



The icons



Be sensitive
to the
site



Pay attention
to the third
dimension



Borrow
daylight
and view



Make a
big
statement



Create
multipurpose
spaces



Shape
pockets for
privacy



Bring the
indoors out and
the outdoors in



The best of **FineHomebuilding**

Small Homes

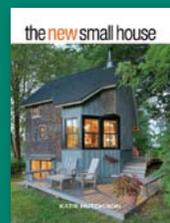
Celebrating small

96 Cape Cod casual

102 Heron cottage

108 California compound

116 White on white



Rhode Island architect Katie Hutchison's forthcoming book *The New Small House* (The Taunton Press) is full of inspiring homes from

across the country. Here we're featuring four projects from its pages. Katie has created icons for identifying 10 key small-house design strategies. These icons will help you recognize the strategies that make these homes so exceptional so that you can implement them into your own small-house design.



Select a succinct finish palette



Invest in quality materials that matter



Design distinctive details that relate to the big picture

CAPE COD CASUAL



SITE



3D



DAYLIGHT



MULTI-PURPOSE



PRIVACY



IN/OUT



FINISH PALETTE



QUALITY MATERIALS

I'M A BIG FAN of outbuildings. I like their informality, the way they shape outdoor spaces, and how fun they can be to inhabit. So, naturally, I was taken with Cheryl Kyle's new small house on Cape Cod designed by Estes/Twombly Architects. It's a collection of small, low, gabled structures that run along a series of boardwalks and decks in which the outbuildings, at first glance, are difficult to distinguish from the main house. "The spaces between the different structures, when you spread it out like this, are as important as the structures themselves," explains architect Jim

"The spaces between . . . are as important as the structures themselves."



The kitchen and adjacent dining area borrow daylight and views from each other and are within conversation distance. Cheryl saved money by using birch kitchen cabinets from Ikea, which she dressed up with 3form Chroma countertops. The white-on-white interior palette and continuous bleached oak floors create a fresh beachy feel.



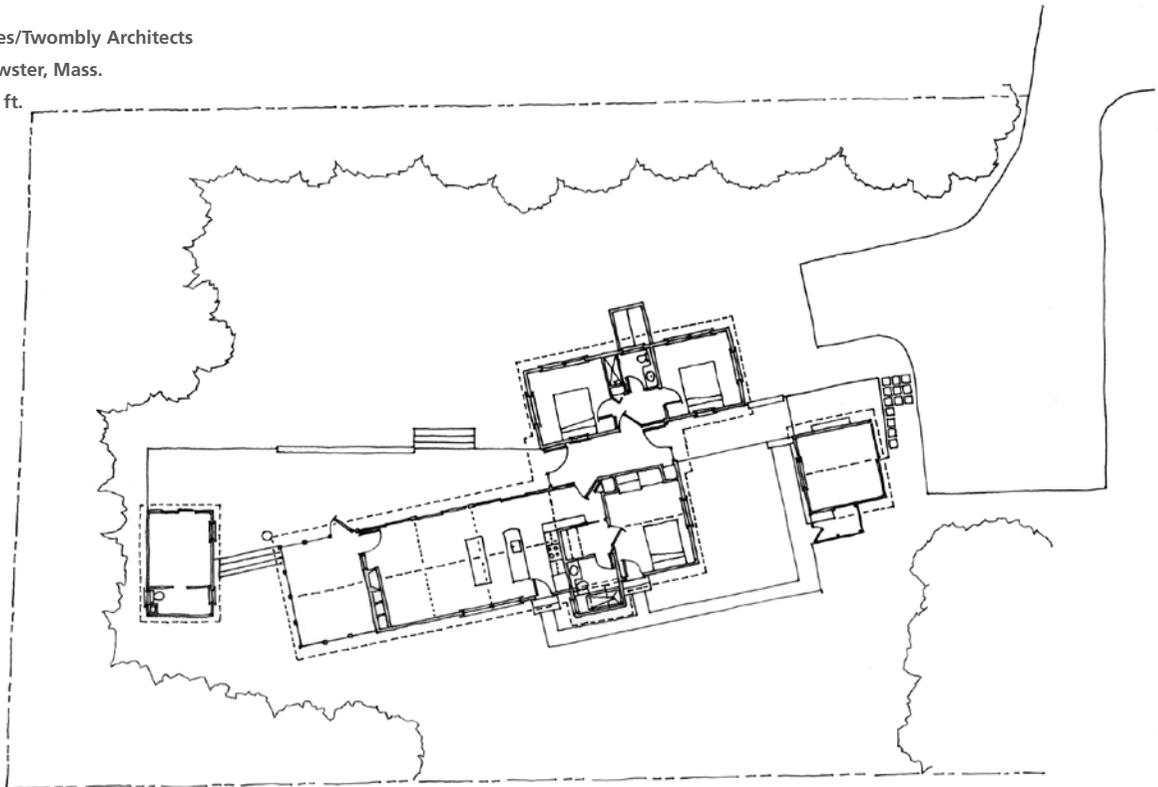


From the driveway, the modest cedar-clad, one-story gabled buildings greet folks and suggest informal Cape Cod beach living. "I wanted to echo the past with the shingles, but I wanted to bring it forward into this century," says Cheryl.

