

January 13, 2010

Ms. Betty Hood
Betty Hood Real Estate LLC

Dear Betty:

I appreciate your asking me about 1106 Constant Springs, the house that I built in 1984-1985 and my family lived in during the late 1980's. I look back on that home with fond memories.

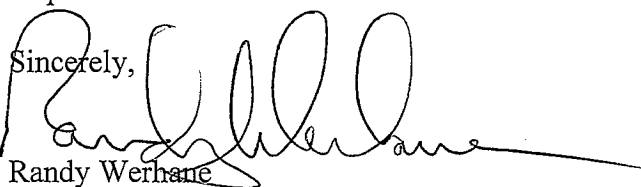
I will share with you some history on the construction of the home. As an ex-mechanical engineer, I designed the house and wanted to make sure that it was built properly to include the amenities that I had been used to growing up in the north.

1. Having moved from the north in late 1980, I wanted a basement. I worked at night and on weekends for a month with an 80-lb. jackhammer to remove the solid rock from this lot that sloped from left to right. This was necessary to create the space for a basement under half the house, and provide a flat area for the evaporative transportation septic system in the front yard. Since this house and entire lot sits on a solid rock cliff, it is not going anywhere and water from a septic system could not percolate downward. With the new construction in the area below on Silver Hill Drive, sewer may now be available.
2. As an uptight ex-engineer, I was not satisfied with the traditional method of using a string line with a bubble level to make sure the slab was flat. I have a transit, and used it to have the foundation crew correct their exterior supports to make sure the foundation was perfectly flat (although minor, some areas were adjusted by approx. 1") when concrete (over 115 cu. yards) was poured.
3. I had the pest control company I used for my business treat the entire area under the slab with chemicals used to eliminate termites. Since there is nowhere for these chemicals to wash away or evaporate, I assume this slab should be termite free for a long time.
4. Due to the building height, all exterior walls were framed with 2" x 6" boards. All exterior windows are dual-pane, crank-out, wood Pella windows, and all exterior walls were sprayed with cellulose insulation over the vapor barrier instead of normal fiberglass batts that could permit air leakage. As a result, my typical monthly summer electric bill in the late 1980's was around \$200.
5. There are three A/C and heating zones in the house to better control temperatures throughout.

6. All interior doors are solid Oak, with handmade operable transoms above the doors into the bedrooms. With the large attic fan at the highest point over the family room, air could be pulled through the bedrooms at night for cooling when closed during times when the A/C was not necessary.
7. Window seats were hand built in the family and living rooms for storage (kid's games, etc.). When we lived there, the seals were tight, permitting us to drop the lids without a bang (just a "whoosh").
8. All exterior hose bibs are the frost-free type (again, I came from the north). Since the valve to shut off water is behind the insulation near the drywall, we never had to cover the hose bids due to cold weather (should be good for sub-zero temperatures, as long as the hose is detached to permit water to drain from the pipe). For an extra \$40, any home in Austin could have been protected this way at construction if local builders just understood the concept.
9. I had the plumbing installed as a continuous loop system. Since hot water weighs less than cooler water, gravity would cause the water to continually flow through this loop without the use of a pump. If the water heaters have been replaced in the intervening years, it may be necessary to verify whether the installer kept this system intact. If not, it should be easy to resurrect.
10. I added a Widow's Walk on the roof, just above the south end (near the stairs) of the third floor play room for the kids. We had a ladder that provided access, but I understand that has been removed. With a commercially purchased lid and pull-down stairs, this area could be reinstated. There were great views of downtown Austin from this location.
11. We had installed a hot tub in a redwood deck in the shape of Texas in the enclosed entry atrium. I understand that has been removed. The outlet for water should still be available for any water feature in that area.
12. The storage room off the finished lower level was used by my son for his drum practice. With all the boxes on the shelves in that room, the sound from the drums was dampened to the point that we could not hear him when in our bedroom.
13. We installed outlets at the back of every vanity in the house. These should be located behind the second drawer (deep drawer) down on one side or the other. This permitted us to use hair dryers, curling irons, etc. and place them in the drawers when done to keep the counters clear.

I hope this information is helpful when clients have questions. Let me know if I can be of further help.

Sincerely,



Randy Werhane