

# Architectural Archives

A semi-annual publication of DASA Architects

## PROJECT UPDATE:

# DANVILLE, VIRGINIA COURTS & JAIL



Photos: Dave Sagarin

## THE JUDGE JAMES INGRAM COURTHOUSE

**I**n 1996, Don Swofford, FAIA and Associates were commissioned to design an expansion to the 1968 courthouse in Danville. The early courthouse, clearly modern in design intent, had become uninviting, functionally impaired, lacking in character and out of scale with the surrounding classical buildings.

The concrete mass, lacking windows, was starving for light and the original entry was lost in the severe concrete massing. Lighting and climate control systems, advanced in their design thinking, but constructed with then contemporary technology had become unmanageable, and basically inoperative, contributing to the extremely severe cost of operating and maintenance. Finally, the courts

themselves were facing space shortages and additional needs for security and operations.

It was time for a Renaissance.

Judge James Ingram, for whom the courthouse was named, wrote the architect:

*... it is clear that the present building does not serves us well. There is no identifiable entry, the building appears unfriendly, and its very existence decries hostility by the Judicial system toward the public. The interior is dare, uninviting and foreboding. It is a difficult place for the community to come and believe that justice, the very core of our freedom in this country, is being served at all.*

*(continues on page 4)*

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## RETROSPECTION

### MARTHA WASHINGTON INN, ABINGDON, VIRGINIA

The original building, which is the centerpiece of the structures which comprise the inn, was constructed in 1832 as a residence for General Francis Preston and his wife Sarah Buchanan Preston. In 1858, the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church purchased the Preston home and developed the property as a college which opened for its first session on the eve of the civil war, when more than once, the students nursed wounded soldiers. Around 1910, there was a major expansion the Mariah Cooper Dormitory (now the Garden Wing) was built and a third story was added to both the Preston Mansion, and the Chapel (now the Barter wing)

In 1919 the college consolidated with the Emory and Henry college and became a junior college. The College closed in 1932. The buildings stood idle until 1935 when George Barnhill leased the property from the college and opened the Inn. The Inn has been in continuous operation since. When the Inn was purchased by the present owners in 1984, it was in dilapidated condition. The roof leaked, the antiquated one-pipe steam system heated unevenly, bathrooms had 4-foot long tubs, and 6-foot high doors, pipes leaked, and water pressure was low. Original large rooms were divided into small rooms, life safety was dependant on a sometimes operating sprinkler system supplemented by four narrow steel fire escapes loosely attached to the building. Structural problems were evident throughout the building and there were no provisions for handicap access. Aside from enlarging the kitchen, installing a sprinkler system around 1950, and remodeling the basement into a pub, painting and cosmetic repairs were the only things done since the buildings conversion into a hotel.

The architects were commissioned in June 1984 to evaluate feasibility of restoring the inn and design of major public spaces, enlarging guest rooms and suites, engineering of mechanical and electrical systems, upgrading means of egress and fire protection to meet current codes, and design handicap access, all within the guidelines established in *The Secretary of the Interiors Standards of Historic Preservation Projects*,

while maintaining maximum occupancy of the hotel.

The schematics were approved in July of that year and demolition work started in the west and north wings in November. These two wings, with 45 and 65 guest rooms, were renovated and occupied by May 1985. The original schedule was to complete the phase 1 work, then commence the rest of the renovation for November of 1985. In December 1984, it was decided to complete the entire project by the end of October 1985. Work was started in the rest of the building in February 1985 (*Cont'd on page six*)



## COMPLETION REPORT

### MCGLOTHLIN FAMILY PAVILION, OAKWOOD, VIRGINIA

**F**rugal Scots/Irish, the McGlothlins were farmers and herdsman who pioneered the settlement and development of Buchanan County in the hills of southwestern Virginia. In the late nineteenth century, coal was discovered on what had become a vast farm holding of the McGlothlins.

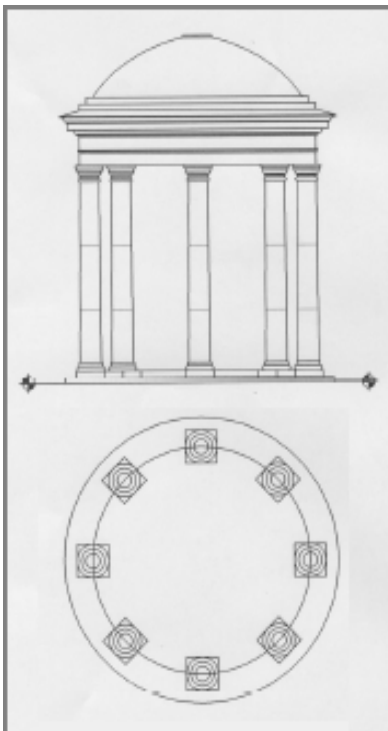
A dynasty evolved among family-related landowners throughout southwestern Virginia and eastern Kentucky. They formed a cooperative which became the United Coal companies. In the twentieth century, coalfield holdings and real estate investments were expanded and diversified under the leadership of Woodrow McGlothlin and his oldest son James. The United Companies, the present holding company, continues as testimony to the vision and good business sense of the McGlothlin Family.

