jaunty trio of evenly spaced dormers appears original to the house—though they are anything but.

Welcome to your new “old” house; architect Patrick Ahearn’s goal was to create a sense of history in the 1970’s era home.





The addition of a well-placed mudroom that opens to the pool area is a central organizing area that exudes classic charm.



totally reframed inside, and the whole first and second floors were reworked. Every finish is new. The kitchen is new, and we did the whole mudroom that opens out to the pool.” In short, little remained beyond the original shell. “Matt Spencer and his team in Chatham really did a great job with the construction,” acknowledges Ahearn.

The landscaping and hardscaping too, by Eldredge Edson of North Chatham Landscape, respects the traditional architecture and Cape Cod setting. Walkways, front and back, and the pool patio are bluestone, while plantings are kept simple—Nikko “Endless Summer” hydrangeas, carpet roses, and evergreens around the perimeter of the property provide screening and privacy.

A bluestone terrace envelops the pool and outdoor entertaining space complete with built-in grill and bluestone and brick fire pit, all by North Chatham Landscape.

The same is true of the angled ell that connects the main house to a two-car garage. These thoughtful additions give the impression of a classic seacoast home expanded gradually over generations. In reality, the entire composition came together within a single year.

### **Unlocking Hidden Potential**

The homeowners, empty nesters, initially had their sights set on another Chatham property. When that opportunity

fell through, they remained determined to stay in town. Ahearn encouraged them to look beyond this home’s nondescript nature and see its promise, particularly its generous in-town lot.

Unlocking that potential required a full-scale renovation, including a complete gut of the interior. “Basically, we built a brand-new house inside the shell of an old house,” explains Ahearn. “The house was

### **Approachable, Nuanced Interior Design**

Onto the blank canvas of the house's interior, v-groove board was applied to the walls and beadboard to the ceilings. "It's Chatham," says Ahearn. "Beachy to a degree, but then the furniture makes it more of a serious house."

When designer Meg McSherry joined the project, she found inspiration in the millwork, which elevates the interiors well beyond a typical Cape Cod-style house. "I wanted to complement Patrick's traditional and classic work, but do it in a way that feels livable," says McSherry, who calls herself an intuitive designer. "I wanted the house to feel approachable—really cozy, warm, comfortable, and relaxed." The goal was to reflect how her clients live and how they want family and guests to feel when they visit.

Establishing a nuanced color palette was the first step. Blue, a perennial Cape Cod favorite, makes an

appearance—but not in predictable navy or bright aquamarine. Instead, dustier shades of blue mingle with light sage, taupe, beige, and chocolate brown, creating a softness that transitions gracefully through the seasons. "This house is on the Cape, but it's a year-round home, not a summer house, and when that's the case, it's really important for me to make sure it feels good at Thanksgiving, not just the Fourth of July."

Classic and traditional are words McSherry returns to often, though she is quick to clarify that the rooms never veer into stuffiness. In the living room, a ticking-stripe sofa pairs with a windowpane plaid rug and floral upholstered chairs. "Introducing a fresh take on those old-school patterns and using soft colors—like taupe and cream ticking instead of navy and white—help the room feel a little more relaxed," she observes.

The kitchen rises two stories, awash in natural light from clerestory windows that draw the eye upward

Interior designer Meg McSherry uses a soft, slate blue palette in the primary bedroom to create a nuanced and relaxing atmosphere.



The bathrooms are an extension of the home's timeless, rather than trendy, design with soft whites, grays and blues that convey a sense of serenity.

and amplify the room's airy openness. Because the first-floor plan allows sightlines from room to room, restraint was key. "It was really important to us to have it be a classic, pretty, white kitchen, with touches of blue in the pendant lights and chairs," says McSherry. "We didn't want to detract from the color palette in the other rooms." The result is timeless rather than trendy—a luminous heart of the house that complements, rather than competes with, its surroundings.

Upstairs, that same sense of cohesion continues. "As you walk from space to space, there is a nice consistency in the paneling on the walls and through the furnishings, rugs and window treatments," says McSherry. Her observation underscores the architect's guiding principle: "If there is one thing that stands out, one really important architectural thought, it is the consistency of detail throughout the house, which makes it appear like a house that will forever feel like a restoration as opposed to a builder-box that was transformed."

For the homeowners, the renovation has exceeded expectations. Ahearn reports that they are thrilled with their new old home. "They like the fact that the house is visible from the streetscape and that everybody in town loves it. They feel quite proud of how the house was transformed." In a village defined by architectural legacy, this once-modest 1970s house now stands as if it has belonged all along. 🏡

## RESOURCES

Architect:  
**Patrick Ahearn Architect**  
*patrickahearn.com*

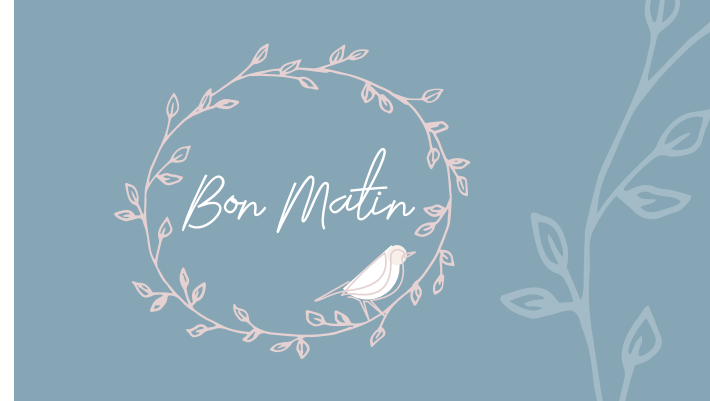
Builder:  
**Spencer & Company**  
*spencerandcompany.com*

Interior Designer:  
**Meg McSherry Interiors**  
*megmcsherry.com*

Landscaping and  
Hardscaping:  
**North Chatham Landscape**



The kitchen and library boast some of the most intricate custom millwork of the project by builder Matt Spencer.



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