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Fitch/O'Rourke Residence • Residential Portfolio • Opportunities in Multifamily Housing • Sarah Susanka on Building Not So Big



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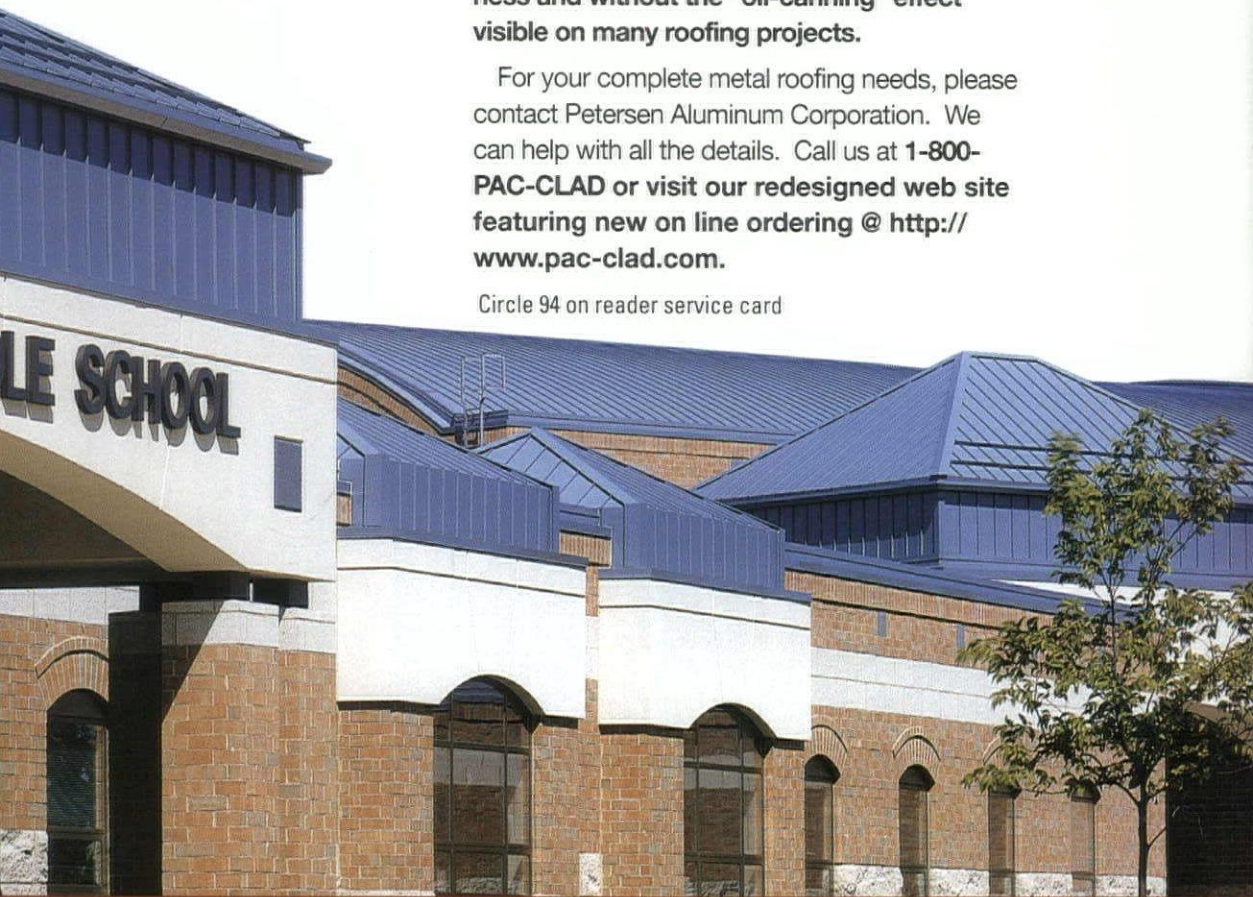


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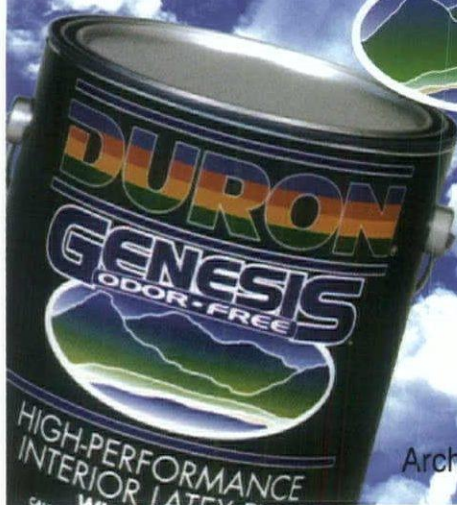
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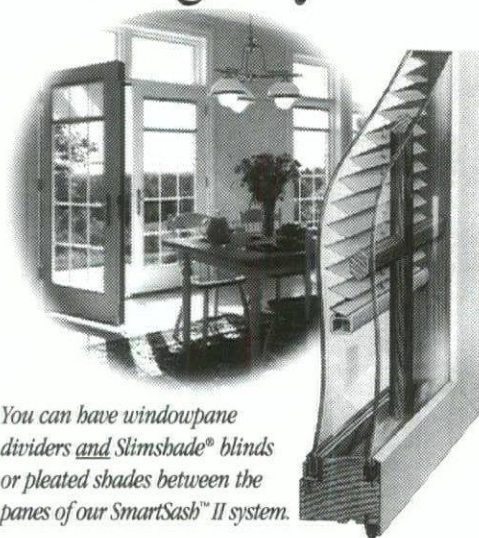
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## From the Editor

### Two Houses, Two Archi-types

Architects should not be in the business of selling dreams, but rather in helping their clients realize their own aspirations. But the more I talk to everyday people who have worked with architects on a residential project – or tried to unsuccessfully – the more I gather the impression that many in this profession are more interested in foisting their visions upon inexperienced clients than they are in helping those people navigate a process that leads to a tailor-made result.

Two instances brought this conflict into clear focus for me. The first involves a friend of mine in Richmond who started with confidence in the ability of an architect to take her practical dreams and weave them into a home that would not only improve the day-to-day flow of her family's life, but would do so in a way that would be pleasurable, even uplifting, as the routine of the day passed. My friend, whom we'll call Beth, and her husband own a sturdy 1950s ranch house on a desirable piece of property. To stay in the same location, they wanted to upgrade the house with "a garage, a real kitchen, some outdoor living space, and a change to the front of the house to update its look and give it some distinction," as she told me.

But her contact with four architects was a nightmare. In some cases, a single meeting was all she needed to detect bad chemistry. But in other cases, the initial meeting led to further design studies. Why didn't it work? "For one thing – their propensity to a certain design style," says Beth. "The person we tried to work with couldn't give up his ideas. He designed a contemporary bridge through the house and we told him it wasn't right for us. The next time we met, there it was again."

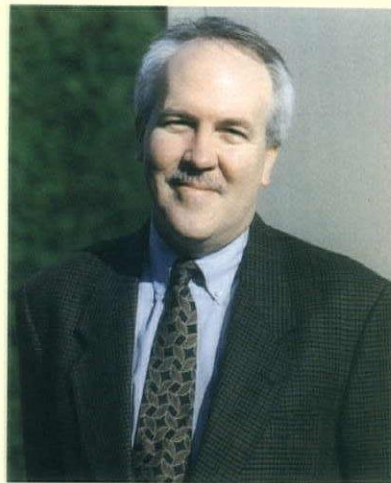
As the design kept growing, so too did the estimated cost. So, after spending a few thousand dollars to compensate two architects for design work, Beth and her husband gave up. They changed direction, hiring a builder who convinced them to tear down their house and start again from scratch. They bought a set of prepackaged floor plans and are having them adapted by a local draftsman. As for her opinion of architects – she was left feeling frustrated, if not a bit cheated.

In sharp contrast to Beth's experience was that of the Washington, D.C., couple whose house is featured in this issue. Mary Fitch is the executive director of the AIA chapter in Washington; her husband Ron O'Rourke, a research consultant, is the son of an architect. As Ron told me, "I came at it from the point of view that hiring an architect is a valuable investment. That turned out to be more true than we thought." Their program also was a renovation, albeit a radical redesign of a city townhouse. Not only did architect Robert Gurney deliver the goods, but he did it in a way that won the couple's confidence. He listened to their needs. He looked for solutions that would meet their requirements, but was willing to do the job on a budget, in many cases inventing details using off-the-shelf materials.

The gulf between Beth's experience in Richmond and that of Fitch and O'Rourke in Washington leaves me wondering what went so wrong in the former case and how it could go so right in the latter. Perhaps it could be chalked up to sheer talent or hard-earned skill. But I've got to think much of the difference lies in attitude. In Beth's case, she entered the process with optimism. But her belief in the architect's skill was met with smugness – the attitude that she and her husband, a college professor, were ill-equipped to make their own aesthetic decisions.

In the end, another opportunity was lost for architects to gain ground in the campaign to be relevant – dare I say indispensable? – in the residential arena, a place where architects can and should be far more influential. To those of you who fancy yourselves good designers and also believe in the value of good service, I'd ask you to examine the motivations, the actions, and the outcome produced by the designers hired to renovate the two houses in Richmond and Washington. Which kind of architect would you rather be? Which one are you?

– Vernon Mays





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## Back from the Brink

The abandoned shell of a turn-of-the-century townhouse in Washington, D.C., is brought back to life by architect Robert M. Gurney, AIA, in a rich Modern interpretation skillfully crafted of steel, wood, concrete, and glass. *By Vernon Mays*

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## Portfolio: Residential Architecture

What could be so personal as a house? It occupies a particular site, it suits the peculiarities of its owners, and it has a unique relationship with natural elements such as sun, wind, and rain. In this issue, Inform visits two accomplished residences. *By Sue Robinson*

**A House in Charlottesville,** Gwyn C. Gilliam, AIA  
Matoaka, Carter & Burton Architecture

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## Not So Big!

Drawing on her broad experience in residential design, architect Sarah Susanka gained national attention with her book, *The Not So Big House*. Now, on the occasion of a sequel publication, Susanka shares her views with Inform magazine on how Americans can build houses that are better – and smarter. *By Meghan Dreuding*

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## More, Bigger, Better in Multifamily Housing

With pitfalls that include zoning boards, cookie-cutter design, government financing, and penny-pinching developers, why would any architect want to design multifamily housing? Because the field has changed dramatically in the past decade, creating new opportunities in planning and design. *By Lisa Goff*

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## Design Lines

new developments in design

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## Taking Note

doing the small thing well



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On the cover: Fitch/O'Rourke Residence.  
Photo by Paul Warchol.

In our next issue:  
**Livable  
Communities**



# George Washington ARCHITECT



Washington, pictured here in "A Gentleman's Residence" by Peter Waddell, struck out on his own to design a house that was both remarkable and original.

Courtesy The Octagon

A little-known aspect of statesman George Washington's life is revealed in the traveling exhibition titled *George Washington, Architect* that explores his accomplishments as a self-taught builder and his broad architectural influence.