Near the family homestead in the Garden Creek Valley near Grundy, Virginia, the palisades rise from the flat plain establishing the entry into a family cemetery. James, Tom and Mickey, the sons of Woodrow, commissioned the architect to design and erect a monument and memorial to the family patriarch and their mother.



#### PROGRAM

Throughout history, architecturally magnificent structures commemorate the memory of those who were loved, honored, after their passing. Perhaps no creation of man has so intrigued the imagination as the monumentality of the Cenotaph—particularly those inspired by Petra (the “City of Tombs”), considered the seventh wonder of the ancient world. The term “Cenotaph” was established by the Romans for the impressive tomb erected at Halicarnassus in the third century BCE, honoring King Mausolus of a nation then known as Caria (part of Asia Minor today).



#### SOLUTION

Searching for a precedent suitable for a McGlothlin family monument, the architects studied the monuments in the City of Tombs and in Rome. The chosen form is an uncomplicated ring of columns supporting an architrave, and roofed with a structure that reflects the roof of the Pantheon. It is a stepped structure with a hemispherical dome, yielding a low profile. The Architect’s principal concern was not to mimic the Renaissance dome, but to express that structural capability of contemporary forms. Studies were completed to assure the structure was straightforward, and candid in expressing the strength of the column below the curved architrave above; all supporting a roof that was rendered in a structure expressing the honesty and openness that created the coffered ceiling of the Roman precedent found in the Pantheon.

#### CONCLUSION

The tradition of acknowledging the deeds of the family patriarch and matriarch in a permanent form is subtly and succinctly completed in the McGlothlin Family pavilion. It is at once a current monument to the work of Woodrow; and a timeless statement about man and architecture

COMPLETION REPORT

KRAUSE RESIDENCE, FARMINGTON, VIRGINIA

**D**avid and Janice Krause closed out successful businesses in Lake Forest, Illinois, and moved to Charlottesville. The purchase of #7 Dogwood Lane was an interesting one . . . the building was an unimposing home; cozy, quaint and architecturally unassuming. The simplicity lay hidden for over forty years by the over growth of boxwoods planted along the visitor driveway in front of the home.

DASApLc Landscape Associate went to work immediately to reduce the scale of the boxwoods, and expose the home. Flanking wings were added, the kitchen remodeled and a dignified Jeffersonian portico identified the hitherto hidden entry door.



Photo: Dave Sagarin

The rehabilitation was completed by Abrahamse Construction in 1989. The Krause's continue to occupy this dignified and appropriate home that continues to subtly contribute to the culture of Farmington Country Club.

(cont. from page 1—Danville)

The DASA team completed a space need analysis and facilities evaluation study. The program recommended additional space to meet the needs. The architect then made a radical proposal for a new façade based on a Classical model that alluded to the same architectural design of earliest Virginia Courthouse. The new façade quickly established an identity for the community to grasp and embrace. Judge Ingram was fascinated that what he knew as traditional, established values could still be designed and built in a world of modernism.

The program called for a complete redesign and rehabilitation of the existing mechanical and electrical systems. Architecturally, the needs of the City's courts required a minimum 16,000 square foot addition. This was all charted through the use of the Facilities Design Guidelines produced by the Virginia Supreme Courts

After intense observation of the images of the original Courthouse for Danville, the architectural team set upon using Pavilion VII of Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia. The "focused entry" was to use the Ionic and Tuscan



Photos: Dave Sagarin

orders in impost. The balance of the building was to be "civic" in stature to fill a void formed by the abandoned park and complete the acropolis setting formed by the Classical Buildings that surround the site.

The heroic and centralized portico of the building was to speak of the government of the people.

Construction of the Courthouse was a technical challenge. The plaza into which the courthouse was to be extended was over a semi-underground parking lot. The structure was therefore designed to go over the existing parking lot. To accomplish this, Clive Fox, PE, and constructed large concrete floating grade beams to preserve precious parking spaces while producing suitable structure to support the load bearing walls above.

Further, confused design ideals of the late 70's misguided the previous engineer into concocting a mechanical electrical system that in theory seemed energy efficient, but in reality it was not. The system needed to be reconfigured to add controls and insulation where required.

