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# DESIGN

new england



*classic*  
**RENOVATIONS**

Reviving the region's architectural heritage



**TAKING FLIGHT** • A stately Georgian house connects to its first-class garden with a bold yet sensitive addition



**A** BUTTERFLY ON A STONE. THAT IS HOW Andrew M. Sidford, principal of Andrew Sidford Architects in Newburyport, Massachusetts, perceives the addition he designed for a 1771 Georgian-style house. “This is a beautiful old building with a strong traditional history,” says Sidford, “and we wanted something that would add to that but take nothing away.”

ARCHITECTURE: ANDREW SIDFORD ARCHITECTS

Like many of Newburyport’s historic houses that date to the town’s 18th- and early 19th-century heyday as a mercantile and shipping mecca, the three-story house is formidable both in size and architecture. The owners, a married couple who have lived in the house for 17 years, undertook a major kitchen renovation three years after they moved in. They engaged a contractor and The Kennebec Company, designers and cabinetmakers in Bath, Maine, and turned out a space that was a huge improvement over the *Brady Bunch*

**THE STEEL RAFTERS** are exposed so the pavilion “looks as light and delicate as possible,” says architect Andrew Sidford, who designed the outdoor space as part of a kitchen renovation for a 1771 Georgian house.





**RATHER THAN STAINLESS, Sidford faced the 13-foot-long island with steel that has the original mill finish, protected by a sealant, for a rougher, matte surface. The upper countertop is bird's-eye maple, while the work top is black granite.**

brown and white Formica kitchen it replaced.

"We were quite happy," says the wife, "until we started to see Andy Sidford's kitchens. Then I realized how short we had come."

Handsome as the existing kitchen was, it didn't relate at all to the outdoors. "We were isolated from the garden," says the wife, who takes her horticulture seriously and has created a gorgeous expanse of flowers, vegetables, shrubs, and trees around a formal back terrace.

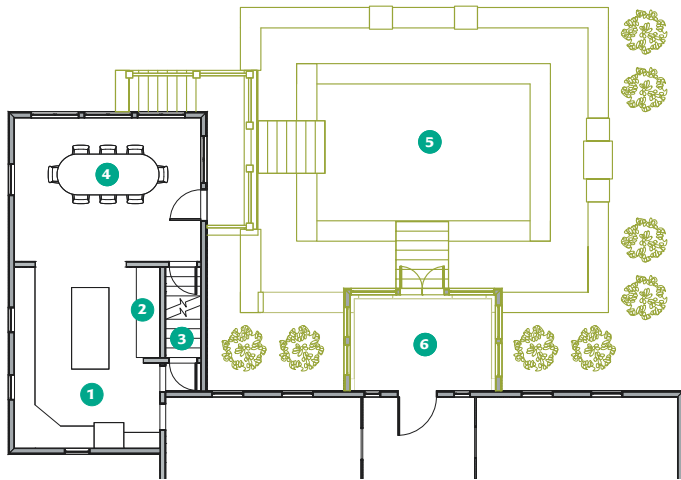
"You had this beautiful old house and garden the

owner created," says Sidford, "but there was a disconnect between them. You couldn't see or find the garden."

A lack of easy access to the terrace was only half the problem. Because the south-facing outdoor space was framed by the three-story white clapboard facade on two sides, "it became a solar oven," says the wife. "It was too hot to use three months of the year. We really never used it after June 1 — and then might rediscover it in September."

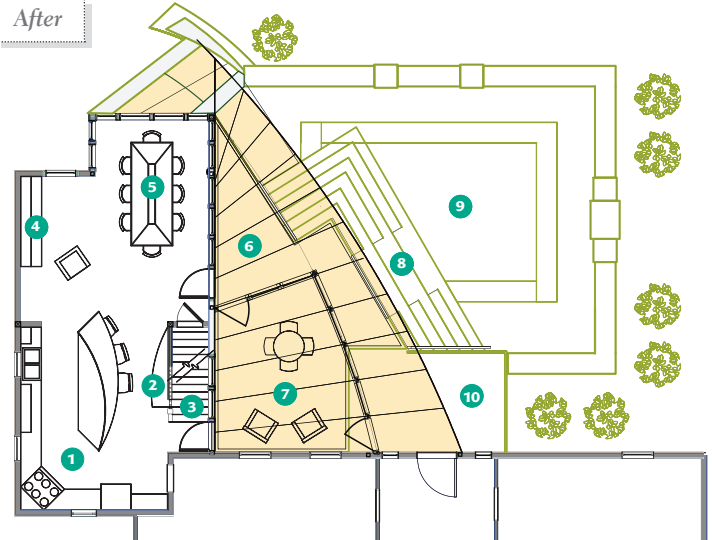
Now the back of the house is gently cooled by the

