

This is an excerpt from the book

# UPDATING CLASSIC AMERICA COLONIALS

by Matthew Schoenherr

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# The Best of Both Worlds



ABOVE, **On the way** to the master bedroom, the owners pass beneath this dramatic cupola, centrally located over their own private hall.

FACING PAGE, **You can restrict** the renovation to only a particular zone of the house. This Colonial Revival from the 1930s received a considerable addition out the back, while the traditional rooms to the front were left intact. Alterations to the front facade involved no more than a fresh coat of paint.

**C**HIP AND DEBBIE, THE OWNERS of this Colonial Revival, lead a busy life. Both are highly involved in their children's activities, and like many of us, their professional lives are tugging at them constantly. They realized their suburban Connecticut home needed the kind of spaces where the family could gather and recharge. But they also enjoy entertaining and wanted to maintain a traditional dining room, living room, and center-hall entryway. The formal plan arrangement already provided by their classic Colonial home suited them just fine, and by creating new space designed for their informal family time, they could have the best of both worlds.

## THE HEART OF THE HOME

The new kitchen and family room is the area of the house where Chip, Debbie, and the children can relax. These rooms are sized for multiple activities, and the height of the family room was determined by the wish to install an 11-ft. Christmas tree each December. The design corresponds with the typical Colonial pattern of using distinct rooms and acknowledges modern notions of liberated space with open planning for a sense of connectivity. From the kitchen, there are large passage-





**The cabinets facing the table area are accessible from both sides, making setting the table or putting away dishes an easy chore. Pass-throughs and the glass doors admit daylight to the deep space, while allowing family members at the table to keep in contact with those working in the kitchen.**

ways that allow communication, both verbal and visual, with the family room and the eating area to the sides. The openings in the kitchen partition also allow sunlight to penetrate through the deep room.

The cabinets between the kitchen and the eating area contribute to the flow of communication and light, and provide an element of convenience as well—there are operable glass doors on both sides, allowing the owners to put dishes away from one side and set the table from the other. The walls that define the kitchen have ample passageways to make it easy to get

to the table and navigate around work areas. Nearby, a back stair creates a shortcut between the kitchen and the second floor.

## A GALLERY OF IDEAS

Instead of including a typical mudroom in the addition, a long gallery was developed that connects the new side and back doors. Although this space is utilitarian, it has been dressed up by using attractive yet rugged materials and by keeping the design simple and well ordered. The

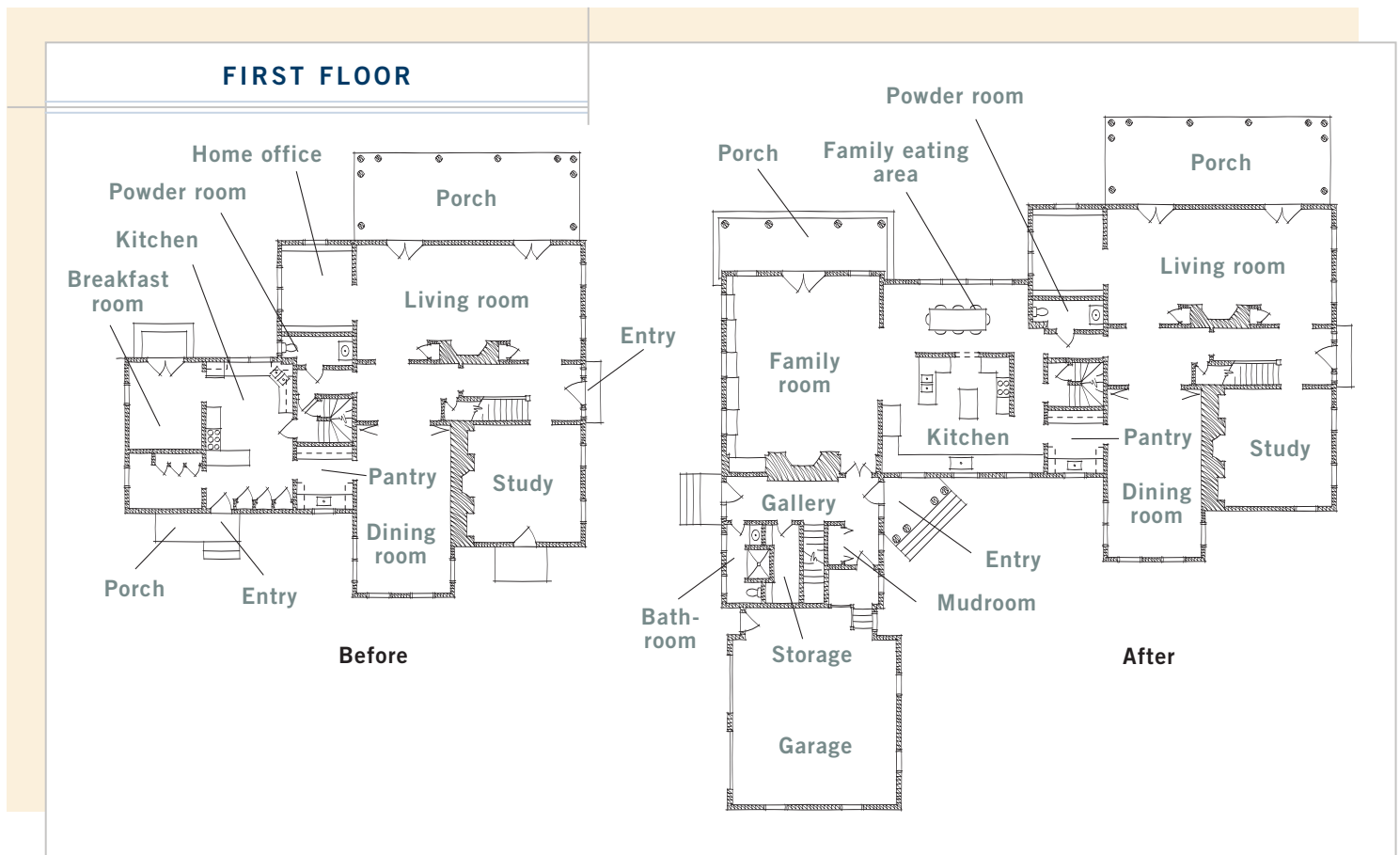
back of the family room fireplace is visible in the gallery, forming a natural stone backdrop for an old church pew. The family can enjoy the convenience of the pew, located just opposite a cubby storage area, to sit and slip on a pair of boots before catching the bus or playing in the Connecticut snow.

