

Classic Cape Cottage

AN AWARD-WINNING MAKEOVER

A Sears “kit house” in Chatham’s Old Village receives a top-to-bottom makeover.

By Laurie Higgins
Photography by Dan Cutrona

The cohesive color palette and warm wood flooring works to make the primary living spaces in this small cottage feel spacious.

DESIGN & BUILD: Minglewood Homes
APPLIANCES: KAM Appliances



The front of fully restored Sears 'kit house' in Chatham's Old Village. The completed renovation garnered a Chatham Preservation Award from the Chatham Historical Society.

From 1908 through 1940, Sears, Roebuck and Company sold close to 75,000 homes through their "Modern Homes" mail order program. This hip roof bungalow, circa 1915, is one of several Sears homes that exist in the Old Village of Chatham. When the present homeowners bought it, it hadn't been updated since the 1930s. Despite the run-down condition of the house, the owners were attracted to the property because of its close proximity to the downtown area and the unique style of the house. They hired Minglewood Homes in Chatham to completely refurbish the home.



A big makeover for a small home

Tim Smith, owner of Minglewood Homes, says that their main goals were to maximize space in the cottage-sized bungalow and to remain as historically accurate as possible. To accomplish the first goal, he and his crew jacked the house up and replaced the old block foundation with a full foundation and a walkout basement that increased the living space by a third. That space now contains a large and light-filled family/entertainment room, a lovely fifth bedroom and a full bath as well as a laundry room with folding area and utility room.

"Then we gutted the whole house and tried to rematch some things that were here," Smith says. "The layout on the first floor is a little bit different. It's not a huge house, so you really had to work with what you had."



The white cabinetry and white-tiled backsplash used in the kitchen make the room feel airy; a black countertop offers contrast. Above: A space-saving two-door refrigerator.

Classic Cape Cottage

They did so beautifully. In the formal living room, they removed an old woodstove fireplace and replaced it with a space-saving gas fireplace. Built-in bookcases add storage and charm. The living room is separated from the dining room by a half wall with columns that give both spaces an open feel. To recreate the historic dining room, Smith and his crew took photos of the wood paneled walls and reconstructed the old look with new materials.

The large kitchen on the back of the house is every home chef's dream, with a Viking six-burner professional gas stove and a Liebherr built-in refrigerator that matches the white cabinetry. Countertops are jet mist granite that has been "leathered" to give them the look and feel of soapstone without the maintenance. A butler's pantry with plenty of built-in storage and a wine rack separates the kitchen from the adjoining dining room.



A half-wall punctuated with columns offers separation between the living and dining rooms without closing off either space.

Classic Cape Cottage



Above: Ship's-style bunks were used in the boys' room to save space and create storage. At right: The master bedroom, with an en suite bath, opens off the living room.

