

# ATLANTA ENGLISH COTTAGE

For a pair of empty nesters, architect Tim Adams designs a new home that looks to the past, marrying English architecture to vernacular interiors in an ingenious plan that captures the river views.

*By J. Michael Welton | Photographs by Laura Negri Childers*



**Above** Perpendicular to the house and tucked away, a garage wing creates a cozy front court. The house's oversized bricks have been lime-washed. **Opposite** The formal dining room is awash in natural light from the bank of steel windows that overlook the arrival court at the front of the house.









**Above** The living room on the main level overlooks the private backyard and pool terrace. Warmth and scale are provided by vertically applied bead-board walls and reclaimed wood beams along with a butt-joint poplar ceiling.





**Large windows open to verdant views;** interior designer Courtney Dickey based the palette on those vistas, connecting the interior to outdoors.

**Above** A banquette creates an eating nook in one sunny corner of the kitchen. **Right** A dramatic zinc range hood balances the classic palette of rough-hewn beams, white marble, handmade tiles, and brass hardware.

**Opposite** Stained-timber door surrounds and corbels define the openings from the kitchen to the breakfast room and to the great room.



TIGHT LOT, bounded at the rear by the Chattahoochee River and on either side by neighboring houses, drove the design of an English Cottage-style home for a pair of Atlanta empty nesters.

Their lot is narrow and fairly deep, but a flood plain limits development where the site meets the river. That meant that Tim Adams of T.S. Adams Studio, Architects, had to shoehorn a U-shaped plan for the house onto its site.

He did it masterfully. At the rear, Adams oriented the house toward views of the river and, behind it, a golf course.

A brick lattice wall much like a trellis screens the view to one side; the mass of the master wing screens the other. “The lots are very tight, with only 15 feet of separation between homes,” he says. “It only made sense to focus attention to the back, and this plan does it.”

At the rear, tucked into the U shape are an outdoor fireplace, dining area, and seating. Past a plunge pool in the foreground is a view to the Chattahoochee, with a golf course as background. “It’s a beautiful view,” Adams says.

The house is located in a gated com-

munity called The River District at Berkeley Lake, one that Adams and his studio were involved in developing before the recession of 2008. “Initially, we were the lead architects in master planning the community and creating design guidelines,” he says. “These clients came to us because of our knowledge of the guidelines and thus ability to maximize the potential of a challenging site.”

The clients preferred a bedroom suite on the ground level, but they wanted the house to welcome their adult children. So three bedrooms were added upstairs,







plus a great room they call the River Room, which has a bar, a beamed ceiling with pecky-cypress panels, and windows overlooking river and trees.

The windows open to verdant views; interior designer Courtney Dickey selected colors to match the vistas. “In the river room, there’s a caramel-color sofa and green pillows and if you look out the windows you see browns and greens,” she says. “The owners wanted connectivity between indoors and out.”

Adams is an architect who believes in the power of natural light. Sunlight pours through a transparent front door and through large, steel windows in kitchen, dining room, breakfast room, and living room. “It’s challenging when there’s a house on each side,” he says.

“Here, the stairs rise to the left of the entry, and a high window at the landing drops a lot of light downward.”

The 5,150-square-foot home is fairly open, with kitchen and family room separated by an integrated server and anchored by a pair of timber columns. The client requested a separate dining room for entertaining. “The room has two openings, to the butler’s pantry and to the foyer,” Adams says.

“There’s not a lot of drywall on the main floor—we used painted wood beadboard on the walls and butt-jointed poplar on the ceilings,” Dickey says. “In the main rooms, walls are painted with Benjamin Moore’s China White—the rooms are all very light.”

On the exterior, the roof is shingled in





The rear of the house is designed to direct the view toward the river, beyond the plunge pool. One exterior wing wall and a pierced brick wall screen nearby neighbors, ensuring everyone's privacy.



**Left** The entry door is a prelude to large windows and glazed doors throughout. **Above** An animal-print stair runner hints at lighter, more modern moments inside. **Below** The powder room has a Thibaut grasscloth wallcovering. **Opposite** Flanking wings form a private terrace with river views.







**Above** An angled dormer visible from the front illuminates the attic hallway. Steps lead to the second-story River Room where the family gathers and entertains. **Below** With a pecky-cypress ceiling and windows overlooking river and trees, the great room or River Room is comfortably furnished for informal gatherings.



cedar; walls of oversized brick have been lime-washed for a permanent finish, essentially a stain “that permeates the brick surface,” Adams says. “It gives the home patina, which is really nice.”

Adams was careful to bring the exterior down to human scale, lowering the roof over the front door. It’s one story in the middle and two on either side. A cornice at the rear breaks up the two-story block; two main gables step up to offer volume upstairs. “When you deal with a style like this, it’s important to pay attention to scale and volume,” he says.

If Adams sounds comfortable designing in a classic style, there’s a good explanation. He grew up in Asheville, N.C., near Biltmore Estate. “The reason I’m an architect is because of Biltmore,” he says. “My mother took me there, and on the second or third visit, its drawings and models were on display. My eyes lit up!” Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted surely would approve. ◉

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**Top Center** The primary suite extends outward toward the back of the site, forming one side of the private pool terrace. A screened porch with identical dimensions forms the other side of the courtyard.

**Above** The en-suite bath is serenely luxurious with a marble floor and a soaking tub.

**Right** The bedroom has a high, vaulted ceiling, with beams as in other rooms.

**Bottom Left** A full bar and pub table sit opposite the fireplace wall of the River Room.