The exhibition, which is sponsored by the Virginia Foundation for Architecture and is on view until January 7, 2001, at The Virginia Center for Architecture at The Barret House in Richmond, examines Washington's inspirations, his design and building efforts at his Virginia plantation, his vision of a grand American capital city, and his architectural legacy. Throughout, the exhibition explores the character of the man, his life, and his times through the prism of 18th century architecture.

Unlike peers such as Thomas Jefferson, Washington never attended college nor traveled to Europe. He was a self-taught builder who formed

his ideas on design in many ways, from reading English pattern books to seeking advice from workmen and neighbors.

A man of practicality and vision, Washington had a keen appreciation for the power of building and architecture. The appearance of virtue and prosperity in a man's farm, a family's home, or a nation's capital spoke volumes about the people who lived there. Throughout his life, Washington used the symbolic power of architecture to create not only a personal image among both his peers and countrymen, but more significantly, an inspiring and enduring national identity. Over a period of four decades – during most of which Washington was serving his country as soldier and statesman – he worked to expand and improve his considerable estate along the Potomac River, combining the talents of his practiced surveyor's eye and the imagination he cultivated on his own through the study of architectural precedents.

Although Washington often was forced to oversee the work on the plantation from afar and depend on the skills of those he hired – during the Revolutionary War, for example, he was unable to return home for six years – the exhibition attests to Washington's own command of the materials and processes of construction. As Benjamin Forgey noted in *The Washington Post*, "Such competency was more or less required of successful planters in Virginia. Washington, however, went beyond the norms. Whether it was for the main house or an inventive circular barn, whenever he drew a simple elevation he pretty much knew where every joist or piece of planking was going to end up, and how they would be fitted together."

Washington's appreciation for the power of images and symbols guided the creation of the District of Columbia. He appointed many men who would develop the new city on the Potomac and made the ultimate choices among competing designs and alterations for the President's House, the Capitol, and the Executive Department offices. Among those individuals were Pierre Charles L'Enfant, whose plan for the Federal City celebrated both the political victory of Washington and the Federalists and the interests of individual states, and William Thornton, a physician and amateur architect whose competition design for the Capitol won Washington's strongest endorsement.

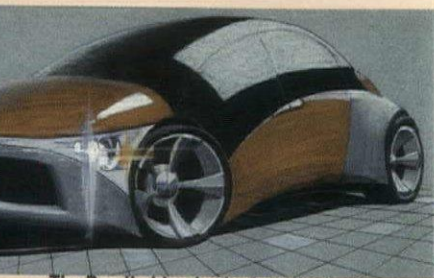
For nearly two centuries, hundreds of architects have adapted Washington's designs for their own structures. The exhibition's final section on Washington's architectural legacy proposes that George Washington created an architectural vocabulary that was somehow distinctly American. As noted by architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, "Mount Vernon is one of the most widely imitated, if not the most copied house in this country. Easily the most famous house in the United States, Washington's home, in its additive character, its quest for grandeur at the domestic scale, and its inventiveness, is quintessentially American."

The curatorial staffs of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and the Octagon (the museum of the American Architectural Foundation in Washington, D.C.) jointly organized the exhibition, which will continue on a national tour when it departs Richmond.

For information on exhibition hours for *George Washington, Architect*, call the Virginia Foundation for Architecture at 804-644-3041.



# An Automobile for the Millemium



The Pendio blends sleek styling and sophisticated engineering.

Interior designer David B. Huber and his wife Rebecca threw the California International Auto Show a curve, returning from Los Angeles last fall with a fourth-place award for their entry in the *Motor Trend* "Automobiles for the New Millennium" design contest.

Predicting an ongoing emphasis on functionality, their Pendio (an Italian word meaning slope) is a curvy glass-and-titanium vehicle powered by a natural-gas fuel cell and capable of going from zero to sixty in 3.9 seconds—if manufactured in the year 2050, as they imagine. "We have used the past as a compass and let our imaginations, as well as our hopes and fears, create the future," explains Huber, a project manager at Baskervill & Son in Richmond.

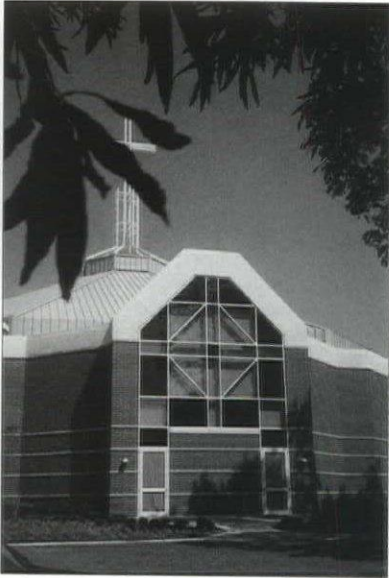
In their entry, the Hubers relied on titanium's evolution into an affordable manufacturing component, selected for its strength and lightness. Some of the titanium components would even be recyclable. The car's reflective glass canopy and windows don't open. Instead, environmental management systems maintain an ideal interior temperature and monitor for toxins. But the windows do change tint for thermal and glare protection.

While global positioning systems (GPS) are now a luxury add-on to vehicles, the Pendio's GPS is standard, and includes a chip for tracking and homing. What's more, this car's engine computers interact with the manufacturer, allowing diagnostic and demographic data to inform product development and marketing decisions. As a result, the maker could electronically initiate repairs. Imagine receiving a new lug nut via FedEx the day before the wheel falls off!

Comfort remained a concern for the Hubers, who believe "ergonomics and anthropometrics will become standard considerations in design." And *Motor Trend's* judges agreed.

—Margaret J. Tinsley

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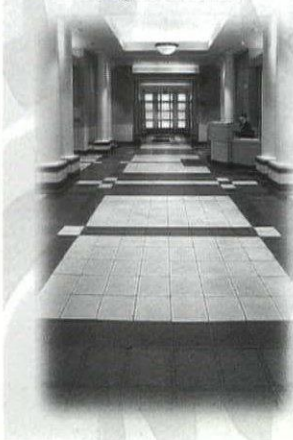


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# Back from

A massive steel plate sets the tone for the house's Modern interior. The small balcony extends from Fitch's study.





# the Brink

*The destitute shell of a turn-of-the-century townhouse in Washington, D.C., is brought back to life by architect Robert M. Gurney in a Modern interpretation of steel, wood, concrete, and glass.*

By Vernon Mays



**A Southern exposure fills the living room with light throughout the day (above). What once appeared as an empty shell from the rear in now an elegant façade (below).**

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Three years ago, the gutted townhouse on Calvert Street was the talk of Mary Fitch and Ron O'Rourke's neighborhood – and for all the wrong reasons. Years earlier, a developer had bought the Washington, D.C., property with the intent of converting it into several condominium units. But when the city resisted his plan, he abandoned the building in a semi-demolished state, having completely ripped out the rear wall and torn out the interior partitions.

There it sat. And sat. But, while others wrung their hands over the hulk that had become a haven to vagrants and pigeons, Fitch and O'Rourke began to imagine the possibilities. "We saw its condition not as a deterrent, but an opportunity to build a modern home in a historic neighborhood," recalls O'Rourke. "The building could really be a blank slate."

After closely studying the financial demands of such an endeavor, the married couple bought the property and quickly contacted Alexandria architect Robert M. Gurney, AIA, whose work they had seen at a local exhibition. "Our expectation and our philosophy was just the opposite of the notion that hiring an architect is a luxury," says O'Rourke. "We are not impoverished, but we are not millionaires either. And, since I am the son of an architect, I came at it from the point of view that hiring an architect is a valuable investment."

Gurney began meeting with them regularly on what would

become a 12-month-long journey of idea generation and refinement. Within a week of hiring the architect, Fitch and O'Rourke presented him with a six-page outline of their aspirations for the project. They were very specific about space requirements – wanting to create a rental unit in the excavated basement and have a garage that would be accessible to the main unit. "Other than that, they basically wanted a two-bedroom house with two studies," Gurney says. "They are two professional people without children, so they each wanted their own office."

Nearly two pages of the couple's project description dealt with the issue of architectural style, and the strong words left little doubt as to their preferences. Uppermost on their list of priorities was a Modern interior. "By Modern, we don't mean the kind of safe, boring, architecturally sterile, contemporary interior design ethic of typical new homes in Montgomery County or Northern Virginia," they wrote. "We don't mean the type of obso-

lete '70s/early '80s Modernism with clunky roof beams and big round windows. We also don't mean the '80s Modernism of extreme minimalism and endless white walls; we don't want a temple to Sheetrock. And we don't mean the equally obsolete late '80s/early '90s Postmodern style with ornamental columns, Palladian windows, and dorky oversized dormers. You don't need an architect for that."







**The couple's master bedroom features a fresh combination of materials and built-in furnishings.**

Instead, Fitch and O'Rourke indicated that their vision of a contemporary house meant "a cutting-edge, architecturally innovative Modernism" that takes advantage of the opportunity to create something new. "The result should be sophisticated and inventive, with elements that are unexpected, gutsy, and perhaps even fun and playful. The design should be something that fulfills our functional requirements, but which you as an architect would like to see written up in professional magazines.... Feel free to consider use of adventurous materials, brightly painted surfaces, oblique walls, and asymmetric spaces."

Receiving this kind of detail from a client was refreshingly new to Gurney, who sensed from the very first phone call that Fitch and O'Rourke were going to be special clients. "In Washington, which does not embrace Modern architecture, the opportunity to do a Modern building in this historical context was very welcome," Gurney enthuses. So, having received that charge, he didn't need further encouragement before beginning to explore ways to overcome the stringent limitations of the rowhouse type, the most difficult of which may be the pressure to string rooms along one side of the building with a long, narrow hallway on the other. "I had to explore how, within this rectangular frame, do you design spaces that are not rectangular," Gurney says.

Striving for a complex geometry that would yield a variety of experiences inside the house, Gurney introduced a simple gesture – a curve – to enliven the house's basic rectangular plan, which is 16 feet wide at the greatest point, narrowing to 13 feet in the rear. To that two-part scheme he added yet another element – a line running at a 10-degree offset that extends from a rear corner of the house to the center of the dining room. "When

you overlay those three different geometries in section and start carving areas away, that is what helped us end up with some of these intricate spaces," notes Gurney.

O'Rourke says the overlapping geometries proved to be a difficult, but interesting, intellectual puzzle to solve. But, given the owners' flexibility regarding the placement of specific rooms (such as the dining room, master bedroom, or kitchen), the opportunities to manipulate space and light were maximized. "We designed it with the idea that you would be walking through a sculpture – so the house itself becomes the artwork," Gurney says. "Creating interesting spaces was really more important than creating a lot of rooms. And ultimately the spaces are much more interesting because they made that choice."

From the moment one enters the front door, the theatrical unfolding of space begins. Overhead is a void formed by a curved wall fitted with tracks that support a series of rolling translucent panels. In addition to providing visual privacy, the panels slide into different positions to modulate the amount of light coming into the core of the house. "Rowhouses are inherently dark, because you normally only get light from the two narrow ends. So we worked very, very hard to flood the whole house with light," says Gurney.

