

WHOLE HOUSE REMODEL

# *Greek Revision*

A modern layout updates a Greek Revival while staying true to its character.

By Jaci Conry  
Photography by Greg Premru

**ARCHITECT:** John DaSilva of Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders  
**KITCHEN DESIGN:** Classic Kitchens & Interiors

White cabinetry paired with a wall of beach-toned glass tiles echoes the sea just outside the doors of this modest, antique Greek Revival.





Between the kitchen, living room and dining area, architect John DaSilva designed archways to define each space in the new, open floor plan. Opposite page: A mudroom was built as part of the small addition to the rear of the home.

During the 18th and 19th centuries countless Greek Revivals were built throughout the Cape. A departure from the Cape Cod-style house, which featured gabled ends on each side, the gabled end of a Greek Revival was turned to the front. Sturdy and refined, white-clapboard-clad Greek Revivals had a central front door flanked by six-over-six paned windows; ells were set at right angles to the main house instead of the rear.



“Over the years, the Greek Revivals in this area were added on to and changed many times,” says John DaSilva, principal architect of Chatham’s Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders. Such was the case with this Greek Revival that DaSilva and his team recently renovated.

“The place was in pretty rough shape, there was a lot of mildew. It wasn’t even really habitable,” says DaSilva. “There are some old houses on the Cape that were originally refined with beautiful details and millwork. This was

not one of those. This was a really basic vernacular house. If it ever had any special details or character it was completely gone by the time we got to it.”

The goal was to restore the house—which faces the open beach and Chatham Harbor—to its architectural origins while making it functional for contemporary living. Sloppy additions made to the house in recent decades were stripped away and the gabled front portion of the house was restored as accurately as possible.





Opposite page and above: The second-floor master bath, nestled under eaves, is bathed in soft and soothing shades of gray while the master bedroom (top) benefits from an infusion of natural light with a trio of low windows.

“The pilasters were there so we could see what they were; they weren’t in great shape so we had to recreate them,” says DaSilva.

To the left of the front door, a new bay window and two small dormers were added to afford the kitchen and second-level master suite a view of the ocean and harbor. “Since the house is located in a historic district, we couldn’t change the front dramatically,” says DaSilva. “We had to be judicious with the windows; on the front we couldn’t change the window arrangement, but we could on the back.”

The historic “Greek” portion of the building is clad in white clapboards while the simpler rear wings, housing a set of new, first-floor guest bedrooms, stairs and a new dining room, are clad in shingles. Also part of the modest addition to the back of the house is a new mudroom and laundry room.



The interior was essentially gutted to make way for a new, open floor plan on the main level that fills the house with natural light and offers maximum opportunity to take in the view. The open floor plan is organized around a “spine” that extends from the front door to the central staircase and the back of the house.

While the kitchen, living and dining rooms are open to one another, DaSilva created archways between the spaces to define each distinct area. The kitchen, designed by Classic Kitchens & Interiors, has white cabinetry for an airy appeal and a glass tile backsplash encompassing the entire back wall that echoes the various tones of the ocean. Throughout the main floor, neutral-



The dining room, with no second floor above, has a cathedral ceiling that acts as a point of relief from the low ceiling heights throughout the historic home.

hued walls and crisp white trim paired with gleaming pine floors serve as a bright, soothing backdrop.

The dining room was part of the new back addition and has no second floor over it. “Due to the period of the house, there are relatively low ceiling heights in the kitchen and living spaces. So in the dining room we created a

cathedral ceiling, which gives you relief from that,” says DaSilva.

The house has a dual character, says Da Silva. “It was a challenge to keep the historic character of the house on the exterior while creating a contemporary open plan with comfortable living space inside, but we did it.”

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As is customary in Greek Revival architecture, this home has a central front door with six-over-six paned windows and an ell set at a right angle to the main house, which was preserved during the renovation.



The second floor is cozy, but big enough to accommodate a spacious master bedroom—where the windows are positioned close to the floor, and the master bath nestled under the eaves. The second floor also includes another bedroom and bath.

The four-bedroom house has a footprint of just under 2,700 square feet, but it feels larger due to the open floor plan and strategically placed windows, which filter in abundant sunlight.

“The house was likely built for a successful fisherman, not a whaling captain. It wasn’t a rich person’s house,” says DaSilva. Yet the simple original vernacular had a beauty to it that begged to be restored. “It’s a special house in a very special location.” 🏠