



# Patience Pays Off

*After three years of renovations, a family can finally kick up their feet and relax in their dream summer home in Dennis.*

BY CAROL K. DUMAS  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMBER JANE BARRICMAN



The Cogswell house was transformed from three buildings with different architectural styles into a more cohesive design and refreshed landscaping. A front patio in the center was among the thoughtful additions.



The rambling Dennis Village house was an eyesore on a street lined with impeccably restored antique and well-maintained newer homes. The exterior was a mishmash of architectural styles; the original 1825 farmhouse had been expanded over the years with two additions that didn’t align with the historic architecture. Inside, rooms lacked the flow that contemporary homeowners seek and needed updating in general. However, its potential for use as a summer house somehow resonated with the Cogswell family, who bought the property in 2018.

Today, the stunning home is as beautiful outside as it is inside, thanks to the vision of homeowners Anne and John Cogswell and the creative execution by the design-build team from McPhee Associates of Cape Cod. The project took three years to complete, hampered by the constraints of the pandemic.

The house was designed to be a summer home for the

Cogswells, who live in Worcester, and their family, which includes two married sons and five grandchildren.

“We wanted to do this in phases, as John hadn’t retired yet,” explains Anne.

“We were shooting for something like this, for the whole family to come down,” says John about their attraction to the property.

There was a lot of back and forth between the owners and McPhee throughout the process—the Cogswells receiving photo updates along the way and visiting the site during the process. The couple worked closely with architectural designer Kendra Seifert and project manager Wyman Brooks, Jr.

“Working directly with Anne and John was a lot of fun,” says Brooks. “They were most accommodating in helping us resolve inevitable issues that arose throughout the project. It is an atypical situation that can often create more problems than

not. In this case, however, we proved to be an outstanding team as evidenced by the extraordinary product that resulted.”

### A seamless blend

The main challenge for McPhee was to blend the three separate structures to make the house more appealing from the outside. The plan was to keep the 19th-century farmhouse on the left and the section known as the cottage on the right, with extensive renovations to both, while razing the odd-looking midsection, known as the barn.

“Also complicating the build, needless to say, was dealing with the pandemic amidst it all,” says Brooks. “We lost windows of time with miscellaneous crews having to pause here and there. Supply chain issues also haunted us a little bit. We learned quickly it was necessary to continue to push forward even if out of sequence to make the best of a