To gain the most sunlight, Gurney placed the dining room at the front of the house and tucked the kitchen behind it in a private alcove. "Mary and Ron weren't necessarily interested in a huge, soccer-mom kitchen. But we wanted it to be a place where we could use interesting materials and create a focal point for the house." The richness of materials that Fitch and O'Rourke sought for the house appears in abundance here, where wood and metal are played off one another with gusto. A rusted steel plate forms the end-panel



of the island, which is capped with a dark English kirkstone countertop. The eating surface is a raised aluminum shelf. Warm-toned maple and mahogany cabinets counterbalance the coolness of the stone and metal. "Here we tried to juxtapose the raw materials like the concrete and rusted steel with the more refined materials," says Gurney.

The house has its greatest impact in the double-height living room, which the owners so eagerly wanted that they agreeably sacrificed additional space that could have been built upstairs. A massive fireplace anchors the living room, but Gurney rendered it as a dynamic composition of poured-in-place concrete, an L-shaped mantel, a backdrop of maple panels, and an operable copper-wirecloth door arranged asymmetrically around a centered firebox.

Fitch and O'Rourke also wanted a small amount of space to enjoy outdoors, and Gurney took the opportunity to continue the geometric play of the house in the pavement pattern and materials on the rear terrace. His efforts to create a Modern foreground to the house on the front façade were thwarted by the neighborhood's architectural review board. "In fact,



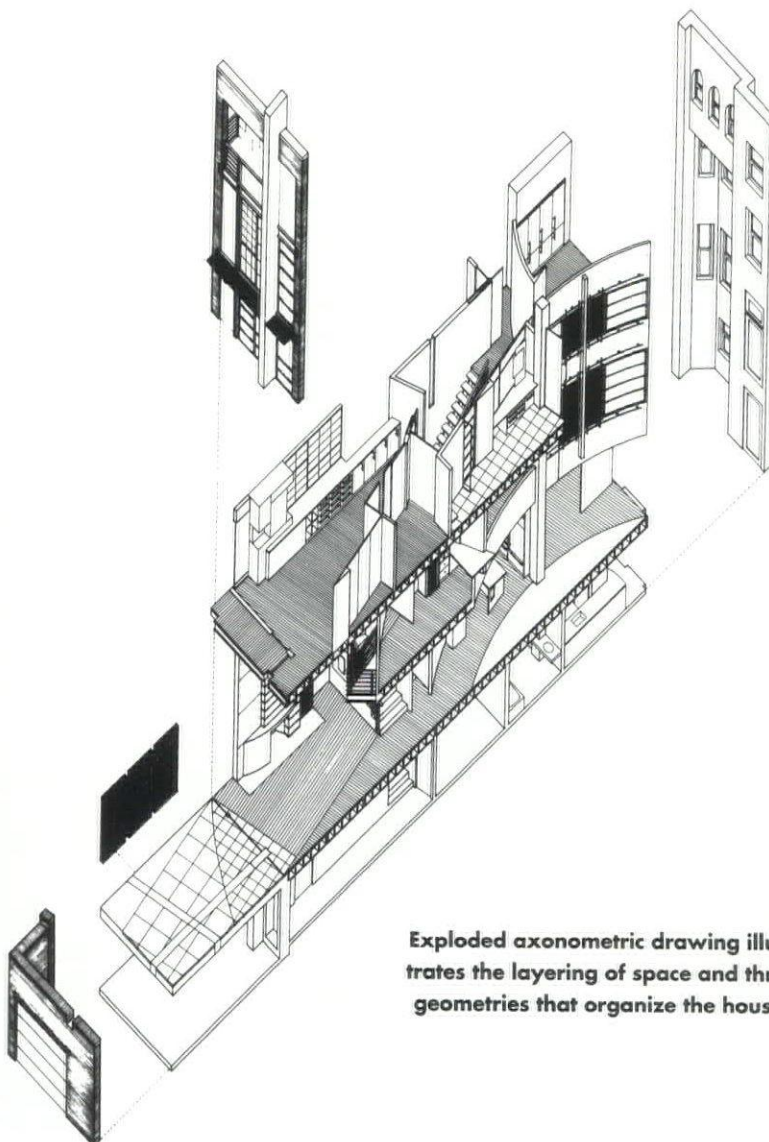
Paul Warchol

**A maple wall, at right, connects the dining room and kitchen in a direct way, tapering to a thin edge where the 10-degree offset geometry ends.**



Hochlander/Davis Photography

**Second floor view shows concrete column and rotating glass door into guest room.**



**Exploded axonometric drawing illustrates the layering of space and three geometries that organize the house.**





Paul Warchol

Gurney avoided a claustrophobic rowhouse corridor by introducing a simple curve into the plan (left).

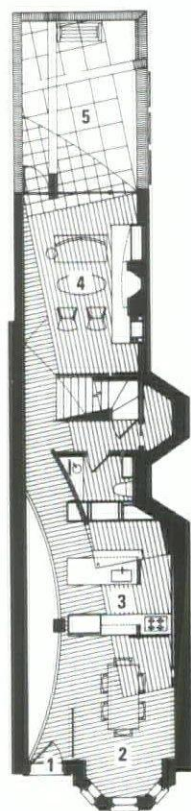
we could do very little in the front of the house," Gurney says. "We had a design for a scheme that was much different from what we ended up with, which is essentially replacing what was here, with the exception that we removed a portion of the front porch to get a little light down below. We had proposed a series of planar walls and a steel stair, along with some interesting light fixtures, but the review board wouldn't let us do any of that."

Upstairs, Gurney placed the guest room, a small laundry room, and Fitch's study on the second floor. On the third floor, he located O'Rourke's study (which could be converted to an additional bedroom), the master bathroom, and master bedroom, which is equipped with generous closet space. Design detailing in objects such as the bathroom sinks and mirrors continue the material themes found in the rooms downstairs.

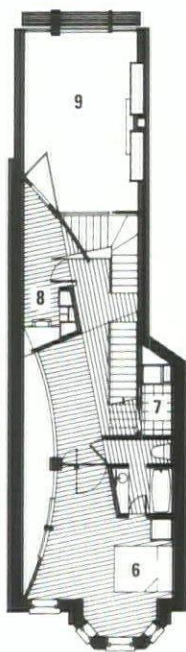
Less would have been accomplished, Gurney says, without the active involvement of Fitch and O'Rourke. "When we were designing this, I would typically meet with them around 9 o'clock at night – then we'd go for three or four hours. We met probably once a week. I remember us meeting one Thursday night to discuss Mary's study, and by the next Thursday they had the whole study taped out with masking tape on the floor to visualize the dimensions. They were really involved in the design process."

And now that it is all done, Fitch and O'Rourke look back with a sense of having accomplished their main goals. They used advanced geometry to good advantage. They were able to include new and innovative materials. And they were able to accomplish it all for \$140 per square foot – about the same cost of a new house in the suburbs.

Says O'Rourke: "I think Modern architecture labors under certain stereotypes. First, that it is uncomfortable or ugly. Second, that it is not functional. And a third is that Modern architecture is expensive. We didn't believe any of those things. We believed Modern architecture could be warm and good looking, as functional as traditional design, and achieved at a moderate cost." And they were right.



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Dining Room
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Living Room
- 5 Terrace
- 6 Guest Room

- 7 Laundry Room
- 8 Fitch's Study
- 9 Open to Below
- 10 O'Rourke's Study
- 11 Master Bathroom
- 12 Master Bedroom



**Project:** Fitch O'Rourke Residence

**Architect:** Robert M. Gurney, AIA, Alexandria

**Consultant:** Therese Baron Gurney (interior design)

**Clients:** Mary Fitch and Ron O'Rourke





Rolling screens in the light well.



Stair view cuts through three levels.



The kitchen as "a cabinet."

## Enriching Details: Taking the Time to Get Them Right

**A**lthough a year was spent designing Mary Fitch and Ron O'Rourke's house, the effort and attention afforded by that pace yielded many benefits in the end. "It paid off," says O'Rourke, "because when we built the house, we did it with very few changes in the plans. That is the advantage of working with an architect and working out these things in advance — you don't have to make a million decisions after the project is underway." Bottom line: the owner doesn't pay a premium for last-minute decisions.

The deliberate design process also allowed architect Robert Gurney the opportunity to produce a series of refined details that give the interior its rich character. "We spent a lot of time exploring how things come together aesthetically and how they work mechanically," Gurney adds. Prime examples are the pulley system used on the copper wirecloth panel that conceals the stereo in the living room, a revolving glass door that closes off the guest room, and the rolling screens in the curved light well.

While the screens don't block sound, they do provide visual privacy for the second-floor guest room and O'Rourke's study above. When privacy isn't a concern, the screens roll out of the way on wheels designed for library ladders. To find just the right solution for the fixed panels beside the screens, Gurney searched long and hard for a translucent material that would allow ample light to pass through. His search turned up a flexible sheet good called Lumacite, which easily bends to fit into steel frames he custom-designed for this purpose.

Client and architect came to envision the kitchen as "a cabinet inserted into an overall space" — a space shaped not by walls, but by the kitchen's functional elements. Gurney's office made upwards of 50 small study models while investigating combinations of shapes and materials for the kitchen's centerpiece, an island that incorporates a column and dropped ceiling. "This became very complex. It's this level of detail that is carried throughout the entire project."

Even the paving on the rear terrace is articulated in a way that reflects the organization of the rest of the house. Gurney's clever use of bluestone, limestone, concrete, and brick make a conversation piece out of an otherwise simple rectangular patio. It's those artful qualities that make the house such a pleasure to inhabit. "We've been here for more than a year — and I am not tired of looking at it," says O'Rourke. "We have only eight pieces of art on the walls, because I enjoy looking at the house as a work of art in itself." — *Vernon Mays*



Terrace paving incorporates the orthogonal, 10-degree offset, and curved geometries of the house's floor plan.

Photos: Paul Warchol





# Belgian Manner

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“I love old farm buildings and the old houses around here that grew up out of the climate and the place,” muses Charlottesville architect Gwyn C. Gilliam, AIA. “They have an authenticity. To me, it’s about combining the landscape and the particular place along with the program of the client. The most interesting and most wonderful building is one that integrates the building with the landscape as if the building grows out of the land.”

With the design of this dignified Charlottesville house, Gilliam achieves harmony between space and place, line and design, while fulfilling the owners’ desire for a rare house inspired by 15th and 16th century European farm compounds. Another reference point for the owners was a courtyard house in Mexico that they had loved. But the most dominant inspiration was the owners’ fascination with Napoleon and their discovery, while studying his European campaigns, of a particularly handsome house in Belgium. Made of stucco and brick, the house fronted a courtyard enclosed by a thick front wall. This was the private nature that Gilliam sought to create on 53 acres of open meadow.

Researching these Belgian farmhouses, “what appealed was that they had a crispness that made them abstract,” Gilliam



Gateway entrance responds to the owners’ interest in walls that change shape and height.

says. Yet the details are traditional. Meadow grasses grow up to the battered foundation made of native stone. “The owners wanted them to look very old,” she adds, “so we spent a lot of time looking at old stone walls and different styles of stone work.” Gilliam even built mock-ups to find just the right combinations of stone. And she sweated the details on the stucco finish, too. “I told the workers, ‘I want to see the trowel marks. We don’t want it perfectly smooth.’”