Architect: Estes/Twombly Architects

Location: Brewster, Mass.

Size: 1184 sq. ft.





The deck slides past the bike shed to the left and approaches the screened entry between the main house to the left and the guest house to the right. The deck path and the garden it borders between the shed and main house both offer pockets for privacy in addition to providing an appealing entry sequence.



The boardwalk, entry deck, and buildings frame an outdoor room where Cheryl grows vegetables and herbs in raised beds.



The garapa deck off the main house's kitchen/dining/living area and art studio edges the site's grassy sweet spot, inviting the outdoors in and the indoors out.





The screened connector between the main house and guest house provides some privacy separation while allowing the two to overlap easily in the summer months. In addition, the screen doors indicate thresholds between the somewhat public entry sequence and the more private deck area off the shared kitchen/dining/living space, which leads to the art studio.

Estes. “So we’re creating different outdoor spaces as well as indoor spaces.” The informality of the arrangement harks back to the Cape Cod of sun-drenched memories, but it’s designed for today’s living.

A small bike shed on the east end of the property fronts the collection of small cedar-shingled buildings with standing-seam metal roofs. A ramp meets those arriving and leads past an outdoor room to the south, up along a two-bedroom guest house to the north, and into a screened-in enclosure between the guest house and main house. In the summer, the guest house and main house can both be open to the screen connector between them, which functions a bit like a dogtrot. Beyond the connector, a more private deck unfolds to the north of the main house’s shared kitchen/dining/living space and leads to an unheated art studio on the west end.

“The layout of the buildings was geared toward the site, and I think every site has a sweet spot, where it’s just a nice place to be or look at, and the sweet spot on this site is right below the main deck,” says Jim. It’s a relatively small grassy area bordered by oaks and pines that’s private from the street. In the winter, when the leaves are off, you can see beyond it



The open kitchen/dining/living space and the porch beyond suit Cheryl well when she’s alone in the house, but they are also generous enough in size and volume to accommodate visiting family and friends comfortably.





The lofty screen porch at the end of the main house enjoys cross breezes and sun exposure on three sides. Its siting shapes an outdoor room or pocket for privacy reached by steps down to the south yard between it and the art studio.



to Cape Cod Bay. Cheryl's daughter, Camille Beehler, a landscape designer in Costa Mesa, Calif., created the landscape design of ornamental grasses and native plantings, which set the stage for the sweet spot.

Cheryl enjoys having the spaces of the house divided among multiple structures because it allows her to live alone comfortably in the main house with the guest quarters shut off, or to accommodate guests during the temperate months, when she entertains family and friends, who can enjoy their own private space. "It goes through different phases at different seasons," says Jim. "When Cheryl's there alone, the main part functions perfectly for her. Then in the summer, when the guests start coming, she gets a little distance from it."

The 800-sq.-ft. main house is composed of a modest entry area with a flat ceiling that transitions to an open, multipurpose kitchen/dining/living area beneath an expansive cathedral ceiling. "In a small house, I think it's good to have some volume and space in the living area so it can act like a bigger house when you have guests over," notes Jim. The multipurpose space shares daylight and views out the three sliding glass doors that open onto the north-facing deck. "I love the way it's situated because you don't have this blinding light [shining] into your sliding glass doors," says Cheryl. She and Jim chose a very simple white-on-white palette for the interior of the shared living area as well as the rest of the main house and guest house, which doesn't distract from the



Beneath an expansive wooden cathedral ceiling like the one indoors, the porch feels very much part of the outdoor space, yet it's still connected to the main house by the sheltering roof and protective screening.

view outdoors and helps the spaces read as a continuous background for her portrait and landscape paintings, collected objects, and furnishings. “I wanted clean and simple and kind of clutter free, but reflecting my travels around the world and my love of the Cape,” explains Cheryl.

The western end of the kitchen/dining/living space opens onto the screened porch, which provides a pocket for privacy and additional outdoor living space. Just beyond the porch is Cheryl’s art studio, another pocket for privacy. Over the past couple of years, she’s used the studio as additional guest quarters in the summer and rolled her art-supply caddy onto the porch to paint there instead.

Cheryl’s house is small in part to accommodate a tight budget, but also because small suits her. “It’s just happier,” she concludes. “People have to communicate; we have to all be together. We might have a puzzle going on the table and people running around and playing. I think small spaces are important and also spaces where, as in the guest house, you can get away from the rest.”



A skylight in the sloped ceiling washes the master bath in sunlight while preserving privacy. A modified Ikea cabinet topped with a 3form Chroma counter (which matches the kitchen countertop) serves as an economical vanity. A strip of the same 3form Chroma material adds a hint of accent color to the shower walls.



