While aging Americans have an overwhelming preference to live in their homes as they age, most design efforts are put into the development of assisted living centers and the like. In an effort to allow the elderly to continue to reside among their families and preserve surroundings, homes should be a place that support lifelong residency by becoming an apparatus to aid in that process. But the needs extend beyond issues of mobility and accessibility. The home should be a place of identity that reflects the past but also allows the resident to look beyond himself and his life, and consider its context in the larger sense of community.

I turn to the life and home of former Chapel Hill clothier, Milton Julian, and his last days spent in his log cabin on his former horse farm. As expressed in Milton’s own words and thoughts, we can see the design through the lens of his past life experiences, his present challenges, and his vision for his future. As he prepares to make the transition to the end of his life, a place is created that absorbs the past and adapts to an evolving condition. It becomes a place of identity for him and highlights his overall connection to the land. While the design delves into the detail scale of everyday elements throughout Milton’s living space, it also considers the design on a greater scale and timeline, for the family and possible visitors at some future time. Just as the home reflects a sense of family and gathering, the overall design considers spaces in which family can congregate in support and fellowship for him and return to this land. In remembrance, for years to come.

What a serene retreat this was for Virginia and I, an antique cabin nestled quietly on a farm in the native forest of the North Carolina Piedmont. It was a place where she had said she had everything she loved in one place: the land, the horses, and me. She was so passionate about this horse farm, and it is here that our children learned their love for the land. This is where I want to spend the rest of my days, surrounded by all of the elements that are rich in all of those fond memories. But, although the cabin was adequate for a temporary stay by the two of us, it needs to be expanded and updated to allow for flexibility and ease of my ever changing circumstances.

Without the active horse farm, the old barn seems lifeless. It calls to be revived with life and activity as it once was. It is the central point of this site and its former operations. As my children and grandchildren become stewards of myself and family, and find new support networks, they gather in this repurposed barn, as an extension of the home. Even beyond my time I imagine each of my children establishing their own cottages on the land, to visit this place with their families to create new memories in a familiar landscape.

But who am I kidding? I know my children will get caught up in their own lives in pursuit of their own dreams, just as I once did, and returning to this place may fall by the wayside. But my vision is that whoever comes to occupy this land may still experience it in a way that helps them connect with the land and each other. Because of Virginia’s passion for raising horses here, I would love to see this passion be continued in an equestrian camp for children and families of all ages to visit and play in the countryside. It could be used as a summer camp with counselors and perhaps tent camping in the fields or family weekend retreats, gathering for meals in the barn before a full day with the horses.
Milton’s Cabin

Although it may be used in slightly different ways, past and be surrounded by the original structure allows me to reflect on wonderful memories of years to come. The renovation and addition, the original cabin (area shaded in red) has now become my private living quarters. I like this area being more private. It alludes and gives a sense of privacy tucked back away from the city life in Chapel Hill. It is very serene and I very well when we would come here to get away from the car up right near the old cabin in my own specific spot.

The central gathering area in the old cabin felt warm and cozy when we gathered around the hearth with a dim lantern on at night. The massive logs notched together at the corners make the space feel sturdy and safe. I often traveled through the dense forest. When I emerge into the clearing again, I round the corner as the house sits within the beautiful landscape beyond. I pull the car up right near the old cabin in my own specific spot.

When I approach the house on the long drive on the edge of the field, I am able to see a glimpse of it. But even it is taken from my own as I drive through the dense forest. When I emerge into the clearing again, I round the corner as the house sits within the beautiful landscape beyond. I pull the car up right near the old cabin in my own specific spot.

The central gathering area in the old cabin felt warm and cozy when we gathered around the hearth with a dim lantern on at night. The massive logs notched together at the corners make the space feel sturdy and safe. Although the room was not very large, it did have carpet or wall-to-wall. The few small windows provided framed views of the trees and the forest in the back. This now area has become my bedroom. As the years go by, this area will be where I may be spending most of my time, just as I once did with my family.

Just as a modern core element is a later addition to an antique log cabin, my new bathroom and storage element is a stand alone piece in the overall structure of the old cabin. The CMU walls provide a modern contrast to the rough wood.

I enjoy having a designated room for my work at my house. With simple room for slide, windows with natural light from French doors that open directly onto the patio.

The new kitchen feels very open and flexible. With all cupboards on the bottom for ease of access, my view can extend through many other spaces throughout the house.

The dining room is a celebratory space with a grand roof that directs your view up and out, along with a pivoting glass door that frames the entire view of the barn from my seat at the head of the table.

This is the separate entry for any visitors that need access to the living spaces from the private guest quarters. I also have a direct right turn in the barn beyond.

The guest quarters are reached but are accidentally for privacy with a view towards the forest.

On nice evenings I like to enjoy dinner outside on the deck. I like thevakation at the moon and stars and think about how great it will be to see Virginia again.

Ah, the old cabin. It served my late wife Virginia and I very well when we would come here to get away from the city life in Chapel Hill. It is very secluded and gives a sense of privacy tucked back away from the city life in Chapel Hill.

