



PHOTOGRAPHS: J. SANKUZE GIBSON

A Room of His Own

Dan Morrill's favorite room is a porch. Small wonder—the past is his life's work.

Dan Morrill's screened porch—a recent addition to his Charlotte home—conjures cherished memories of golden days as a youngster growing up in Winston-Salem. “I remember sitting on the porch in the evening and being serenaded by the orchestra of insects that surrounded our house, watching the lightning bugs,” he recollects. “[Sitting on the porch] is reconnecting with my youth.”

A fondness for the past—and the connection to bygone days through physical structures—comes quite naturally to Dan. As a historical preservationist, he teaches at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and at the same time oversees the Charlotte

Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. Through his work, he's helped save and restore parts of the town of Matthews, an old gristmill, a blacksmith shop, and two store buildings. Not to mention his “knee-deep” involvement in the introduction and restoration of a colorful trolley to the streets of Charlotte.

About his own 10- x 15-foot outdoor room, he notes, “There's a certain timelessness to sitting on a porch. You can have special conversations on porches. We eat out there a lot, and I usually have a ritual nap on the weekends, hearing the birds and noticing the wind rustling in the trees.”

Nancy Dorman-Hickson



“There's a certain timelessness to sitting on a porch.”