HERON COTTAGE



SITE



3D



DAYLIGHT



MULTI-PURPOSE



PRIVACY



IN/OUT



FINISH PALETTE



QUALITY MATERIALS

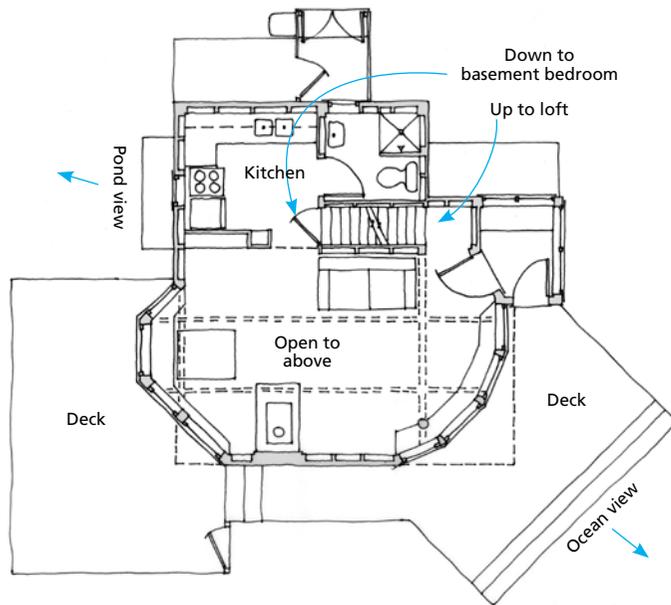
NOT MANY OF US have a chance to revisit with a fresh perspective a creative project we started a couple of decades beforehand. Architect Will Winkelman has enjoyed just such an opportunity. In 1990 as a young architect relatively new to Maine, he and his wife Kathy Hanley built a small cabin for themselves on property they acquired on Peaks Island. They named it Heron Cottage in reference to the great blue herons and night herons that frequent the unique site along a freshwater pond on one side and within view of the ocean on the other.

“The cottage really does live sanely as a dwelling year-round.”



Tucked beneath trees and angled toward two views in opposite directions, Heron Cottage, with its ample entry/entertaining deck, takes full advantage of the site's multiple unique assets.