A bathroom with a seashore theme is positioned where it can be easily reached from the swimming pool without tracking water into other areas of the home. Wet feet were kept in mind when choosing the floor material for the gallery: Slate tiles, with a rough texture and just a hint of sea green color, were selected for their durability and beautifully natural appearance.

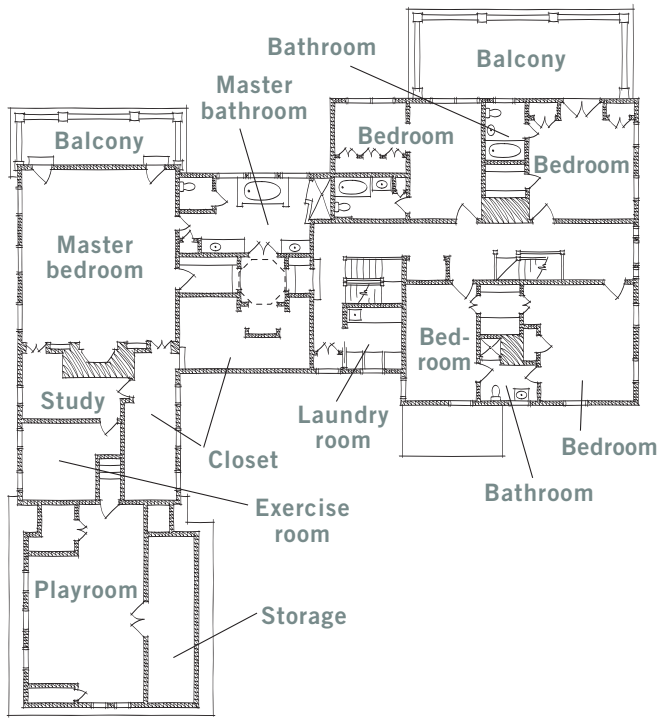
It seems you can never have enough storage space. With three young children—triplets in fact—Chip and



**This mudroom extends the full width of the addition, offering accessibility to both the front courtyard and the pool area out back. Doors to the left lead to the cubby storage, the bathroom, and the garage.**



## SECOND FLOOR



Debbie knew this problem could catch up to them quickly if they didn't plan well ahead. The result is a compact, yet generously accommodating area with plenty of cabinets and cubbies for all the things the triplets could ever carry (see the photo on p. 101). The different types of storage are versatile enough to handle the children's needs as they grow, from book bags and lunch boxes to winter parkas and hockey sticks.

### A private retreat

Directly above the new family room, but seemingly a world away, is Chip and Debbie's private retreat. This is their master suite, which is reached through a passage that is a treat of its own. The 11-ft. family room ceiling is just below the master suite, and a set of steps was needed to go up and over. The passage negotiates this change in level with steps that are grouped in twos,



**Designed for stretching out and relaxing. The family room has abundant natural light, gives easy access to the terrace and pool, and is within a few steps of the kitchen.**



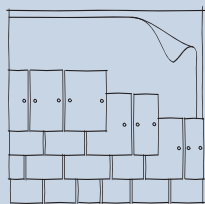
Tall ceilings can sometimes leave us feeling cold, especially in a bedroom. But in this comfortable suite, the height is dampened by a pattern of woodwork on the ceiling and a deep band of molding at the ceiling line.

