LIBERTY HILL FARM

Compiled by members of the Leadership Brentwood Class of 2008:

Renee Chevalier
Randy Lee
Todd Petrowski
Amy Thomas
Mike Womack

The information was compiled from the following sources:

- Liberty Farm plat provided by City of Brentwood
- Interview notes with T. Vance Little
- 2000 Tour of Homes Information Sheet
- *FFI* magazine, November/December 2001, pages 24–26

LIBERTY HILL FARM

INTRODUCTION:

As of this writing (2008), the Liberty Hill house, located on Liberty Church Road in Beachgrove Subdivision, is owned and lived in by **Larry and Carol Atema** and their children, Brent and Jenny.

The core of the house is a 1½ story log cabin that dates to **1796**. This currently serves as the family's breakfast room. An **1812** addition to the cabin now serves as the formal dining room. The front section of the house dates to the **1830s**, when major construction added a center hall and four rooms flanking the hall on the first and second floors. In **1990**, Mr. Atema replaced a Victorian porch with a pedimented porch supported by four columns. He also expanded the house at the back with a new block that houses a family room, second-floor master suite, and a modern kitchen off the core 1796 cabin.

HISTORY:

The land on which Liberty Hill house was built was originally a North Carolina land grant to **Thomas Buckle**, a private in the Revolutionary War. It is doubtful that Private Buckle ever saw the land. Rather than moving to Tennessee from his North Carolina home, he sold the land to **Henry Coffey**. Mr. Coffey purchased the land as a speculator, but he died before he could subdivide the land. After Mr. Coffey's death, his heirs divided the 640 acres into tracts of about 220 acres and sold them to would-be settlers.

The Liberty Hill tract passed through several hands before it was purchased by **John Hamer in 1810**. Any one of the intervening owners could have built the log cabin that originated the house, but it's likely that Mr. Hamer built it because he is the only one of the owners who was there to stay during that period.[1] He lived there for the rest of his life. During his lifetime, he was active in the **Liberty Methodist Church**. In **1837**, he donated an acre of land to the trustees of the Liberty Church on which to build a new church building.

Mr. Hamer had three daughters, two of which were twins. At the age of 19, the twins died 10 days apart in November of 1831. They are buried in the small cemetery north of the house. Mr. Hamer was also buried there when he died in 1853 at the age of 83.

Mr. Hamer's surviving daughter, **Jane Hamer**, never married, but survived both parents and ran the plantation until her death in 1879. Records show that she lent money to neighbors and then foreclosed on them when they failed to repay. During the Civil War, there was said to be a good bit of activity on and around the Hamer Plantation. Civil War documents reveal that Federal troops were stationed for a time on the 'Widow Hamer's Plantation' – yet she wasn't a widow.

In her will, Jane Hamer left a life estate in 25 acres to five family servants who remained with her after the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War. She also left them a half acre as a burial ground 'for my former servants and for any white person who has relatives now buried in said graveyard.' Today, this cemetery is in **Beech Grove Subdivision**.

After Jane's death, the land passed to the **Fly** family. They operated a gristmill and later a saw mill on the land. **William Fly and his wife, Cynthia**, deeded one acre of land for a school in 1900. This school, the Liberty School, operated there until 1941.

Dr. Robert Thurman, a Nashville Dentist, bought the Liberty Hill house from the Fly heirs in the **1940s**. He drastically renovated the house, completely changing its appearance. He sold the farm in two tracts in the early **1950s**. The tract on the east side of Liberty Church Rd. was sold to **Stanley F. Horn, Jr.**, son of Civil War historian Stanley Horn. The tract on the west side of the road was sold to **John Wesley Little**.

Room Specifics from the 2000 *Tour of Homes:*

Master Bedchamber
- Built in 1853
- This was the headquarters for the ladies of the house while the men gathered across the hall in the parlor.

Upstairs
- The original bedchambers were built in 1853.
- The walk through is the loft which still has the original wood floors.

Parlor
- Built in 1853, this was the gathering room for men.
- All four front rooms are symmetrical (16' x 16')

Dining Room
- The windows are the original glass.

Log Cabin
- The logs and floor are original.
- The framing around the doorways in the kitchen were taken from the roof.
- The fireplace is original, except of the bricks.