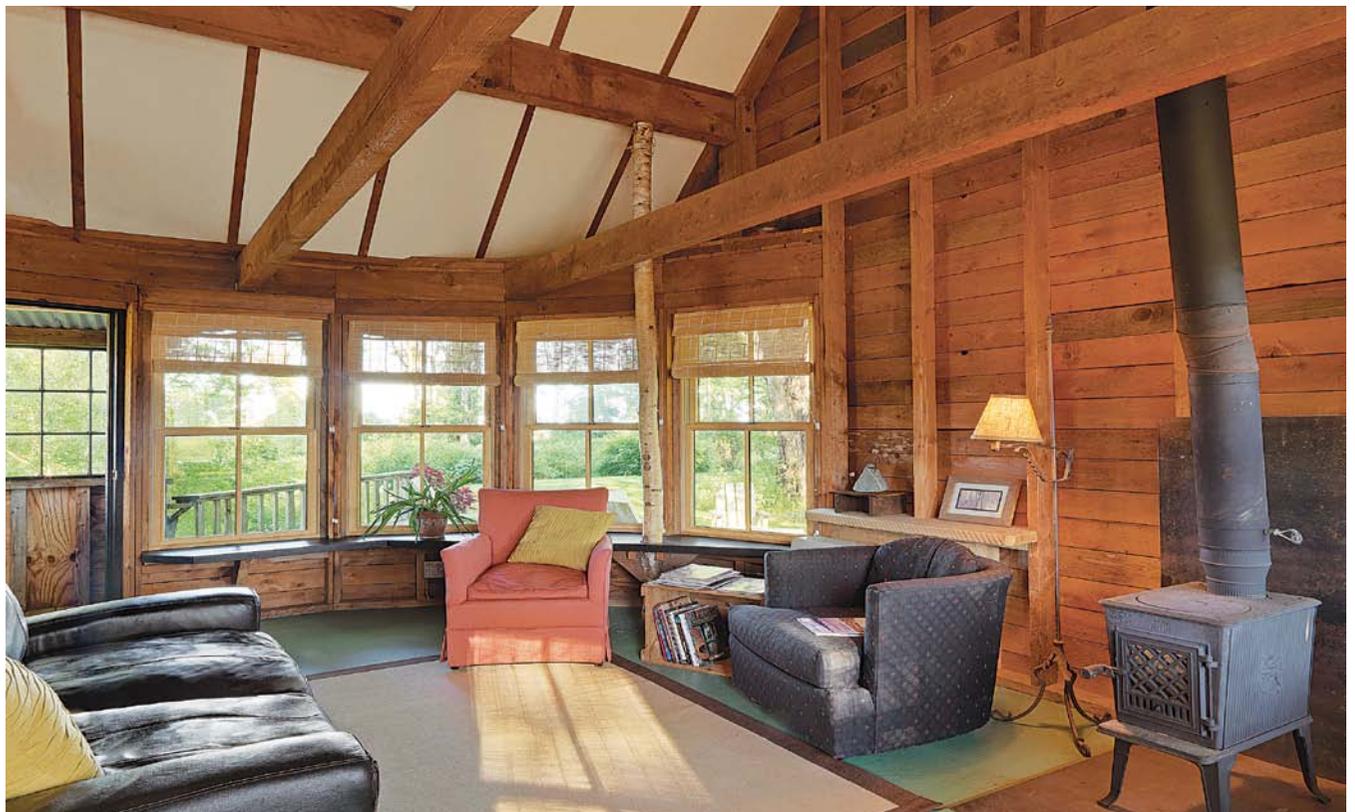




Architect: Will Winkelman of Winkelman Architecture
 Location: Peaks Island, Maine
 Size: 600 sq. ft.



The living-area bay features galvanized corrugated steel that wraps the house and suits the rugged yet simple aesthetic of Maine retreats. A boxlike mudroom entry was added after the first summer storm necessitated more shelter and gear storage.



The open dining/living area shares distant ocean views via the faceted bay. A birch tree that had been removed to make way for the cottage finds a new role inside as a decorative post. To emit as much heat as possible inside the cottage, the woodstove flue climbs to exit through the roof instead of via the side wall.

Their goal was to construct Heron Cottage quickly and affordably so they would have a place to live on-site while they designed and built what would later become the nearby main house. The cottage, they figured, would in short order transition into a guest house, a rental retreat, or accommodations for a family member. What they didn't anticipate was that the cottage would become their primary residence for seven or eight years while the main-house design and construction percolated and was ultimately completed.

Fortunately, the cottage “really does live sanely as a dwelling year-round,” says Will.

Then a couple of years ago, Will and Kathy recognized that it was time to update some of the cottage's weather-worn materials and products. “To achieve the low-maintenance vocabulary, you have to spend some money,” Will notes, and they were on a very tight budget when they originally constructed the cottage. While he upgraded to extruded aluminum-clad windows, replaced the asphalt roofing in kind,



The dining bay borders a midlevel deck that enjoys views of the pond. Hefty eastern white-cedar furnishings, handmade by Kathy, provide a comfortable spot to savor the surroundings. Galvanized corrugated steel makes another appearance to the left over the new bay window in the basement.





The open cathedral ceiling is tall enough to accommodate a loft bedroom, which features a guardrail made of the same type of stainless-steel mesh that you might see around a bird enclosure. The ceiling is painted plywood to reflect light back down into the space. Hemlock ceiling battens tie the look back to the hemlock used elsewhere.

and replaced eastern white-cedar wall shingles and trim as necessary, Will tweaked the original design with knowledge gleaned from decades on the property and in the practice of designing homes. He left unchanged the many aspects of the design that had performed successfully over the years.

The original one-and-a-half-story design features a steeply pitched gable roof that’s “evocative of Maine retreats, which are more traditional forms,” according to Will. Taking advantage of the third (vertical) dimension, a loft—open to the cathedral ceiling shared by the multipurpose dining/living space—is tucked in over the kitchen and full bath and provides a pocket for privacy. Two bays push out from a 14-ft. by 20-ft. core open space. One 45° bay off the dining area bulges to the southwest toward a view of wetlands and a freshwater pond, while another multifaceted bay off the living area reaches out to the northeast toward the yard and a distant



The dining bay is a cozy spot to enjoy the pond. Another birch, salvaged from when the house was constructed, spans between two rafter ties, providing a mounting surface for a pendant lamp above the table.





The loft bedroom is accessed easily from a stair and offers a good siesta space for visitors who don't want to miss out completely on activity down below. A small peekaboo window provides a glimpse of the pond from the bed.



The basement's built-in bed and window writing surface contribute to the boatlike feel. Hemlock battens applied to hemlock boards imply a tree pattern in relief and add to the rustic Maine feel.

view of the ocean (allowing the dining and living areas to borrow views and daylight from opposite directions). Both bays include built-in benches that wrap double-hung windows. In the dining bay, a table nests into the window seat.

What the original cottage lacked was a truly habitable basement. “Before, you couldn’t stand up in there,” Will says. During the renovation, they dropped the basement floor, insulated with spray foam, improved drainage, and installed a bay window with a built-in writing surface looking out toward the pond. The new-and-improved basement bedroom with its wood ceiling is “like a ship’s cabin,” notes Will. Steps from the window desk is a hobbit-size 5-ft.-tall door leading to a new private, red-cedar deck and outdoor shower, which brings the indoors out and the outdoors in. Taking full advantage of the grade drop to the rear of the house, the renovated

private basement quarters, indoors and out, greatly enhance the cottage’s livability.

