



A Cape Grows Up



Hemmed in by a brook, a septic system and setback requirements, this remodel was forced upward on mostly the same footprint

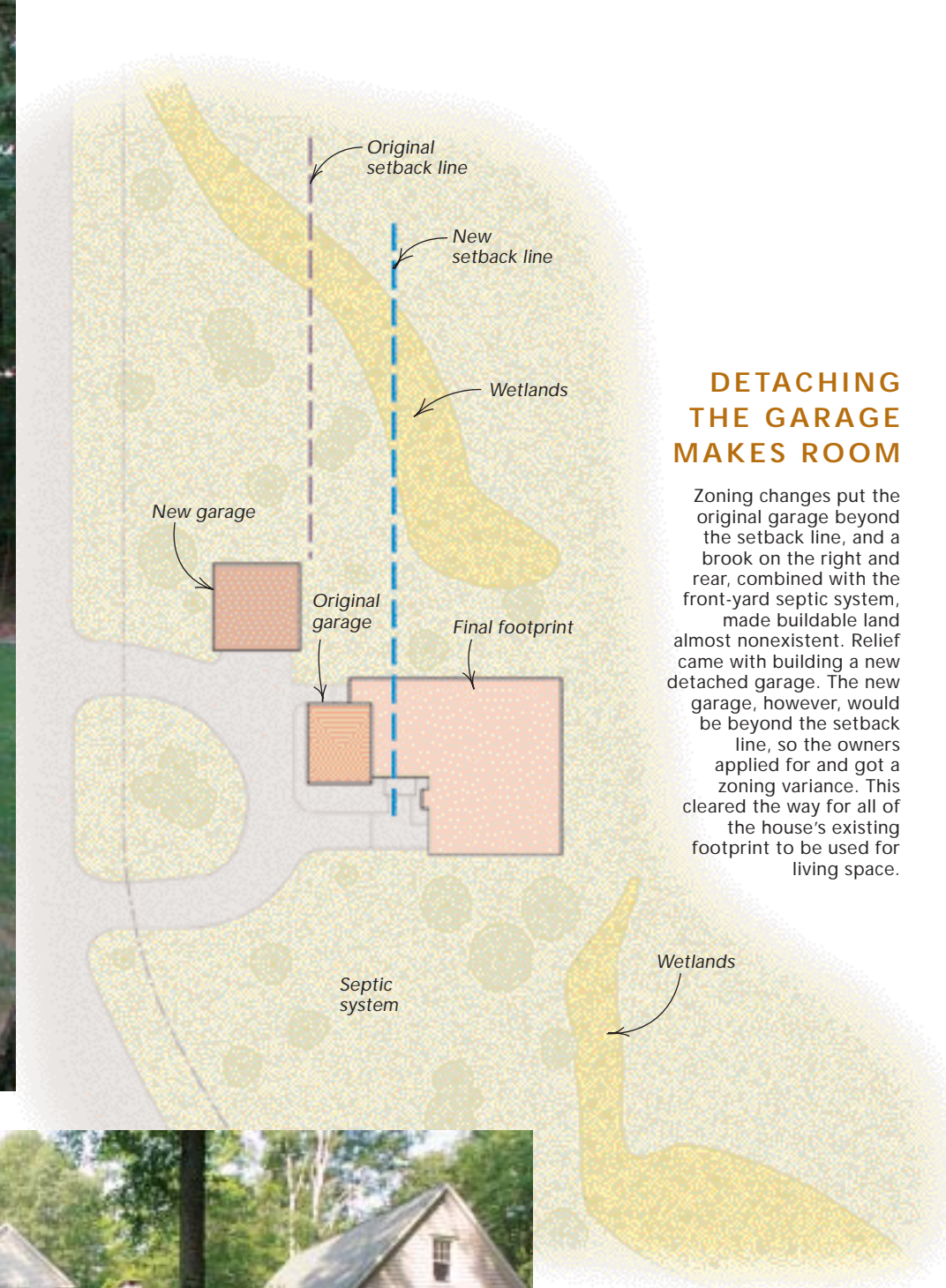
BY LOUIS DIBERARDINO

Michele and Ed Howe were quickly outgrowing their 1950s Cape Cod-style home (photo left). Their two young sons needed extra room, and the house's tired-looking interior and exterior needed a face-lift. Rather than move, they decided to renovate (photo above). As a result, Bob Parisot and I teamed up, as we had done in the past on similar projects, to develop a new design for the Howes.

Their wish list consisted of a new master-bedroom suite, a family room, an eat-in kitchen, a new dining room and a more-formal entry. In addition, they wanted a two-car garage and an outdoor play area for their growing family.