In earlier times, a European farm complex would have barns, a tower for wind power or a lookout, and family residence. Grouping of buildings was necessary so that animals and equipment could be closed into one space for security and weather protection. Multiple functions

are evident in Gilliam’s interpretation of the concept. The owners are, in fact, building an active farm with pigeons, burros, sheep, goats, dogs, and horses. The working nature of the property combines easily with more formal, private spaces.

The overall complex includes the main house, carriage house, secret garden, and a central courtyard. The house has a wing of public rooms, an office, family room, master suite, and guest bedrooms upstairs. The carriage house contains guest quarters on the second floor and a kennel, tractor storage, and workshop below.

A bluestone pier and mahogany panel fence divides the courtyard into a granite cobblestone car park and garden. On three sides of the courtyard, colonnades unify the components while providing covered passage. On the fourth side, a six-foot-thick front wall houses a koi pool, tool room, garden workroom, and an in-ground wine cellar.







On the south side of the courtyard, Gilliam placed a small paved garden with a koi pool (above). Three types of native stone were blended in the complex's base, a unifying element that ties the discrete pieces into a single whole (facing page).



Typical of Belgian architecture, the carriage house combines a high- and low-pitched roof (above).

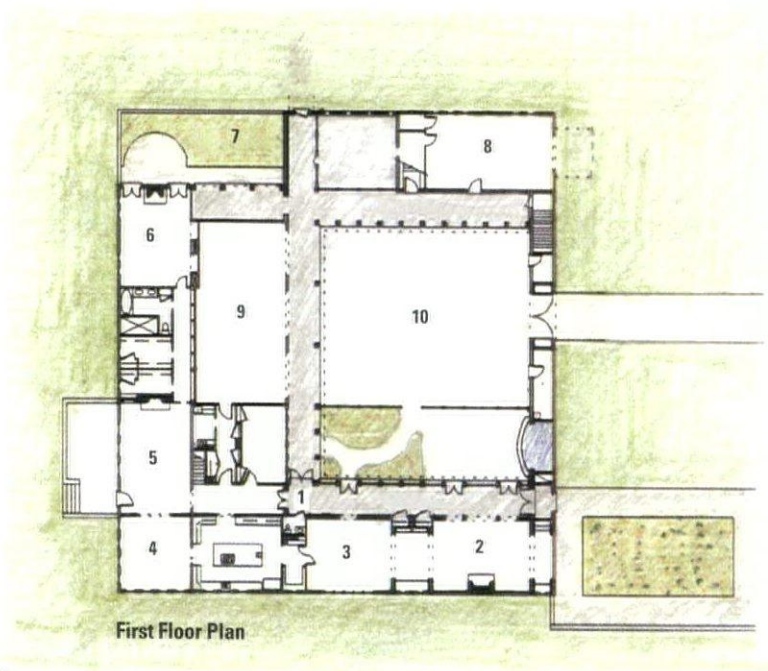
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Inside the materials-rich house, blue-stone floors in the entry hall and the Douglas fir from the exposed colonnade give way to a series of spaces that are simple gypsum board openings. Other than a high baseboard and simple trim around the windows, there is little conventional detail, such as intricate cornice molding.

For a complex built for privacy, the internal spaces are proportioned to focus outwardly into garden spaces both in and outside the wall that surrounds the house. Private rooms at the back are most open to the land, stands of trees, and finger meadows, peninsulas of green that dissolve into the woods. — Sue Robinson



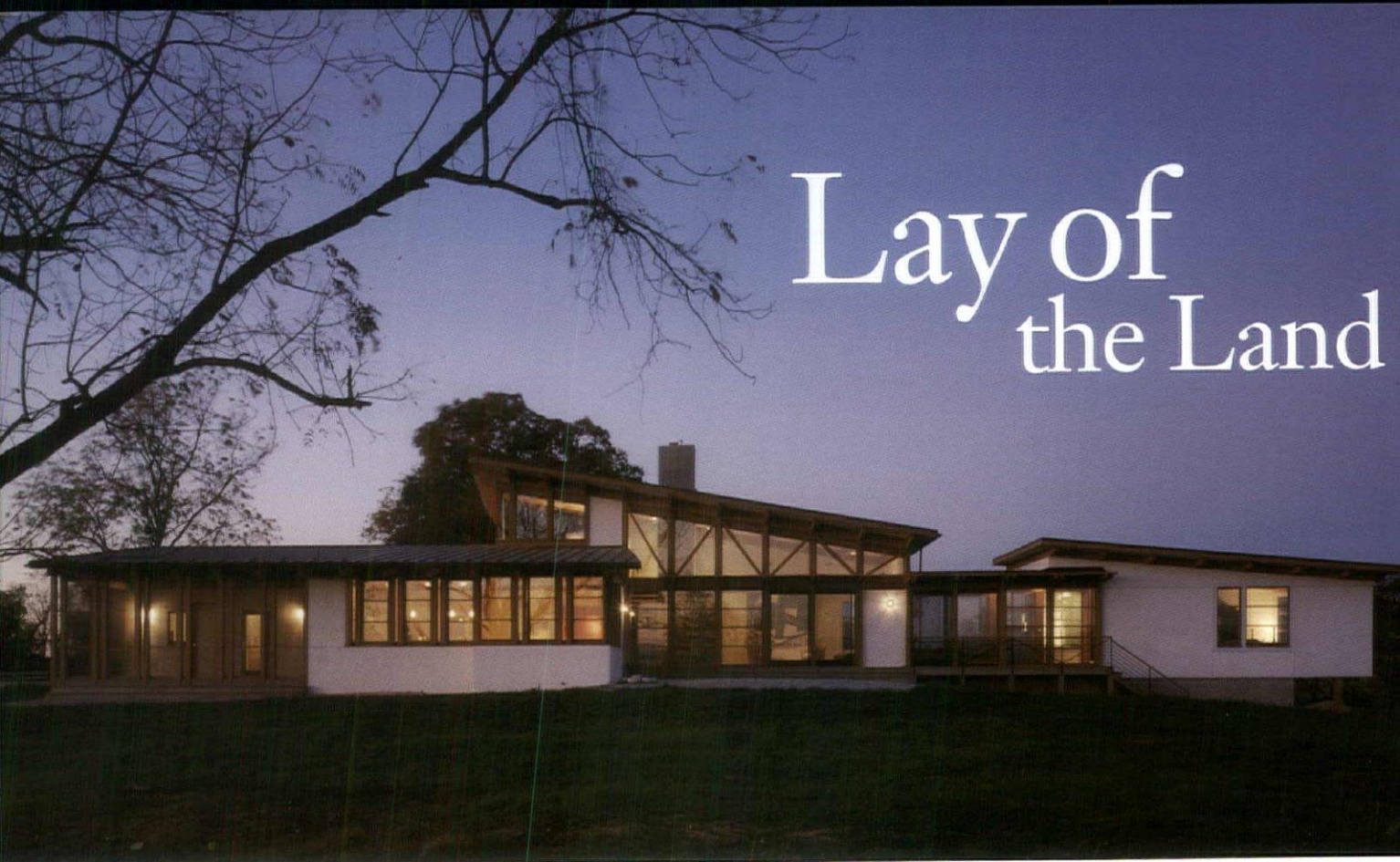
The dog kennel and two-story guest house (left) are separated from the main residence by the car courtyard.



- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| 1 Entry          | 6 Master Bedroom |
| 2 Living Room    | 7 Secret Garden  |
| 3 Dining Room    | 8 Carriage House |
| 4 Breakfast Room | 9 Garage         |
| 5 Family Room    | 10 Courtyard     |



# Lay of the Land



18

Broken down into its cleanest components, architecture can be described as “art, function, and a contribution to the earth.” That’s the view of architect Page S. Carter, AIA. “The thing we enjoy the most is the organic approach, fitting a building with a site, very tailored to a specific family and a specific view,” says Carter. “There’s a real artistic component to it.” Talking about Matoaka, a recently completed house in the mountains of Clarke County, she notes, “We like to do this kind of work, because it affords us a certain level of design.”

Art and function marry well in Matoaka, a 4,000-square-foot house on 60 acres of rolling pastures, wooded forests, and southerly views of the Blue Ridge. But, then there is also the matter of inventing a built art form that will last and convey respect for the environment. One level of that respect is sustainability. “It’s part of the *Zeitgeist* that we’re building a house for today and the future, not the past,” says architect Jim Burton, AIA, who is Carter’s partner in the Berryville firm of Carter & Burton Architecture.

Burton and Carter make no grand claims that this house is the be-all and end-all of sustainability. The clients simply wanted “a place that didn’t take more than it gave,” says Carter. Yet an active solar system seemed to be too much for them as a busy, working couple. Still, the clients felt strongly about having an energy-efficient house that uses regional, environmentally responsible materials. So a passive solar scheme stretches the living space along an east-west axis for heat gain and big views. Wide overhangs and trellises let in winter sun, but filter it in summer. In addition, concrete floors along a glass wall absorb heat by day and radiate it back into the house after dark. A cutout above the stone fireplace circulates heat. Dark fireslate counter tops in the kitchen form an additional heat sink.

For the living room flooring, bamboo was chosen for its lustrous beauty, as well as its quality as a replenishable resource. Using local labor where feasible contained the use of fuel for transport-



The essential form of the house (top) suggests the hills and valleys of the surrounding landscape. Inside, a cutout in the concrete mass over the fireplace (above) helps to draw warmth into the upper floor.



tation. The heating and cooling system is eco-friendly, as well – a geothermal heat pump that averages \$75 per month for summer cooling. And the architects selected stress skin roofing panels that have zero air infiltration, need no venting, and save on labor, insulation, and framing costs.

For design inspiration, the clients pointed the architects toward Frank Lloyd Wright and Japanese design. The wife grew up in Hong Kong and has traveled widely in the East. As part of the getting-to-know-you-process, Carter and the client visited Fallingwater, the high-water mark of Wright's illustrious career. Two aspects of Wright's masterpiece worked their way into Matoaka: a central fireplace that is the soul of the house and floating stairs that allow transparency for light and views.

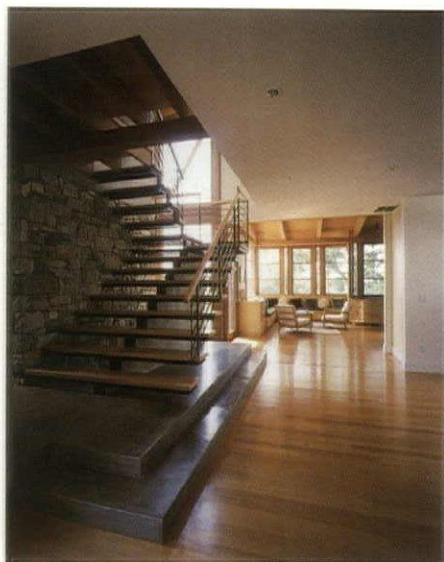
Most of the house faces south, with generous panes of glass open to views. Parking is bermed into a hillside so one sees the view to the south over the garage roof when approaching. The house takes some of its shape from the hillside, using a shed roofline that slopes from the open landscape up to the trees, moving from a one- to two-story elevation.