Much of Will’s other recent enhancements are more subtle but reinforce the intentions and strengths of the original design. A new guardrail system on the loft made of stainless-steel mesh and black plumbing pipe replaces the original cable guardrail, which Will decided was too techy for the cottage’s rustic vibe. New hidden, low-voltage LED tape lights affixed to the beams in the more enclosed spaces—such as the kitchen, bathroom, and stairs—provide a welcome glow. A new closet door in the basement echoes a treelike applied-batten design also visible on a prer renovation access door.

Over the past quarter century or so, as Will has grown professionally and come to call Peaks Island home, Heron Cottage has grown to express his more complete vision for it.



With newly improved head height, the walk-out basement bedroom boasts its own private deck and outdoor shower.



The custom red-cedar outdoor shower features shutters that the less shy can open to the view. The bench inside the shower extends to the exterior to serve as outdoor seating, too.

CALIFORNIA COMPOUND



SITE



3D



DAYLIGHT



MULTI-PURPOSE



PRIVACY



IN/OUT



FINISH PALETTE



DETAILS

JOSH HEISER AND STEVE BURNS found a nearly half-acre parcel in Sonoma, Calif., that had the basic ingredients they needed to shape a site-sensitive small-house compound. It was near downtown Sonoma, was adjacent to a creek, and featured several small structures, including a 1880s cook shack. “We like to live small,” notes Steve. The opportunity to live among small buildings in a variety of outdoor living environments in a seasonable climate appealed to him and Josh.

“We really use every inch of the property.”



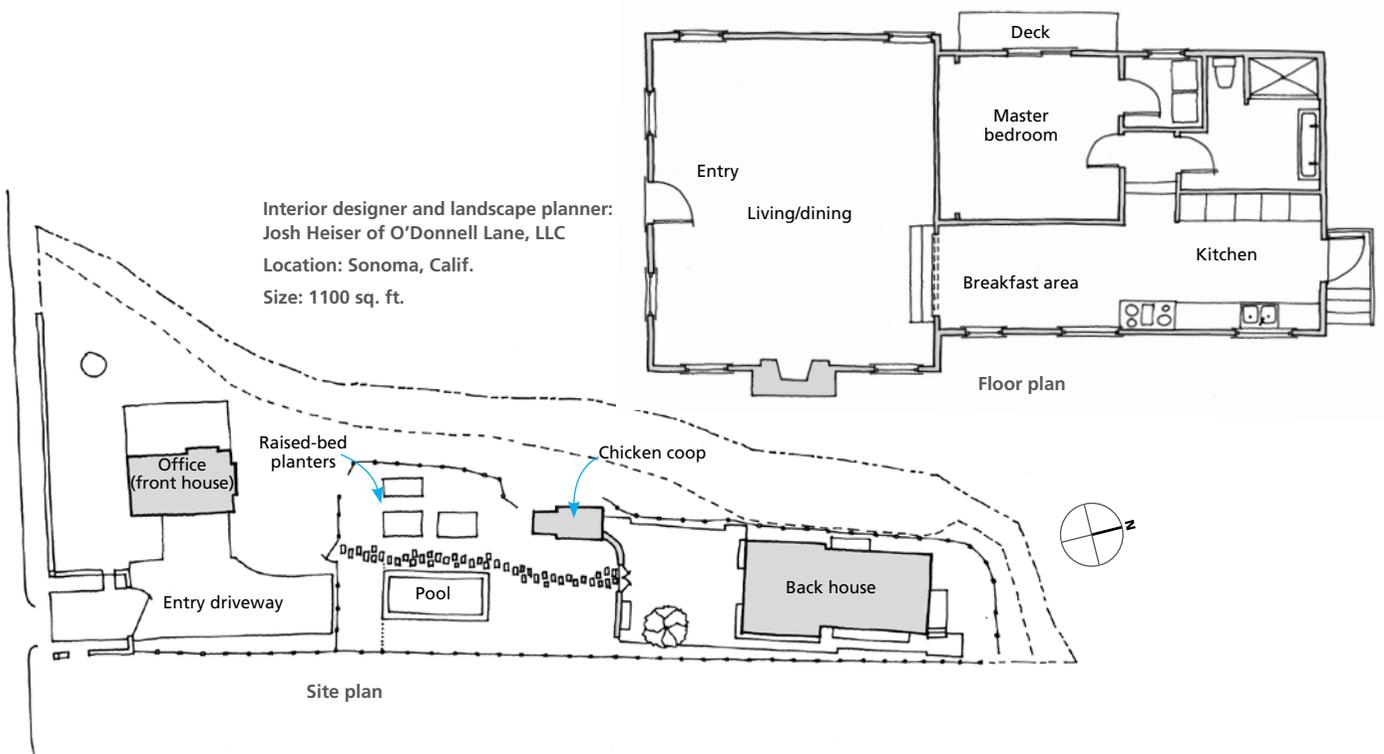
The brick patio in front of the backhouse is furnished for both outdoor dining and lounging. Josh chose colors for the board-and-batten siding and windows that would slightly recede into the landscape. By contrast, the color of the new Dutch door makes the updated facade pop.