Topography and zoning affect design

Not long into my first meeting with Bob and the homeowners, it was clear that adding on to the house in any direction would be difficult. The house sat on a roughly triangular 2½-acre lot (site-plan drawing, facing page). To the rear and wrapping around the right side were



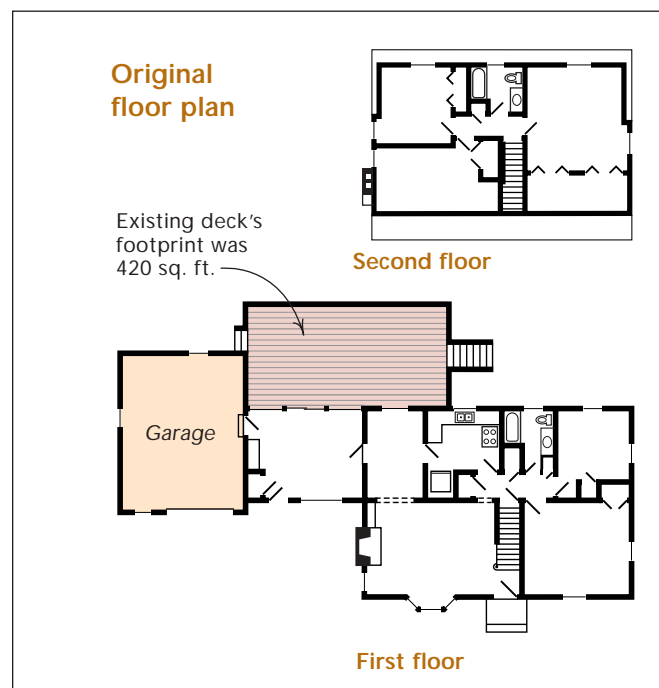
DETACHING THE GARAGE MAKES ROOM

Zoning changes put the original garage beyond the setback line, and a brook on the right and rear, combined with the front-yard septic system, made buildable land almost nonexistent. Relief came with building a new detached garage. The new garage, however, would be beyond the setback line, so the owners applied for and got a zoning variance. This cleared the way for all of the house's existing footprint to be used for living space.



It's a beautiful backyard, but it's not buildable. Rock outcroppings and a brook lined with native wetland plants make up the backyard. A new deck, two-story addition and detached garage make the most of the buildable space on an unfriendly lot. Photo taken at B on floor plan.

ADD 1340 SQ. FT. OF LIVING SPACE ON A 420-SQ. FT. FOOTPRINT

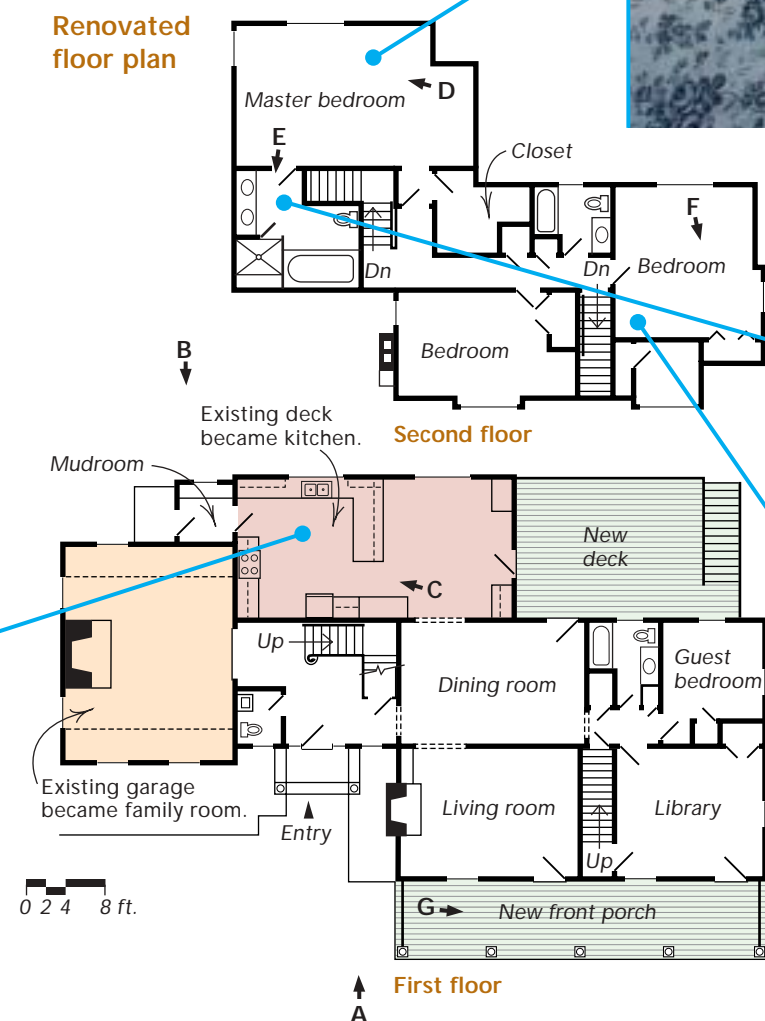


Adding a new detached garage enabled the old garage to become a family room. The existing deck was removed, and a two-story addition was built in its place, containing a first-floor eat-in kitchen and a second-floor master suite.

Photos taken at lettered positions.