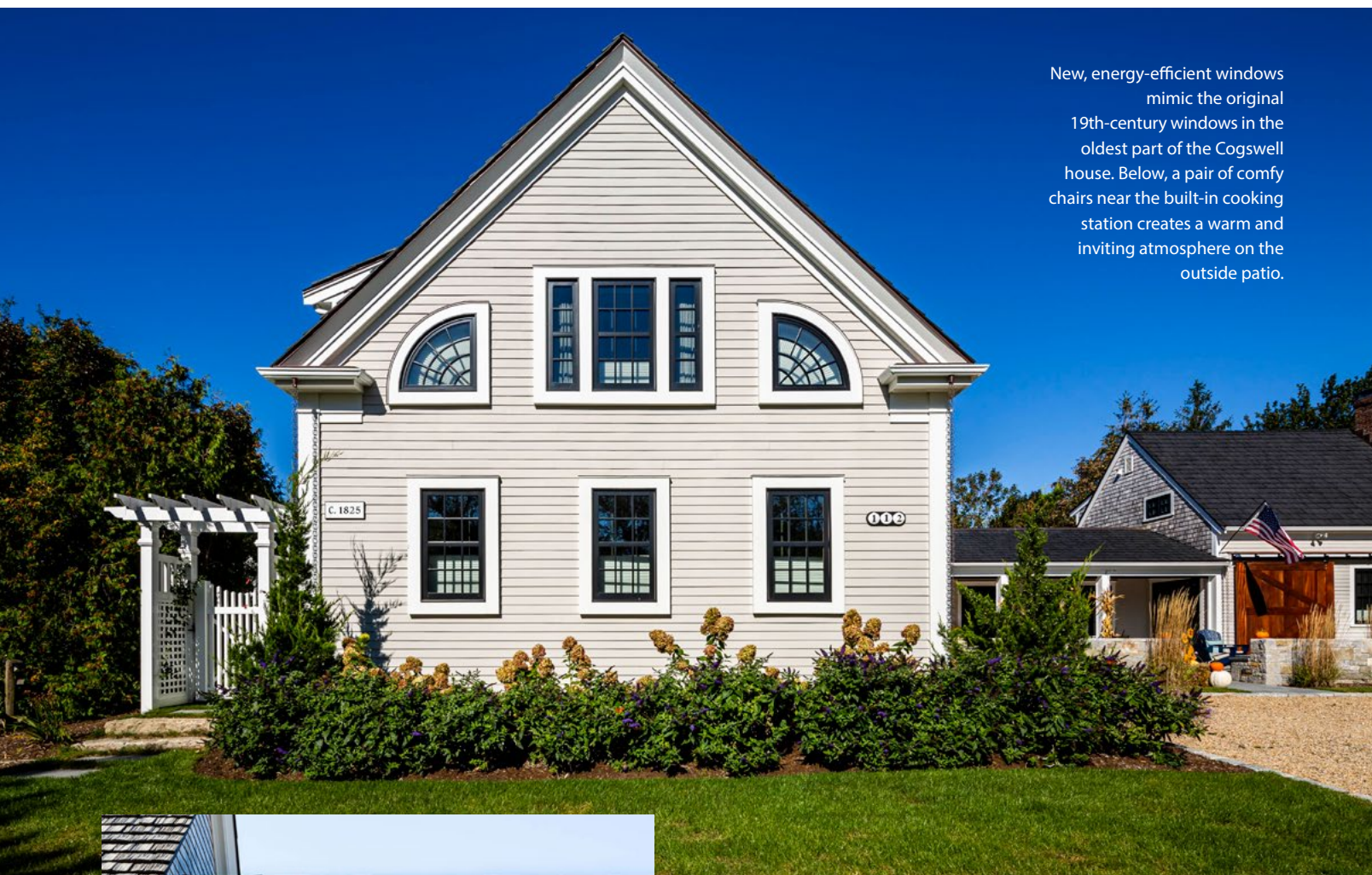
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situation that was certainly less than ideal.”

The yard, which had been choked with plantings, was refreshed by McNamara Bros., who created a timeless, subtle palette with evergreens, grasses and flowering perennials, such as butterfly bush and hydrangea, and installed a lawn that wraps about the property.





New, energy-efficient windows mimic the original 19th-century windows in the oldest part of the Cogswell house. Below, a pair of comfy chairs near the built-in cooking station creates a warm and inviting atmosphere on the outside patio.



## History meets modern living

The historic farmhouse now contains a new custom kitchen anchored by a large island. Lower cabinets have floating shelves above, creating even more openness. The space also includes a beverage bar and dining area, a laundry room, guest bedroom, and an en suite bedroom with a fireplace. The second floor has two bedrooms, including a unique bunk room with four, queen-sized bunk beds (with child-friendly steps between them) to accommodate the grandkids. Black-framed double-hung windows replicate the historic architecture, yet are modern and energy efficient.

The former barn holds a large, beamed family room with a stone fireplace that opens to an expansive bluestone patio that is the epitome of outdoor living with a built-in grill, a fire pit, plenty of seating and a covered porch with heaters. Stone walls lend privacy to the patio.

“Some of the more substantial challenges at this project were simply the very unique nature of the structure,” says Brooks, “and we had to think and design on the fly at times in order to best accomplish the desired look and outcome the Cogswells wished for. Trying to marry both sides seamlessly proved ultimately to be an extremely satisfying accomplishment.”