Photos: Ken Gutmaker



Josh designed a woven, rusted-steel front gate inspired by the woven red-wood fence he designed on the side of the property. He calls it a “friendly neighbor fence” because it looks the same on both sides.





A limestone path meanders between the raised beds and modestly sized saltwater pool in one of the property's three primary outdoor rooms. The chicken coop lies ahead to the left. Josh and Steve have seven laying hens and use the eggs to barter with their neighbors for tomatoes, peaches, and biscotti.

Out of this lot, which is tucked among similar lots fronting a fairly busy street, Josh and Steve devised a series of courts that become increasingly private as you move farther away from the street toward the north. With the aid of fences, walls, gates, and plantings, the broad strokes of three outdoor rooms extend living space into a variety of outdoor settings.

After you enter onto a brick driveway, you encounter a woven-steel gate (designed by Josh) that leads to the front house, which was built in the 1950s as a music studio and is now used by Josh and Steve as their office. Next, you come to a redwood woven fence featuring another woven-steel gate that leads to a court containing a narrow saltwater pool on one side and three raised-bed planters (with redwood woven

sides like the fence) along with a chicken coop on the other. This is a generous combination of entertaining, swimming, and gardening space that also contains pockets for privacy. Continue farther, and you come upon the fieldstone wall Josh and Steve had constructed as the next threshold. Pass through an antique gate, and enter the more private domain of what Josh and Steve call the “backhouse” and the brick patio they use for entertaining smaller groups of friends.

The backhouse, where Josh and Steve live, includes a front open living/dining area that was constructed on a slab in the 1950s. The rear section of the house dates back to a cook shack (built about 1880) that later contained two bedrooms, a shared bath, and the kitchen. It was on a tenuous wooden



The shared cathedral ceiling, new walnut floors, and white and black palette help unite the open living/dining area and kitchen beyond. Artwork by Scott Coppersmith in the shape of California (made of reclaimed lath that relates to the floor tone) is a striking accent on the living-room wall.



Josh and Steve use the ladder hanging on the wall in the foreground to access the open shelves in the tall storage area. The door at the end of the efficient galley kitchen leads to the grill area.



Upholstered seating and cheerful repurposed wooden signs announcing ice cream flavors make for a cozy kitchen table for two.

foundation essentially at grade. Because the backhouse is within the setback for the creek, Josh and Steve's remodel needed to maintain the existing footprint. But the cook shack required a new foundation, so Josh and Steve raised the floor level in that area to accommodate it. It turns out that the level change between the living/dining area and the kitchen was fortuitous. "When we sit down for dinner, it's nice that we're not looking into the kitchen even though it's all open," says Josh. Paying further attention to the third (vertical) dimension, Josh and Steve elected to raise the bedroom/bathroom floor level up from the kitchen level. "As with every party,

everybody stands in the kitchen . . . and it feels like the bedroom is its own little area because you have to go up two steps to get there," says Steve.

Josh and Steve opened the ceiling in the kitchen and the relocated bathroom (which occupies a former second bedroom) to capture as much vertical space as possible. The new cathedral ceiling in the kitchen matches the cathedral ceiling in the living/dining area and helps better link the kitchen area to the lower living/dining area while allowing them to borrow light and view. The increased ceiling height in the kitchen makes room for tall storage opposite the kitchen work area.



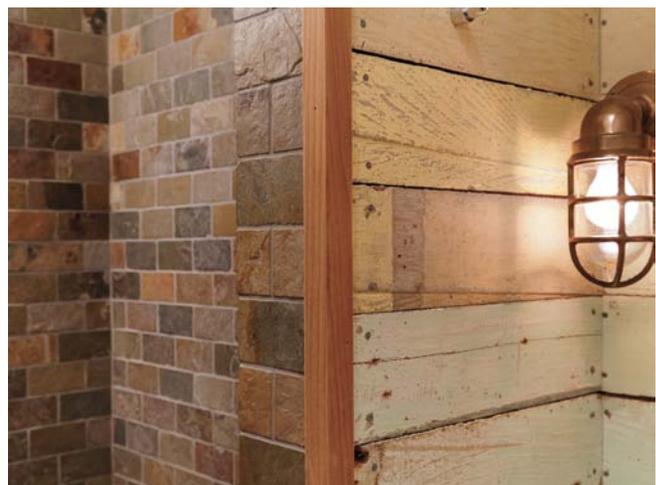
A new shallow balconylike deck off the master bedroom overlooking the creek below is another favorite pocket for privacy and also happens to bring the indoors out. The closed interior door ahead leads to the laundry closet, which used to be the shared bath.

Because Josh is 6 ft. 1 in. and Steve is 6 ft. 4 in., they didn't want to bump into overhead cabinets. Instead, they opted for open shelves above the full-depth storage cabinets, the refrigerator, and the freezer on the wall that borders the relocated bathroom.