ASK THE ARCHITECT

**Residential Remodeling Nearly a Quarter Trillion Dollar Industry**

Home improvement moving toward the upper-end offers expanding opportunities for architects



by Kermit Baker, PhD, Hon. AIA, Chief Economist  
Reprinted from *AIArchitect*

It's fairly clear that residential architecture firms have benefited from the strong homebuilding industry in recent years. What is less well publicized is that home remodeling activity has fared just as well as new residential construction. Leading the upswing in home-improvement activity are upper-income homeowners who have realized several years of rising house prices and now have substantial equity in their homes. Not only are rates for home-equity loans to finance these improvements at very attractive levels, but streamlined application procedures also make this financing easily accessible.

As a result, spending to improve and maintain our nation's housing increased to \$214 billion in 2001 and accounts for 40 percent of total residential investment. Documenting these trends, the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University recently released *Measuring the Benefits of Home Remodeling*, a report on the U.S. home improvement industry. Following is a summary.

Home improvement has become the great national pastime. Whether remodeling a kitchen, adding a family room, installing replacement windows, or simply changing a light fixture, millions of Americans each year undertake some type of home project. For individual owners, investing in their homes in this way not only improves their comfort and safety, but also their ability to build wealth and achieve financial security. For society as a whole, home improvement spending bolsters annual growth of the economy at the same time that it preserves and enhances the nation's \$13 trillion housing stock.

**Remodeling and the economy**

While trending up throughout the second half of the 1990s, spending on home remodeling picked up pace toward the end of the decade. When the Joint Center for Housing Studies published its first report in this series, 1995 remodeling expenditures were estimated at about \$150 billion. At the time the second report was published, 1999 expenditures were up to about \$180 billion. And by 2001, expenditures had climbed to \$214 billion.

Indeed, the strength of home remodeling activity played an instrumental part in preventing the economy from falling deeper into recession in 2000-2001. Like new residential construction, remodeling spending has directly benefited from several years of rising rates of homeownership, rapid increases in house prices, and low interest rates. Even as economic growth averaged just 2.0 percent annually in 2000-2001 (in inflation-adjusted terms), remodeling expenditures increased more than 6 percent. With so many other sectors in retreat, the \$34 bil-

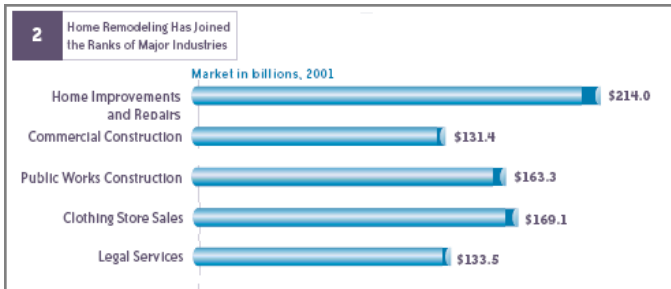
lion increase in home improvement spending accounted for 4.2 percent of overall economic activity.

Despite its size and growing importance, home remodeling is a "stealth" industry that flies beneath the radar of most macroeconomic analysts. Collectively, however, spending on home-remodeling activities outpaces that of several other major industries, including legal services and clothing-store sales. In fact, expenditures on home remodeling now exceed those in both the commercial and public-works construction categories.

**The role of homeowners**

Homeowners accounted for more than three-quarters of the \$214 billion total in 2001, devoting more than \$131 billion to home improvements and over \$34 billion to maintenance and repairs. Owners also were responsible for almost 90 percent of the spending gains from 1995-2001, with growth rates averaging almost 7 percent annually (4 percent when adjusted for inflation).

In 2000 and 2001, some 41 million homeowners undertook almost 100 million improvement projects, nearly two-thirds of which involved replacing structural elements or major systems. Homeowners also completed 7.6 million room additions and alterations (including decks and



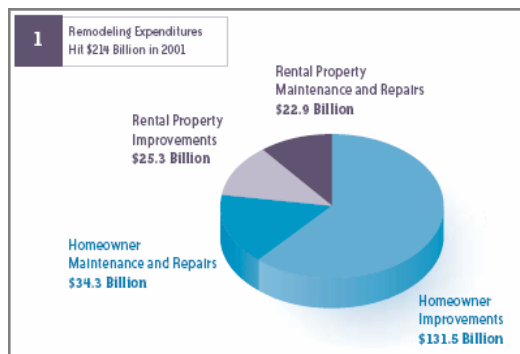
porches), with total spending averaging just under \$25 billion annually in 2000-2001.

