



This 80-year-old, cottage-style house in Elizabethtown was designed by the renowned architect C. Edwin Brumbaugh, who is regarded as the foremost authority on early Pennsylvania stone houses. The exterior of the house was in relatively good shape – shutters are original and the roof had been replaced. Updates included re-pointing the steps, replacing the windows, restoring the columns and adding copper downspouts.

Small Town Living...

Where Everybody Knows Your House

Lancaster County's small towns and villages are dotted with houses that qualify as dream homes. Most are decades, even centuries, old and exude an indescribable charm that can't be duplicated in suburbia. One such iconic house can be found in Elizabethtown. Two years ago, when a passerby saw that a for-sale sign had been posted in front of the house he had always admired, he bought it on the spot.

**BY SUE LONG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLAN HOLM**



What had been an enclosed kitchen and an adjoining breakfast room were reconfigured and enlarged (the sitting room to the right is an addition) to create a great room. The hardwood floor is a near match for the floors found throughout the house. Stone was saved from demolition work to enclose the steel support beams. A new staircase was added.

Due to remodeling and decorating projects that were being carried out, the home's new owner had to wait nearly a year before he could move into the house. As you can imagine, the work that was being done at one of Elizabethtown's most revered homes was the talk of the town. No speed traps were necessary on this busy street – passersby automatically slowed to assess the progress that was being made. Acquaintances were begging to be among the first to see the finished project.

In fact, that's what prompted the homeowner to suggest to the team that transformed the house inside and out – Carole Sheffield, Dave Geib and Jon Hubler – that they host a house tour to satisfy the curious. He surmised they'd be doing him a favor. By his estimation, the number of people asking to see the house would keep him busy for months on end. His plan was to host an open house over the course of a

weekend and welcome one and all to tour the house and grounds.

While the team appreciated the opportunity they were being given to show off their talents, they felt that a charitable organization could benefit from his generosity, as well. "He was all for that idea," Dave recalls. Ultimately, the Ronald McDonald House in Hershey was chosen as the beneficiary. "We had no idea what kind of response we'd get," Dave recalls of the free-will format that was used to collect donations. To their surprise and delight, the *Tour of Possibilities*, which was held last October, generated \$5,000.

A private party that was held on Friday night provided the threesome with the inkling that the tour would be supported by area residents. Guests toured the house multiple times and then made themselves at home in the lower-level clubroom and around the outdoor fire pit, where they enjoyed hors d'oeuvres provided by The Cat's Meow, as well as the unseasonably

warm temperatures that came courtesy of Mother Nature. Nobody wanted to leave.

Over the weekend, nearly 1,700 people toured the house. "We were amazed to arrive and find a line had already formed," Dave says of Saturday's turnout. Sunday was no different. The last residents of the house, C. Ray and Barbara Olweiler, were among the tour-goers. "She was just thrilled by what had been done," Carole recalls. "In fact, she came back on Sunday with some friends." Mr. Olweiler, who was a landscape architect, couldn't believe the backyard's transformation.

The cottage-style stone house, which was built in 1927, boasts a pedigree of sorts, as it was designed by Philadelphia architect C. Edwin Brumbaugh, who led the team that restored the Ephrata Cloister prior to it becoming a state museum, and also acted as a consultant during the

restoration of Columbia's Wright's Ferry Mansion. A newspaper article described Brumbaugh as "the foremost authority on early Pennsylvania stone houses."

The house in Elizabethtown was built for William A. Withers, who owned a shoe factory. Withers' daughter, Salome, and her husband, Russell L. Hein, who were the proprietors of Economy Shoe Store in Elizabethtown, were the next occupants of the house. In 1983, the Olweilers bought the house and lived there until 2005, when they moved to a retirement community.

Carole was the first person to see the house after the new owner bought it. She has known him for years and is well acquainted with his tastes, as she previously decorated homes for him in Salt Lake City, Utah; Florida; and Ocean City, Maryland. Prior to seeing the for-sale sign, he was set to build a home on property he had purchased in

the Hershey area. “Like a lot of people, he had always admired this house,” Carole explains, alluding to his growing up in the Elizabethtown area.

He asked Carole to take a look at the house and offer suggestions on how it could be updated, yet retain its integrity. Carole shares that visualizing the transformation was one of the easiest assignments she’s ever taken on. “This house had so much character, plus it had never been ‘remodeled,’ so we had good spaces to work with,” she remarks.

Elements such as original hardwood floors, large windows, quaint fireplaces, built-in corner cupboards, a home office and a first-floor master bedroom made the house all the more special and primed to make the leap into the 21st century. Plus, it would readily reflect her client’s preference for traditional styling.