Before



- 1 KITCHEN
- 2 8-FOOT-LONG CABINET
- 3 ENCLOSED STAIRCASE
- 4 DINING AREA
- 5 TERRACE
- 6 SUN PORCH

After



- 1 KITCHEN
- 2 BUILT-IN BENCH
- 3 OPEN STAIRCASE
- 4 8-FOOT-LONG CABINET
- 5 DINING AREA
- 6 PAVILION/ENTRY
- 7 PAVILION/SCREENED PORCH
- 8 PAVILION/STEPS
- 9 TERRACE
- 10 NEW DECK ON EXISTING FOUNDATION

expansive wing of a curved steel pavilion that hovers above a new screened porch and protected entry. The structure is a complex piece of engineering, adeptly assembled by Wilson Brothers Construction, steel fabricators in Salisbury, Massachusetts. “Their work is wonderful, artistic, and precise,” says the husband, who collaborated closely with them on the project.

A series of rafters of varying lengths and pitches cantilevers out over a curved steel beam. “It all lands on two columns, so everything looks like it floats,” says Sidford.

“Because this eliminated the solar reflecting surfaces,” says the husband, “even on the hottest days, the terrace is cooler.” But Sidford also considered what the pavilion could contribute to the house’s year-round comfort. The roof pops up at intervals where glazed inserts allow the low winter sun into the porch and then into the kitchen. “There is shade in the summer, so they need less air conditioning,” says Sidford, “and in winter, more light and warmth enters through the windows.”



**A FORMAL BRICK WALK** leads from an orchard to the house, where the kitchen and pavilion now feel at one with the landscape. The pavilion roof pops up where glazed inserts allow light into the space below. The steps create a stadium seating effect for outdoor entertaining on the terrace. The garden wall terminates with a large granite block the homeowners selected from a quarry in Chelmsford, Massachusetts.



Inside, Sidford moved an 8-foot-long floor-to-ceiling Kennebec bank of cupboards to the far end of the room, allowing him to take down the wall behind it, exposing the existing staircase and new clerestory windows.

A breakfast-room partition also came down. Sidford then added a bump-out to the far end of the space. It measures a mere 50 square feet, but lined with windows designed to look “extruded from the old house,” it feels much bigger, says Sidford. “The corner is meant to have the pattern and rhythm of the house but with a newer vocabulary.” Furnished with a Sidford-designed 10-foot-long-by-4-foot-wide tiger maple table with cherry connectors and a glass insert in the center, it is an elegant dining space — or a place where the couple’s 10-year-old son can build a city out of Legos.

The focal point of the room, however, is the curved 13-foot-long island designed

**A FLOOR-TO-CEILING cabinet was moved to the far end of the kitchen so the staircase could be exposed. New clerestory windows bring light from the pavilion into the room.**



**THE PAVILION ROOF provides protection from rain and sun for the rear door to the original house as well as for the side entry to the kitchen and the screened porch.**

to reflect the lines of the pavilion. Wilson Brothers was called upon to form the sleek steel arc of the base, creating a piece of sculpture that slices through the room, both linking and dividing the old and the new. The work side of the island is fitted with new custom cabinets by Kennebec — complete with half-crescent-shaped drawers to accommodate the curved frame.

“This project addresses a big question in New England,” says Sidford. “You have an old house, so how do you renovate with balance and in a respectful way appropriate for now?”

“We respect and love the old house,” says the husband, “and this addition makes it seem even grander. On one level, it is hyper-modern; on the other, it is just organic. The contrast is unapologetic.”

“This is such an amazing house,” adds the wife, “it deserved something like this.” ■