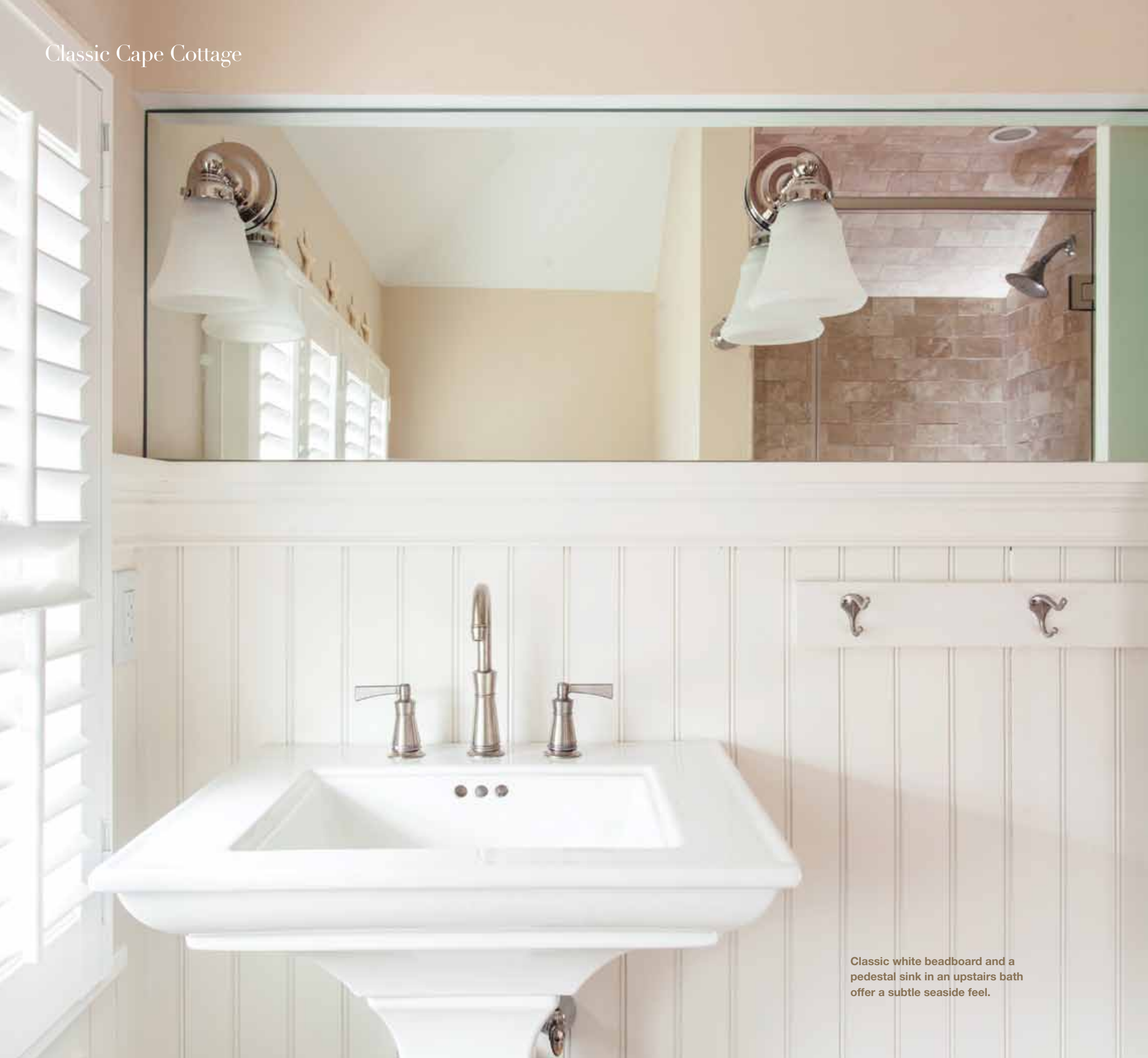
The first floor master bedroom can be accessed either through a full bathroom off the kitchen or through a door off the living room. Pale blue walls create a calming effect and plantation shutters offer privacy.

History found; history preserved

In keeping with the historic nature of the house, the staircase to the second floor is the original staircase, beautifully refurbished. The fir treads on the staircase inspired the decision to use vertical grain fir floors throughout the house.

"The original house had fir flooring and the stair treads are fir so we decided we wanted to match what was here," Smith says. "It's very pretty because it's got a lot of different colors to it."





Classic white beadboard and a pedestal sink in an upstairs bath offer a subtle seaside feel.



The home's original staircase was fully restored; black high-gloss paint was used to highlight the charming details.

When the Minglewood crew gutted the upstairs, they discovered there had been a fire at some point. They found smoldered rafters with a few burned straight through that had to be replaced. The original second floor had a couple of tiny warren-like bedrooms. To create more space, Smith added dormers and cantilevered the roofline. The three bedrooms are still small, but have storage cubbies and features like built-in beds to maximize space and create a cozy feeling. There is also a new full bath on the second floor.

“From the outside it doesn’t look very big, but when you get inside there is a lot of space,” says the homeowner. “I credit Minglewood with the creativity of that lower level. If you’re around a lot of people, everyone needs their own space from time to time.”

Classic Cape Cottage

At right: A roomy outdoor shower was added off the side of the home. Far right: A small, covered terrace opens directly off the home's lower level.

In addition to maximizing space indoors, Smith created plenty of outdoor living spaces. The existing covered front porch was completely redone. The small deck off the kitchen was replaced with a larger mahogany deck that was rubberized in order to create another sitting area underneath for rainy days. The lower sitting area is a patio with bluestones edged by cobblestones. Granite steps lead up to a four-car parking area. A bluestone path leads to a giant outdoor shower with beautiful fieldstone accents.

A former one-car garage was also completely refurbished and turned into what the homeowner's call "the bunkhouse," which offers yet another area for family and friends to congregate.

"We took the long-term approach both in terms of the structural improvements and also the aesthetic improvements," the homeowner says. "We didn't cut any corners and we got a lot of good advice from Tim and his team."

Their efforts earned the house a 2012 Chatham Preservation Award from the Town of Chatham Historic Commission, the Historic Business District Commission and the Chatham Historical Society. 🏠

Select styling accessories for this photo shoot were provided by Picnic Fashion and Simpler Pleasures in Chatham.



in the details

1 The 48-inch commercial-grade Viking range was purchased at KAM Appliances; 800-649-2221; KAMOnline.com.



2 The gas fireplace in the living room is the Regency P36. It was purchased at Stove Place II in Harwich Port; 508-432-5977; StovePlace.com.



3 The home's original staircase, railings and newel post were completely restored by Minglewood Homes.