Josh's redesign of the kitchen included placing a door at the far end to access a rear barbeque area where Steve likes to grill and where they can enjoy a quiet private sitting area in the shade. The change from the original U-shaped kitchen layout to a galley configuration significantly improved the flow. The length of the space allows room for a small table and two comfortable chairs where, when they're not entertaining or dining at the table on the level below, Josh and Steve enjoy most of their meals. The table's slightly elevated location on the edge of the open living/dining space makes it an ideal private space for enjoying a cup of coffee or the morning paper.

Recognizing that the open kitchen and multipurpose dining/living area are visible all at once, Josh adhered to a simple color palette in the shared spaces. "The Apple White paint, for me, makes the spaces feel a little bigger," he says. "There's so much color and vibrancy on the outside of the house; I didn't want the two things to compete." In the remodeled bathroom, which is well removed from the shared kitchen and living/dining area, Josh was comfortable reintroducing some of the tones and materials visible on the site.

And it is the site and the landscape design that tie the various living spaces together. The backhouse is in many ways only one of many layered living areas on the property. It could even be considered a pocket for privacy. "The house is really the ultimate California house because of the indoor-outdoor living we can experience pretty much year-round," notes Steve. "We really use every inch of the property," adds Josh.



Reclaimed boards from the ceiling of the cook shack serve as wall finish in the bathroom. The painted patina of the redwood boards complements the slate tile used for the shower and creates a warm, welcoming personal retreat.



Opening the ceiling in the remodeled bathroom made room for an oversize antique English mirror, which lends the modest room a sense of spaciousness. Salvaged redwood chicken watering troughs are repurposed as open bins for bathroom toiletries. Staying on theme, the hexagonal pattern of the slate floor tile is reminiscent of chicken wire.

WHITE ON WHITE



SITE



3D



DAYLIGHT



MULTI-PURPOSE



PRIVACY



IN/OUT



FINISH PALETTE



QUALITY MATERIALS



DETAILS

THIS SMALL-HOUSE RENOVATION by Priestley + Associates Architecture in Rockport Village, Maine, infuses a traditional New England form with a pared-down modern sensibility. Once a blacksmith shop, the now predominantly white exterior and interior display a combination of distinctive details integrated with a succinct finish palette. “Keeping the aesthetic very clean and very minimal has a calming effect,” says architect John Priestley.

“The house is pretty close to perfect the way that it is.”



Groupings of tall windows and a glazed side door face south. A succinct palette of white painted shingles, minimal white trim and windows, a gray asphalt-shingle roof, ipé decks, and metal cable rails helps unify the form of the small house.



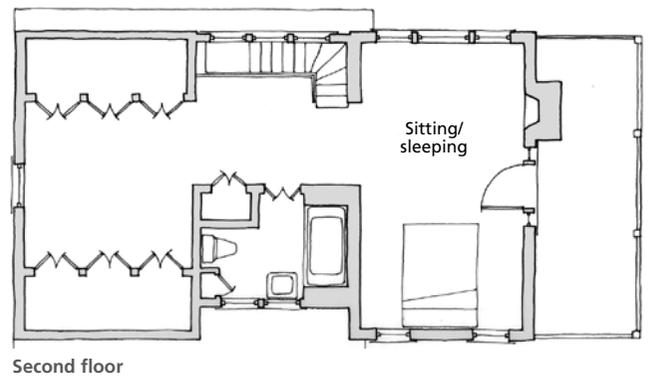
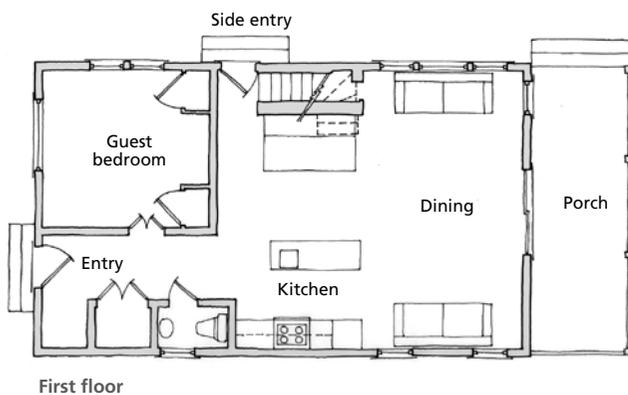


The renovation maintained the gable form of the one-time blacksmith's shop, updating it with knife-edge eaves and augmenting it with a shed dormer and a second-story cross gable on the west end. The one-story structure to the right encloses a lap pool, which is open to the sky.

Architect: John Priestley of Priestley + Associates Architecture

Location: Rockport Village, Maine

Size: 1360 sq. ft.





Large rough-hewn granite steps and pea stone provide an interesting contrast to the crisp white, glazed side door, white shingle courses, and ipé boardwalk path.



The dining bench is doubly efficient because the lid lifts off to reveal storage space inside. The glass table picks up on the light and airy theme of the space and efficiently accommodates six diners.