When I approach the house on the long drive on the edge of the field, I am able to see a glimpse of it. But even it is taken from my own as I drive through the dense forest. When I emerge into the clearing again, I round the corner as the house sits within the beautiful landscape beyond. I pull the car up right near the old cabin in my own specific spot.

When I wake up, the room is flooded with sunshine as it beams through the eastern windows while I look out into the open landscape. I love the view towards the forest.

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To me, the barn is the heart of this place, or at least it once was. It stands boldly in the middle of the site looking out into the wide open field for visitors to catch a glimpse as they wind through the trees. Now the barn should become an extension of the home, a place for the larger family to gather. Elements of home, such as the dining table and the hearth, are crucial components in the space but are translated to fit the barn typology. It is an open plan with spatial dividing elements placed within the existing grid.

Baron for Gathering

01. As I walk down the crushed gravel path to the barn, I am enveloped by the building's covered area carved out of the original barn volume. I encounter the vertical wooden planks typical for a barn but the large windows are a new addition that flood the space with light and pivot open to let the breeze through.

02. The Old main barn at the far end has beautiful panoramic views of the trees and the pond we can enjoy after a day of fishing. The Visitor center is one of warmth and friendliness and the large windows on both sides fill the space with light, embracing the natural color palette.

03. This entry is where the family, children, campers, etc. will gather in after a day and enjoy some relaxation and get a welcome from the friends who lived there all together.

04. The living room area is a centralized portal area that is set off from the rest of the spaces. People gather around the hearth to relax and enjoy the view from out of the window.

05. The barn is central to the function of the barn. The fire ring for a grand feast is at the center of the barn. Everyone gathers around the fire ring for a grand feast and to enjoy some relaxation and get a welcome from the friends who lived there all together.

06. This end seems to be more private and for service containing more compact and compartmentalized spaces for storage, circulation, and service.

07. Just as it is typical for a barn to have a loft, this one has been developed into a private living space. The view is out onto the world, out to the large pond below and out to the open fields beyond. The view is spectacular and the feeling is one of warmth and friendliness.

08. This kitchen area is in addition to the original barn space, as it becomes a space of support, a hierarchically different space.

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Although each would have its own size and personality to match each of my children, they would all be designed within the same cohesive guidelines. I am a man who appreciates refined designs and I would want no less for the development of my land. The volumes are simple and overlap in different ways to create different outdoor spaces and views. To me, the volumes are a study in the living (or public) core. The private zone will be clad in Corten steel for differentiation. I think it is also fitting for a cabin that may be only temporarily used because of its natural beauty and patina with a small amount of upkeep. Where the areas that these two zones overlap would be the core area(s). All the living areas need to feel open and free flowing with great views to the outdoors. There will be a higher ceiling to celebrate the living space hierarchy. The exterior cladding would look to be a few planks turned on end and in it there is a horizontal wooden rain screen, a modern, refined interpretation of the cabin walls. The private core is clad in Corten steel for differentiation. I think it is also fitting for a cabin that may be only temporarily used because of its natural beauty and patina with a small amount of upkeep. Where the areas that these two zones overlap would be the core areas of bathroom, storage, sometimes the kitchen.

01. Frederick and Susan’s One Bedroom Vista
My oldest child Frederick and his wife have live in Charlotte for a long time and when they are retired, I know they will be eager to move back to this place just as I did. Their cottage is just for them with simple yet functional spaces. There is a more open living space, with a breathtaking view out over the water, separated by the CMU core elements from the one bedroom. The typical elements of the cabin have been reinterpreted in modern ways. For example, the hearth is a large, yet simple, Corten steel pipe with a hole cut near the bottom for firewood and a base placed inside.

02. Randal and Heidi’s Weekend Home
Although Randal has a busy schedule, being a well-known doctor in Raleigh, he will want a place for all of his family to come and gather. It will be a simple house but will be a lively place when they all get together.

03. Diana and Jim’s Getaway
I know that my daughter Diana will want something more on the modern side of things: something more linear and contemporary. It will have the wall element to section and organize the space and its circulation. She will want a great view of the water, of her own bedroom, and will have private areas right up to the second floor.

04. Todd and Jennifer’s Family Retreat
Being the youngest of my children, Todd and Jennifer are still raising their kids, so I know they will have no trouble in building a home big enough for the whole family to come visit the farm. Their cottage will be located in close proximity to the horse fields and the top floor, for their barn, will have a pool that can be used as well. They will want a definite division in the interior and public spaces and will continue it with a celebrated entryway that acts as a pivot between the two zones and directs the view upon entry, right out over the pond and out to the land.

I imagine this land as a place for my children and their families to share for generations. They can build houses to come and visit whenever they want. The cottages could also function for the camp as places for families to rent out or for theirAnte as their home base, surrounded by the camp structures and the camp fire that is an open landscape with a few trees that also open up to the beautiful pond view.