

Whole House Remodel

Childs' Childhood Home Grows Up

A partner with Patriot Builders puts his expertise to good use in recreating a home that's been in the family for decades.

Chris Childs first visited his West Dennis home when he was a child, coming with his parents from Hyde Park to his grandmother's summer house. Melissa Stone wasn't much older when she traveled from Marlborough with her parents to their summer home, located next door. It's said that location is everything in real estate, and certainly Chris and Melissa Childs would not disagree. The couple met from across the lawn, and today they're married and living in the house that Chris purchased from his grandmother in 2005.

"We didn't really know each other very well until I moved here in 2003. But we started dating within a few months and we were married in 2007," Chris said.

By Rob Duca • Photography by Dan Cutrona

By removing several walls, Chris Childs of Patriot Builders was able to open up the living space in his own home.



Big changes for a little cottage

The most dramatic change was the addition of a second floor with two bedrooms and a bath. That expanded the house from a cozy 930-square feet to nearly 1,700. The 13-foot-by-19-foot master bedroom features windows on three walls and views from the back of the house out to near-by Swan River. As always in a smaller home, being creative with closet and storage space is vital, and Chris maximized every inch of the footprint, utilizing window benches and built-in cabinets in both bedrooms.

Because the left back corner of the house was restricted due to setback requirements, the ceiling in Kyleigh’s bedroom is at a dormer-type angle, which blends neatly with the actual dormers at the front of the house. “It’s a nice look and balance,” Chris says.

The second-floor bath, painted light green, with a cream marble vanity top and beige porcelain tile flooring, further reflects the home’s clean lines.

A new entrance and a first-floor laundry

The changes to the kitchen, the living room, the dining room and the addition of a mudroom and laundry were equally essential elements to the renovation. Previously, the only entry to the home was through the front door, while basement access was limited to the backyard walk-in. That meant venturing outside to reach the washer and dryer in the basement. Chris built a side entry into what had been the 9-foot-by-11-foot master bedroom, designing a combination mudroom and laundry room in its place. For Melissa, the laundry room was ‘Priority No. 1.’ “I didn’t want to go outside to

Childs and his wife Melissa are all about entertaining. The new wide open kitchen with center island now takes center stage at gatherings. At right: The roof in what was a little cottage was raised and dormers were added allowing for two new spacious bedrooms.

It immediately became clear that expansion was in order not long after Chris, Melissa and their 10-year-old daughter, Kyleigh, settled into the small ranch that his grandmother purchased in 1969. Fortunately, as part-owner of Patriot Builders in Harwich Port, Chris possessed the expertise to transform a house with three undersized bedrooms, only one outside entry and negligible space for entertaining into a comfortable Cape ideal for family gatherings on balmy, breezy summer nights.

“We wanted to create an open feel,” Chris said. “When we had company be-

fore and everyone gravitated to the kitchen, there was no room to move. Now there’s so much more space. We had 40 people here on Christmas Eve. We could have never done that before.”

The home is now one of comfortable elegance, from the ivory bead-board to the crown molding, wide shaker-style maple cabinets, Imperial white granite countertops and soothing seaside motif. Colors in the home range from sea salt green to powder blue, soft yellows to off-whites, all with an eggshell finish.



A former deck was enclosed creating a three-season room that's quickly become a family favorite.

get into the basement to do laundry anymore," she said, laughing. "That was pretty difficult in winter or when it was raining."

Two smaller bedrooms on the same side of the house were turned into a den, which is located across from the first floor bathroom.

It's all about entertaining

The kitchen is the *piece de resistance*. Chris and Melissa love to cook and entertain, and before the renovation a wall separated the kitchen and living room. "If we were cooking we couldn't see people in the

living room. We were really secluded," Melissa says. "Now Chris and I can cook and it's a great place for all of us to gather as a family."

The granite-topped center island allows space to flow seamlessly into the living and dining rooms and affords ample space to prepare meals and engage in conversation with guests. The shaker-style maple cabinets are painted off-white, and combine with the beige walls, white oak floors and recessed lighting to produce the perfect summer ambiance. "It's nice and simple and works well with Cape Cod," Chris says.

The formal dining room was converted from an enclosed porch in the 1980s, but Childs transformed it further by adding a vaulted 11-foot ceiling. A nice touch is a mantel for placing collectables built on the dining room beam. Deep red walls complete the striking setting.

"I wanted (the colors to be) very simple and light, except for a dramatic feel in the dining room," Melissa said.

The living room was expanded by pushing a wall toward the old bedrooms and centering the front door. The basic footprint remains essentially the same, but the space between the kitchen, dining room and living room is now uninter-



A first floor bedroom was broken up, making space for a powder room, mudroom and adjacent first-floor laundry. This also allowed for a much needed second entrance to the home.



Above: The master bedroom is a haven of calm with peeks of the adjacent Swan River through the windows. Below: Daughter Kyleigh's room has a custom-built window seat set into the dormer.

rupted. An existing wood-burning fireplace in the living room was converted to gas, with the brick and a raised hearth replaced by black slate framed on each side by white columns.

Childs tinkered repeatedly before settling on the final overall design. "At one point I had moved the kitchen to where the dining room was," he said, "but I think the way it ended up works the best."

A hint of the outdoors is brought in

The final piece to the puzzle was transforming the back deck into an enclosed 12-foot-by-12-foot three-season porch, which has become Melissa's favorite room. Surrounding acrylic windows above white bead board provide plenty of light and warmth. "I love going out there at night to sit and relax. It's quiet and peaceful, my own little paradise," she says. A smaller mahogany deck was added on for a spot to place the gas grill.

The entire renovation was a family affair. Chris served as architect and builder, while Melissa selected all the wall colors. "It's not a formal house, so we wanted to keep it nice, simple and summery," he said. 🏡



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in the details

1 Vibra Pewter #112-VP door knob and #116 VP drawer cup pull: Atlantic Kitchen & Bath 300 Oak St., Pembroke. **2** GE Profile: GE PFSS2MIYSSKAM Appliances, 201 Yarmouth Rd., Hyannis. **3** Besa Lighting: Lucia pendant light w/ Garnet Shade Ford Diamond Electric, 539 Higgins Crowell Rd., West Yarmouth. **4** Maytag front loading machines, also from KAM in Hyannis, 539 Higgins Crowell Rd., West Yarmouth.