For the first floor, Carole visualized expanding the kitchen to include dining and sitting areas. She also suggested that they extend the back of the house to create spaces for a master bath on the first floor, a wine cellar in the lower level and an additional bathroom on the second floor, which

holds three bedrooms. “I don’t want to call them additions,” she says of the new spaces. “They’re more like extensions of the house.” She also wanted to make over the main staircase. “I saw iron,” she recalls.

As Carole’s plans meshed with the homeowner’s goal of creating a fun home inside and out, she was more than happy to take on the project. “It definitely qualifies as a once-in-a-lifetime kind of project,” she says of the opportunity to not only design and decorate a home’s interior and exterior spaces, but to be given free reign by the owner to do so. “It was all-consuming,” she explains. “I wrapped up other projects and decided not to take on new ones. It’s good my husband travels as much as he does!” she jokes. “I was at that house 24/7. During the day, I’d work inside with Dave’s crew or I’d go shopping, and by night, I’d sit with Jon to go over ideas for the landscaping.” The first order of business was to partner with a remodeling contractor, and Carole’s short list of candidates was comprised of her one and only choice

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Very little was done in the formal living room. The fireplace and floors are original. Crown molding was replaced, while the walls were painted a more modern Quincy Tan. The alcove at the far end of the room was enlarged and the floor in the hallway, which had been vinyl, was replaced with hardwood.



This room has always been used as an office. The beams, cabinetry and woodwork are original to the house and were simply revived. The grid-work behind the desk houses the workings of the computer system. Carole created a leather look for the walls by sponging them with a combination of paint and varnish.



Again, little work was required to update the dining room. The floors and built-in cabinets are original. The crown molding was replaced and new lighting was added.



The master bedroom became a suite with the addition of a large bathroom that includes vessel sinks, brushed nickel faucets/fixtures, tile, a Jacuzzi tub and a steam shower.





Dave borrowed an idea from Bent Creek to disguise the meters that can be seen from the lower level.

The lower-level clubroom was carved out of a typical basement. Pipes traveled the length of the ceiling on the left side of the room, while the ceiling on the right side was lower. To remedy the situation, the pipes were removed and the floor on the right side was lowered six inches.

The wine cellar is located in one of the additions.



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- Dave Geib of Stiegel Construction. Carole had worked with Dave on several projects, including the extensive remodel of her own home. "Dave has a great eye for older homes," she notes.

As for transforming the exterior spaces, the homeowner proposed that Jon Hubler take on that responsibility. With the three principals in place, their client then took up residence in an apartment and left the details to Carole, Dave and Jon.

Dave, too, was impressed by the house. "It was obvious that it had been perfectly maintained," he comments. "It simply needed to be updated." Dave also recognized that the project would be unique due to the fact that the team would be given total con-

trol. "It was nice to be working with Carole again," says Dave. "We work well together - she can envision things and we can create them."

Architect Michael Humphrey, who had worked with Dave on a number of previous projects, was brought in to design the extensions and the lower-level clubroom that would increase the size of the house from 3,000 to 5,000 square feet. "We had the original blueprints from 1927," Dave explains. Day one of the work schedule - January 2, 2006 - saw the footers being dug for the additions.

Updating mechanicals and the electrical system was also at the top of the to-do list, especially in view of the fact that the homeowner is technology driven. Wiring for computer access (in every room) and nearly a dozen flat-screen televisions was needed. In addition, the entire house and out-

doors are wired for sound. As plaster walls were involved, the wiring had to be perfect. "We didn't want to have to re-repair the walls if we forgot something," Carole says of this challenging aspect of the project.

The cast-iron, steam-driven heating system was replaced with a forced-air system. Central air was added, as well. "I hated to take out all those radiators, but it had to be done," Dave says. All of the windows were replaced with energy-efficient models from Pella's Architectural Series.

The basement, which had been dedicated to storage and the laundry, also presented its share of challenges. Steam pipes traveled the length of the ceiling on one side, while the ceiling on the other half was considerably lower. "Once we removed the pipes, the ceiling height was fine, but on the other side, where the bar would be going, we had to lower the floor six inches," Dave explains.

Jon Hubler also recognized the opportunity he was being given when he signed on for the project. He's been in business since he was 12 years old, when he focused on mowing the lawns of Elizabethtown residents. Ten years ago, he officially launched Hubler Landscaping, which serves clients primarily in the Elizabethtown, Hershey and Harrisburg areas.

During his initial inspection, Jon discovered the landscaping was in need of a major overhaul. Overgrown shrubs (notably boxwood, azaleas and rhododendrons), grasses and "one big sycamore tree" greeted him. A closer look revealed a "forest of under-story trees" such as Japanese maples and dogwoods growing alongside the house. "They were worth thousands of dollars, so we made an effort to save them," he says of the decision that was made to dig them out and redistribute them along the outer perimeter of the yard. The same strategy was used to relocate the ferns that grew in profusion on the property.

