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Down-Sized Dream Home



After her husband died a few years ago, Donna McGee felt it was time to downsize from the large home where they had raised their family. However, she didn't want to leave the friendly Cohasset neighborhood she'd lived in since 1965. Fortunately, she discovered that her former home was actually situated on a property that consisted of two lots. She decided to sell her house and build a smaller place that suited her better. Axiom Architect's Jim Kelliher worked with McGee to design a home that was comfortable and compact, yet equipped with a wide open floor plan on the main level to provide an inviting entertaining spot and enough space upstairs to accommodate her very important overnight guests—her grandchildren!

"I wanted the house to have a cottagey look," says McGee. "I also wanted it to have character, so emphasis on unique details was important," she says. One such detail is the red stripe on the roof.



Due to the openness of the floor plan, McGee's house seems larger than it actually is. "People say to me all the time, 'I thought you were building a small house? This isn't small!' It truly is small, but it seems much bigger," she says. Another element important to McGee was that the house be filled with light; the kitchen's custom design yellow cabinetry, butter colored walls, and light bamboo floors help achieve this.



The lot is long and very narrow, so the garage, an essential part of the property to McGee, could only fit if it was built in front of the house. The decorative pergola made of Alaskan cedar is another one of the home's unique details; it also helps mask the garage.





(top) McGee calls the nook located at the top of the stairs, the “book tower” or “tower room.” A favorite spot for reading, from here it’s possible to see the ocean. (above) The beds in the second floor guest room, designed and decorated for McGee’s grandchildren, are equipped by built-in shelves and book lights. “The kids just love the room, they feel very safe and cozy here,” she says.