

...onomist Rick Dulaney
 mpany said the defining
 his simple Gothic
 its unusual roofline — a
 paired gable roof.
 s are seen in only a
 Gothic Revival houses.
 ave once had decorative
 ge boards and even lace-
 an original porch. Such
 ost over the years and
 replace.

...ours were looking for a
 t care what architectural
 They were looking for
 ouse.

...had been looking for a
 e for two years and
 ked until they walked in the kitchen.
 en he saw the way Connie looked at the
 was the house.
 hen, which the previous owners



The living room of the Balfour family home was once the front parlor. Pictured are Lisa Balfour, sitting, and standing, from left to right, Erica Balfour, Connie Balfour and Jim Balfour.

revamped, continues to be a special spot for the family.

"We are a real close family. We spend a lot of time with our family in the kitchen," Jim said. "We think it's important to gather at least once a day and know what's going on."



...en has a real farmhouse feeling to it.

The comfortable home has a circular floor plan on the first floor, with one set of six panel pocket doors between the front parlor and the former back parlor, which is the family dining room.

The children quickly discovered that the pocket doors made a terrific theater "curtain" for the plays they liked to put on for their parents.

The house has a charming atmosphere without the often-seen Romantic ornamentation of the era.

Instead, the original owners included understated finery, such as the highly-profiled, butternut door and window trim with crown headers throughout the house.

The living room has a stained glass transom window with an unusual design created from an uncommon type of stained glass.

The Balfours didn't have to do much to make the house a great place to raise their three children, Lisa, Bradley and Erica.

They redid two bathrooms, did some redecorating, some exterior painting and had a new roof put on the house.

The family is taking steps, little by little, to make the house as maintenance free as possible. It has been slow going, but they interspersed the really hard work with fun projects such as their current one of designing flower beds and a rock garden in their park-like backyard.

The Balfours are very attached to their home. They talk about moving to a smaller house now that their children are grown, but keep deciding against it.

Connie said even though a new house would be warmer and have fewer squeaks, it could never have the character of their house.

Their children said coming home to a new house wouldn't feel like "coming home."

squeaks by adding humidity to the air by using a humidifier. For a permanent repair, a carpenter can stop the squeaks without removing the carpet.

The other problem is that the subflooring was not glued to the floor joists, and now that the joists have shrunk there are miniature gaps between the top of the joists and the bottom side of the subflooring. Every time you step on that area of the floor, you hear the subflooring riding up and down on the nails used for attachment.

Locate the joists, which are likely spaced 16 inches apart. Finding that first joist is tricky, but once it's found, the others can be located using a tape measure. To help find the first one, look at the floor registers by an outside wall. There should be a joist on either side of the register.

If you don't have floor registers, go to the basement or crawl space where you can drill a hole next to a joist. To locate the hole stick a stiff piece of wire up through the hole and above the carpeting. Once the joists are located, it's easy to secure the subflooring to the joists. Using a screw gun (a variable speed drill) and a 1-1/2 inch-long No. 8 Phillips head wood screw, force the screw through the carpeting and sub-flooring to the joist.

Once the screw is set, the piling of the carpeting will break, releasing the piling, and the screw will disappear. If you don't want to work through the carpet there are products available at most home stores for repairing the squeaks by working under the subflooring from a crawl space or basement.

C. Dwight Barnett is a master inspector certified by the American Society of Home Inspectors.