

Brick

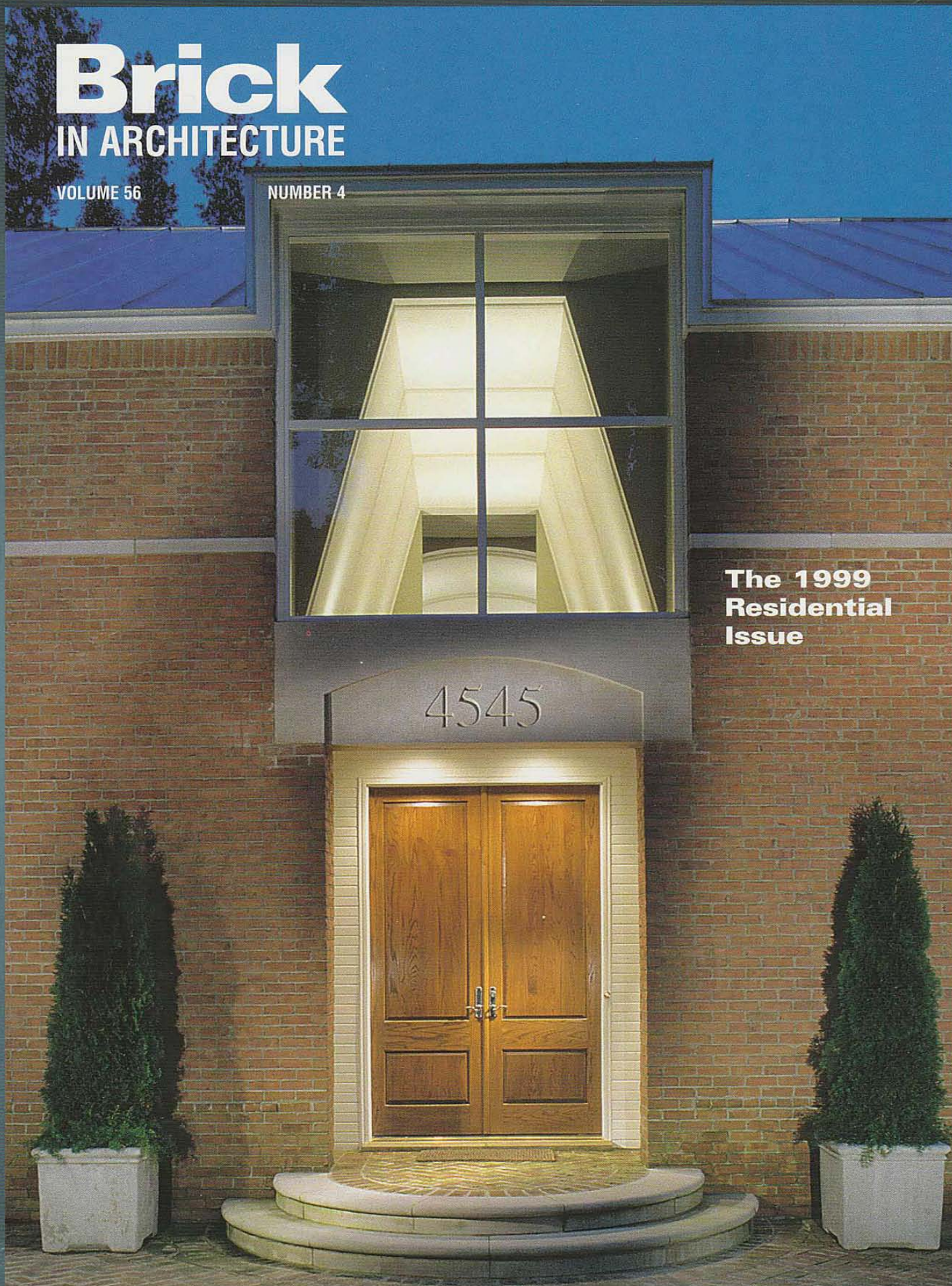
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Pounders Residence

Memphis, Tennessee

Architectural Firm: Williamson Pounders Architects, P.C.
Memphis, Tennessee
Louis R. Pounders, AIA
Principal In Charge

Photography: ©1997 Jeffrey Jacobs/Arch. Photo. Inc.