Meanwhile, rental property owners added another \$48 billion to the total, with expenses about evenly split between improvements and maintenance and repairs. Spending on rental properties was not only much lower than that on owner-occupied

homes, but also registered almost no gain in inflation-adjusted terms from 1995-2001.

While millions of households of all incomes complete at least one home-improvement project each year, high-spending homeowners are responsible for an increasing share of overall expenditures. For example, the 6.3 percent of owners who spent \$20,000 or more on home improvements accounted for almost half of the 2000-2001 total, while the 2.7 percent of households spending \$35,000 or more accounted for over a third. This represents a dramatic increase in the high-end market since 1995, when comparable shares were a third and less than a fifth.

The importance of the high-end segment is clear from recent statistics on kitchen and bath remodeling. In 2000-2001, homeowners undertook more than 5 million bathroom projects and almost 4 million kitchen projects. Owners making major kitchen improvements or alterations (costing at least \$10,000) accounted for almost \$11 billion of the \$14 billion spent each year in



(cont. from page 5—Remodeling)

this category. Similarly, major bath remodels, additions, and alterations (costing at least \$5,000) contributed \$8.3 billion of the \$10.6 billion spent annually.

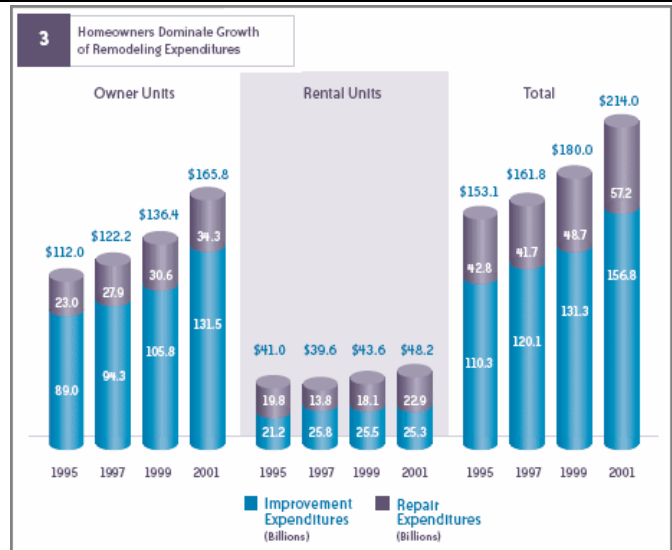
**Building wealth, preserving the stock**

Investing in their homes contributes importantly to the financial well-being of owners, who now make up more than two-thirds of all American households. Although they do on occasion fall, home prices at the national level have risen in nominal terms each year over the past two decades—only rarely falling to outpace general Inflation. This appreciation has enabled many longer-term owners to accumulate substantial home equity, which typically accounts for more than half of their total wealth.

Families that spend more on home improvements also realize the greatest rates of price appreciation. In many regions of the country, homeowners in fact recover as much 80-90 percent of the cost of home improvements in the form of higher home values. It's little wonder then that homeowners spent more than \$2,300 on average in 2001 to help protect and improve their most important financial asset.

While remodeling projects are increasingly equated with fashion-oriented upgrades to upper-end suburban homes, families living in lower- and moderate-income neighborhoods also are active in the improvement market. By making modest investments in basic systems and structural elements, these households are preventing their older—and typically more affordable—homes from deteriorating and falling out of the housing stock.

Consider the case of persons who purchased homes prior to 1994. When improvement expenditures are measured as a share of initial



home value, these homeowners spent on average some 6.5 percent on upgrades over the 1995–2001 period. What is more, much of this remodeling activity is occurring in the center cities of major metropolitan areas across the country. While this finding reflects the fact that center-city homes have lower values, it also suggests that, after decades of neglect, many older homes are being upgraded to serve the needs of a new generation of homeowners.

(cont. from page 2—Martha Washington)

. During all of the construction activity, the hotel remained open except for one month in the winter.

One of the most impressive spaces in the building is the presidents club. Originally a gymnasium and later a science laboratory, the room had been cut up into several large storage rooms and a maintenance shop. The floor was collapsing when work started. Structural repairs were made old partitions were removed and a new service area was built in the center of the room. New fire stairs, two enclosed and two covered, were built to replace the steel fire escapes. In the Williamsburg wing, which is the central wing connection to the other four wings, an elevator was installed and several short flights of stairs were replaced by ramps for handicap access. All new plumbing, heating electrical and fire alarm systems were installed and the existing sprinkler system was reworked. A new metal roof which matches the green color found in a peeling paint chip was installed. New suites were created



when partitions were removed in the original mansion, restoring rooms to their original size. Damaged or destroyed plaster cornices were recreated in wood. The pub was remodeled and sound insulation installed to reduce noise levels. Steel framing was added to shore up the structure which had been cut up in past alterations.