But the main sources of inspiration are the idea of horizontality – joining with the land, rather than dominating it – the use of natural wood and light, and stretching out the house while creating an intimate interior. Says Carter, "It's a very peaceful space in keeping with their eastern sensibilities."

– Sue Robinson

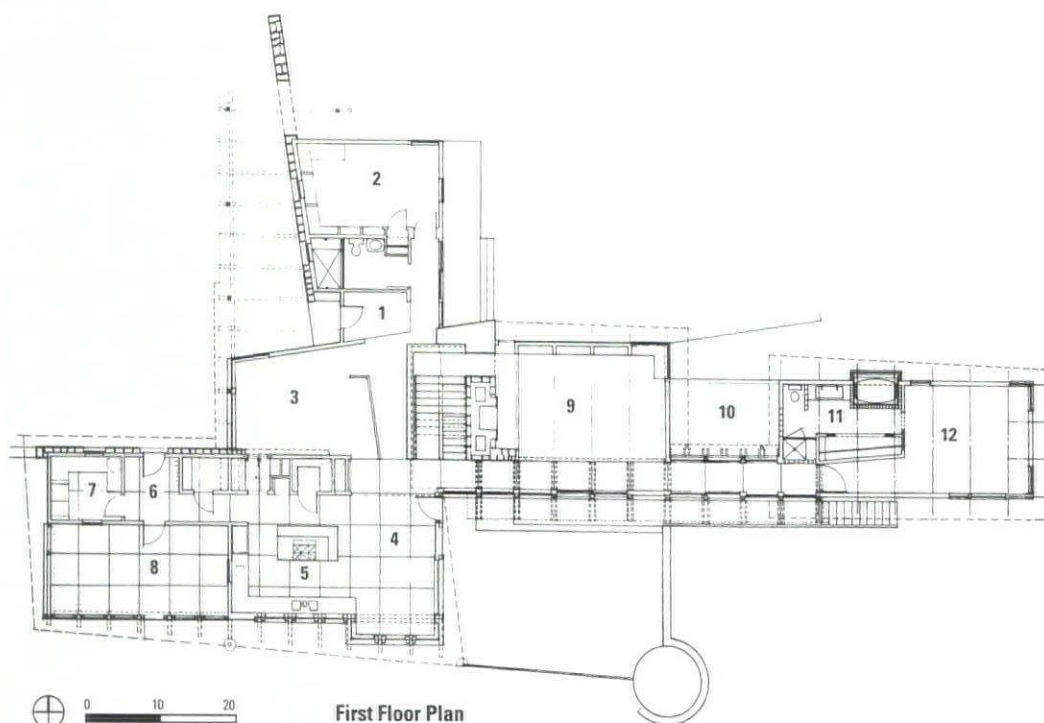


A cedar-and-glass wall system (above) admits light on winter days, but blocks the high sun of summer. Inside, the delicate open-riser stair (left) maintains the house's openness and allows sunlight to penetrate.



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- 1 Entrance Hall
- 2 Study
- 3 Dining Room
- 4 Family Room
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Mud Room
- 7 Laundry
- 8 Screened Porch
- 9 Living Room
- 10 Deck
- 11 Master Bath
- 12 Master Bedroom



First Floor Plan



# Not So Big!

A conversation with Sarah Susanka

By Meghan Dreuding



**S**arah Susanka, AIA, created a stir among architects and homeowners two years ago when she published her first book, *The Not So Big House*. Drawing on 15 years' experience as a founding partner of the Minneapolis firm Mulfinger Susanka Mahady & Partners, she pinpointed a problem that's affected the housing industry for decades – valuing square footage over quality design and construction. Her second book, *Creating the Not So Big House:*

*Insights and Ideas for the New American Home* (The Taunton Press), came out in October and showcases 25 houses that exemplify her ideas. Housing industry editor Meghan Dreuding spoke with Susanka, now a full-time writer and speaker with a home base in Raleigh, N.C. about her views on the houses that Americans typically build.

## **Dreuding: Why did you decide to write *The Not So Big House*?**

**Susanka:** Well, the practice I started in Minneapolis appealed to people on a modest budget. With each client, it became clear that in order to build the quality they wanted, we'd have to talk them into less square footage. We went through the same education process with everyone – it got to be rote. Pretty early on I thought, I should write this down as a kind of firm brochure. It would be a way of pre-educating clients. Then I thought, if there are this many people in Minneapolis who feel this way, think of how many there must be nationally. Of course, there were. I talk to architects from all over the country now, and many of them are using *The Not So Big House* as a tool to educate their clients. Interestingly, builders are using it too – they're in the same bind. They know you can build a house for less money, but that the money has to come out of the square footage rather than the materials and detailing or else the construction quality will suffer.

## **What cultural or economic factors contributed to the rise of "starter castles," as you call them – oversized, soulless houses designed to impress visitors, not nurture the soul?**

It's interesting to try and understand the dynamics behind it. The tax structure in this country encourages people to invest in their houses, because that money is sheltered. The problem is we haven't got a way of identifying quality of construction. Look at the auto industry, for example. You know that you can buy a Mercedes or a Honda Civic, and that there's a difference between the two. You can pay more and get a better product. But, in the building industry, it's square footage, not quality, that determines price.

A lot of market forces encourage people to build bigger, but not better. As an architect, I saw that people wanted something different than what was out there, but were motivated by resale value. We have to let banks and lending institutions know that there are people who want to pay for higher quality, not more square footage. The market has been frustrated for a long time. People

know what they want, but can't find somebody to give it to them. This is an alternative – it's not going to supplant all starter castles. If you want to put more money into your house, fine. But I'm trying to help people without a lot of money use their dollars efficiently.

## **What factors stand in the way of people accepting smaller but richer homes?**

The biggest question mark, by far, is resale. It's becoming less of an issue by the month, though. A lot of people are telling me that my book helped convince their banker that their Not So Big houses wouldn't be difficult to sell. Actually, it's not hard to talk people into spending more on quality and not quantity. But they want to make sure their homes have a high resale value.

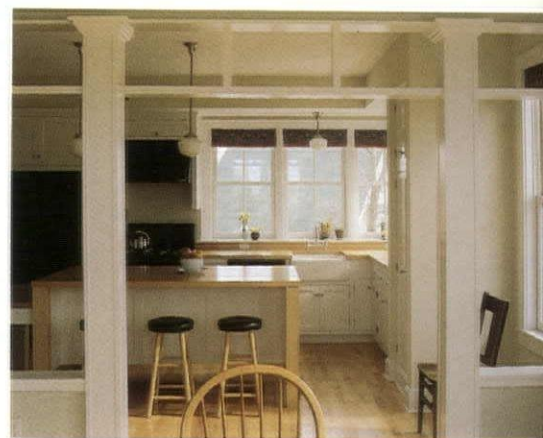
## **What changes in lifestyles over the past few decades have influenced the rooms people use in a home?**

Working at home is perhaps the most influential trend. We don't know exactly how many people are doing it, but we do know that it's very important to feel comfortable in the place where you work. People are reassessing how they spend their time and money – they just want to spend more time with their families and have more time to themselves. All that is contributing to the desire for a home office or some type of work space at home.

## **Was there a time in the history of American building when Not So Big principles were common practice? In other words, is this something we've lost and are trying to regain?**

They're present in almost every other country in the world! If you look at construction in Japan, Scandinavia, and all of Europe, you will see more examples of what I'm talking about. There's an understanding in these places that you can spend more per square foot and get better design. Rarely do you see houses in other countries the size of the ones you see here.





This modern-day farmhouse in Minnesota (left) has part of the wraparound porch screened as an outdoor room. Inside, the typical farmhouse would have had a small door connecting the kitchen and dining room, but in this version (above) a wide-spaced lattice and columns only suggest where the old wall would have been.

Then there's the Arts & Crafts movement. Back in the Victorian era, we saw the same thing in the United States that we're seeing now. Houses got bigger and bigger. The Arts and Crafts movement changed all that. Gustav Stickley was trying to show that good design didn't have to be restricted to the wealthy.

#### Why aren't there other options for homebuyers besides tract houses or architectural statements?

For the past 100 years, houses recognized as architectural designs have tended to be the avant-garde homes. We as a profession haven't done a good job of letting people know that we can do things they've seen before and feel comfortable with, that we're not always trying to make a masterpiece. If we don't reassert that we'll lose a very important role we play in society. You can see the lack of our influence in tract housing today – there's no sense of proportion. Architects are the arbiters of proportion. They say architects design two to three percent of the houses built in the U.S. every year, and that's probably an optimistic estimate. If we did our job better, I think it could easily be 50 to 60 percent. But most architects think most people don't want and can't afford their services.

#### Do Not So Big principles apply to multifamily housing as well?

Absolutely. In fact, I included a loft apartment in *Creating the Not So Big House* as an example. In many cases multifamily housing is better designed than single-family, because an architect's involvement is required.

#### How is the Not So Big House sustainable?

For one thing, it uses less material and land than a standard subdivision house. But I also think the way we go about making houses is going to be revolutionized in the not-too-distant future. I included two chapters on panelization in *The Not So Big House*. I think we'll eventually end up with everything but sheetrock already attached to the panels when they arrive on the site. The waste nor-

mally produced on construction sites will be limited to the factories, so the process of building a house will be much cleaner and more friendly to the environment.

#### How is *Creating the Not So Big House* different from *The Not So Big House*? Does the second book further the mission of the first one?

They're quite different. My first book was a tool to help people see that they can have the house they want with the money they have, if they're willing to subtract some square footage. What people don't realize is that the important information about a house isn't so much in a floor plan as it is in a three-dimensional space. I'm telling people to listen to their bodies, to how they respond to space and light. It's the secret language of architects – we don't talk about it, but we use it all the time. The second book says, now that you've decided to tailor a space to how you want it, here are some spatial concepts that can help you achieve that.

#### As you have lectured and written about this concept over the past few years, have your ideas matured or been refined?

Yes, I've learned how frustrated builders, developers, and real estate people are with big, soulless houses. Soon after the first book came out, I spoke at a realtors' meeting. There were about 300 realtors there, all of whom dealt with very high-end houses. I was worried, because I was basically getting up there and insulting them. The moderator even warned me that some of them might leave in the middle of my talk. You know what? Not a single person left. What I realized was that they were just as upset as I was about the lack of alternatives. Everybody assumes it's the builder's fault, the developer's, the realtor's. But a lot of it really is the tax thing – the idea that the more money you have invested in your house, the less the government can take.

Meghan Dreuding is a senior editor at *Residential Architect* and *Custom Home* magazines in Washington, D.C.



"More, Bigger, Better" in

# Multifamily

By Lisa Goff

**Z**oning boards, cookie-cutter design, government financing, penny-pinching developers: why would any architect want to wade through all these distractions in order to do multifamily housing? Because the field has changed dramatically in the past decade, reversing its déclassé reputation and creating new opportunities for architects interested in land planning and design innovation.