IN THIS ISSUE

From Tennessee to Virginia to Pennsylvania, the American brick home is revisited.



Architect Louis Pounders' new home sits on a one-acre lot in an old Memphis neighborhood. The front facade at first seems too reassuringly familiar to prompt any further contemplation. Then something clicks. Something registers as being different. This is just the effect Pounders intended. "The idea was to design a very modern house, but one that was informed by classical architectural principles."

The street elevation is a traditional two-story block with bipart symmetry. Yet the windows are larger than strict Georgian scale calls for. A big window over the front door substitutes for the standard gable. The "bottom" of the house is created by a datum rather than a watertable. The soldier coursing over the major first floor windows is double-high rather than single-high bond. The fieldbrick changes from a running bond below the limestone band to a personal variation on Flemish bond above it.

On the back of the house, two one-story wings come off the block to form a courtyard, a very traditional architectural element, but with a twist. The back of the house is virtually all glass. This contemporary architectural element is tempered

by rendering it in wood, a traditional material, a material appropriate for the house. "Traditional components," says Pounders, "expressed in a contemporary way."

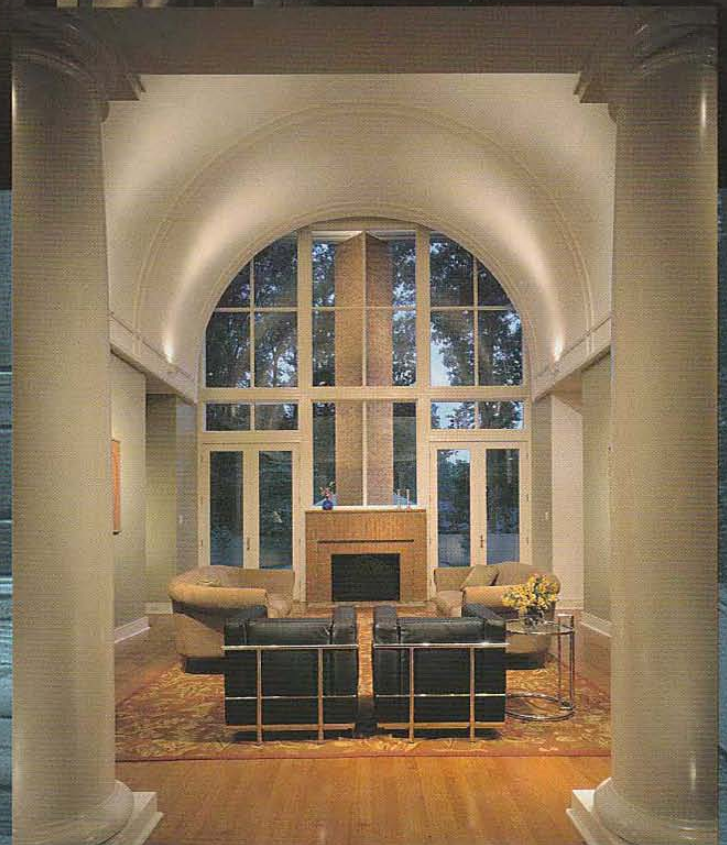
The two other underlying design intents are flow and geometry. The rooms are all open to each other. Ceilings flow continuously from one room to the next. Looking through the big window over the front door, one can see straight through the angle vaulted ceiling of the entranceway, through the barrel vaulted ceiling of the living room, through the large windows in the back and out across the pool to the poolhouse. Rotating the chimney onto its edge accentuates the house's geometry. The living room is exactly as wide as the swimming pool, so the pool becomes a visual extension of it.

"The front of the house is an orderly symmetrical arrangement," says Pounders. "It has a traditional flavor because it's relating to the neighborhood, but the back of the house, with the courtyard space, the big windows, the terrace, the pool and the poolhouse, that's really the focus. That's what the house is about."