North

Renovated floor plan



Privacy for the parents. The master-bedroom suite is separated from the children's rooms by a hallway. The 10-in-12 pitch roof makes for a dramatic ceiling. Windows in the dormer splash midday sun on the bedroom floor. Photo taken at D on floor plan.



Beneath the main-gable addition, light filters into a wainscot-tiled master bath. It's focused around a built-in tub with recurring frame-and-panel surround and complemented by a generous shower. Photo taken at E on floor plan.



New dormer lights a cozy nook. In addition to adding a window where there was none, the children's bedroom dormer creates a useful, adaptable space. There's extra storage on both sides of the dormer. Photo taken at F on floor plan.



It used to be a deck. The removal of the deck made space for a two-story addition. Moving the kitchen to where the deck had been allowed the original dining room to double in size. The master bedroom is above the new kitchen. Photo taken at C on floor plan.

rolling hills, rock outcroppings and a brook/wetland lined with native plants (photo p. 71). The lot proved equally unsuitable as a play area for the Howes' small children.

In the front yard (the site's only level lawn area) was the septic system, on which we couldn't encroach and which needed to be enlarged if the project moved ahead. To top it off, increasingly stringent zoning regulations now placed the house's left side within the building setback area. Almost any expansion to the house would require a zoning variance, which was typically hard to come by. To improve the

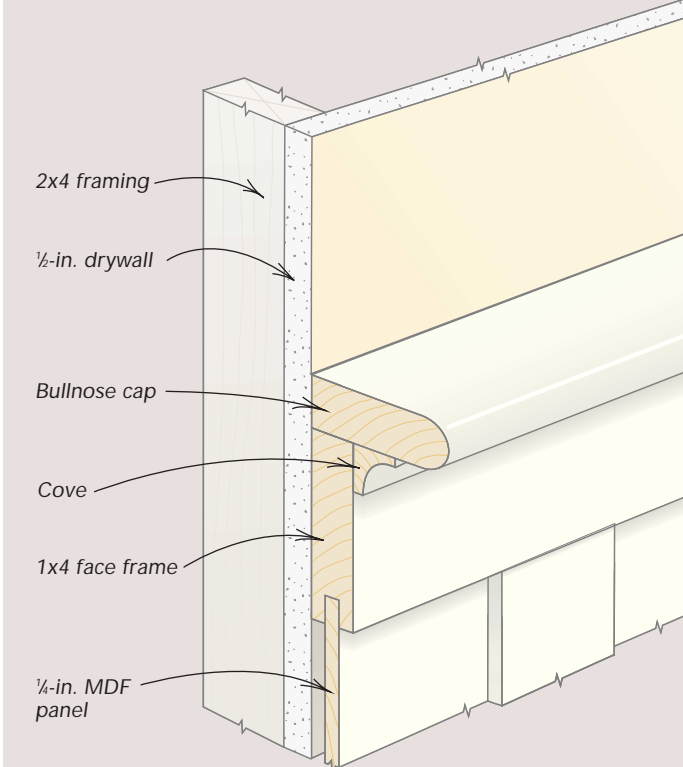
odds of getting a variance, our strategy centered on encroaching into the setback area and wetlands as little as possible.

Taking advantage of the original footprint

Relief from zoning restrictions came when we got the variance, allowing us to build a detached accessory building (in this case, a two-car garage) closer to the property line than we could build the main house's addition. This breakthrough with zoning allowed us to use all the existing footprint (including the garage and rear deck) as living

Shopmade frame-and-panel wainscot

Wall sections were prefabricated, then installed and trimmed in the field. The 1/4-in. MDF plywood field panels were let into a slotted 3/4-in. face frame for a look similar to the kitchen-cabinet doors.



space in the new design (floor plan, p. 72). The original garage, den and deck were demolished. To replace the den and deck, we built a two-story, front-facing gable addition with an eat-in kitchen on the first floor (photo p. 72) and a master bedroom and bath (photos left, p. 73) on the second floor. The new kitchen took over the old deck space, and the dining room more than doubled in size by annexing the original kitchen area.

On the left side of the house, a new family room replaced the original garage. To the right of the main gable, on the original Cape section, are two new shed dormers. Outside, they break up the house's long Cape roof by adding detail; inside, they bring light and space to the children's bedrooms (photo bottom left, p. 73). Just below the

dormers, a sweeping full-width front porch extends from the original roof (photo below).

The only unresolved issue was the play area: The low-lying, uneven terrain made the rear yard undesirable. In the end, everyone agreed the level front lawn would work fine. It faces a quiet street on the site's sunny southwest corner. No one doubted that the small compromise of accepting a front-yard play area was a better choice than moving. □

Louis DiBerardino is an architect and the owner of Studio DiBerardino in New Canaan, CT. Bob Parisot is an architect and the owner of Parisot Design in Redding, CT. Photos by Chris Green, except where noted.

The front yard becomes the backyard. A comfortable front porch steps out to the only large, flat area on the property. Woods, wetlands and uneven terrain elsewhere make the front yard the obvious choice for informal family events. Photo taken at G on floor plan.

