

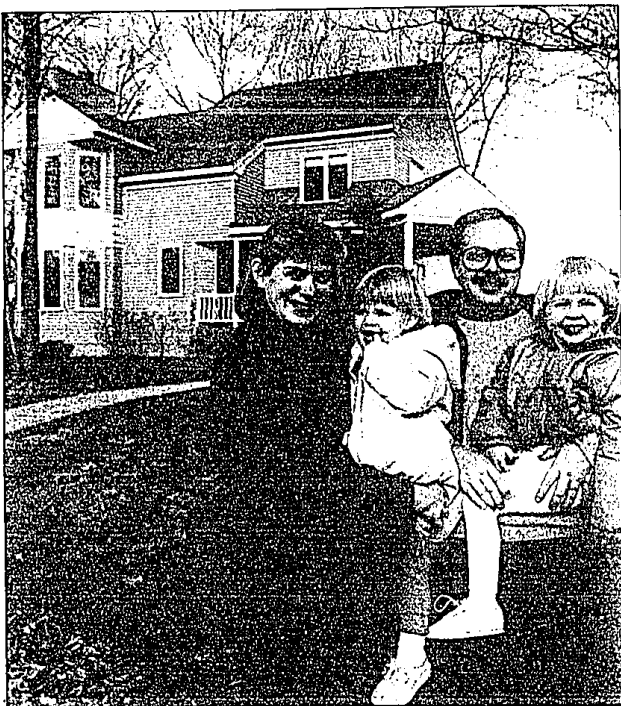
Building Scene

Marilyn Fitchett editor/591-2300



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Staff photos by STEVE CANTRELL

Michael Jarman, holding daughter Lauren, and wife Mary, holding daughter Lauren, have strong convictions about house design. They believe a house should be a home, not a work of art; that it should blend into the neighbor-

hood; and that it should suit each other's sense of style. A self-employed architect, Michael works out of the house as does Mary, a market research consultant.

Architect's house blends country, contemporary

By Louise Okrutsky
staff writer

ON THE OUTSIDE the clay-colored farmhouse blends in with the traditional houses in the established Birmingham neighborhood.

Once visitors walk across the veranda and through the front door, they're presented with an open, contemporary living space filled with country accents.

Architect Michael Jarman and his wife, Mary, built their house to suit each other's sense of style and to blend into the neighborhood.

Michael Jarman's design for the house illustrates the sort of compromises made by the couple. She prefers country. He likes contemporary.

THEY DO agree upon one point. A house should be a home, not a showpiece.

"The house is not the main objective. In a lot of the houses my contemporaries do, the house is a piece of art," Michael said. "In houses I do, the house is a backdrop. People don't need to live in art."

It's important to them that the house fits into the backdrop of its neighborhood.

"We're trying to be non-obtrusive," Michael said.

"It's important to fit into the neighborhood. You have to work with your surroundings," Mary said.

IT TOOK two years for Jarman to design his own house. After years of designing to suit clients' needs, it

proved tough to start a project that didn't include anyone else's suggestions.

"This is me. It set my style," he said. "I like taking the old forms and using them with modern technologies."

"Instead of five or six small rooms, people want more open spaces, more light. Windows are more energy efficient. New technology allows you to do open spaces in a house," he said.

"You're still using a traditional framework. There's a kitchen, living room, dining room," he said.

But the traditional framework was bent to fit the needs of the family and the flaws and assets of the property.

The house is angled on the lot to take full advantage of the tree line and avoid the sight, if not the sound, of the nearby railroad tracks.

INSIDE, ALL THE utility areas such as the laundry room and closets are next to the tracks and act as a buffer against train noise.

Eventually, when the unattached garage is built, it too will be placed between the house and the tracks.

When the train passes, visitors notice it but the Jarman's take it in stride.

"We don't notice it anymore. The neighborhood gets used to it," Michael said.

Most of the time the windows reveal only a tree-lined lot that hides neighboring houses. Windows are accented with balloon shades or by fabric draped around the frames.

THE REMAINING living space in

the two-story house manages to exclude a sense of space and a certain amount of character.

By some standards, 2,300 square feet doesn't make a spectacular home, but the Jarman's say that in their house, every bit of space has a purpose.

Throughout the house are 10-foot ceilings. In addition to giving the home an open, airy look, the high ceilings on the second story also accommodate the Jarman's antique bed with its 8 1/2-foot tall, carved wooden headboard.

FOR MARY, the heart of the house is the country kitchen with a breakfast area.

As in the rest of the downstairs rooms, the walls are painted a light shade of salmon.

White custom kitchen cabinets echo the curved lines of two corner cabinets in the dining room and the built-in entertainment center in the living room.

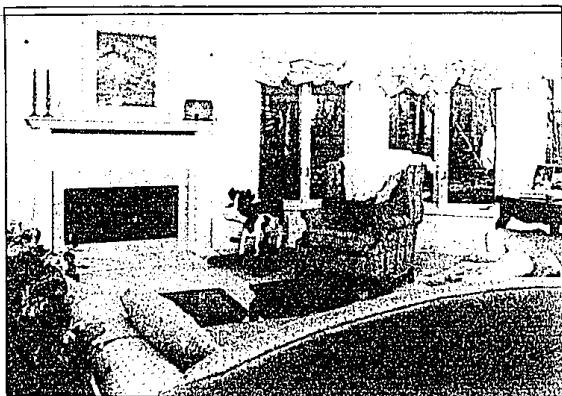
The cabinets are the result of a collaboration between Michael Jarman and the house's builder, Watson Custom Construction.

FLOWERED TILES with a white background soften the kitchen walls and give Mary versatility in changing the room's color scheme.

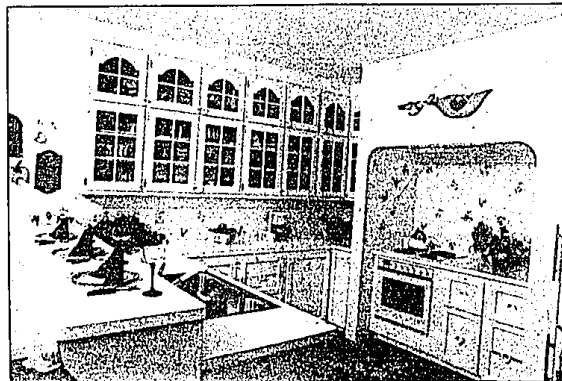
The tiles were handpainted by Chris Hillburn at Beaver Tile to match the fabric of the room's balloon shades.

Someday, the occupants will be able to walk out the back door onto a small deck leading to a patio.

"It's evolutionary," Mary said in describing the house.



The 10-foot ceilings throughout the house give it an open, airy look. The windows reveal a tree-lined lot that hides neighboring homes. As in the living room, windows are accented with balloon shades.



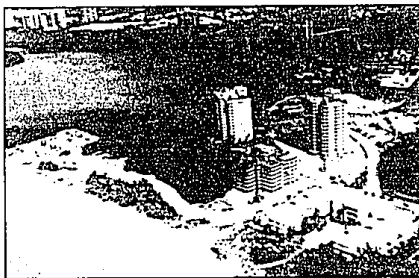
The walls of the country kitchen are painted a light shade of salmon. Custom cabinets are white. Flowered tiles with a white background offer versatility in

changing the room's color scheme. The tiles were handpainted by Chris Hillburn at Beaver Tile to match the fabric of the room's balloon shades.



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