



Floriculture and History

*A centuries-old home stays rooted in the past with a
landscape plan planted for the future.*

By Julie Craven Wagner | Photography by Mike Crane

There are homes that tell stories and gardens that whisper them, and on a quiet road in Chatham, the two do so in perfect harmony. This antique home, dating back to the 1800s, has stood the test of time not just because of its bones, but because of the care given to its surroundings. Thanks to the long-standing partnership between homeowners Kevin and Kendra and landscape designer Shayne Sibley (née Watson) of Chatham’s Bedworks Design, Inc., the property’s grounds now reflect both historical reverence and botanical ingenuity.

Sibley has worked with the couple for more than 15 years, witnessing the property’s transformation in two acts: the first, a modest refresh when the old house was still intact; the second, a full-scale reinvention following a historic renovation by the team at Polhemus Savery DaSilva. Throughout both, Sibley served as caretaker of the landscape’s evolving identity—one grounded in heritage, yet unafraid of thoughtful enhancements.

“The house was lifted and completely redone with amazing sensitivity to its original character,” Sibley says. “We did the same with the landscaping. When the construction began, we actually dug up, removed and healed-in all the plantings Kevin wanted to save, especially his old Rose of Sharon shrubs. There was a lot of sentimentality attached to them.”

Indeed, sentiment is woven into nearly every corner of the property. A standout Catalpa tree anchors the front yard, its broad canopy casting dappled shade over a circular clam shell driveway—a design element that feels both intentional and quintessentially Cape Cod. The drive, reimagined under Sibley’s direction, now gently curves around the Catalpa, framing the home with the kind of elegance that feels like it’s always been there.

Kevin and Kendra’s aesthetic skews classic Cape, and their devotion to tradition is perhaps most apparent in their affection for hydrangeas. The landscape is a living homage to the flower in all its variety: *Hydrangea macrophylla* ‘Nantucket Blue’ bloom abundantly along the front, while tree-form hydrangeas add architectural dimension. ‘Endless Summer’ varieties bring brightness to the drive, and ‘Cityline’ hydrangeas—smaller, pinker cousins—grace the side garden. In the shaded rear yard, a generous bed of white ‘Annabelle’ hydrangeas adds a cooling softness to the scene.

But the hydrangeas are just the beginning. The property also features a curated blend of ornamental trees and heritage plantings—some original to the home, others thoughtfully introduced. “We added a Japanese Maple near the patio, a Vitex that blooms in August when nothing else is in flower, and a gorgeous crepe





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myrtle—a nod to the homeowners’ Connecticut roots,” Shayne says. “That one was a special request, and with our changing climate, it’s thriving here now.”

The layers of new and old converge seamlessly. A corner garden where many of the original plantings were temporarily stored during construction now features a newly installed ivory silk tree, surrounded by ‘Endless Summer’ hydrangeas and a compact rhododendron. In the backyard, a Norway spruce offers privacy from a neighboring lot, softened by sweeps of ornamental grasses and boxwood hedges.

There’s also whimsy in the mix. A fan trellis—designed by Sibley and hand-built by a local craftsman she sourced—supports a romantically unruly ‘New Dawn’ rose, and a trellised honeysuckle takes center stage between the refurbished red doors of a tiny

original shed. “It’s one of Kevin’s favorite spots,” Sibley says. “That red color became a unifying theme—they even used it for the back door of the house.” Another shed, affectionately known for the collection of buoys that adorn its side, brings a note of playfulness to the grounds.

Nestled alongside the house, a new portico shades a gracious sitting area dressed in wicker and filled with light. Just beyond, a stone terrace invites casual entertaining, punctuated by an adjacent built-in firepit and flanked by dining and lounging zones. “We didn’t do the hardscape ourselves, but I worked closely with the team to make sure the landscape would nest naturally into these outdoor rooms,” Sibley explains.

Throughout the property, thoughtful details echo the home’s past while embracing the present.



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A pair of established trees in the rear yard—left undisturbed during renovation—were trimmed and preserved, their canopies offering shelter to newer plantings. Ferns and Hakone grasses thrive in dappled light near the foundation, offering texture and movement. Window boxes, a personal passion of Kendra’s, brim with seasonal color and provide a welcome burst of joy to walkers passing by. “She says they’re for the neighborhood,” Shayne shares. “It’s a walking community, and she wants everything to be beautiful for others, not just for themselves.”

Perhaps that sums up the spirit of the entire project—a landscape not just designed, but deeply lived in and shared. Sibley’s long relationship with Kevin and Kendra is evident in every decision, from the conservation of mature plantings to the selection of more modern, climate-sensitive additions. “They give me full creative license,” she says. “They trust me to do what’s right for the house and the land. And at the same time, there’s room for fun. It’s a classic Chatham home—but with little surprises here and there.”

That balance—of reverence and reinvention, of structure and spontaneity—is what elevates the project from a simple restoration to a living work of art. In Sibley’s capable and strong hands, the garden hasn’t just grown—it has evolved, in step with the home’s history and the homeowners’ lives. And just like the hydrangeas that have come to define it, it promises to keep blooming for generations to come. 🏡

Julie Craven Wagner is the editor of Cape Cod HOME.

