

# At Home

## And then there were two

BY BILL LAHAY

Astute observers have always noted that the recent demographic notion of the nuclear family living in a detached home is mostly an historical anomaly of the modern Western world, an exception to the shared living arrangements commonly found in other times and places.

It's more typical of human culture, they say, to have several generations under one roof or at least on one premises, and to have closer physical proximity to one's relatives and neighbors.

But U.S. households have bucked that trend for more than half a century. Relative affluence and greater mobility have loosened the ties that used to bind people to their extended families, villages and communities. Our neighborhoods, especially in suburban areas, have reflected that trend toward separation, but the advent of a new millennium has had a curious effect: a renewed interest in living more together rather than apart.

The factors behind this change are likely multiple and varied — an economic recession that has made sharing

expenses smarter, if not necessary; baby boomers trying to care for aging parents who are living longer but can't always stay independent; or just the attempt to balance global interconnectedness with a simpler tie to one's local world.

Whatever the reasons for the cultural shift, it turns out that most of our current housing arrangements and residential zoning restrictions are decidedly unfriendly to it.

One lot — one home. It's a simple way to build, and a simple rule to enforce. But it sidelines the potential for affordable housing in many urban



PHOTO/MUFFY KIBBEY

Though it involved more work and expense than a simple conversion, a lofty roof modification (called a "monitor") transformed this former garage into a living space that rivals most homes for comfort and appeal.

areas, leaves homeowners and other residents with fewer options, and can even contribute to suburban sprawl. So what's the alternative?

That's the subject of Michael Litchfield's book "In-Laws, Outlaws, and Granny Flats." Litchfield, who has

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## — HOME OF THE WEEK —

### Townhouse features 'a fabulous blend of old and new'

This historic townhouse, circa 1860, sits along Prince Street in the historic district of Old Town. Restaurants, retail shops, offices, the farmers market and Metro are just a short stroll from the front door.

Originally home to a headmaster of St John's Military Academy next door, the home was purchased in 2002 by John and Teresa Groupe, of the Engineering Groupe. The duo hired a top design firm — with access to wonderful European antiques — to complement the history, evolution and special patinas throughout the residence.

The interior is flawless and reflects a bespoke, timeless elegance.

"It's very traditional in

some ways and more modern in others," said Robin Waugh, of TTR Sotheby's International Realty. "The house is a fabulous blend of old and new."

The bright, open floor plan is perfect for gracious entertaining and casual family gatherings. The full basement also caters to get-togethers, with a wine cellar, game room and state-of-the-art movie theater.

The house's other highlights include: 10-foot ceilings, large sunlit cook's kitchen, European marble baths, elegant applied moldings, large mahogany windows and doors, original heart-of-pine wood floors, grand central staircase, rear private stair, four antique skylights, four gas fireplaces, private elevator, and views of Old Town.



PHOTO/SHANAHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

This historic Prince Street townhouse is within easy walking distance of Old Town's amenities, including shops, restaurants and parks.



PHOTO/SHANAHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

The historic Old Town townhouse features a large, sunlit cook's kitchen. The home also boasts marble baths, a grand staircase and beautiful views of the neighborhood.

Check out more than 50 photos of the home at [www.815princestreet.com](http://www.815princestreet.com).

#### At a Glance:

**Location:** 815 Prince St., Old Town  
**Year Built:** 1860  
(renovated 2000-2002)

**Price:** \$2,495,000  
**Style:** 4-Level Townhome  
**Contact:** Robin McKibbon  
Waugh, MBA  
TTR Sotheby's International Realty  
703-917-0515

[robin@robinwaugh.com](mailto:robin@robinwaugh.com)  
**Bedrooms:** 4  
**Bathrooms:** 4.5  
**Parking:** Private Alley (off-street)

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