

# DREAM HOMES

NEW ENGLAND









## JAMES KELLIHER

Axiom Architects, Inc.

While growing up on Boston's South Shore, Jim Kelliher developed a keen eye for the subtle architectural clues in the environment around him that were indicative of the changing lifestyles of its inhabitants. Historic houses were adapted and enlarged, living spaces were opened up, windows were introduced to capture the outdoors, and family rooms were added. The most interesting houses to Jim's eye, however, were those that went a step further to become forms of self-expression for their owners, while fitting comfortably in their often dynamic contexts.

Jim pursued his passion for architecture by enrolling in the architecture program at the University of Notre Dame. In 1978, Jim founded Axiom Architects, later to be joined by Blake Auchincloss, who had moved to the South Shore from New York City after earning a master's degree at Columbia University School of Architecture. As the firm grew, its designers concentrated on the interweaving of old and new into a cohesive architectural statement that addresses trends in the lifestyles of today, while creating a fresh interpretation of the surrounding vernacular style.



### ABOVE:

A high cathedral ceiling over the living room links the downstairs and upstairs and provides unique vantage points for this ocean view cottage.

*Photograph by Brian Jenkin*

### FACING PAGE:

After a catastrophic fire, this grand seaside residence was redesigned and rebuilt on its original stone foundation.

*Photograph by Mark Craig, Mark Craig Photography*





The designers at Axiom faced some new challenges in October of 1991, after the "Perfect Storm" pummeled the north Atlantic coast. The perils of the occasional tempest were all too apparent, and Axiom became the go-to firm for coastal residential work. Formerly, New England "grand seaside cottages" had been built securely, on high ground, and with long views of the ocean. As these estates were subdivided and developed, houses were built on smaller lots closer to the ocean. The resulting limitations became design opportunities and challenges for the designers at Axiom. A smaller lot requires a carefully sited and more efficiently designed home, one which encourages both designer and client to respond more effectively to climate, program, needs and lifestyle.



**TOP LEFT:**  
Flow and movement through the house are carefully orchestrated to provide intrigue and interest.  
*Photograph by Brian Jenkin*

**BOTTOM LEFT:**  
Natural wood and stone finishes provide elegant yet intimate atmosphere and scale.  
*Photograph by Brian Jenkin*



Axiom's creative response to these factors involves both careful crafting of the program to promote multiple uses for spaces, and focus on movement and flow within the home. When translated into built form, this may result in a study that doubles as an artist's studio or a stairwell landing that is enlarged to become a restful retreat with a special view. These elements often evolve during the design discussions with the owner and as such, allow the owners to place their fingerprint on the design.

This design process invites more client participation and results in a more comfortable, more personal and more environmentally sensitive residence. Axiom's designers are aware that the most successful project is one in which the clients feel that they have designed the spaces themselves. In other words, the hand that looms behind the client should vanish.



**TOP RIGHT:**  
The perfect small and efficient ocean view cottage is designed for a single grandmother who frequently entertains her children and grandchildren.  
*Photograph by Brian Jenkin*

**BOTTOM RIGHT:**  
Spaces are opened to one another for entertainment purposes, yet are carefully defined with architectural elements to maintain their individuality and intimate feel.  
*Photograph by Brian Jenkin*