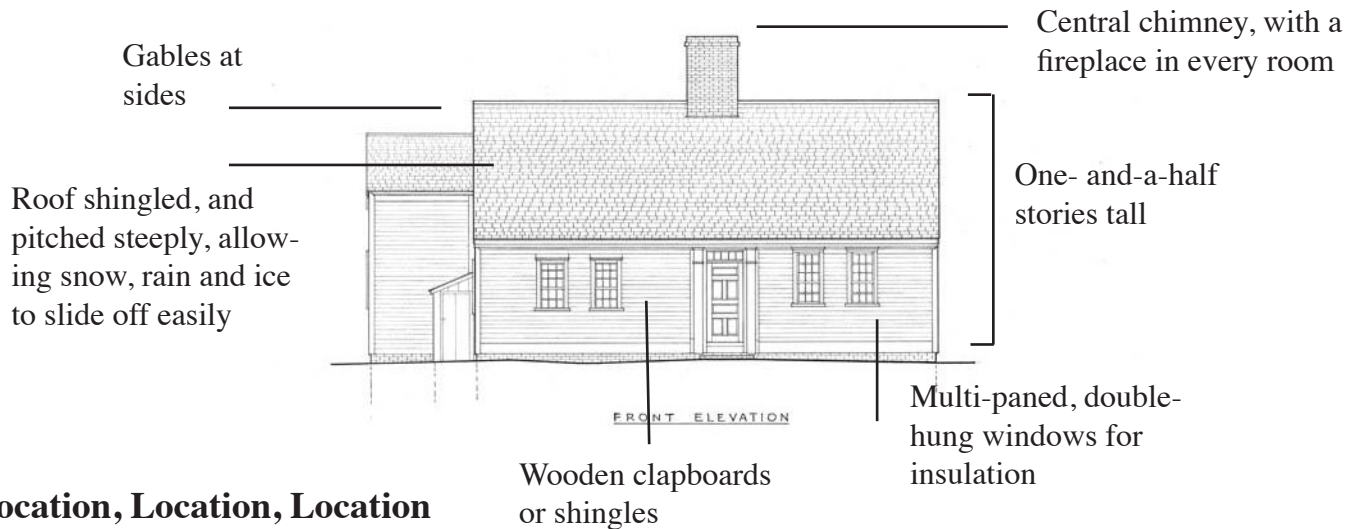


From the broad hearth in front of you, to the shingles up on the roof, every feature of this house speaks to how the early settlers adapted to living in a harsh, coastal environment.

The Atwood-Higgins House is an authentic example of an architectural style that is popular all around the country today, but first developed on the Cape out of practical necessity.

The Europeans who settled in this area used familiar building techniques, local resources, and advice from Native peoples to create the perfect structure to suit their new homeland.

Anatomy of a Cape Cod house



Location, Location, Location

Nowadays a prime location can boost your property value, but for the first settlers, the right location was even more important. The placement of a house was determined by the natural amenities at a particular site. Poised on a high bank above the tidal Herring River, this spot offered easy boat access to Wellfleet's harbors and salt marshes. The surrounding hills served as a windbreak during fierce winter storms.

No matter where a house was built, it would be positioned facing south for maximum exposure to sunlight, which helped keep the front rooms bright and warm during long, cold winters.

A Home that Grew

As a household got bigger, a Cape Cod house got bigger as well. The simple floor plan made it easy to expand, saving energy and resources at a time when timber was hard to come by. This house progressed from a half Cape in the 1700s, to a three-quarter Cape in 1795, and finally to a full Cape with a small wing in 1820.