As for the backyard and the more sizable but sloping side yard, Jon was greeted by a grassy lawn that wasn't conducive to outdoor living.

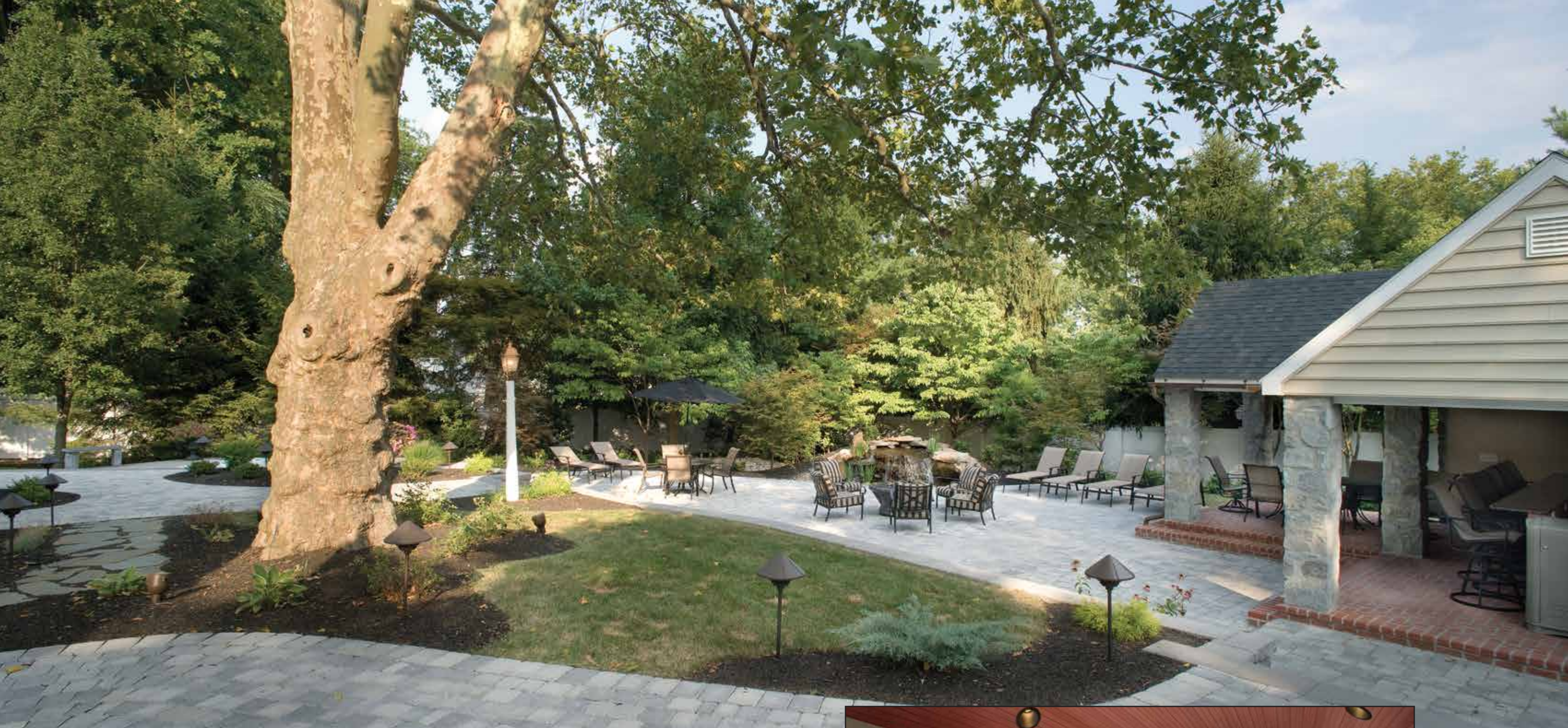
Access to the house was also a problem. As it's located on a corner, visitors tended to park on the side street, walk around the fenced-in front yard and then take a walkway that leads to the front door. The other option was to walk up the driveway and follow a crumbling concrete walkway to the far side of the house, where a back door was located. "After making

that walk with my arms loaded down way too many times, I knew we had to make a change," Carole recalls. Jon and Carole devised a plan whereby the low stone wall that runs the length of

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Access to the front and back of the house was made easier with the addition of this walkway that was cut into the side yard. The garage also received a complete makeover.



The once-sloping side yard was not conducive to outdoor living. To remedy the situation, the terrain was tiered, with the lowest tier holding a seating area (complete with a firepit and pondless waterfalls) and a pavilion that is home to a full-service kitchen and dining room. The water feature and the pavilion also screen the sound of traffic.