In the 1980s, multifamily housing often meant one of two things: Section 8 high-rises or townhouses for first-time homebuyers. Financing was largely through government sources or from wealthy individuals seeking federal tax credits for investing in low-income housing. The design challenges were minimal, the government red tape maximal. After the repeal of the tax credit legislation and the recession in the late 1980s, the multifamily market essentially dried up.

Now, thanks to an economic boom and an aging cohort of Baby Boomers, multifamily housing is back as a key component of the construction economy. The buying market is more affluent and design has been heavily influenced by neotraditional styles and the philosophical tenets of the New Urbanism. As developers snatch up sites, architects are grabbing opportunities to create master plans, design housing, and advise clients and localities on a host of development options.

## The senior housing boom

After the recession of the early 1990s, it was clear that senior housing was going to be the biggest market for multifamily housing in the coming two or three decades. As the Baby Boomers age, many are moving to retirement communities.

But these aren't our grandfathers' retirement communities. Senior housing has always been a significant part of the multifamily market. The difference today is that the demographic group we call "seniors" represents a wide variation of ages and lifestyles, much wider than those of 25 years ago. Consequently the changing needs and greater affluence of this group is affecting the design and location of multifamily senior housing. "These are people who turn on their computers and check their stocks as soon as they get up in the morning," says Christian J. Lessard, AIA, principal of The Lessard Architectural Group in Vienna.

Residents of retirement housing are getting younger – and older. "The average age is holding steady at 83, but people move in earlier and live longer," says Drew Kepley, AIA, vice president at SFCS in Roanoke. With the trend toward more continuing care facilities, in which residents relocate within the complex as their health needs change, architects are designing both for 70-year-olds who want to bring their boats along and 90-year-olds who require high-tech medical attention around the clock.



## Reston Town Center, Reston

The Lessard Architectural Group, Vienna

The second phase of Reston Town Center, like the first, sets a premium on "bundling" housing with existing services, stores, and entertainment centers. A second park will be built on the order of the first one. But there is one major difference in the second installment, designed by The Lessard Architectural Group. "The first phase was built all at once," says architect Christian J. Lessard, AIA. "That doesn't happen anymore, not since the 1980s recession. Nobody builds a million square feet on spec anymore." This time around, the offices and hotels will be



# Housing

*In spite of the headaches associated with the design and approval of multifamily residential developments, architects are finding this practice niche provides rich opportunities for planning advancement and design innovation.*



Seniors on the low end of the age spectrum, in particular, want large living spaces. "They're coming from large homes and they resist downsizing," says Kepley. SFCS, which designs retirement housing up and down the East Coast, used to design senior housing units of 750 to 800 square feet. Now developers insist that 10 to 15 percent of new units be at least 900 square feet in size. They also want architects to design communities with amenities that will attract the younger generation of seniors.

"More, bigger, better – that's the trend in senior housing," says Rudy Jennings, AIA, senior vice president at SFCS. "More choices, bigger spaces, better amenities." SFCS, for example, is designing senior housing complexes with bistros and cafes in addition to large dining halls, which provides dining options. Clients who buy freestanding cottages or "villas" get to choose paint colors and fixtures and select from a menu of upgrades that include fireplaces, garages, vaulted ceilings, and screened porches. Room sizes have grown from the 10' x 10' dimensions that were common a few years ago to at least 12' x 12' today. Windows are bigger, too, and the land set aside for parks and walking trails has increased. The general craze for technology and fitness also has seeped into the senior market, where buyers are demanding amenities such as computer centers and aerobics rooms.

## Urban sites rebound

"The cities just love us," says Ed Winks, AIA, of Edward H. Winks-James D. Snow Architects in Richmond. Winks-Snowa is getting a warm welcome these days from cities long starved for new or renovated multifamily housing. Thanks to an economy so strong that buildable sites are disappearing overnight, city leaders are seeing their wishes come true.

Over the years Winks-Snowa's commissions in the multifamily housing arena have accounted for anywhere from 40 to 70 percent of its revenues. The firm builds all stripes of multifamily housing, from condos and timeshares to resorts and senior housing. The single biggest trend today, says Winks, is the renewed popularity of downtown locations.

"Every building that can be converted to multifamily housing in urban areas is being converted," says Winks, pointing to a Washington, D.C., developer who wants to buy an entire square block in downtown Richmond and rehabilitate it as 300 units of multifamily residential.

Both Winks and Lessard say the demand for urban multifamily housing is generated by a combination of seniors and childless young professionals – often living in the same buildings. Both groups appreciate the convenience and cultural opportunities an urban setting offers. In response to their needs, Lessard says he's designing projects with "bundled" services, such as a concierge, laundry pickup and delivery, daycare, and retail.

built separately and by different developers.

Lessard's design calls for four-story buildings of wood. "Until a few years ago you couldn't use wood in a project like this. It was considered too suburban," he says. But the lower cost of wood has endeared it to developers, and consumers have come to accept it, too. Lessard says his design accommodates a hefty 85 units per acre, noting that if the design is handled in a thoughtful way, the densities of high-rise development can be achieved in a pedestrian-friendly way.



Architects also testify to an increase in rental housing, thanks both to a strong economy and young professionals whose priorities don't include home ownership. Lessard's design for the Port Imperial apartment complex on the Hudson River in Weehawken, New Jersey, for example, takes advantage of the hot rental market in metropolitan New York City.

Lessard confidently predicts a sharp decline in the popularity of suburbs, which he says will drive demand upward for multifamily housing in urban areas. "People are sick of commuting," says Lessard, whose practice specializes in infill urban housing. "They're beginning to define where they live as the total environment, not the individual housing unit." The definition of "urban," he adds, has expanded recently to include not only traditional cities, but edge cities such as Tysons Corner.

Winks points out that developers are increasingly drawn to downtowns because they're tired of trying to make the math work in suburban areas. Thanks to impact and sewer fees, the cost per unit of multifamily housing in suburban Henrico and Chesterfield counties, for example, are double and triple the cost in downtown Richmond. True, construction costs are higher downtown, but that can be more than made up by the higher prices upscale renters are willing to pay for premium downtown housing. Eager city officials also make a favorable counterpoint to gnarly suburban homeowners. "One of the scariest things you can run into is a neighborhood association," says Winks.

As for the monetary incentives for architects, Winks admits that professional fees are lower on multifamily housing than on many other building types. "But you can make it up by being prolific. Multifamily housing is design-intensive. It has a quick turnover. And you can make a difference."

### Challenges aplenty

The opportunity to "make a difference" by designing multifamily housing owes a lot to the New Urbanist school of thought, which encourages denser housing in a mixed-use environment. The trend toward mixed-use developments that feature multifamily housing – such as the Reston Town Center project Lessard is working on now – offers opportunities for innovative design. "Ten or fifteen years ago multifamily housing design was very formulaic, and developers wanted to put all their money into upfront glitz – elaborate lobbies, for example." Today, he says, developers are spending money on the units themselves, as well as on streetscape amenities, landscaping, and common areas. New Urbanism dictates more attention to the design of streets and their linkages to housing units. Indeed, one of the opportunities multifamily housing offers architects today is in the arena of land use consulting and master planning.

For architects engaged in senior housing, the biggest design challenge is often adapting a domestic vocabulary to an institutional building. "The philosophy of the industry now is that if you

### Sunrise Cottages

Sunrise Assisted Living, Richmond  
Beery Rio & Associates, Springfield

Paul Klaassen, a pioneer in the assisted living field in America, mandated that his senior housing facilities feel like home, not a hospital ward. In its latest design for Klaassen's Sunrise Assisted Living of Virginia, Beery Rio & Associates has taken that philosophy to its extreme, designing a neighborhood of three one-story buildings in the California Bungalow style. The wood-framed buildings have 70 units of housing as well as a laundry. A central building houses a kitchen. One of the residences serves as a "reminiscence building" specially designed for residents with Alzheimer's and other memory impairments.

Architect Chuck Heath, AIA, of Beery Rio & Associates says the firm chose the Bungalow style partly because it has a domestic connotation for residents who are now in their 70s and 80s. Sunrise Cottages is a prototype for similar developments in other parts of the country. Beery Rio collaborated with Sunrise architect, Victor Regnier, FAIA.





don't see it in your home, you're not going to see it in senior housing," says Chuck Heath, AIA, of Beery Rio & Associates in Springfield.

Heath faced this challenge when he designed a steel frame three-story building at the Sunrise continuing care retirement community in Richmond. Sunrise, a developer of retirement communities worldwide, pioneered the design of elderly housing on a social, rather than medical, model. To avoid an institutional feel, Heath varied the grid pattern on the facility, combining a regular, linear pattern on the long sides of the building with an irregular grid along the short sides. The result was an irregular column pattern inside that felt more like a residence than an office building. He clad the building in vinyl siding that gives the same domestic effect as wood.

Heath is using real wood in the next phase of the project, Sunrise Cottages, a community of homes in the Arts and Crafts style. "Wood is one of the biggest trends," agrees Lessard, who is using the material generously in his work on Reston Town Center. Wood is not only homier, but cheaper, a fact that appeals to developers who are still struggling to keep costs down.

### The money game

Rising interest rates have shooed away government funders like the FHA, the Virginia Housing Development Authority, and, more recently, the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Multifamily housing is once again being financed by traditional lenders: banks, insurance companies, and private

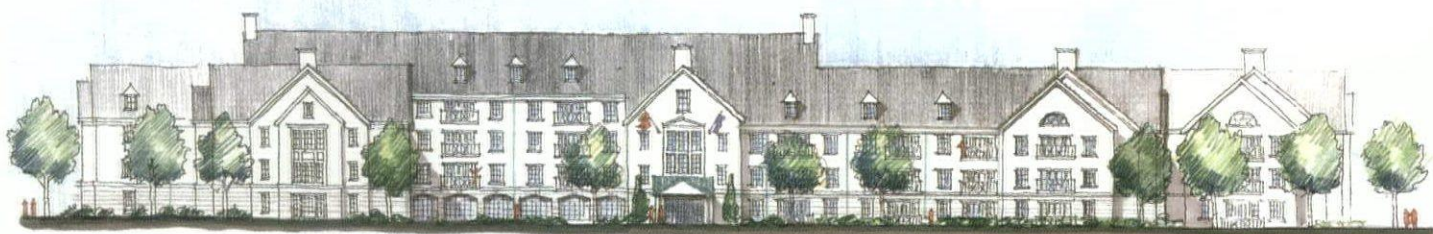
investors. However, unlike the private investors of the 1980s who were shopping for tax credits, wealthy individuals today are looking primarily for a return on investment.

With construction costs rising and government financing hard to come by, developers are looking hard for cost-cutting options. In his last low-rise building for Sunrise, Heath used in-room air conditioning units and saved \$300,000 on a \$10 million building. "And we adapted them to the design in a way that didn't compromise the façade," he says.

Designing multifamily housing in today's market helps a firm diversify its clientele and offers design challenges that some architects say are far more rewarding than other aspects of their practice. But the niche requires them to be nimble with numbers and sympathetic with developers' and builders' needs. It also demands a kind of zeal.

