

HOMIE

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Auto, Classified

EXTRA INSIDE
Community news

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ADRIAN HIGGINS

Gardening

What's So Bad About a Mouse Outside the House?

People ask me how to fix problems in their gardens, and I am happy to oblige. But a lot of questions have little to do with plants or landscape design; they are desperate cries against the animals that show up when you unwittingly provide them food and shelter.

Voles, groundhogs, deer and rabbits all can undo the work of the gardener, and you must devise ways to thwart them. There is no cure for squirrels.

Then there are mice.

On the other side of the screen on my porch, I have planted a stand of black-eyed Susans. Last summer, I was enjoying the view of the garden when I noticed a creature rustling away at the base of the flowers, and I caught a glimpse of a sparrow. But the closer I observed the sparrow, the more I could see that it had four legs and whiskers and a tail.

The mouse proceeded to climb up the slender stalk of a black-eyed Susan, and when it reached the top, it neatly severed the fading flower head with the efficiency of a guillotine. The mouse then dropped to the ground — from a height that would have been about 20 feet if scaled to human size — and dragged the seedy bloom about six feet to beneath an upturned clay flowerpot.

One seed head was not enough for this persevering creature; it would repeat the spectacle over hours, days, weeks. I counted more than 100 missing flowers by late summer. Oddly, it preferred heads with some petals on, rather than the ripper seed of a fully shriveled flower head. I didn't mind. The main display of black-eyed Susans was past, and the mouse provided hours of theater.

My dog, who is otherwise highly intelligent, would get wind that there was something beyond the screen and trot about with his tail in the air but was never able to target his quarry. The mouse ignored us; something deep within it knew that the days were shortening and that it needed to gather nutritious seeds for the distant winter.

Another mouse took up residence in the garden shed. I know this because one day I noticed that the thick black plastic trash bag in which I kept the birdseed had been gnawed and that the rodent had eaten to its heart's content. I also know this because later I saw the creature on the potting bench, emerging from a pile of

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BY HEIDI YOUNGER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST



Going the Distance

Builder Dismantles a 1797 House, Moves It 150 Miles and Restores It From the Ground Up

By **TERRI SAPIENZA**
Washington Post Staff Writer

Tom Glass has spent his career building dream homes for other people.

As the founder and president of Glass Construction in the District, Glass and his team work with clients to renovate and build houses, specializing in historic restoration and preservation. But early in 2006, Glass took on a personal project.

After discovering an abandoned 18th-century house nestled in a cow pasture in Virginia's Appomattox County, he decided to make it his own. But first he had to disassemble it, move the usable pieces 150 miles north, then rebuild it.

"The first time I saw it," says Glass, "I thought, 'That's the house I've been looking for. Finally.'"

A year earlier, Glass, who also has a home in Dupont Circle, had bought property in the Rappahannock County countryside. The 30 acres are surrounded by horse and cattle farms with panoramic views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The property in Flint Hill sat empty for a year while he decided what to do with it.

"I didn't want to build a new house," he says. "I've spent my whole career preserving and restoring existing houses. I wanted to find an existing Virginia house that fit inside this landscape so I could have a house that looked like it had always been here."



Tom Glass

The dilapidated structure he found near Pamplin City was originally built in 1797 by a Revolutionary War veteran on land given to him for his service to the country. The 3,400-square-foot, Federal-style house was named Woodlawn. By the time Glass found the house, it had been unoccupied for more than 70 years and was being sold for salvage.

Despite the time the building had sat open to the elements, the bones of the house were intact. And unlike other existing houses that age, says Glass, this one hadn't been added on to or changed since the day it was built. "Everything was handmade. All the woodwork was original. Everything was intact. It was unbelievable."

Glass was instantly drawn to the simple architecture, the side-hall entry, the symmetrical, multi-paned windows and the 10-foot ceilings on the first floor. But the detail that really sold him was the 48-foot-high, free-standing double chimney on the side of the house; it had an arched doorway in the center leading to the English basement. "The beauty of the proportions was unusual," he says. "The base was substantial. Everything about it was beautifully done."

