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Home&Garden

Backyard sighting: A heron captured in flight. Page 2E.

home of the month

December's profile of a well-designed living space
Take a look at a photo gallery at www.newsobserver.com, search **home&garden**.



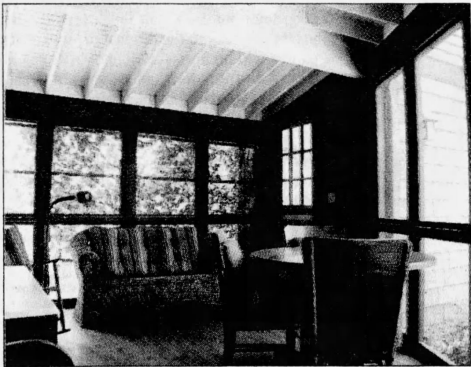
the courtyard

Ken Peterman transformed the existing landscape into a garden courtyard, with a koi pond in the center.

PHOTOS BY KEN PETERMAN

A simply elegant nest

Chapel Hill house is shaped around a koi courtyard



The favorite and most frequently used room, by far, is the screened porch, which opens onto the garden.

By PAUL R. BATTAGLIA
GUEST COLUMNIST

Shannon Ravenel and Dale Purves had lived in the house on Franklin Street in Chapel Hill for eight years when a man offered them more money than they could refuse. The timing seemed right: The couple's nest was now empty, and they had been considering relocating some day. A few years back they had purchased a portion of their neighbor's lot to establish a privacy buffer. But now "some day" was here. They looked around, but decided that they loved being in the heart of the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. So they turned their attention to the neighboring parcel: a narrow, .36-acre lot running east-west with a mature landscape featuring two large pecan trees. The couple had worked with

See Correction: Page 2A, Date 1-4-08
architect Ken Peterman on an addition to a former residence. Peterman was hired to design the new house.

The couple wanted a cozy, private house. They favored casual and comfortable over formal, and preferred a small, one-story house. And they wanted a courtyard. They asked Peterman to design a house that transformed the existing landscape into a garden courtyard, a place where they could live, work and rest. Also, Ravenel said, "I told him that I wanted a house that was too small for big parties." Once they communicated their basic needs, they left Peterman to develop his design. The relationship worked well. As co-founder of Algonquin Press, Ravenel was well versed in how to provide direction,

the project

the purves-ravenel residence

architect
Ken Peterman
Architect, 205 W. Main St., No. 204, Pittsboro 933-1855
project location
103 S. Boundary St., Chapel Hill
square footage
2,241 heated, 275 unheated
key attributes
Modest, courtyard house, integrated garden

SEE COURTYARD, PAGE 4E

COURTYARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1E

then edit, critique and manage while also allowing for creativity.

Peterman developed a design that combined his clients' wish for a central courtyard with precedents established by houses in the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District. The form and proportions of the house match those of the shingled-sided cottages with simple wood detailing found only one street away.

The house fits the neighborhood nicely. While Franklin Street has a certain ceremonial aspect, and its houses are commensurately grand, the side streets are more casual. This house has no prominent facade. Instead, a landscaped motor court drive fills the front yard. Then there is the gate to the garden.

A koi pond occupies the center of the courtyard, the definition of which is completed by low site walls and the house itself. The house curves around the courtyard and connects to it both physically and visually. This allows the house, despite its relatively narrow interior, to feel far larger. And because the house faces south, it enjoys passive solar heating.

The house is clad in cedar shake with simple exterior trim and sills, echoing the detailing of the historic neighborhood. This simplicity extends into the interior detailing. The house has simple wood trim at the doors and windows. The doors are made with simple panels. There is a straightforward mitered base molding without corner blocks. Bead-board and exposed ceiling joists make the rooms feel more like porches.

To meet the couple's requirement that the house be constructed on one level, the house reaches to the full extent of the lot's setbacks. With the help of landscape consultant Kim Archer, Peterman preserved the best of the existing vegetation, including the pecan trees and several mature azaleas. These were complemented by several other plants.

The house has distinctly modern luxuries. For instance, along with a common tub and shower area in the master suite are his-and-hers water closets and sinks as well as separate walk-in closets.

More than anything else, the house hinges on the garden. See-through glass cabinets allow the couple to look into the garden. Peterman placed storage, pantry, laundry in a room on the north side of the kitchen, where it would not interfere with the view of the courtyard.

