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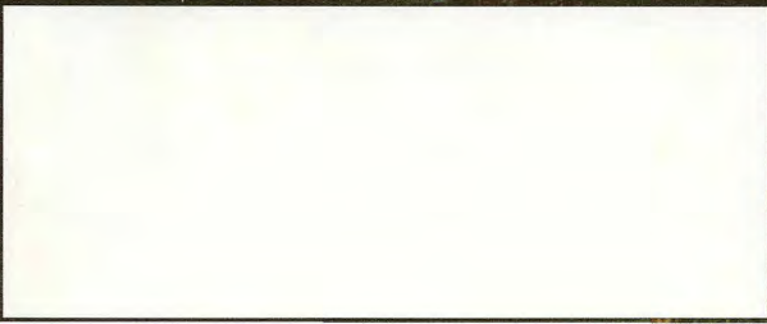
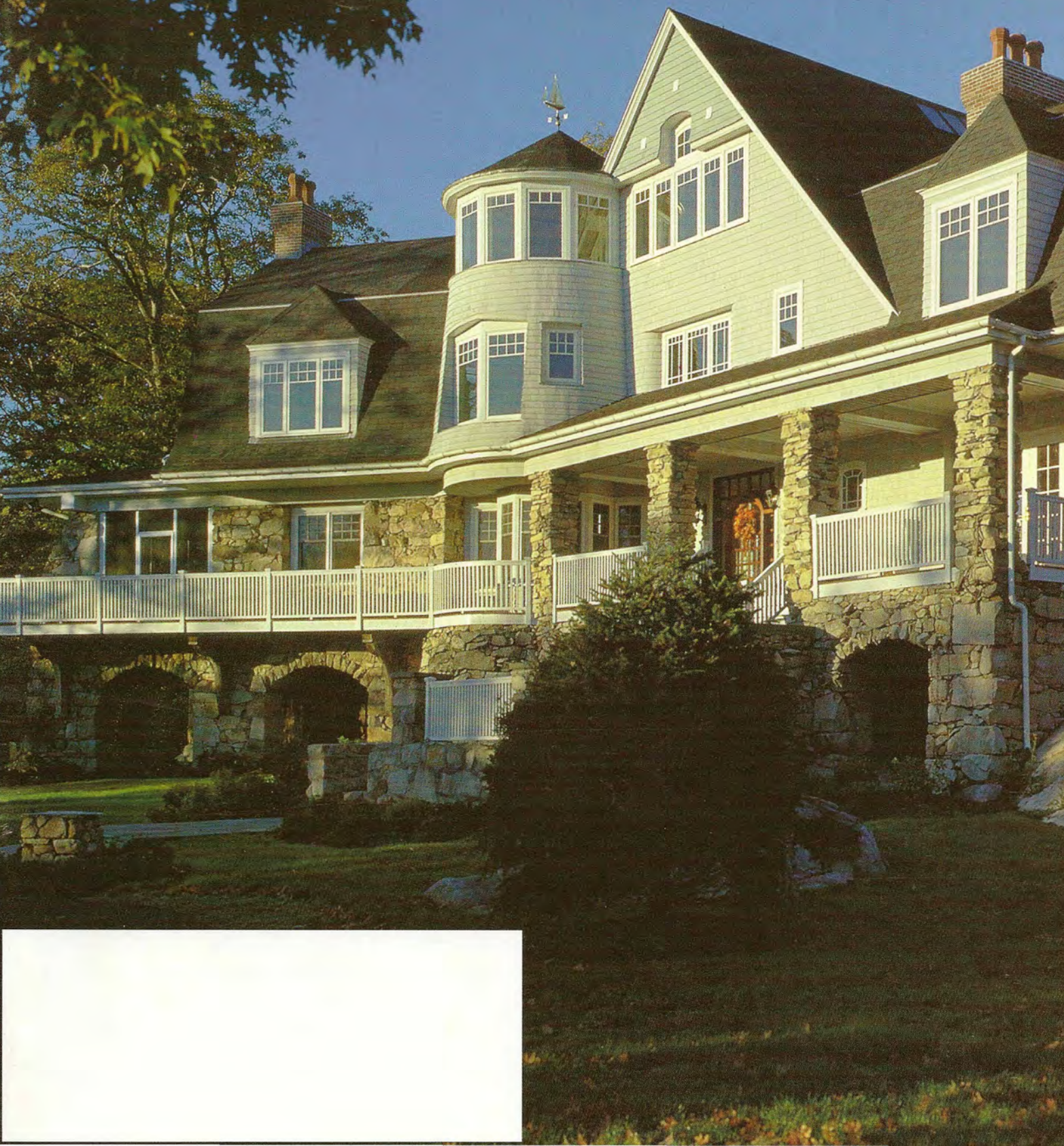




