



INSIDEOUT

EMBRACING TRADITIONAL COMFORT AND
OUTDOOR ENTERTAINING, A HOUSE IN
MONTGOMERY'S HAMPSTEAD COMMUNITY
COMBINES TIME-HONORED ENGLISH
STYLE WITH SOUTHERN EASE.



It's a common refrain for empty-nesters: "The kids are gone—let's make a change." That was the case for a couple with deep roots in Montgomery, who realized that "we were at the stage of life where we were ready to downsize," recalls the wife. That meant giving up their home of many years, a grand, columned manor designed by the lauded Alabama firm McAlpine Tankersley Architecture. The couple decided to build a house in Hampstead, a master-planned village on the outskirts of town. And what they gave up in grandeur they gained in community.

Hampstead embodies the principles of so-called Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND), also known as New Urbanism. Popular across the country (familiar examples range from The Preserve and Mt. Laurel in Birmingham to Seaside and Rosemary Beach on the Gulf), TND emphasizes greater density and traditional niceties such as porches and parks to achieve walkable neighborhoods with valued amenities. At Hampstead these include restaurants, a branch library, swimming pool, Montessori school, YMCA facility, trails, tennis courts, a community farm, and what will be Montgomery's largest lake.

Like other such communities, Hampstead has a unifying style, based on English Arts and Crafts and English vernacular architecture,

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FRENCH DOORS ON BOTH SIDES LINK THE LIVING/DINING AREA TO THE FRONT PORCH AND INTERIOR COURTYARD. A CUSTOM SCREEN SETS OFF THE SOFA.

as skillfully interpreted back in the day by C.F.A.Voysey and Edwin Lutyens. Having worked on several New Urbanist developments (including this one), Birmingham-area architect Gary Justiss was a natural choice to design a house blending the couple's wishes with Hampstead's Anglophile style.

"All the homes share that English DNA, but at the same time they're Southern houses, with big porches and

other outdoor living spaces," he says. "The house is traditional but relaxed, with a contemporary floor plan and lots of natural light." Traditional style also defines the interiors. "They had so many nice pieces that decorating mainly involved selecting what would work together in the new house," says interior designer Ashley Gilbreath. "We freshened it up with new upholstery fabrics, new lampshades, and a few new things."



Making the most of less wall space, she arranged a good portion of the couple's art collection above the stairway.

The living and dining areas and kitchen flow together, unified by a trio of Italian chandeliers. Timbers reclaimed from a Virginia wharf found new life as weathered ceiling beams and rough-sawn flooring. Continuous, floor-to-ceiling linen draperies flank French doors on both sides. More long draper-





ies wrap around the bed alcove in the master suite, which features a limestone fireplace and his-and-hers baths.

Far from chilly England, this house embraces the sunny South. The front facade's double-gable roofline and stacked porches face a parklike green space. Other outdoor zones include a walled garden off the master bedroom and a landscaped terrace by the motor court, accented with a graceful statue. But the verdant heart of the house is an interior courtyard formed by the L-shaped house, a three-car garage, and an enclosing wall and arbor.

Designer James Farmer, Gilbreath's friend (and Auburn classmate), turned the courtyard into a true alfresco living/dining room, complete with outdoor fireplace, ample dining table, and faux-bois concrete settees. Diverse plantings—seasonal flowers, hydrangeas, boxwood, rosemary, curly willow, potted palms and olive trees, and more—make the courtyard lush even in winter. A sundial; carved architec-







tural details; dual wall fountains with hand-forged spouts and river-rock backsplashes; a deft mix of brick, bluestone, tumbled cobblestones; and Alabama-made Peacock Pavers provide visual interest and varied textures. Two stone hounds and a metal sculpture of a frog reading a book add a note of whimsy.

“The garden appeals to all the senses, as it should,” Farmer says. “At night it has a romantic glow—a carefully balanced blend of gas lamps, candle sconces, and low-voltage lighting.”

The house and courtyard are equally suited to intimate parties or large gatherings. “We had 45 people on Christmas eve,” the wife recalls. “The weather was incredible—we had a fire but the doors were open and everyone was in and out.” She has nothing but praise for the talented design team: “They gave us something elegant but not stuffy. We were ready for something different, and we got it!”

THE INTERIOR
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GREENERY, SOOTHING
FOUNTAINS, AND
SHELTERED SPOTS TO
LOUNGE OR DINE.