

Today, tomorrow *and always*

Luxurious lakeside cottage designed
with multiple generations in mind



By Kate Bavelock · Photography by Dan Cutrona



Doesn't every Cape Cod dream include a lot of laughter and a house full of loved ones? But if there is a line for the bathroom for morning showers, or if grandpa is kept awake by a crying baby or a twenty-something coming in at midnight, reality can fall short of the dream. According to local architects and builders, creating homes that bring together multiple generations while providing them with spaces to relax comfortably is a huge trend on Cape Cod. These homes are being designed to provide large gathering spaces for the clan while also offering privacy, quiet, and separate bedroom suites so that generations can keep different hours, pursue different interests, and still enjoy one wonderful vacation home together.

One great example of this trend is a private home on Lake Wequaquet built several years ago for a retired couple with two grown daughters and two grandchildren. The

home was designed by Brown, Lindquist, Fenuccio & Raber Architects Inc., and built by Cape Associates Inc. The architects' mission was to design a lakefront cottage with generous living space of 6,000 square feet for three generations of family to enjoy together, without the appearance of overwhelming mass or bulk, while capturing lake views for every important room. The key to their success was careful planning and a lot of 3D modeling to get the siting, massing of forms, and rooflines and elevations just right to maximize the views and space while ensuring the house fit into a mixed neighborhood with more modest homes.

According to Rick Fenuccio, one of the principal architects on the project, the clients approached the firm after buying one and one half acres of land in Centerville with 200 feet of lake frontage. The team then entered into a 10-month design process.

"Building a new home was something I never wanted to do in my life again because I've done enough building projects," the homeowner recalls. "Because of the multitude of decisions to get it right and the enormous amount of time on every level of detail, I know when you build a new house you can forever second-guess yourself. I didn't want to walk in the door every time and see something that I wish I had done differently. But my family talked me into it. We had looked at a great number of properties and just were not finding a house that was right, so we decided to build something that would work for our family."

On this project, the first order of business was to capitalize on the home's relationship to the lake views. "It evolved as a linear design scheme to capture water views from almost every important room," says Fenuccio.

The second major task was to break up the scale of the home so all the client's needs could be met without creating a behemoth-sized structure. This was also important to the homeowners. "Having lived in Northern Virginia, we have seen a lot of McMansions," the homeowner says, "and we did not want to build something that looked like a very large monolith."

According to Tom Swensson, the other lead architect and project manager, the firm came up with a design featuring four main components: the main part of the house; a master bedroom wing; a small one-story wing (which they



call the “knuckle” because it is angled back from the main structure to reduce mass and parallel the lake front); and the garage wing, which is broken into two sections and houses a generous bedroom suite above. Each of the four components has different rooflines and heights to break up the scale. Another trick, Fenuccio says, was adding a curved roof to the third garage bay, which softens the roofline and helps to bring the mass down to an attractive scale.

“One of the early things we keyed in on,” says Fenuccio, “was to use cottage-style materials and to provide contrasting materials, such as vertical boards, cedar and stone. Cedar on the front provides balance, a welcoming appearance, and breaks up the mass of the facade.”

The architects’ 3D puzzle also included some concentrated thinking about how to use the slight slope from the road to the lake. One of the early requests included a walkout basement that could capitalize on the slope where the back of the house was lower than the front. However, they found that would have raised the front door elevation enough to require entry stairs. Since one of the client’s priorities was to be able to stay in the house through the years with everything they needed on the first floor, going up steps to enter the house was out of the question. Ultimately the design was compromised to include an extra deep foundation, high ceilings in the basement, and full windows—but with a bulkhead entry—so that



the basement is bright, spacious, and every bit as inviting as the other levels of the house. The basement holds a playroom for the grandkids, a large sitting area, and a game room with a billiard table.