Den
- Added in 1992.

[1] A document from the 2000 Tour of Homes states that the 1796 cabin was built by William Edmundson.

Developing a Point of View

by Annette Stramesi

Larry Atema of Spring Hill, TN, is no ordinary real-estate developer. He feels most professionals find the dealmaking or the financing to be the most compelling aspect of a project. "I like the hands-on development," says Atema, "from the footings to the foundation, right down to the furnishings, if I have my way." He's also in love with the 18th century—"my hobby," he calls it. This lifelong interest, which began in the traditional homes of his childhood, is reflected in many of the interiors he gets involved with, including those of the home he shares with his wife, Carol, and their children.

Atema develops and project-manages both commercial and residential properties: large corporate offices; medical facilities and law offices; sports and recreation centers; retail and residential complexes are on his client list. A current project is for the Arlington, Virginia–based, Freedom Forum, a nonprofit organization set up to promote First Amendment rights as well as minority participation in the media. Atema is serving as development manager for almost 50,000 square feet of space for the Forum at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. The facility will include the renovation of the First Amendment Center, an Institute for Newsroom Diversity, offices, and a broadcast studio.

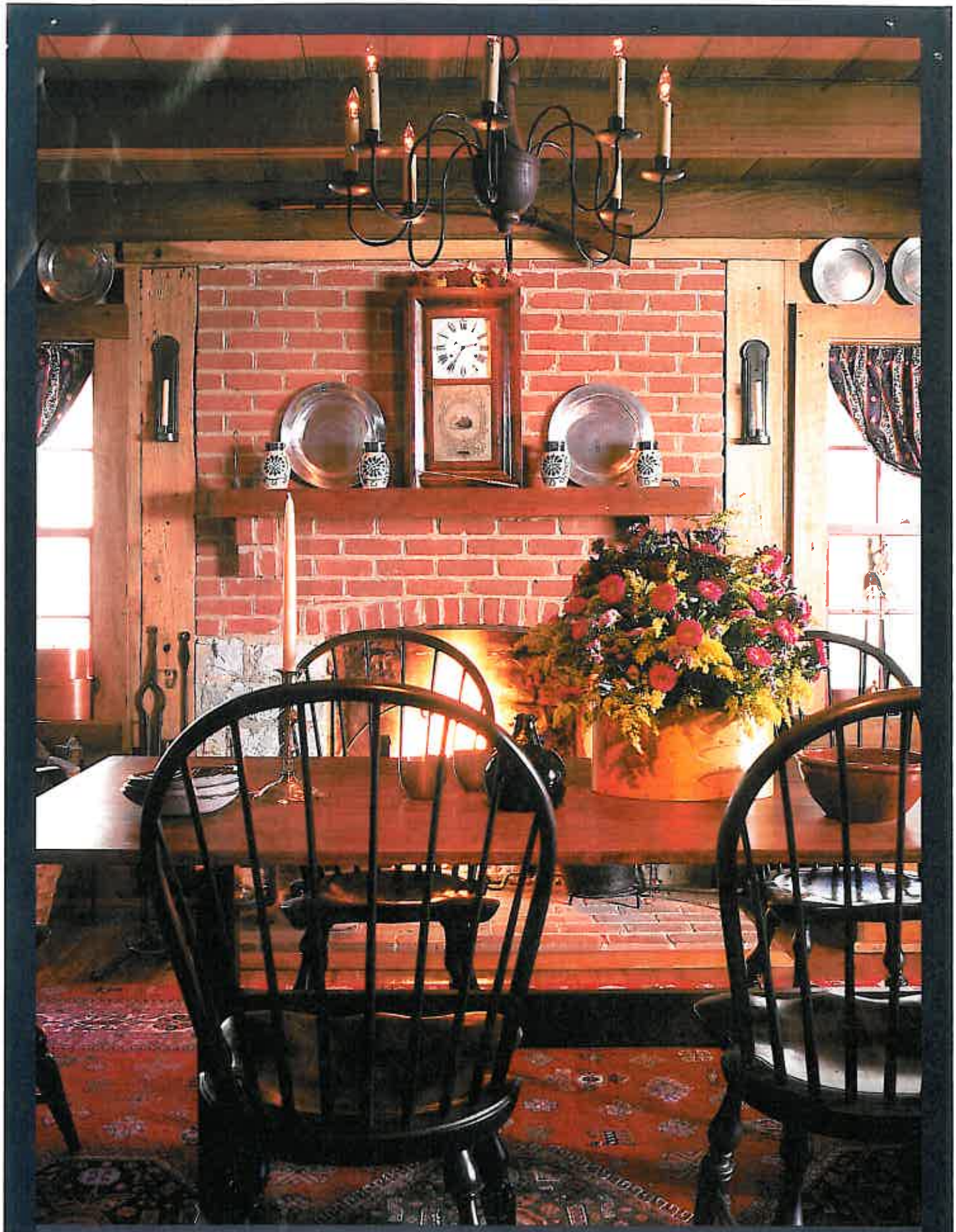
The front section of Larry Atema's Brentwood, TN, home dates to the 1830s and was the second addition to a cabin built in 1796. In 1990, Atema replaced a Victorian porch with a pedimented version supported by four columns.