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the property would be broken up by a short staircase that provides access to a meandering, paver-lined walkway that allows entry to the front and back of the house, as well as to the remodeled garage.

The slope of the side yard was remedied by cutting tiers into the terrain. Walkways, sitting areas and an expansive patio have replaced the lawn. Low maintenance was a goal, hence the waterfalls were selected in place of a pond, while easy-care perennials

were chosen for the flower beds. Even a plan for water runoff keys into the low-maintenance approach. Water is directed underground via copper spouting that connects with a main pipe and spills into a rock-filled trench. "If the spouts emptied onto the ground, you'd have mulch everywhere," Jon explains.

The outdoor-living area especially demonstrates how plans evolved. Initially, plans called for the patio to be outfitted with a fire pit, the pondless waterfalls and a pergola. As the homeowner wanted to use the space for entertaining, the pergola morphed



into a pavilion that is composed of a kitchen and dining room. The pergola’s evolution included the addition of Dryvit walls (inside), a brick floor, granite countertops, tongue-and-groove hemlock siding (ceiling) and stainless appliances. The “dining room” comfortably seats eight. The pavilion does triple duty in that it shelters the patio from the ever-present sound of street traffic (as do the pondless waterfalls).

The backyard is home to a large spa. “He didn’t want a pool, but he instructed us to provide him with the largest hot tub we could find,” Carole recalls. The spa was set into a trench that contains the mechanicals and is covered with non-slip, non-fade, wood-look decking.

The final touch was lighting: The trees are illuminated. Low-voltage lighting brightens the walkways. Post lighting is situated at the junctures of walkways and other critical areas. “It really comes into its own at night,” Jon says. Fencing placed at varying heights ensures total privacy.

Jon says that he and his employees – Darryl Yeagley, Larry Locker, David Gibbs and Mike Robinson – worked

The pondless waterfalls are low-maintenance.

The backyard is home to a large spa that is set into non-fade, non-slip decking that has a wood look. Mechanicals are located underground.



as a team to make the backyard into a unique space. “It’s probably one of the most involved projects we’ve undertaken,” Jon says. “We worked on it non-stop from early May to 6:45 on the night of the party.”

What a difference a year makes. The homeowner is totally loving his house. Dave is celebrating his 25th anniversary as the owner of Stiegel Construction. “Nineteen-eighty-two was the worst year to go into business,” he says of the direction he took when the partnership in which he was involved dissolved and he renamed his portion of the business Stiegel Construction. “I had three employees and no work; mortgage rates were sitting at 16 percent,” he remembers. Thanks to luck and talent, one job led to another and he has not looked back. Long-time employees Woody Snively and Jay Peters are still with him, and he continues to have 12 carpenters on staff in an era when subbing out jobs is the norm.

As he prepares to celebrate his 60th birthday, he wonders what will happen to small companies such as his. Over the past 25 years, Dave has

been forced to reinvent his company. One reason has to do with the scarcity of single building lots, as most communities are now builder-owned. “I’m not interested in that, so our focus has shifted from building custom homes to remodeling. Plus, the younger generation doesn’t seem to appreciate our quality of work. People don’t stay in their houses as long as they once did. Even houses have become part of society’s throwaway attitude.”

His last hurrah in the custom-building market was his own home in Bent Creek, for which he won the Parade of Homes’ Fulton Award. He’s also proud of a tear-down/rebuild project – a new concept for Lancaster – that he did for a client in Lancaster Township.

As for Carole, she and her husband Terry have moved to the West Coast as a result of Terry receiving a job promotion. “I feel blessed to have worked with talented people such as Dave and Jon,” she says. “I’m going to miss them and my clients.” ■

Credits:
Design/Décor: Carole Sheffield, Cara Mia Design
General Contractor: Stiegel Construction

Architect: Michael Humphrey, D. Michael Design
Landscaping Contractor: Jon Hubler Landscaping
Kitchen: Horizon Kitchens
Electrical Contractor: Joyce Electric
Plumbing Contractor: Haller Enterprises
Audio/Video: Wee Bee Audio•Video
Flooring: Adair’s Carpet & Tile
Counter Surfaces: Frank’s Marble & Granite
Painting Contractor: DG Painting
Roofing: John Hughes Construction
Pavilion Carpenter: John Bitner
Pavilion Electrician: David Hubler
Plantings: Huber Nurseries
Fencing: New Holland Fence
Windows: Pella
Garage Doors: Stadel Garage Doors
Wine Cellar: Vigilant Wine Cellars
Excavating: Sauder Excavation
Drywall: Zook Drywall
Insulation: S/T Insulation
Insulation: Keener Insulation
Security: ADT Security
Masonry: Jay Weaver
Disposal Service: Good’s
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