



Patience Made Perfect

A renovated and expanded historic property,
plus a new guest house, form a unique compound.

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AND BRIAN VANDEN BRINK



This 1837 Greek Revival was built by Enoch H. Howes and his wife, Patia. The house was renovated most recently in 2016 by Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders.

Captains Row, the present-day Cross Street, was named for the 19th-century sea captains who built houses on the long, winding road that is close to the town center.

One of those historic homes is a stately two-story Greek Revival built in 1837 by Enoch H. Howes and his wife, Patia (Patience Atwood, daughter of Capt. Joseph Atwood).

When the house, called “Patience,” came on the market in 2003, the homeowners, who had ties to Chatham and were seeking an historic home, were thrilled to find a property that retained many of the 19th-century home’s original details, including the windows, interior doors, fireplaces and moldings. Plus, it was close to town.

Busy with their business, the homeowners postponed updating and restoring Patience until 2016, when they hired Polhemus Savery DaSilva Architects Builders

(PSD) to undertake the renovation. They were heavily involved in the planning. They sought to preserve as many historic details as possible, while making the home more functional for today’s family living. The owners also wanted to expand the house without detracting from the historic facade, which had a commanding presence on a knoll overlooking the street.

“We worked closely with PSD,” said the homeowners. “John [DaSilva] was a great listener and he really cared about the same things we did.”

Patience won a Chatham Preservation Award in 2018.

“The clients had a longtime connection to Chatham, and the property evolved with them,” says PSD owner and CEO Aaron Polhemus. “It developed in a really comfortable way. We very much enjoy being a part of a process that achieves our clients’ goals. It was a very special project for a very special family.”

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Top left, clockwise: A built-in dressing area in the primary bedroom of the main house; the Greek Revival house dining room features a unique chandelier; all of the fireplaces were rebuilt in the older house and a new one (shown here) was added in the addition; and a mudroom is part of the addition to the Greek Revival.



The guest house interior design was inspired by a New England surf shack. Its modest ceiling heights, bright coastal palette and vintage furnishings drive the point home. A minty-green Smeg fridge is center stage in the kitchen supported by re-imagined 1950s barstools.

The renovation was completed at the end of 2016. The house was lifted and placed on a new brick-clad foundation. The original windows were removed, restored with the old glass kept intact, and then reinstalled. The honey-colored heart pine floors throughout were refinished, and while existing fireplace boxes were rebuilt, the antique trim and mantels were kept as is. The steep pitch of the stairs leading from the front door to the second floor was retained. Original hardware and doors were also kept, with everything old restored to its original condition.

New addition meets modern needs

In addition to the restoration project, a two-story addition was made to the rear of the 1837 house to accommodate the needs of modern living: a mudroom and an open-plan kitchen, family room and dining area. The second floor of the addition features a primary bedroom and bathroom, with a walk-in closet and dressing room. From the street, a recessed space called a hyphen separates the old structure and the addition.

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“In terms of historic preservation, it allows the eras to be displayed on their own terms, and it’s considered more appropriate,” said John DaSilva, lead architect for the project, about the marriage of the old house with the new addition. “We allow the historic to remain historic without diminishing it.”

But Patience’s new history wasn’t over just yet. When the property next door, a 1950s Cape Cod-style home without historic significance, came up for sale,

Patience’s owners saw an opportunity to create a family compound by connecting the two properties.

“The owners hired us to design and build a guest house and connect the landscaping of the two homes so that it has a ‘compound’ feel,” says DaSilva. The existing house was razed, and the guest house completed in 2022. “We added a pool to the backyard, and then the landscape was all redone by Lombardi Design to connect the properties. The houses are related, front



A soaring ceiling adds architectural interest in a primary bedroom.

and back. SLC Interiors did the interiors for both the main house and the new guest house. It was great fun working with the client, Lombardi and SLC.”

Coastal palette, unique accents

The palette in both houses has an understated, coastal aesthetic, and the designer and the homeowners carefully chose unique accents and furnishings, retaining some antique pieces here and there in the old house. Window coverings, when there are some, are attractive Roman shades in varying fabrics that coordinate with the décor of each room. The open-plan kitchens in both houses are similar, set to the

back of the houses, each with white cabinetry and an additional dining space. Each of the main family areas features a window wall that gives a grand view of the shared backyard.

The Greek Revival street entrance was redone, with stunning terraced granite steps that add to its grandeur.

PSD’s signature design elements can be found in both houses: interesting ceiling shapes with soffits or tray ceilings; contemporary columns that echo classic Greek architecture in a more streamlined, simple way; and lots of windows.

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At top, the newly built guest house was designed to reflect elements, such as the wraparound window walls, of the family’s addition to the historic house next door. Above, built-in bunk beds add charming touches in the guest house. At right, all of the bathrooms are uniquely appointed.



A breakfast nook in the guest house offers plenty of light and a grand view of the backyard.

“As often as possible, we try to create rooms to have three exposures,” says DaSilva.

The homeowners did extensive research on the Howes-Atwoods. Enoch Howes died at sea in 1861, but Patia lived in the home until 1888 with her daughter and son-in-law and their two children. Upon Patia’s death, the house passed to her daughter, and the old house stayed in the family until 1964. Patia’s sister lived just down the

street, and, of course, the Atwood name and descendants are still part of Chatham today. The addition of the guest house that can accommodate extended family is a nod to those historic and cherished family ties.

“You can look at this property as a little Acropolis,” muses DaSilva. “It’s two classical temples on a hill, both recognizable vernaculars, but from two different eras.” ▲

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