Master Plan

Born in Paterson, New Jersey, and a licensed electrician by trade, Atema incorporated the Commonwealth Development Group in 1990, in Spring Hill, TN. The town is now a suburb of the Greater Nashville area, but at one time was a quiet village of about one thousand people. Atema's route from Paterson to Spring Hill was one that crossed itself a few times. After college in Texas, Atema returned East to New York to join Mobil Oil in the areas of safety and security for the company's capital projects.

Ten years later, he decided he'd prefer to be in a smaller business. "I learned a great deal at Mobil, but in my last year, I began exploring what businesses I could start on my own." Real-estate development became a possibility, so he moved to Houston to become part of a small development company. He became project manager for the Town Center at Spring Hill, implementing the master plan for a new downtown. By that time, Spring Hill was undergoing tremendous population growth, the result of General Motors' construction of a Saturn automobile manufacturing plant in the area. The core of the Spring Hill master plan was traditional: the City Hall, post office, fire station, and town library served as anchors for the downtown commercial zone.

The Saturn plant brought with it a host of related supplier and vendor projects, which led Atema to go into business for himself. He developed and built five additional structures for the Lockheed Federal Credit Union and created the largest facility in the United States for Ryder Transportation with a series of residential-scaled traditional buildings suited to the Spring Hill area. The Lockheed projects took advantage of his expertise in 18th-century design: Prior to the firm's move to Tennessee, their corporate look was contemporary. Atema convinced management that traditional architecture and interiors were more suited to the area and the company's image.



For the interiors of his home, Atema worked with Katharine Arnold of the Colonial Williamsburg Design Studio. Over the years, she has frequently collaborated with the developer on his commercial projects as well. The breakfast room of Atema's home features reproduction Massachusetts sackback Windsor chairs and a trestle table. Pewter, both reproduction and antique pieces, add gleaming accents to the space.

Personal Projects

Aterna's own home in nearby Brentwood is a testament to his personal taste and the careful hands-on approach he likes to give all his projects. The core of the house is a one-and-one-half story log cabin that dates to 1796; this is now the family's breakfast room. An 1812 addition to the cabin now serves as the formal dining room. The front of the house dates to the 1830s, when major construction added a center hall, and four rooms flanking the hall on the first and second floors. When Aterna redid the house, around 1990, he stripped away a Victorian porch and replaced it with a pedimented porch supported by four columns. He also expanded the house at the back with a new block that houses a family room, second-floor master suite, and a modern kitchen off the core 1796 cabin. Jokes the developer, "My wife absolutely refused to do the cooking in the log cabin's fireplace."

To help with the decoration of the restored and renovated house, Aterna enlisted Katharine Arnold, a designer with the Craft House Interior Design Studio at Colonial Williamsburg. They connected during one of his "hundreds" of trips to the restoration, a place he says he never tires of visiting. Their business relationship is an ongoing one: she did the interiors for several of his Lockheed projects.