Photo by Steve Rodgers

Designing for the Present with the Future in Mind

By Alison Cohen

Many architects can boast of designing multi-millionaire dollar homes. Few but Jim Kelliher of Axiom Architects can boast of being commissioned to design a henhouse as well.

The coop in question belongs to children's author and illustrator Jan Brett, and as might be expected these are no ordinary chicks. Then again, Kelliher might well claim all of his designs are uncommon and all of his clients special.

It doesn't take long to get a sense of the diverse talents of the Norwell-based architect. All around the South Shore and down on the Cape, Kelliher and his fellow architects at Axiom Architects are building marvelous new homes from scratch or transforming dated, time-worn designs into something fresh and new. Another challenge calls for him to renovate an original Walter Gropius home in a way that remains respectful of the architectural philosophy while making it suit a contemporary lifestyle.

Trained in the era of Bauhaus, Kelliher's own preferences run to those sleek, spare lines but he knows that it's fallen out of favor with most Americans.

"They prefer something that is not so strict in form and allows them to express themselves more," he says. "Shingle Style has almost become our contemporary. It's interesting and warm, and we've had a lot of fun working in that style."

Unlike the rigid dictates of the Colonial, Shingle Style allows for infinite variation in the flow of rooms. Its more playful use of shape allows an architect to better fit the home to its site and take advantage of views. It can be adapted to the needs and desires of any homeowner.

Nowhere can that be seen to greater advantage than the summer home Kelliher designed for a retired developer and his wife. They wanted something that reflected and fit a more relaxed, informal lifestyle, but retained a sense of elegance.

"They wanted something casual, but not a summer camp," Kelliher said.

Tauer, the name on their quarter board, has all the casual elegance of a grand resort. The fact that it overlooks the 15th green of one of Cape Cod's premier golf courses adds special emphasis to the notion of summer living in high style. Even the stonework of the foundation and the stone walls reflect this air of refinement. These are not rustic, tumbledown, countrified walls. The stones have been carefully chosen and installed with all the care and pride of a Shaker or builder of a Renaissance cathedral.

Kelliher prides himself on designing homes that suit the present lives of its owners and can adapt to changing needs and lifestyles.





Photo by Steve Rodgers

He knows many older homeowners sell when they no longer want to deal with too many stairs and too many rooms. But in this case, he also had clients who hoped their home would be a magnet for their children and grandchildren, but with plenty of privacy for everyone.

"This is a home designed for one-story living, but it's four stories tall," he says. The master suite is located on the first floor and the other floors can be easily closed off when not in use. The lower level contains a home fitness center, a billiard and pinball area and a family entertainment area. The two upper stories are bedroom areas that can be easily closed off when unused.

The house was also designed to minimize the fact that it is situated relatively close to the street. A heavily landscaped berm provides visual privacy while a minimal use of windows on the street side of the ground floor seals off the street. But make no mistake; this is not a home that turns a blank face to the street. A tower reminiscent of a lighthouse adds a dramatic seaside touch to the home and a variety of shingle shapes and window styles give it textural interest.

The tower isn't mere ornamentation. It houses the wide staircase that leads to the upper stories. The window wall at the top floods the staircase with natural light.

Kelliher also points with pride to the fact that this house has no "back door" on the front. Whether you enter from the street side or the golf course side, you are entering in a way that welcomes the guest. As a purely practical matter there are two family entrance points - one from within the garage and one from the golf course side. These entrances allow those who are wet, sandy or muddy to shower off at an enclosed outdoor shower and

deposit dirty clothes in the laundry room and to offload groceries.

Inside there is virtually no wasted space in the entire house. Although the homeowners were dubious at first, Kelliher designed them a house with no living room and no formal dining room.