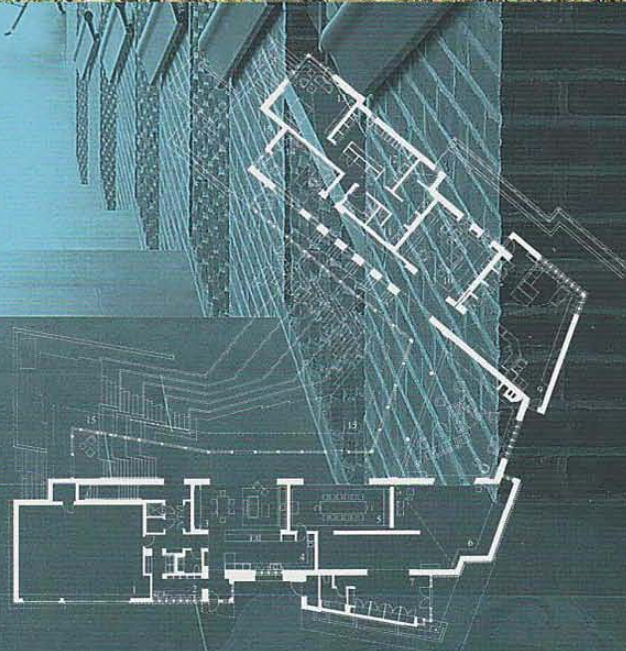
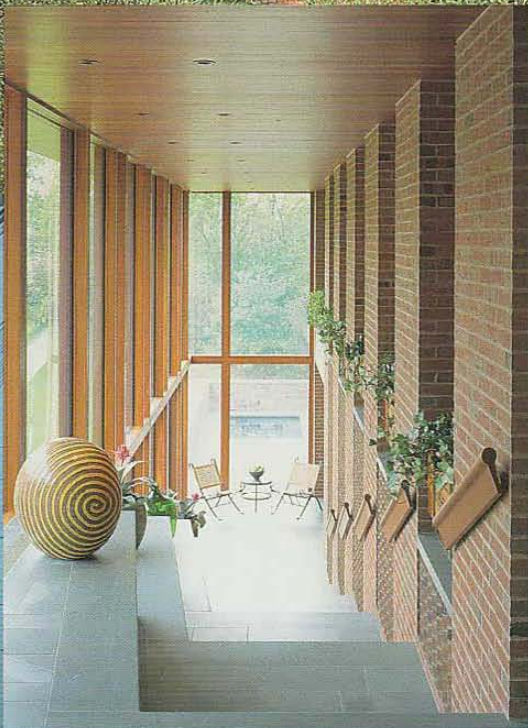


"All along I had envisioned a brick building because it was the historically appropriate material. And it gave me opportunities for design expression, like that datum, the coursing and bonding options and curves."

Louis R. Ponders, Principal In Charge



Private Residence
Southeastern Pennsylvania



"The brickwork is quite simply laid-up running bond. But it's beautifully laid-up. There was great emphasis by the owner on the craft of every aspect of this house."

N. Michael McKinnell, Design Principal

Architectural Firm: **Kallmann McKinnell & Wood Architects**
Boston, Massachusetts
N. Michael McKinnell, FAIA
Design Principal

Photography: **©Robert Benson Photography**

During site selection, architect Michael McKinnell and the client came across a nicely grown-in 2³/₄ acre property in the rolling country of eastern Pennsylvania. "To my astonishment," says McKinnell, "there was a large stone house standing on the property. The property was lovely, but it took extraordinary imagination to view it without the rather ugly, ill-proportioned house that was on it. So they bought it and we took the house down."

Free of distraction, McKinnell responds to the site's topography with a "U" shaped building plan that embraces the landscape as the house spills down the slope. The back of the house sits as close as possible to the road and the property line to make the most of this effect.

The house's form is an "extruded shed," with high walls to the exterior and a lower glass wall along the inner court. The house evolves to become more and more open from the outer portion of the U to the inner portion. Living and entertainment spaces occupy the outer portion of both wings.

A "circulation gallery" runs the entirety of the inner U. This ambulatory, bounded by a brick wall on one side and mahogany-framed glass panels on the other, gives access to all the rooms on the first floor and provides a gallery for displaying the client's collection of glass and ceramic work. "The idea of this house," says McKinnell, "is that there is a brick wall, which is the boundary wall of the house, and then more and more openness until one gets to the garden."