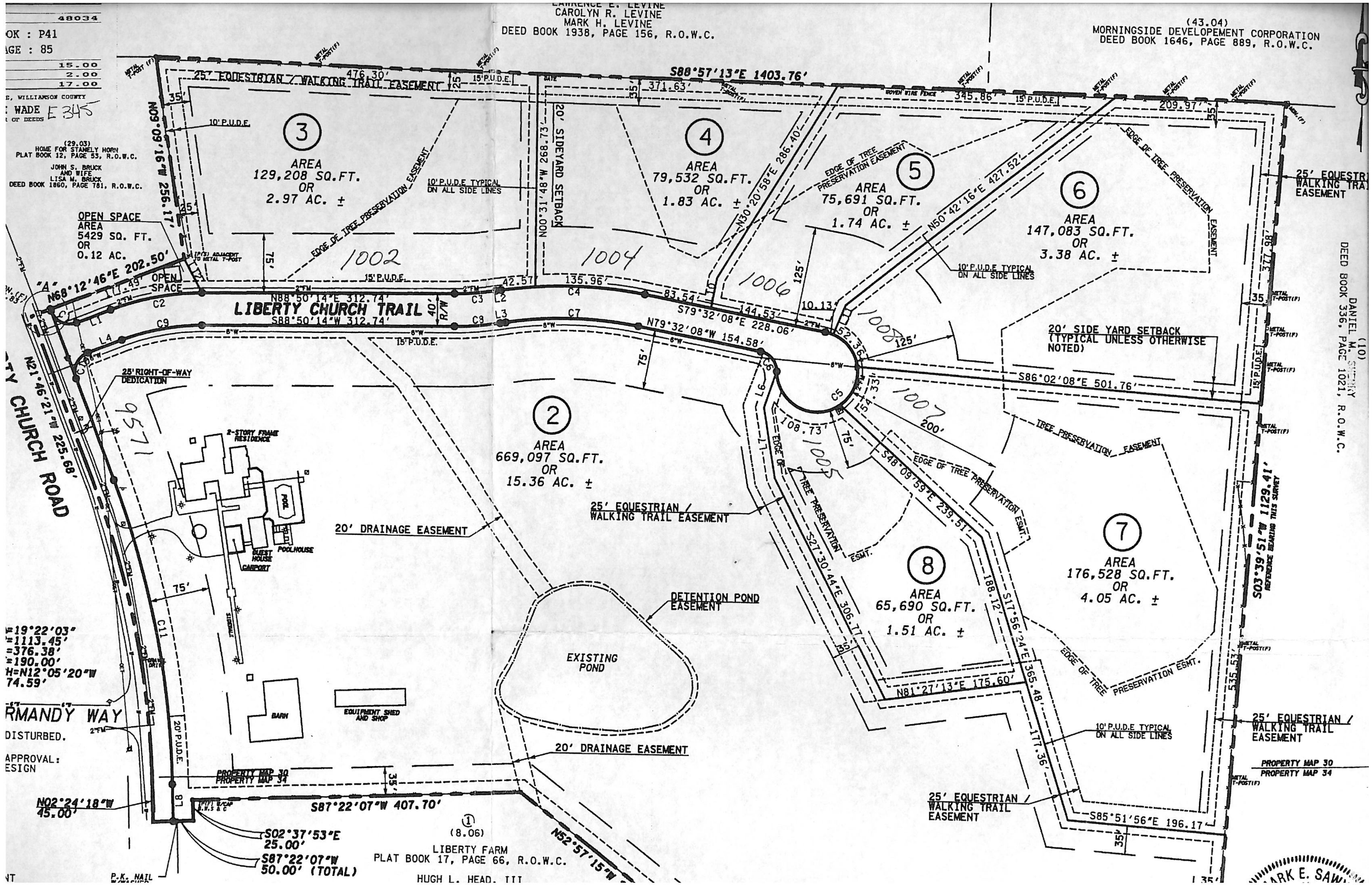
The relationship is also one of give-and-take. She arrived in Brentwood determined to choose the rugs before anything else; he did not warm to her suggestion of Oriental carpets, at least not at first. Arnold says her client is very respectful of and knowledgeable about 18th-century design, but he also feels one must live in the present. Says Arnold, "He has a way of drawing on his academic knowledge and translating it into practical solutions for today's living. He really takes what is beautiful and makes it accessible."