Above, the open-plan kitchen with two-toned cabinetry, floating shelves and a center island is a home chef's dream. Below: the main entrance to the family room. Ann Cogswell gathered home decor from a variety of resources to decorate their expansive summer home.







Upstairs, the “bunk house” features four queen-sized bunk beds to accommodate visiting grandchildren. The stained-glass fish on the bunkhouse beds were made from remnant glass pieces stained by glass artisan Patrick Todoroff of Glass Graphics Studio in Hyannis. Below: the first-floor master suite bathroom. Opposite page: Wood from the original house was repurposed into an artful display wall.



The Cogswells’ primary bedroom suite in the cottage includes a kitchenette, laundry room, lavish bathroom and a loft office space for John.

The interiors flow seamlessly together with wide-plank oak floors that have radiant heat beneath and handsome black interior doors (sourced from an Oregon manufacturer) throughout. The doors have wrought-iron hinges and strapping, one of many nods to the home’s farmhouse architecture, along with sliding barn doors separating the family room from kitchen and the kitchen from the guest room.

### Renovate and repurpose

The Cogswells were also respectful of the historic nature of their property, salvaging elements when able from the renovation and repurposing them into the new design. Wood from the old barn was used to create an artful feature wall in the kitchen dining area and for new fireplace mantels. An old transom window from the 1825 side is displayed above the barn door in the family room, and some old beams were utilized in the kitchen and two of the bathrooms.





“We were able to use a couple of the original exterior door steps with the boot cleaners still in them on two doors going outside,” says Anne, who served as the interior decorator.

“I wanted people to come in here and feel at home,” she says. “Everything I chose was very mindful.”

Her very personalized and eclectic décor flows together into welcoming spaces, where anyone stepping into this house could envision themselves living here. While the couple’s daughters-in-law were invited to design their guest rooms, their choices mesh with Anne’s design sensibilities.

Wallpaper makes a statement

Each space is unique. Anne is a big fan of wallpaper and used it carefully throughout the house, such as in the family room, where she chose a playful beige-and-white pattern of cottages, and in a hallway, where a blue grasscloth gives an upscale touch and pop of color. A photo she took of Ryder’s Cove in Chatham was made into wallpaper that runs up the stairwell in the farmhouse. She had the finish carpenter apply a *shou sugi ban* finish on a custom bathroom vanity. (Originating in 18th-century Japan, *shou sugi ban* is a method of preserving wood by charring it with fire then coating it with natural oil, resulting in a scorched finish with a cracked look.) The technique was also used to bring character to the wide pine floors in the bunk room.



Thoughtful details give a custom flair to the Cogswell house, such as this cottage wallpaper in the family room. Below, the master bedroom suite with fireplace.



The Cogswells reused parts of the old house throughout, including this transom window mounted above a modern sliding barn door leading to the master suite.



Anne sourced furniture and accents from various places (Etsy and HomeGoods, in addition to higher-end retail shops) to achieve just the right touch for a particular room. Each room is personalized with one-of-kind accents, such as a stained-glass mermaid window in the primary bedroom suite; mermaid tails that add a touch of whimsy to the banister leading up to John's office; turquoise glass knobs that give a pop of color to white cabinets in the primary bedroom's kitchenette; and the vintage cutlery that form fanciful pendants over the kitchen island.

"I've been building for more than 35 years. This project, this home, may be my favorite of all time," says Brooks.

After three years of reimagining and rebuilding this home, the Cogswells said their dreams have come true.

"Yes, of course, there were obstacles in many different forms to overcome, but on this project we worked closely with McPhee, their subs and our own," says Anne. "We feel it was such a positive process and everyone was always extremely professional and respectful. We were very fortunate to have worked with all of them!" 🌊



The mermaid stained-glass window was made by glass artisan Patrick Todoroff. Below: the kitchenette in the master suite.







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