Glass says the distinctive design of the house could be re-created only by using the same materials and rebuilding the structure

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When Tom Glass first saw the house that would become his weekend home, it had been abandoned for more than 70 years. In the rebuilt house, the living room, top, is furnished with neutral pieces so the architecture and woodwork can take center stage.

Before



THE WASHINGTON POST

After



"BEFORE" HOUSE PHOTO FROM GLASS CONSTRUCTION; OTHER PHOTOS BY POWERS AND CREWE PHOTOGRAPHY

Inside

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What exactly are those ready-to-assemble bookcases and dressers made of? **PAGE 6**



Take a Look

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Shop Modern

Sinks and shower fixtures designed by Philippe Starck are now available in Bethesda. **PAGE 2**





In rebuilding an 18th-century house named Woodlawn, Tom Glass kept all of the original woodwork. **At left** is a sitting area and kitchen, whose inclusion is one change from the original design. The fireplace is one of six in the house; the closet next to it was turned into a pantry. **At right** is the dining room, where, as in the rest of the house, nicks and scratches from decades of wear remain visible. The painting on the wall was done by Glass.

For 1797 House, a Relocation and Restoration

WOODLAWN, From Page H1

in the same way that it had originally been built. Before the house was dismantled and moved, he made detailed architectural drawings of every room. He took complete measurements of the interior and exterior. And he meticulously labeled every piece of lumber, every floorboard and every piece of wainscoting so they could be replaced in the same spot. Glass even replicated the late-18th-century construction methods by rebuilding the mortise-and-tenon framing, which holds the structure together using pegs instead of nails.

"This house has a lot of quirks," Glass says as he points to the chimneys and original attic window that are slightly off-center and the front hall stairs that were built in front of a window, blocking a portion of the top panes. "But I love stuff like that." He found the quirkiness and random imperfections so appealing, in fact, that he kept them all in place during the restoration.

Glass also kept all of the original woodwork, including the wainscoting, mantel-pieces, doors, staircases and railings, doing nothing more than cleaning it mainly with water and trisodium phosphate to maintain the weathered paint and the warm patina it acquired from 200 years of age. "We buffed, oiled and waxed the floors, keeping the original marks and dents," he says.

"I didn't want to build a new house. I've spent my whole career preserving and restoring existing houses. I wanted to find an existing Virginia house that fit inside this landscape so I could have a house that looked like it had always been here."

Tom Glass

From a distance, the wood walls and floors merely look worn and rustic, but close up, every nick and scratch is clearly visible and completely charming. Carved on the walls leading up the main hall stairs are initials, dates and random graffiti from the years the house stood abandoned.

Of course, not everything in the house is as it was in the during the 1800s. Glass carved out space in the house's original footprint for a kitchen and several bathrooms, which would have been outside the house when it was initially built. The centuries-old architecture now shares space with Sub-Zero, Bosch and Viking stainless-steel kitchen appliances, fully enclosed glass showers, lighting from Restoration Hardware and bathroom tile from Waterworks. Glass also added electric, heating and cooling systems and more modern amenities: Internet, cable and telephone service.

Other small ways in which the original interior was changed: Doorways on the first floor were made wider to create a more open and airy feel, and dormers were added to the fourth-floor attic to bring in more light and make it a livable space; it now includes a bathroom, guest room and an office.

Glass paid \$40,000 for the original structure. "You couldn't even buy the lumber for this house for that much, let alone the antique trims and architecture," he says. After dismantling the house, moving it, restoring and renovating it, his total cost came to about \$740,000.

Not bad for a dream weekend home that includes a piece of history.

"It's been existing for 212 years," says Glass of Woodlawn. "Barring a tornado or fire, and if it's protected and taken care of, it could easily last another 200 years or more."



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Center, in the master bathroom, the original blue-painted door and wainscoting are paired with new fixtures and custom cabinets topped with cross-cut travertine.

Middle row, Glass was drawn to the house's quirks, including the front hall stairs, which block part of a window on the side of the house. "I love stuff like that," he says. The master bedroom, on the second floor, includes original wainscoting that stretches as long as 20 feet without a joint.

Bottom, the back porch provides a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Glass added dormers to the fourth-floor attic to turn it into a living space.