While the interiors include furnishings of Williamsburg licensees, they also feature many antiques and other reproductions. The interiors also mix formal and more casual styles. Arnold points out that the rooms in the Aterna house function on several levels. There's always a table for food and drink, always a writing surface or a place for books. And the guest rooms are designed not just for sleeping; they are designed to be comfortable retreats.

top: Through the door of the breakfast room of the original 1796 log cabin, is a view of the formal dining room, added in 1812. Table and chairs: Hickory Chair. Carpet: Nourison.

center: A reproduction settee mixes with an Oriental rug in the front entrance; the tall case clock is an antique and stands adjacent to the guest bedroom.

bottom: Red predominates in the guest bedroom at the front of the house. Arnold says that the guest rooms throughout the Aterna home are multifunctional, comfortable for taking small meals, reading, writing, or simply relaxing.



48034
OK : P41
AGE : 85
15.00
2.00
17.00
E, WILLIAMSON COUNTY
WADE E 345
OF DEEDS
(29.03)
HOME FOR STANELY HORN
PLAT BOOK 12, PAGE 53, R.O.W.C.
JOHN S. BRUCK
AND WIFE
LISA M. BRUCK
DEED BOOK 1860, PAGE 781, R.O.W.C.
LAWRENCE E. LEVINE
CAROLYN R. LEVINE
MARK H. LEVINE
DEED BOOK 1938, PAGE 156, R.O.W.C.
(43.04)
MORNINGSIDE DEVELOPEMENT CORPORATION
DEED BOOK 1646, PAGE 889, R.O.W.C.
(10)
DANIEL M. SHENRY
DEED BOOK 336, PAGE 1021, R.O.W.C.
S88°57'13"E 1403.76'
25' EQUESTRIAN / WALKING TRAIL EASEMENT
N09°09'16"W 256.17'
N68°12'46"E 202.50'
N21°46'21"W 225.68'
LIBERTY CHURCH TRAIL
N88°50'14"E 312.74'
S88°50'14"W 312.74'
N79°32'08"W 154.58'
S79°32'08"E 228.06'
N30°20'58"E 286.40'
N50°42'16"E 427.52'
N00°31'48"W 268.73'
20' SIDEYARD SETBACK
S86°02'08"E 501.76'
S48°09'59"E 239.51'
S27°30'44"E 306.77'
S17°56'24"E 365.48'
N81°27'13"E 175.60'
S85°51'56"E 196.17'
S03°39'51"W 1129.41'
REFERENCE BEARING THIS SURVEY
S87°22'07"W 407.70'
N52°57'15"W
N02°24'18"W 45.00'
S02°37'53"E 25.00'
S87°22'07"W 50.00' (TOTAL)
OPEN SPACE
AREA
5429 SQ. FT.
OR
0.12 AC.
AREA
129,208 SQ.FT.
OR
2.97 AC. ±
AREA
79,532 SQ.FT.
OR
1.83 AC. ±
AREA
75,691 SQ.FT.
OR
1.74 AC. ±
AREA
147,083 SQ.FT.
OR
3.38 AC. ±
AREA
669,097 SQ.FT.
OR
15.36 AC. ±
AREA
65,690 SQ.FT.
OR
1.51 AC. ±
AREA
176,528 SQ.FT.
OR
4.05 AC. ±
1002
1004
1006
1008
1007
1005
9571
10' P.U.D.E.
15' P.U.D.E.
20' P.U.D.E.
10' P.U.D.E TYPICAL ON ALL SIDE LINES
EDGE OF TREE PRESERVATION EASEMENT
EDGE OF TREE PRESERVATION ESMT.
TREE PRESERVATION EASEMENT
20' SIDE YARD SETBACK (TYPICAL UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)
25' RIGHT-OF-WAY DEDICATION
2-STORY FRAME RESIDENCE
POOL
GUEST HOUSE
POOLHOUSE
CARPORT
BARN
EQUIPMENT SHED AND SHOP
20' DRAINAGE EASEMENT
DETENTION POND EASEMENT
EXISTING POND
25' EQUESTRIAN / WALKING TRAIL EASEMENT
PROPERTY MAP 30
PROPERTY MAP 34
RMANDY WAY
DISTURBED.
APPROVAL:
ESIGN
(8.06)
LIBERTY FARM
PLAT BOOK 17, PAGE 66, R.O.W.C.
HUGH L. HEAD, III