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FAMILY TRADITION

Blending the past with the present, architect Robert Hammond turned a narrow Annapolis lot into a waterfront haven for parents and kids

By Edward Gunts

Photography by Anne Gummerson



Annapolis architect Robert Hammond (above, left) designed a shingle-style house for Stephanie and Tom Bedard (above) on Lake Ogleton with a wide back porch (opposite) and a master suite balcony fronting the water. Gambrel roofs and dormer windows reduce the home's apparent size.

In most neighborhoods, there's one house where everybody wants to hang out. The place to be in the waterfront community of Bay Ridge, part of Annapolis, Maryland, is the home of Stephanie and Tom Bedard and their three young sons, Brett, Benjamin and Beau. With a big back porch overlooking Lake Ogleton, it is where kids come to play lacrosse or swim, and grownups

stop over for cookouts and weekend beer blasts.

Water-related features range from a trampoline that floats in the lake to a dock for two boats. "It's all for

Architecture: Robert G. Hammond, AIA, Hammond Wilson Architects, Annapolis, Maryland

Interior Design: Cathy Belkov, Interior Concepts, Annapolis, Maryland





From the street, the three-story house presents a quiet, asymmetrical front (opposite) with gambrel roofs. Inside the curved bay framing the recessed entrance is a library (above) that doubles as a guest room.

them," says Tom Bedard, the owner of a human resources firm, referring to his sons, ages 11, 8 and 5. "We have a ball here. We have as much fun as they do." The door is always open to friends and visitors, adds Stephanie, a stay-at-home mom. "We're very casual. We love it here. Our neighbors are our best friends."

Designed by Annapolis architect Robert G. Hammond of Hammond Wilson Architects, the 5,500-square-foot house is the Bedards' second residence in the same location. It replaced a 1980s contemporary that was damaged by Hurricane Isabel in 2003. The Bedards had lived in Bay Ridge since 1996 and came to love both the community and the waterfront setting, a quiet cove near where the Severn River meets the Chesapeake Bay, just minutes from the heart of Annapolis.

Knowing that their first house wasn't designed to withstand flooding, but wanting to remain in the neighborhood, they had started planning a replacement even before the old one was damaged. Under Maryland's "critical area" requirements, they were allowed to erect a new home on the property as long as it complied with the state's regulations for flood-

prone areas. According to Hammond, one of the toughest challenges was accommodating the family's space needs while keeping the house in scale with the neighborhood. "It's all about connecting the inside with the waterfront," he explains.

The 75-foot-wide-by-280-foot-long lot, with the narrow end facing the lake, limited the architect's options for maximizing exposure to the water. At the same time, a county height limit stipulated that the replacement house had to be less than 35 feet tall, limiting the ceiling heights on any given level. To complicate matters even more, one of the side yards was considered part of the flood plain because it contained a tidal marsh, further reducing the area where a house could go. Hammond, who has designed more than 50 waterfront residences in and around Annapolis, came up with a three-story house that appears rooted in the land even as it rises above the flood zone, and incorporates three sump pumps and other measures to keep flood waters out.

From the street, the shingle-style house presents a relatively subdued face with a curved wall partially framing a recessed entrance. The most distinctive fea-





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ture is the gambrel roof, which is actually comprised of two gambrels intersecting at 90-degree angles like a cruciform. Hammond explains that he chose the sloping forms because they offered a way to provide "more volume" under the eaves while enabling him to break down the apparent mass of the building.

The back side opens up to the water with generous porches extending the living space outdoors and large windows letting in light and views. To avoid making the house a stark glass box, the architect shaped the façade into a series of shifting planes and recessed the windows under the eaves and behind columns and railings to minimize their visual impact. This façade is the more formal of the two, symmetrical compared to the studied asymmetry of the street side. "The idea was to put the main living areas on the back to take advantage of the water views," Hammond explains. "The back is actually the front, the way we look at it. It has a great view."

Inside, Hammond worked with interior designer Cathy Belkov of Interior Concepts in Annapolis to create a progression of spaces, starting with less frequently used rooms that don't need waterfront views and ending with everyday rooms that rely on them. From the front door, a hallway extends past a library that doubles as a guest bedroom. It leads to a dining



A curving stairway (opposite) provides a gracious transition from the living spaces on the first floor to the bedrooms and kids' playroom on the second floor. In the family room at the back of the house, a corner fireplace anchors a conversation area and wood cabinets conceal a built-in home entertainment center. Trim and woodwork inspired by houses in New England and colors complementary to the Chesapeake Bay enhance comfortable traditional furnishings.



The back side of the house (these pages) opens to the lake through windows and French doors. Living and dining areas occupy a large, open space next to the kitchen (opposite, top), which was designed by Blue Heron Kitchen & Bath Design Center in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Each function is differentiated by coffered ceilings and carpets rather than walls that would block water views.



area that has been converted to a billiard room and a gently curving stairway to the bedrooms upstairs. Past the stairs, the house opens to several conversation areas, a dining space and a large, open kitchen. The various functions are differentiated by coffered ceilings, area rugs and furniture arrangements rather than walls that would have blocked water views. The result is a space that can be used as several distinct areas or one large room that spills outside.

On the second level, the water side is reserved for a master bedroom suite, including a study, a sitting area and a balcony. Also on this level are the sons' bedrooms and their combination playroom and study area, which boasts the colors and Terrapin logo of the University of Maryland, where the Bedards met as undergrads. Along one side is a "lacrosse wall," designed so the boys can throw balls against it. "Most parents would say 'don't play ball in the house,'" Tom Bedard jokes. "We encourage it."

Though stately and well organized, this is also a playful house with whimsical touches. On the third level, for example, a "dead zoo" displays stuffed lions and other wild animals that Stephanie's grandfather shot while on safari in Africa. The rest of this flexible, attic-like space is a play area for the kids. It provides access to a roof deck that offers views ranging from Maryland's domed capitol to the twin spans of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

The Bedards, who are in their late 30s, kept little from their previous residence, asking Belkov to select furnishings that would hold up to heavy wear while fitting in with the traditional character of Hammond's architecture. The interior designer



Framed by columns, a wide porch with rocking chairs (these pages) overlooks the back lawn and boats in the lake. An informal dining area off the porch (opposite) incorporates a window that serves as a pass-through from the kitchen. French doors framing the second-floor master bedroom (following pages) open to a balcony with sweeping waterside views.



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responded by creating a look that she calls "updated traditional, with an English country feel." In selecting room colors, the Bedards were inspired by the architecture of Nantucket and Vermont and gravitated toward rooms with pale, creamy yellows accented by crisp, white trim. They were also drawn to the wheat tones of tidal grasses around the Chesapeake Bay and the blue-green hues of Lake Ogleton. "They wanted the house to feel like it belonged on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay," Belkov says. "Those porches are great outdoor living spaces. They almost feel like you're on the deck of a boat."

Since moving in last spring, the Bedards have added their own touches, including a fire pit near the water's edge and lacrosse nets on the lawn. One of their favorite spots is an informal dining area off the back porch, where a keg of beer is always on tap. "We like to be prepared," Tom Bedard explains, "You never know when someone is going to drop by." 🍷

Edward Guntz is the architecture critic of The Baltimore Sun. Photographer Anne Gummerson is based in Baltimore.