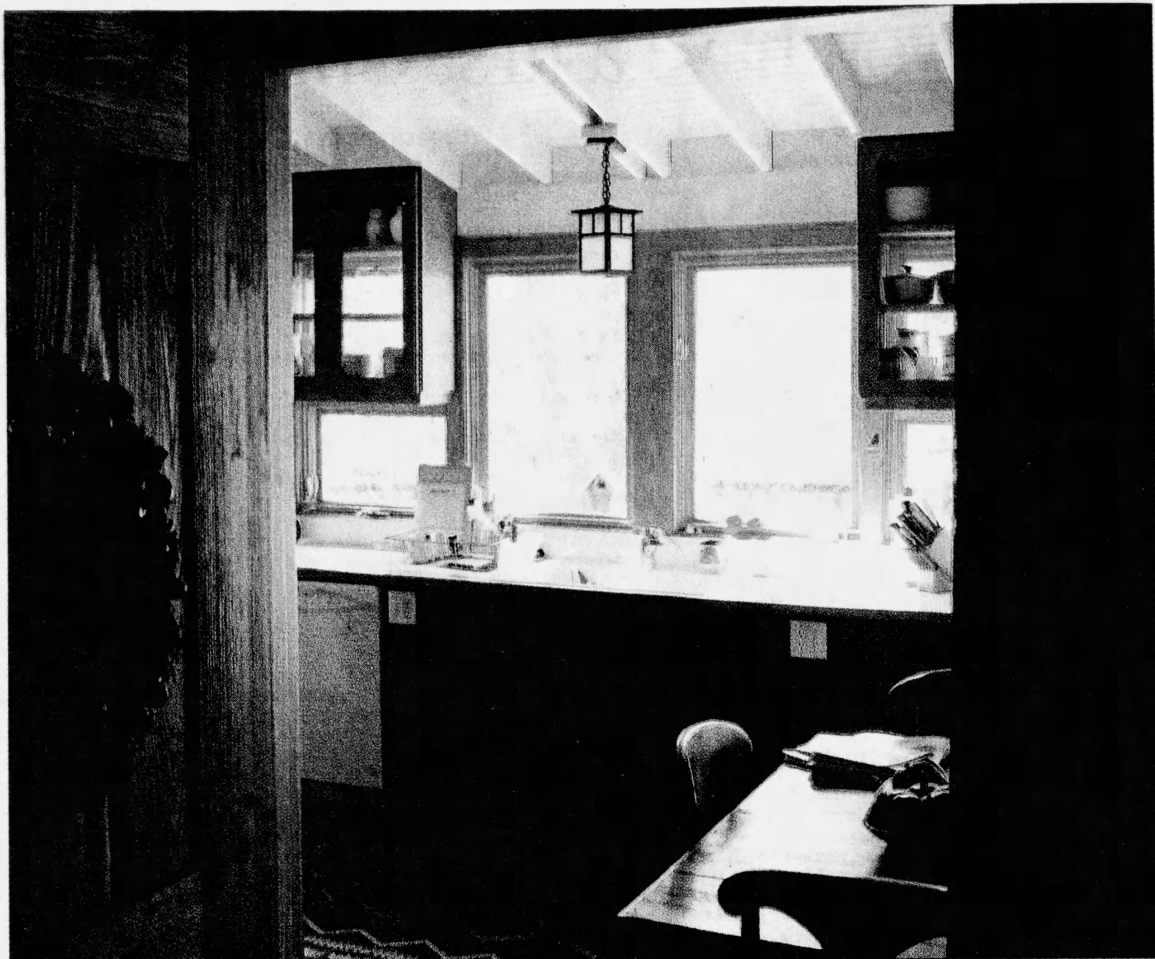
The favorite and most frequently used room, by far, is the screened porch. Accented by a waterbird made by Bynum folk artist Clyde Jones, the porch opens onto the garden. A planted trellis on the east side of the porch provides privacy by blocking the potential view from the neighboring houses, but because it is left open it has excellent cross-ventilation. "With the breeze it's possible to eat outside on all but the coldest and hottest days of the year," Ravenel says.

Beyond the screened porch is the study. A cozy, isolated room with a woodstove, it was intended as a guest room, but Purves enjoyed it so much that it became his retreat. After five years, it was clear he was not giving it up.

The lack of a proper guest room necessitated an addition. Peterman was retained again and designed a sympathetic addition that mates with the original house seamlessly. A bathroom and an office were added beneath a loftlike upper bedroom. A skylight draws the sun into the bedroom while light pours in from all sides of the bedroom.

Ultimately, Peterman created an elegantly simple house that sets off and is set off by its central courtyard. A house that beautifully fits its context. A house that is modest by intention. But perhaps the greatest compliment comes from Ravenel, "The house feels as if it has been here forever."

Paul R. Battaglia is a registered architect and assistant professor of architecture at the N.C. State University College of Design.

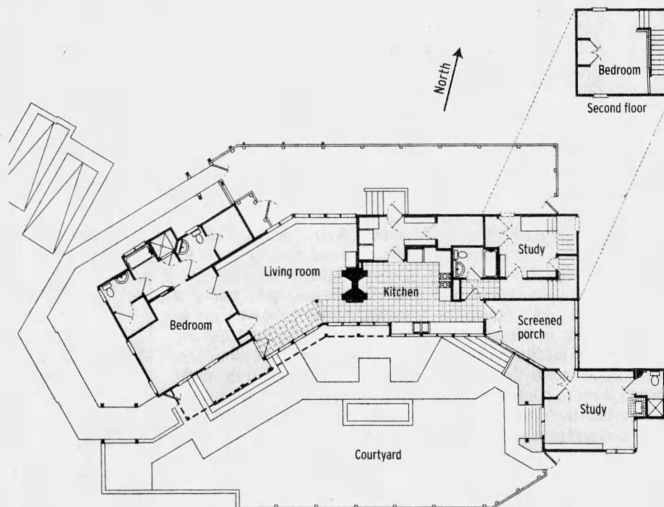


See-through glass cabinets in the kitchen allow a clear view into the garden.

PHOTOS BY KEN PETERMAN



Home of the Month, a collaboration with the N.C. State University College of Design, shows possibilities for constructing a living space with homeowners' living patterns and preferences in mind. Each month we profile a different home, selected by an expert panel, from designs by area architects. The goal: to offer inspiration and knowledge that can be applied to any living space.



The layout of the house wraps 2,500 square feet around a central courtyard.

◀ The central fireplace, left, reflects the elegantly simple design of the whole house.

CORRECTIONS

- A story in the Sports section Thursday incorrectly reported the record of the Atlantic Coast Conference football teams against members of the Bowl Championship Series. The ACC went 11-11 against BCS teams and 15-4 against teams not affiliated with the BCS.

- The Home of the Month article in the Home & Garden section Saturday listed an incorrect office location for the architect. Ken Peterman's office is in Carrboro.

- A Dec. 28 story about a breakin at the Willow Creek shopping center in Carrboro incorrectly said the burglar first entered a vacant Curves for Women gym. The vacant space had been occupied by a Slender Lady fitness center.