Sculpture and pottery displayed on the ambulatory landing platforms become planters outside the glass wall, the gallery's waterstruck brick walls flow outside to become garden walls, and interior slate floors extend outside to the terrace in bluestone, completing the transition.

"The shed form with the roof sloping down towards the garden keeps the sunlight always coming into the garden court," says McKinnell. "It's in many ways a garden wall of a house, a response to the landscape and the client's needs."



Potomac River Estate
Northern Virginia

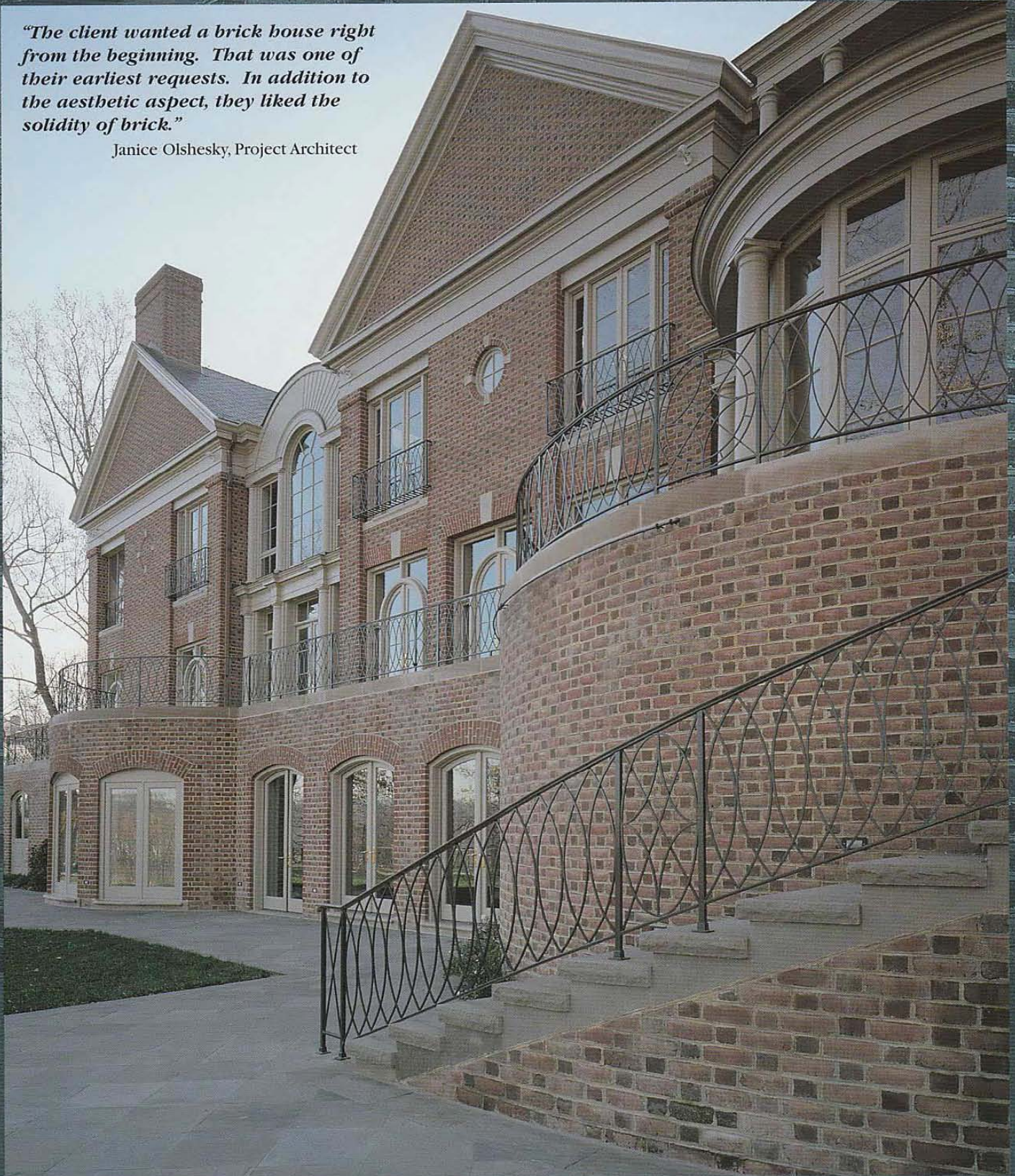
Architectural Firm: **Geier Brown Renfrow Architects**
Alexandria, Virginia

