My Mother’s Cabin: A Design in Memory
Benjamin Crews Hackworth

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Hans C Rott
Chair

Frank H Weiner

Patrick A Doan

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Abstract

Located in rural Mount Laurel, Virginia, on the tobacco farm my mother was raised, this house grew from the use of memories as a design tool: my childhood memories not to mimic, rebuild, or remake, but to create new space for new memories. To create a space where, one day, my son could retreat and remember his childhood.
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In memory of
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who were my motivation
For my son, Alasdair Jourdan Hackworth
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I remember, as a child, waking up as the tires hit the edge of the long gravel driveway, the small hill obscuring the house just beyond it. As we would crest that hill, the light from the porch, framed by its columns, became visible forming a bright square that meant we were there. My grandmother, my mother’s mother, would be waiting at the screen door.

This is where my memories of my grandmother’s house begin. This thesis is the house of a new grandmother, to create the memories of a new son.

That long axis of approach with the warm light at the end, the sound of the rain on the metal roof, the child’s sense of scale, I tried to capture my memories and reshape them for my mother and my son. To create a home. To create an escape. A place for me to attempt to leave behind the harsh memories of war and slip into their place memories of my childhood.
Taking the long approach the gravel driveway creates, I used this axis to create the spine of the building, demarcating the living spaces of the home. To the west, the private areas: the bedroom, the bath, a living room. To the east, the more public areas: the kitchen and dining or gathering room. This spine carries through to a clear story, which reveals on the other side the gabled fire room which spans between the east and west halves of the home. This room is the literal and figurative bridge between the public and private spaces.

The concrete is left rough to give this main element its own tactility.