"Almost nobody uses them anymore," Kelliher says. "It can truly waste valuable living space."

Oddly, it takes a while to dawn on visitors that there is only the one great room in front of them. Each area of the great room has a strong focal point. Kelliher also plays with ceiling heights, doorway shapes, columns, wide decorative molding, inlaid wooden flooring, decorative floor tile and, in the case of the kitchen area, by a wooden peninsula topped by highly polished granite that is supported by richly detailed carved brackets to define space. The seating area gets special emphasis with its soaring, two-story ceiling and a fireplace with an 11-foot mantel and glass-shelved display cases on either side.

The kitchen area is a wonder of architectural positioning. The view of the kitchen is obscured by a solid wall as you enter the living area. The peninsula is set at an angle that allows the preparation areas to be obscured even when standing directly in front of the counter. Additionally, the angling of the peninsula discourages guests from entering the preparation area and getting underfoot. It is all quite intentional and extremely well thought out.

"When you are in the sitting area, you cannot see the kitchen clutter, but you can be in the kitchen and still be part of everything," Kelliher explains.

A huge oval screened porch also draws attention. The porch is accessed by wide French doors off the dining area. It repeats the theme of grand resort with its field stone walls and bluestone floor.



Photo by Mark Craig

Normally Kelliher places porches off to the side, to avoid blocking the view. In this case, the porch is directly in line with the spectacular views of the 15th green and the nearby water hazards.

"I put the porch in the main view only because it is used full-time when they are here, and they are only here in the summer," Kelliher says. The porch, the owner says, is the place she spends much of her time because of its commanding views and almost constant cooling breeze.

Kelliher's terraced patio becomes yet another living space. Stone walls topped with granite provide privacy and offer additional seating space during outdoor parties. Kelliher constructed a wide overhang to the first floor roofline to provide natural shading for humans and household furnishings alike.

"I wanted to create an outdoor living room that also provided some relief from the strong summer sun," Kelliher said.

The master suite lies just past the dining and kitchen areas. Here, a concave wall provides the perfect niche for an accent piece to draw attention down the hallway. It's the first indication that this is a very special place.

The suite contains a cozy parlor, perfect for working on the computer, watching television, reading a book or merely spending time in a more intimate space than the great room. The room is entered through double French doors that can be closed for even more privacy.

The large master bedroom also contains a rounded sitting area that is suffused with light all day.

"That's something that was important to her, especially," Kelliher says

The huge master bath area includes a private room with toilet and bidet, huge walk-in closets and spa tub positioned in front of a window wall in such a way that bathers must feel as though they are in a private forest glade.

The upper story contains a variety of guest rooms, sitting areas and even more splendid views.

To the left at the first landing are dormitory style bedrooms. The whimsical inte-



Photo by Mark Craig

Opposite page: The sunny golf course side of the home provides outdoor living right on the fairway. The large colonnaded overhang provides shade on the deck and for the interior.

Top: The interior of the Great Room highlights the full volume space for large family gatherings. The placement of the fireplace on this wall limits the hot, south light; the fireplace itself is a focal point which is also seen from the dining room and from the kitchen.

Above: From the Great Room the flow of space into the dining area and kitchen is defined by elegant columns. The raised counter screens any kitchen clutter from view.



Photo by Steve Rodgers



Photo by Steve Rodgers



Photo by Steve Rodgers

rior design makes this a very special retreat for the youngest grandchildren. It isn't hard to imagine giggling in the middle of the night. This space can be closed off to enable the grandchildren to sleep undisturbed while their parents and grandparents socialize downstairs

On the other hand, the Antico home in Cohasset is something old and something new. Devastated by fire in the 1990s, nothing of the historic Shingle Style home but the dramatic stone foundation with its open arches could be salvaged.

"We went out of our way to save the stonework," Kelliher says. "We estimate it was built in the mid-1800s."

One measure of Kelliher's success is that many people assume it's the same building it always was. Although much of the structure is different, Kelliher ascribes their misperception to the seamless way he was able to build upon the foundation, the way it completely integrates with its setting and its faithfulness to the exterior conventions of the style.