"Half of what I do is missionary work," says Winks. Developers have to be convinced to break the mold of multifamily housing design, and government officials have to be convinced of the merit of a cutting-edge proposal that might not fit their preconception of what multifamily housing ought to look like – or where it should be located. But as Baby Boomers continue to age, and the economy continues to boom, architects are finding multifamily housing an exciting market to work in.

*Lisa Goff is a freelance writer based in Charlottesville.*



### Galloway Ridge at Farrington Village Farrington, N.C.

Edward H. Winks / James D. Snow Architects, Richmond

Like many of his Virginia colleagues, Ed Winks has been influenced by the New Urbanism. The impact is clear in Winks' design for Galloway Ridge at Farrington Village, a 15-acre senior housing development near Chapel Hill, N.C. Unlike traditional nursing homes, which often are located away from large population centers, Galloway Ridge is a five-minute walk from the center of the village of Farrington. The apartment building wings, commons building, and wellness center at Galloway Ridge merge with the massing and architectural style of the rest of the community. The design of the housing is reminiscent of the 1950s, when many current residents were living in houses that were similarly styled. "These things are small towns in scale," says Winks. "The urban design potential is immense."



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SFCS Inc., Roanoke

Many of SFCS's designs for assisted living communities incorporate regional vernacular housing styles. At one of the firm's recent projects, Reeds Landing in Springfield, Massachusetts, white siding and steeply pitched green roofs reflect traditional New England houses. Inside, Windsor chairs and traditional wood furnishings continue the theme. Elsewhere, at The Colonnades in Charlottesville, porticos and wooden porch railings echo the Jeffersonian architectural heritage of the area. The country-house exterior of The Glebe in Daleville (rendering, below) fits comfortably in its rural Virginia setting.

"We approach the design of these facilities with an open mind, but we try to match the design to the surrounding area," says architect Drew Kepley, AIA, of SFCS. At Salemtowne, The Moravian Home (rendering, above) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, SFCS had a particularly rich vernacular style to draw from. The three-story buildings incorporate Moravian architectural details in the arches, eaves, and cupolas, producing a multifamily housing complex that looks at home in the context of historic Old Salem.







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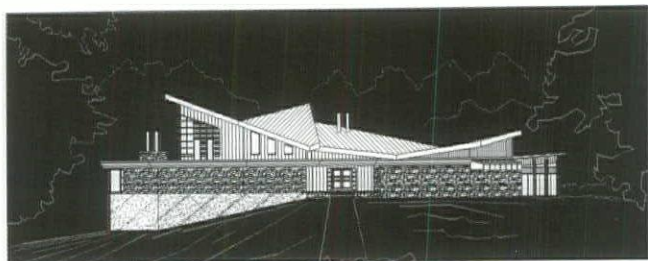
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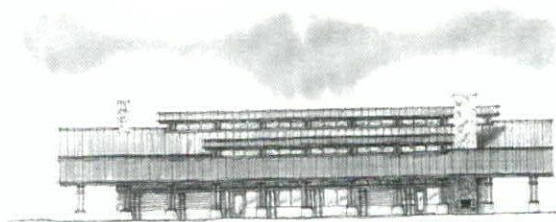




**Architect:** Architectural Design Group, Inc., Newport News

**Project:** Residence in Kings Grant

ADG is currently renovating a 1960s home in Virginia Beach, in which the goal is to improve the existing structure's dynamic nature and enhance it while maintaining the essence of the original structure. New elements include a second-floor loft with wet bar and a covered outdoor roof deck. Tel: 757-873-9644



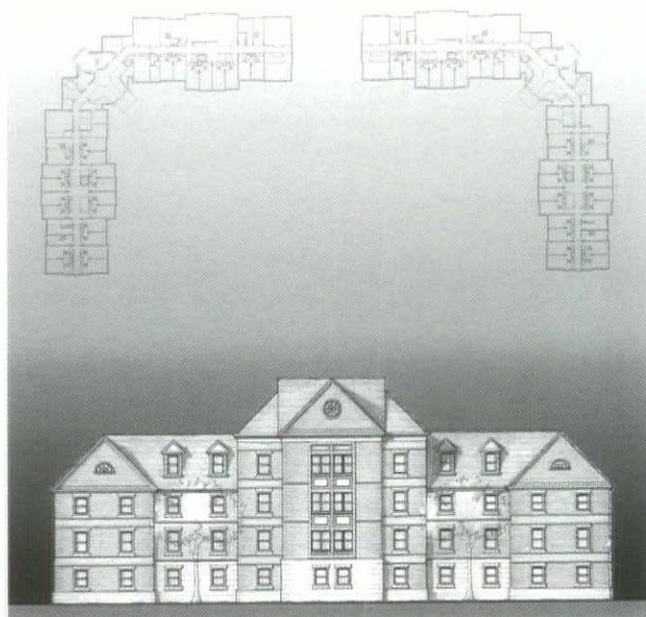
**Architect:** BCWH, Richmond

**Project:** 2000 Cub Scout Camp

The Lodge and Administrative Center is one of several new buildings and structures for the Robert E. Lee Council's new Cub Scout Resident Camp. This 12,870 s.f. facility includes administrative offices, meeting rooms, health lodge, dining hall and kitchen, trading post, and quartermaster. Tel: 804-788-4774



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**Architect:** Daniel, Mann, Johnson & Mendenhall

**Project:** Christopher Newport University - New Residence Halls

The two residence halls will create a new architectural theme and campus quad for the university. The design responds to the existing campus and surrounding neighborhood scale with twin "L" buildings composed of residential wings linked by a distinctive commons entry with lounges. Tel: 703-807-2518



**Architect:** Baskervill & Son, Richmond

**Project:** The Richmond SPCA

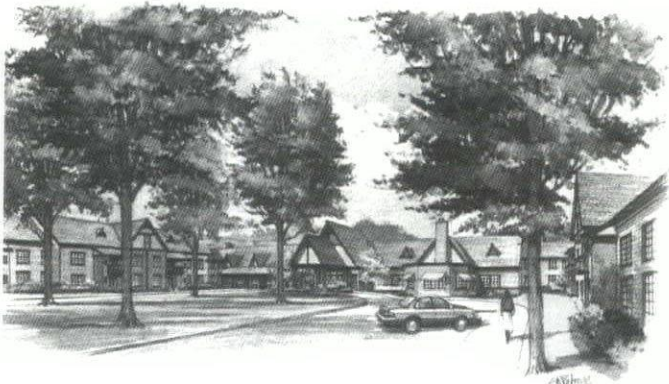
Through its "Campaign for a Compassionate Solution," the Richmond SPCA is moving to a renovated tobacco warehouse with the goal of setting a new national standard for humane care. The facility will provide a homelike adoption environment with educational facilities, a clinic, and gymnasium. Tel: 804-343-1010





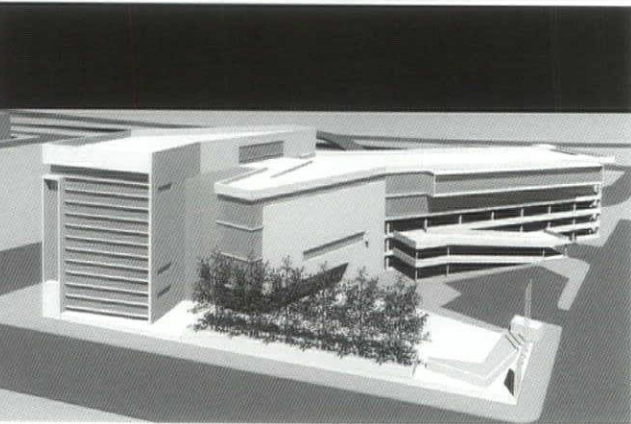
**Architect:** Mitchell/Matthews Architects, Charlottesville  
**Project:** Holsinger Square

This mixed-use development is intended for medical, research, technology, and office uses, with the possibility for residences above and commercial at street level. Located in Charlottesville, the 170,000 s.f. building falls within strict control of the architectural and urban character. Tel: 804-979-7550



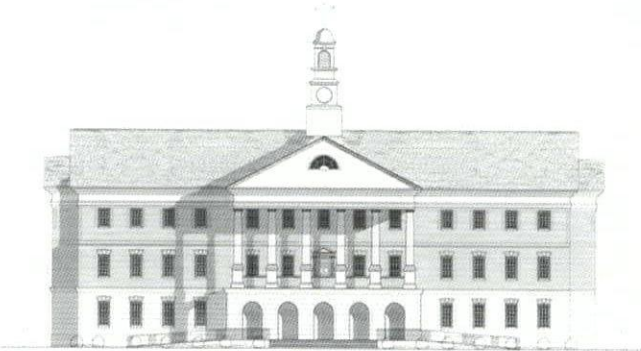
**Architect:** SFCS, Roanoke  
**Project:** Preswick Glen, Presbyterian Home for Central New York, Inc.

Phase one of this \$18.5 million retirement community includes 84 independent living apartments, a 20,000 s.f. community center, and 28 cottages. The design challenge was to create a rich architecture for the New Hartford, N.Y., site while keeping to a modest budget. Contact Rudy Jennings, AIA, at 540-344-6664.



**Architect:** SMBW Architects, P.C., Richmond  
**Project:** UNOS Corporate Headquarters

Anchoring a corner of the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park, this 90,000 s.f. office building will consolidate existing facilities. The facility is comprised of two wings connected by a four-story atrium. Concrete, architectural precast, metal panels, and curtain wall are the primary materials. Tel: 804-782-2115



**Architect:** Wiley & Wilson, Lynchburg  
**Project:** New Gloucester County Courthouse

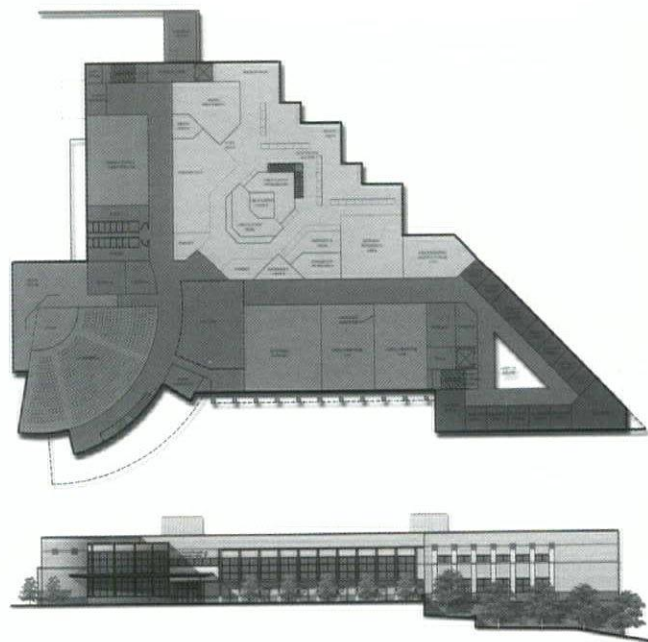
Wiley & Wilson is currently designing Gloucester County's new 45,000 s.f. courthouse. The new Roman Revival structure will house four courtrooms, clerk's offices, court services, security, and Commonwealth's Attorney and County Attorney office suites. Tel: 804-947-1901





**Architect:** Tut Bartzen & Associates Architects, Richmond  
**Project:** Private Residence near Middleburg, Virginia

This new 8,500 s.f. home will be built on 30 acres bordering Goose Creek. The house – which along with the guest house will be constructed of stone, stucco, and metal roofing – is planned to maximize views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Windows will be custom wood with a natural finish. Tel: 804-288-3436



**Architect:** Marcellus Wright Cox & Smith Architects, Richmond  
**Project:** J. Sargeant Reynolds Information/Technology Center

An 81,000 s.f. information/technology center on the college's Parham Road campus will house instructional and academic space, a high-tech library/learning resource center, student services, and support facilities. It will incorporate state-of-the-art voice/data/video technology. Tel: 804-780-9067.