William Geier, AIA, Principal in Charge
Dan Houston, Project Manager
Janice Olshesky, RA, Project Architect
Siegfried Ising, AIA, Design Architect

Photography: **©Ron Holtz Photography**

"The client wanted a brick house right from the beginning. That was one of their earliest requests. In addition to the aesthetic aspect, they liked the solidity of brick."

Janice Olshesky, Project Architect





"The client gave us fairly loose guidelines to work with. They told us they liked Tidewater architecture, in particular the Governor's mansion at Williamsburg and Monticello." So says Janice Olshesky of this grand Georgian home situated on a bluff overlooking the Potomac River.

The macro design concern was keeping a home with 25,000 square feet of floor space properly proportioned. "Human scale is one of the hallmarks of the Georgian style," says William Geier. "This is a big house, but we broke it down into individual elements." It reads as a traditional two-story central block with a recessed facade to the left, connected to a two-story carriage house by a one-story loggia. The gabled pavilions in the back are treated almost like additions.

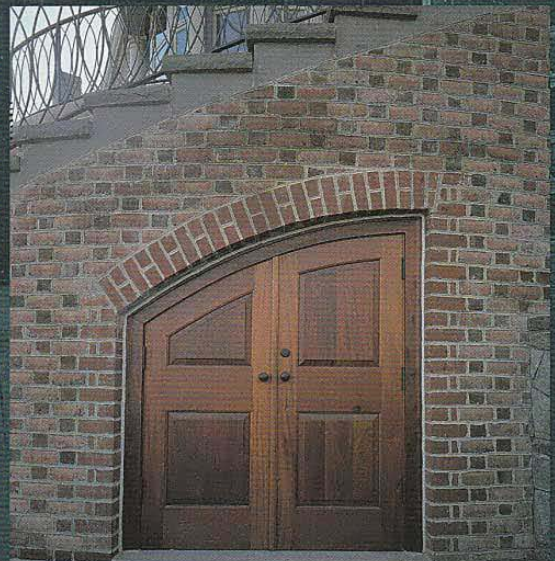
Keeping proper interior scale assisted in maintaining proper exterior scale. Smaller rooms are generally in the front of the house and larger rooms in the back. Since smaller rooms call for smaller windows, the front facade maintains its fairly strict Georgian proportions.

The client also wanted a lot of glass in the rear to afford a better view of the river, but the architects didn't want a house with a split personality. "We carried through the Georgian details in the rear using appropriate scale and proportion," says Geier. "We just used more glass."

Detailing on the house was labor intensive and meticulous. Large scale elevation drawings of every facade were made. "I basically drew every brick in the house," says Olshesky. "You have to be so accurate laying out the modules for the Flemish bond so that those dark headers line up."

All the arches were drawn, brick by brick, as well. Some, like those on the pavilion and the loggia, curve in both plan and elevation. The masons worked from full-size templates to help speed the construction process while insuring accuracy.

The brick itself is a hand-mold and was chosen by the owners to match as closely as possible the brick on the Governor's mansion in Williamsburg. But even with all the attention to classical composition says Geier, "We weren't attempting to reproduce a totally accurate historical building. However, it is properly proportioned. It never loses that sense of relation to the human figure."





Potomac River Estate

The Brick Industry Association requests outstanding brick projects for possible inclusion in upcoming issues of *Brick in Architecture*.

Please submit photos and a brief description of the project and use of the brick to:



Brick Industry Association

Attn: John Grgurich

11490 Commerce Park Drive

Reston, Virginia 20191

(703) 620-0010

grgurich@bia.org

www.brickinfo.org