While construction was in progress, antique furniture was being repaired and refinished. Rooms and suites are furnished with these antiques and with reproductions. Walls of the lobby are covered with original French scenic woodblock printed wallpaper. Hand painted silk wallpaper from china was ordered for the epicurean dining room. Wainscots in the lobby and dining room were given a marbled finish by a local artist.

The Inn was reopened November 16, 1985; enlargement of the kitchen was completed in July of the following year.

## FOUNDER'S THOUGHTS:

By Don Swofford, FAIA



### THOUGHTS ON NEW URBANISM AND THE “TRANSECT”

**A**t the end of World War II, Architects and Planners is a rush to embrace “Modernism” began to codify a method of planning small and large urban areas, that had only evolved prior to the notion that man and government should “take control”. Practices emerged that were based on a segregation and categorization of people and their activities that were codified into zoning that responded further to the advance of the automobile and a demoting transportation design that was neither rational, nor stable. The standardization through zoning coincided with that postwar desire to maximize equality, and equalize outcome. It was very simply put, the devolve-ment of planning for growth from an organic system that had evolved over the centuries into a mechanical institution that finds its underpinning in the effort of planners and architects to establish modernist architectural thought. Based on le Corbusier’s belief that architectural design should expand to the whole of the built environment, the harmony envisioned in the mechanical environment was the modernist ego taken to the expanded limits, and perhaps further. Brasilia was the philosophy taken to those extremes . . . an environment that people quickly rebelled against and abandoned in favor of the kitsch in which their cultural tra-

ditions had grown in the previous two centuries.

The results in other locations were found to be dismal. The modernists, recognizing failure of the mechanics, sterility and cultural abandonment of modern planning moved from pole to pole seeking “patch” solutions. Most recently, environmentalism was presented as a solution. Such fallacious approaches continue to rebound in failed ‘new communities’ across the nation. Greening was seen as the salvation of suburbia. Environmentalist is pervasive, but, and paradoxically so, the greening of suburbia is not the solution . . . but it is a part. As I watch the City and County Planning Commissions grapple with these issues in a modernist, manipulative mindset, I am astonished at how we could be so far from the Philosopher’s Stone.

In the failure of man to manipulate his environment, what remains to be done is to return to a common sense approach to mans occupancy of the land. The designers of today, faced with the failure of modernism, and the rise of that need for common sense have evolved an approach to urban design called New Urbanism, and it is dictated by the **transect**.

The Transect is an observable occupancy of man and animal upon the land – it is a natural law that can be observed anywhere and everywhere. The Transect emerged organically in human settlement, preceding its explicit conceptual formulation. That it is timeless and cross-cultural can be easily observed by walking from the center to the outskirts of Pompeii.. It is still inculcating in towns and cites across the Virginia landscape; The Plains, Philomont, Brownsburg, Bluemont, to name a few. The Transect as a natural law may be immanent, but its suppression by modernist transportation and zoning has catalyzed the current need to re-present it as a viable alternative theory.

It articulated a series of determined human societies ranging from the bazaar at the intersection of two pathways; the town/city, the dense housing of the working force to serve the labor demands of the commercial center, the larger lands of the urban dwellers proceeding to the farmers in the alluvial plains, the hunters in the highlands, the industrialists along the rivers and the to tradesman along the shores.

It is the paradigm to survival on the planet containing all the notions that we can garner for this work.

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The Architect's Gazette

*Investment Opportunity*

*DASA plc is participating* with GPD Group, planners and developers. Plans are under way to construct three 30,000 square foot office buildings in the Charlottesville area.

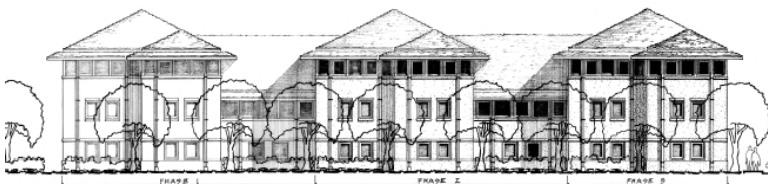
The opportunity exists for a select group of additional investors to participate. For further information, please contact Don Swofford at (434) 979 7407 or dons@dasaonline.com.

Our phone & fax numbers:  
Phone: (434) 979-7407  
Fax: (434) 293-8534

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NEXT ISSUE:  
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*Elevation view of a proposed office development near Charlottesville.  
Designed by Ed Eichman, AIA*