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**Architect:** Hayes, Seay, Mattern and Mattern, Inc., Roanoke  
**Project:** Bowe Street Parking Facility

This new 440-car parking deck for Virginia Commonwealth University also provides a weight training facility on the ground level and instructional studios for the Art Foundation program on the top level. Located in the university's developing

Broad Street district in downtown Richmond, the building is designed to reflect its strong contextual influences while establishing its own identity. Tel: 540-857-3100



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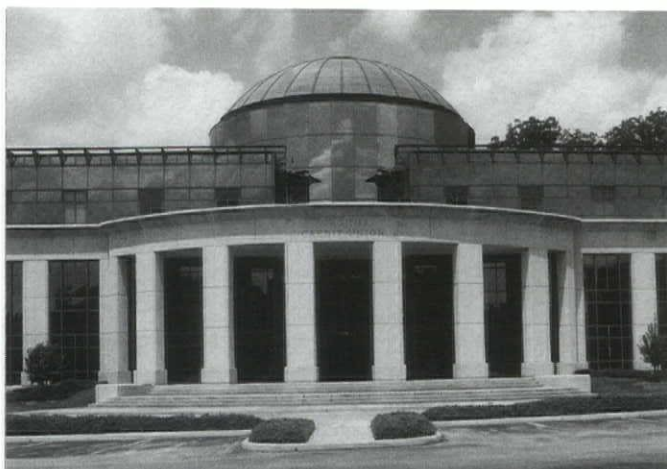
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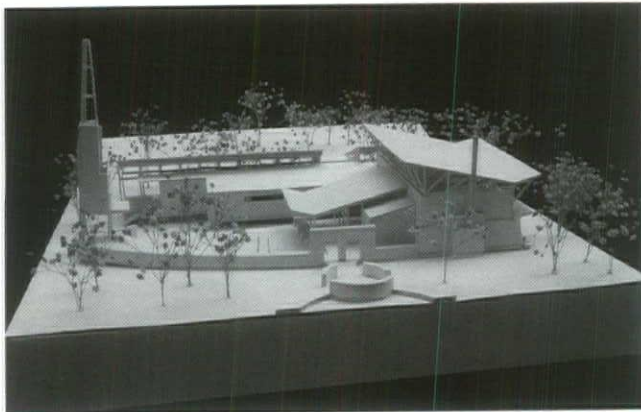


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**Project:** Unitarian Universalist Church of the Shenandoah Valley

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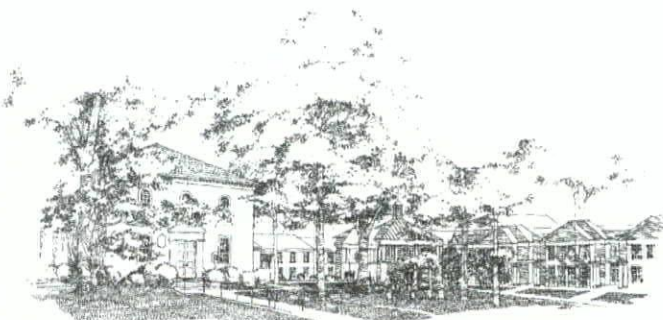


**Architect:** Rancorn Wildman Architects, Newport News

**Project:** West Point Auditorium and Fine Arts Center

This 24,400 s.f. facility will be shared by the schools and the community in the Town of West Point. Its 500-seat auditorium features a fly loft and orchestra pit along with theater lighting and sound. The lobby has space for art displays. Band, chorus, drama, and art classrooms are included. Tel: 757-873-6606

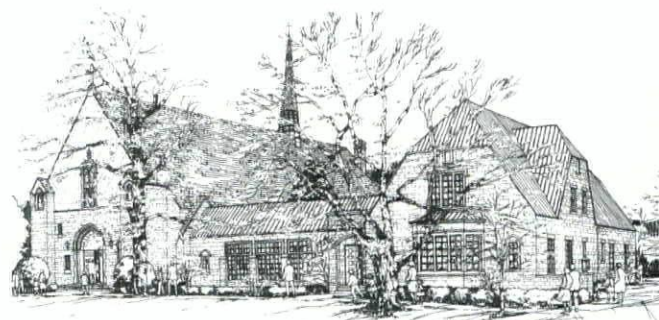
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**Architect:** LeMay Erickson Architects, Reston

**Project:** The Falls Church (Episcopal) Multipurpose Addition

LeMay Erickson Architects was chosen by The Falls Church (Episcopal) to master plan and design a 60,000 s.f. classroom and multipurpose addition to its historic campus. The scale and materials of the new architecture are designed to complement original Georgian-styled structures. Tel: 703- 471-7555



**Architect:** Winks/Snowa Architects, P.C., Richmond

**Project:** St. Paul's Catholic Church Commons/Office Addition

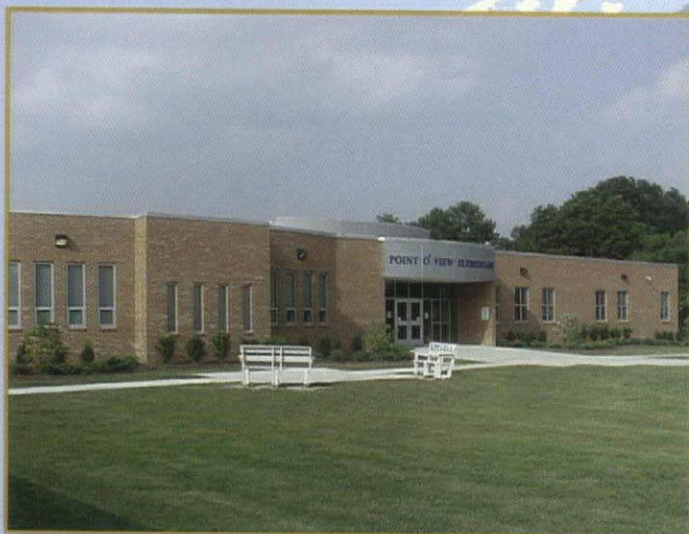
The focus was on a smooth transition between the 51-year-old church and its addition. Stone veneer, Gothic considerations, and formal site planning enabled this process. The addition holds a large gathering space for the congregation, an art gallery, a nursery, and office space. Tel: 804-643-6196





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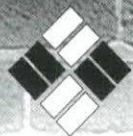
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## ! Taking Note

Despite his adding only 300 square feet of space to it, Alexandria architect David Jameson, AIA, has transformed a 1960s developer house in McLean with an expressive living area that links the interior spaces to the house's heretofore obscured grounds and pool. The original house made little attempt to link inside and out, eschewing even the ubiquitous deck. But, after removing an interior wall to join the family room and kitchen, Jameson exploded part of the rear wall and replaced it with an angled plane of steel windows. The wall's cranked orientation, which aligns with the new pool, exposes the glass to afternoon sun. To offset this, Jameson added a generous overhang with a new steel roof.

The new wall is complemented by a cylindrical breakfast room. Its conical roof is topped with a weathervane fashioned in the shape of a man-in-the-moon. Below the weathervane lies a laminated glass skylight, admitting light that skitters around the breakfast area and finds its way into the kitchen.

Jameson allows that the project is more "follyesque" than most he has done, but adds that clients Ruth and Paul Kossler were just the right fit for such a fancy. She, for one, manages a children's toy and clothing store. But, as fanciful as the forms appear, the austerity and precision of the detailing ensures that the ensemble is taken seriously. One example: the bluestone patio and family room floor are at virtually the same level – an accomplishment that required the Honduran mahogany windows to be intricately detailed with layers of flashing to maintain the separation.

– T. Duncan Abernathy, AIA

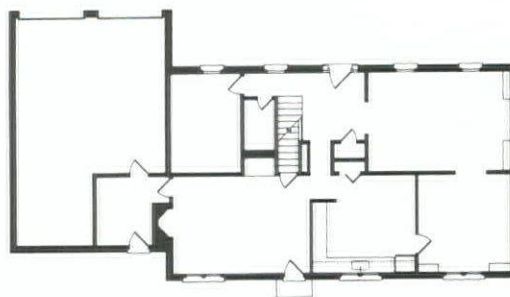
## Small Moves with Big Outcomes



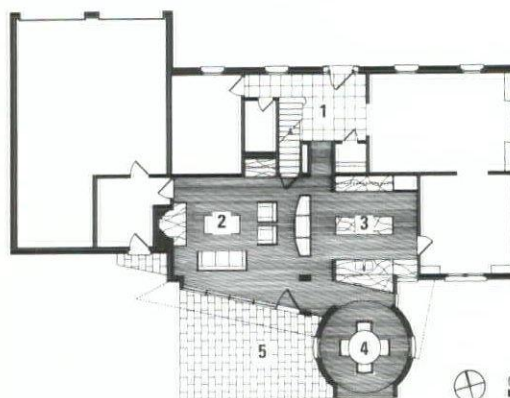
Fine-grained oriental stucco covers the exterior walls of the breakfast room (below left). Inside, walls are finished in plaster, with Honduran mahogany framing the steel windows (left).

Photos: Hoachlander/Davis Photography

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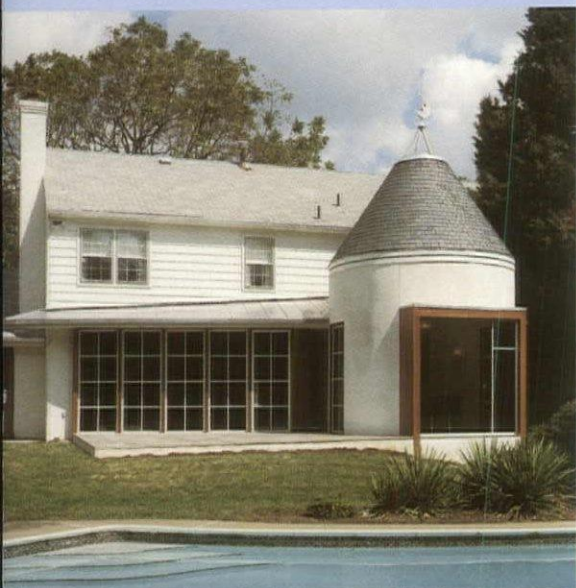


First Floor Plan (Before)



First Floor Plan (After)

- 1 Renovated Entry
- 2 Family Room
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Breakfast Room
- 5 Patio





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