# Colonial Siding

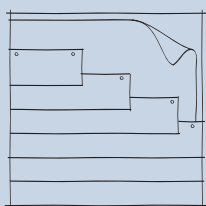
☆ VARIATIONS

**SIDING PROTECTS YOUR HOME'S** structure from the weather—and its toughest adversary is water. If trim or siding traps or absorbs moisture because of an insufficient paint job or poor flashing, the wood can decay in a remarkably short period of time. Architects often specify siding products milled from western red cedar and eastern white cedar; both are naturally resistant to short-term moisture problems and to many damaging insects as well.

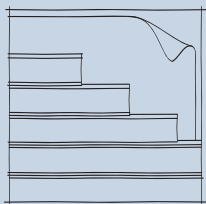
Siding plays a major role in the appearance of your home, and you'll want to evaluate the alternatives on the merits of their appearance and durability.



**Sawn shingles.** Often associated with houses along the East Coast, shingles are also found on the walls of inland Colonials. Some early houses were clad entirely in shingles except for the prominent front facade, which exhibited relatively more expensive clapboard.

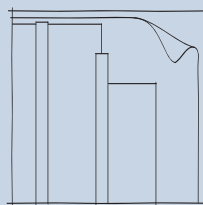


**Clapboard or beveled siding.** Clapboard with a simple profile was commonly used in Colonial architecture. It has a more refined appearance than a shingle wall. Cedar clapboard is smooth on one side and rough-sawn on the other, so you have a choice of finish.

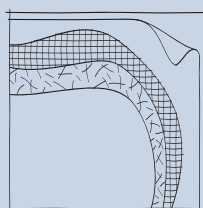


**Decorative siding.** Specific regions and towns favored certain types of decorative siding with a variety of profiles, such as beaded, channel, and shiplap. In

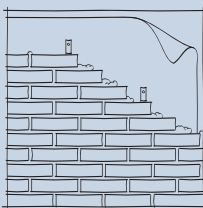
Newport, Rhode Island, for example, many houses were clad in beaded siding.



**Board and batten.** Board and batten siding was originally used for barns and outbuildings, but it since has been applied to new houses and additions as well, particularly when the architect wants to introduce a strong graphic image or suggest a less formal, rural effect. The boards are installed vertically, one next to the other, and the narrow battens are placed over the joints to keep out moisture.



**Stucco.** Stucco is a cementitious material that is troweled over wire lath. Depending on the desired appearance and the artistic hand of the installer, stucco textures can vary dramatically, from glossy smooth to rough and rustic. While stucco is most often found in the South and Southwest, it also is used for more regal examples of Colonial architecture throughout the United States.



**Brick and stone.** Brick siding is second only to clapboard in its use for Colonials, and it is *the* material of the South, offering excellent weather protection and longevity. To help new work appear as if it had been done years ago, you can use “new-used” brick, which replicates weather-worn material. Stone creates a substantial, rustic, instantly old appearance, and it shares the excellent weather protection and longevity of brick.





**LEFT, A narrow space** off the mudroom is the perfect spot for an array of storage—from hooks to cubbies to cabinets.

**BELOW, A full tub** offers the promise of a rejuvenating soak in the master bath. The lower sashes of the windows are glazed with a textured glass to admit light while creating privacy from a nearby yard.

creating an elegant arrival to a luxurious space. A tall tower further reinforces the drama of the passage, spilling a copious amount of light where a second hall intersects. This crossaxis connects the walk-in closets to the master bathroom. A small but striking window, salvaged from the demolished portion of the house, was repaired and installed over the bathroom doors to capture light streaming down from the cupola (see photo on p. 94).

The bedroom is lofty but doesn't feel empty or out of scale. In fact, it seems cozy despite having a ceiling height of over 14 ft. The trick is in the trim detail, which was borrowed from the great mansions of Newport, Rhode Island. The room's height is tamed by the use of a large crown molding at the ceiling line, and a second decorative band positioned well below that. The **tray ceiling** is embellished with a contrasting decorative basket-like grid, which anchors the location of the ceiling and prevents it from vanishing above you. The woodwork looks elaborate but is really just painted 1x6 pine applied directly to the drywall. During construction, Chip joked of having "molding migraines" since the expense for such details can run pretty high. But without scale devices like these, you can end up feeling as though you were living in a drafty, echoing hall.



**tray ceiling** — A decorative raised area of a ceiling with equally sloping sides.