Inside, former owners would never recognize their own home. The original layout of the rooms resembled an old railroad flat with the rooms lined up like a series of individual cells. The challenge was to create something with more flow.

Top: The open, airy kitchen provides an ample working area for both cooks and kids.

Center Left: Muffy Antico showcases her heirloom china in the butler's pantry. Traditionally this room would be tucked away from view, but here it is in full view to highlight her treasures.

Center Right: The formal dining room floods light from the front windows, lightness and an airy sensibility are the themes here.

Opposite page: The formal living room provides a traditional room with a twist. Although the room is richly paneled and features a marble fireplace, certainly features, the room is flooded with light which flows smoothly across the painted paneling, through the arched openings, and to the rooms beyond.

Unlike the retiree's summer house, Paul and Muffy Antico were determined to have something more traditionally formal. They wanted a classic front entry, a very formal living room and a formal dining room as well. The Anticos also wanted a home that would be comfortable for a family with three young children. Kelliher created this with a design that clusters the formal space at the front of the house and balances it with a spacious family room and large kitchen area at the rear.

Built high on a hill with copious amounts of exposed ledge, the original home was set even higher atop a full one-story stone foundation. Kelliher theorizes this was done to access views of the Atlantic Ocean, views now obstructed by woods from all but the upper stories. Kelliher added a three-story tower to bring in more light and more opportunities to see the ocean and Minot's Light beyond.

set off the deep glow of the cherry wood and the handsome copper sink. A row of pendant stained glass lights adds another period touch. A spider web window set into the wall allows a glimpse of the pantry before even entering the dining room.

"That's my absolute favorite part of our house," Muffy Antico says of her pantry.

Beyond the dining room is the expansive family room with a giant Cohasset granite fireplace and huge window wall with a view of the back yard with its huge ledge boulders. A curved porch off the family room is perfect for catching summer breezes.

The oversized kitchen is a magnet during parties. Kelliher positioned the center island in such a way that guests cluster on one side or pass through without encroaching on the cook's space. At the other end, a children's playroom shares the living room wing.

Once again, Kelliher turned to thoughts of the future, lining up

closets on each floor that could be used as an elevator shaft in the future. Muffy Antico thinks sooner rather than later might be nice as it's a long trudge from ground level to the first floor when carrying grocery bags or children. Upstairs to the right is the children's wing, which can be closed off for privacy or sound-proofing. The wing has a U-shaped hallway so it can be entered from either the front staircase or the back stairs. The master suite is separated from the children's wing by the wide center hallway. A large laundry room is also located on this floor as well as a dark paneled, extremely masculine study for Paul Antico.

As you enter the

master suite, the first room you encounter is a rounded sitting room contained in the lighthouse tower. Here you get your first glimpses of the ocean. Beyond that is the master bedroom, again with a granite fireplace, the capacious master bath and a curved balcony located over the screened porch.

The very top floor is known as "the viewing room." It's not hard to understand why - even without the telescope it's easy to see Minot Light and its classic 1-4-3 beacon. Locals say it means "I love you."

Here all the ceiling angles come into play, creating a wonderland of nooks and crannies. Although the children are young now, it's easy to imagine them vying for control of the space as they get older.

This is a big house with many rooms, and although the Anticos bought it after construction had begun, Muffy Antico labels it "perfect."

"It's very formal, but I told them I wanted it very usable," she said. "The floor plan is great and we use all of it." •SSM•



Photo by Steve Rodgers

In order to create a classic front entry, Kelliher had to reorient the front door. Because the door doesn't line up completely with the stairs, the owners chose an oversized dramatic arched door and sidelight that is all glass and muntins.

Inside, Kelliher used the sort of formal paneling one associates with English country estates, but painted white for a more informal seaside look. Directly ahead when you enter is an imposing staircase with barley twist spindles and two display niches at the first landing.

To the right is the formal living room. A large fireplace at one end is balanced off with a deep bowed window at the other end. Another row of windows looks out onto the wraparound front porch.

To the left is the formal dining room. Kelliher nestled this into the tower at one end and created an oval niche at the far end to make this an unusual oval room. From the dining table, one can see directly into the butler's pantry.

A traditional wall cupboard was designed to display the owners' china and crystal. Cobalt blue and white tiles in the back splash