“The elevations were complex, and we spent a lot of time managing the site considerations,” says Fenuccio. The architects also used different levels to enhance the strong indoor-outdoor connection. “From the deck, to the patio, to the lawn, to the lake—we like to make the transitions

to be interesting,” he says. In addition to lake access with a seasonal pier, the residence has a private tennis court as well as a basketball hoop—all the fun of a summer camp but with an incredibly luxurious bunkhouse! While the grandkids are still too young for tennis, they make good use of the court as a fenced-in play space. There is also a wooded area, which provides a great adventure spot for the little ones. Though only toddlers, the grandkids already beg to go to the house on the Cape,



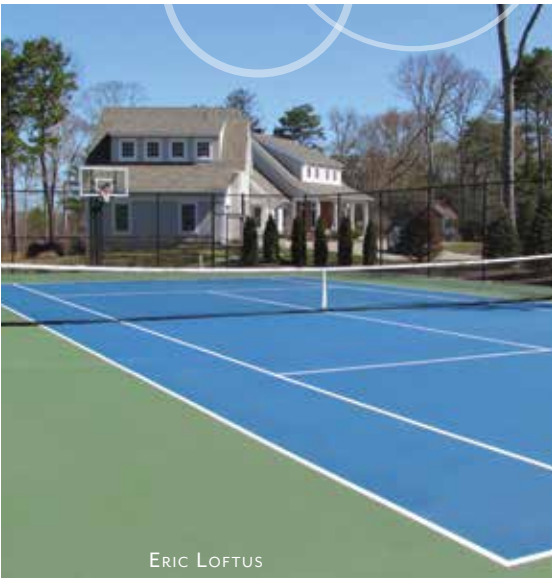
and as they grow the house will be the perfect setting to build many more happy childhood summer memories.

In the main section of the house, the living room, dining room and kitchen create one generous space, an open floor plan that is truly the heart of the home. While large enough for entertaining a crowd, the space feels comfortable, warm and inviting. The architects decided the living and dining room area, with its 10-foot ceilings, called out for vertical board paneling the height of the tops of the doors to bring down the scale and create a more comfortable feel.

“I describe the house as a one-room cottage with attached bedrooms,” the homeowner says with a laugh, pointing out how the large open center is surrounded by private and separate bedroom suites. “Multigenerational living sounds great, but you really do need spaces to be together and spaces to get away from one another.”

With the master suite connected to this open and active space, the architects added a home office to buffer the master bedroom from the public areas of the house. Again, the design took into consideration mobility needs as the couple gets older, incorporating extra-wide doorways and barrier-free floor plans, and siting all the necessities on the first floor.

A few more design elements stand out on this project. Solar tube skylights bring great light into the pantry and several closets, all of



which have no exterior windows. One can walk into those rooms without needing to turn on a light, even on overcast days. The pantry is a neat solution to a design problem created where two wings met, leaving a small, awkward space off the kitchen. Built-out as a fully fitted walk-in pantry, with the skylight providing daylight, the space offers a great deal of extra storage off the kitchen, a valuable plus since the inclusion of a huge bank of windows overlooking the lake along the kitchen wall limited cabinet space. A double kitchen island with drawers on both sides also adds a generous amount of storage.

Rich Bryant of Cape Associates shares another perspective on the concept of multigenerational vacation home building. “We used many low-maintenance materials—such as a 50-year roof shingle and trim boards and stainless steel deck rails that require little to no upkeep and painting—because when we think of a Cape Cod destination residence to be enjoyed by future generations, we want to think of a place that doesn’t require a lot of upkeep. We wanted to build this so that someday the grandchildren don’t inherit a dilapidated building.”

The homeowners agree this was an important consideration. The husband describes himself as a fanatic for designing for easy maintenance. “We spent a lot of time looking for materials that would provide low maintenance and low cost of operation,” he says. “After all, this is a cottage that you come to to enjoy.”



“Yes, we built this house for our kids and grandkids,” he adds. “But it is one of those circumstances where we really do get to enjoy our kids’ inheritance but still leave something very special for them in the future.”

Now that the project is complete, the homeowner is confident he and his family did the right thing several years back when they made the decision to build anew. “At the end of the day,” he says, “there’s almost nothing I would have done differently.”

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THE FOLLOWING BUSINESSES DESIGNED AND BUILT THE HOME IN THIS ARTICLE.

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