Cloaked with the same white tongue-and-groove boards as the walls and ceilings, the kitchen and its cabinets blend effortlessly into the open space. The beamed ceiling beyond is composed of the original floor joists wrapped in white boards, which gives the impression of a taller and more dynamic ceiling over the gathering areas than what a continuous flat ceiling would provide.

Horizontal courses of white painted shingles on the house's exterior are echoed by white horizontal courses of Azek boards—joined with intentional reveals—that enclose an adjacent lap pool. Minimal white exterior trim on the house edges the roof rake and wall openings, calling little attention to itself. On the interior, white tongue-and-groove boards are held a prescribed dimension apart (like the Azek wrapping the pool enclosure) to create a distinctive detail of repeated gaps that march around the walls and across the ceilings on both floor levels; interior trim is completely omitted.

The succinct palette of white, rhythmic, tongue-and-groove boards allows the open sitting areas, dining area, and

kitchen—which includes cabinets faced in the same boards—to blur into each other. The white-board backdrop carries up the stairs and across the second-floor walls and ceilings, uniting the small house's varied open spaces into what feels like a generous nuanced space. A quiet, quartersawn, white-oak floor runs throughout. Homeowners Michael Hampton and David Kantor were attracted to the crisp and airy effect. "I think we both were drawn to the simplicity of it, the views, and the quality of light in the house," says Michael. Of course, they were also drawn to the location near the water in a village not far from Camden, Maine.

John designed the renovation for a previous owner who



Sun washes through the new dormer windows and glass railing and across the oak floors. The office/study pocket for privacy under the east gable end borrows light from and is open to the stair hall and the sleeping area. Closets built into the office kneewalls are concealed by the continuous white tongue-and-groove wall finish.

lived by herself. She and John adhered to the former blacksmith shop's footprint, which is in the local shoreland zone. Instead of expanding living space out, they increased the volume with a new dormer over a new stair and a new second-floor cross gable on the west end. John's original client envisioned an unconventional multipurpose second-floor living space open to her sleeping area and, on the first floor, an open kitchen off a roomy dining space looking out to the view. "Because it is a small house, any individual spaces would have seemed like closets, so the only separate space is a combination office/guest room on the first floor," says John. "Of course, there is a bathroom upstairs, but other than that, it is open, because otherwise I think it would be very claustrophobic."



The upstairs sitting space off the sleeping area looks out to the Goose River and Rockport Harbor beyond, and it borrows additional daylight from the stair hall. A deck to the right extends living space out toward the view. Custom chairs and ottomans designed by Michael and a small built-in woodstove make it cozy.



Michael, an interior designer, and David had a different idea about how to use the spaces. It's a testament to the versatility of the multipurpose solutions created by John and the previous homeowner that Michael and David were able to swap the use of some of the spaces with great success. "On the first floor, we really wanted to utilize the small spaces as much as possible, while making it very comfortable," says Michael. While the previous homeowner had a substantial dining table in the west end of the house toward the water view, Michael and David chose instead to locate two sitting areas there: one with a sofa and chairs grouping to the north, and another with a daybed area to the south. The daybed that Michael selected is low so as not to hinder the view of

Goose River through the sizable gang of three windows to the south that bring the outdoors in. Michael and David prefer having the living area on the more public first floor rather than on the second floor, where the previous homeowner had placed it. Michael situated the dining area immediately adjacent to the stairs and near the kitchen island. "To best utilize that space, I designed a small upholstered bench rather than have a set of chairs go all the way around a dining table," explains Michael.

On the second floor, he and David located the office/study on the east end where the previous homeowner had positioned her bed. She had liked the idea of being able to lie in bed and look across the stair hall to the woodstove on



Minimal cable rails on the second-floor deck off the sleeping/sitting area provide little distraction from the view beyond, which can be enjoyed from comfortable Adirondack chairs.



The master-bath vanity and tub feature natural finish accents of walnut, while the pattern of seams continues across the tongue-and-groove walls and is scored into the Corian shower surround.



The bed is located on the north end of the new second-floor cross gable, where it's open to the sitting space overlooking the view. The carefully placed seams on the trim-free, tongue-and-groove wall and ceiling treatment are on full display.

the west end of the second floor. Instead, Michael and David enjoy the pocket for privacy that the office/study provides off the stair hall, which is open to the sitting/sleeping area. “Generally, during the day, one of us is working in the office,” says David. “And the nice thing about having that space is that the other one of us, whoever’s not using the desk and the computer, is probably sitting at the other end of the bedroom in those comfortable chairs . . . , so we can still be occupying

the same space, but we’re not on top of each other.”

Michael and David plan to replace the lap pool and its enclosure with a one-car garage designed by John. It will occupy the footprint of the lap-pool enclosure and have a one-story flat roof. “We told John we love the purity of the form of the house as it is now, and we don’t want an addition to take away from that,” says Michael. “The house is pretty close to perfect the way that it is,” notes David.