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Smart Decisions, Loving Compromises

By Claudia Johnson, Director of Marketing, Honest Abe Log Homes

Dreams, decisions and compromise. That's the formula Doug and Noreen Williams can endorse when it comes to building a home - and a life - together.

"It had been a dream to own a log home for many years prior to actually moving forward with it," Doug said. "There is something unique and rustic feeling about a log home over a conventional home. Perhaps it has to do with a simpler time, though today's log homes still have all the modern conveniences."

Doug said that before embarking on the homebuilding process, they visited models, perused log home magazines and attended home shows.

"The Chantilly, Virginia, log home show is where we first encountered Honest Abe," Doug said, explaining why he and Noreen chose Honest Abe Log Homes as their designer and manufacturer. "Through our research we discovered there are differences in log home manufacturers. The main thing to look for is someone who has been around for a while. That ensures that any problems with log species, settling, etc., has already been worked through and you will get a quality product."

Through the home show, Noreen became connected with Darlene Dawson, who along with husband Rodger, owns Bear's Den Log Homes, an Honest Abe Log Homes independent dealership in North Carolina.



“When talking to Darlene, something clicked, and it appeared that the hurdle of who to use was settled,” Noreen said, concluding that choosing Bear’s Den was a “smart decision. Darlene has a thorough knowledge of the building process, and we could count on Bear’s Den to be there helping out in any way possible to make sure our dream home became a reality.”

The Williams said their desire for a log home predated their choice of where to build it, though they always knew it would be either in the mountains or the foothills.

“There is something extra special about a log home in the mountains; it just appears to belong there,” Doug observed.

So, for several years the Williams explored locations, but the Asheville, N.C., area kept calling them. The couple said they were attracted to the region’s variety of recreational opportunities, as well as Asheville’s vibrant downtown and its outstanding medical facilities.



The Williams explored various locations but decided on the mountains of North Carolina because they believed their dream fit the landscape.

“We chose the lot for our home because of the potential for excellent views of the mountains, which we have, and that certainly makes living here extraordinary,” Doug said. “We not only have views from the front porch, but from our master bedroom and living area. It is a great way to start each day by looking out at the mountains. The design of our log home captures those views very well.”



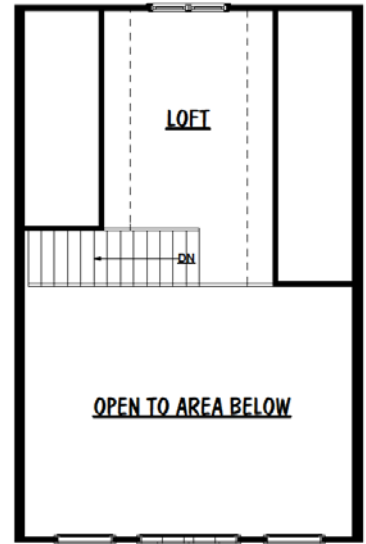
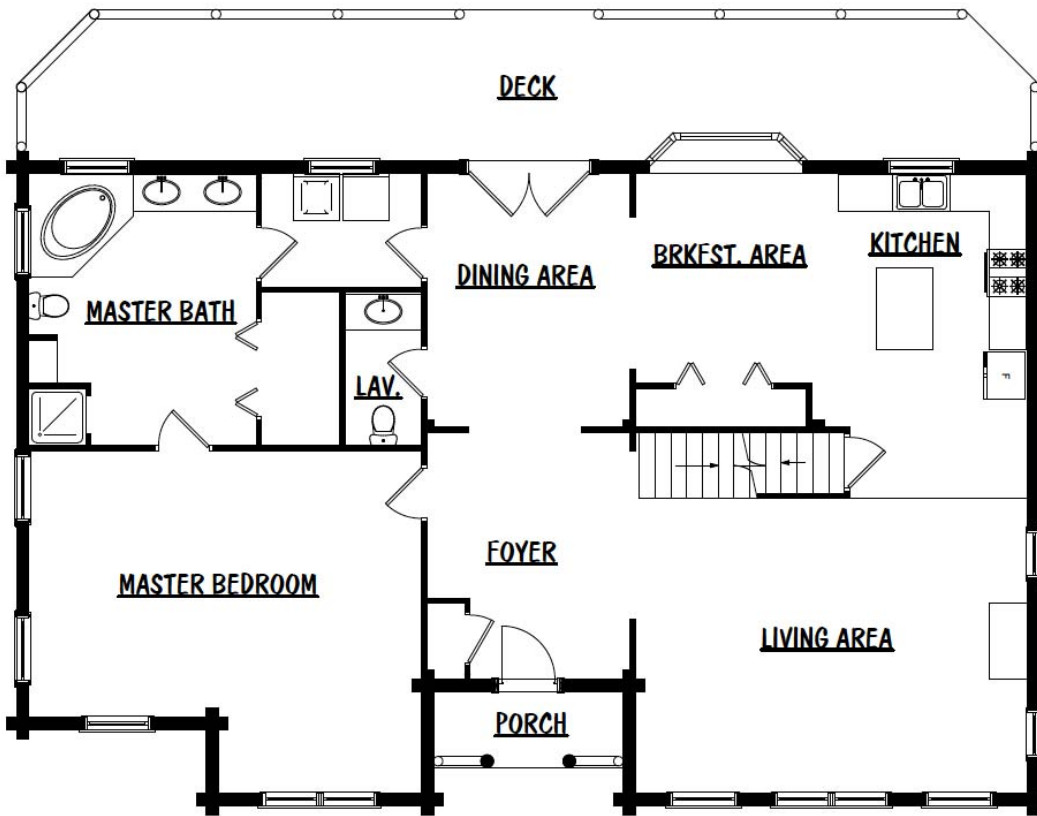
With 2,456 square feet the Williams house is spacious but cozy. Furnishings were chosen to enhance the home’s layout and design.

Doug said that he and Noreen were initially seeking a design that incorporated a wall of windows surrounding the fireplace in a great room that was open to the kitchen and dining areas, creating one large room.

“We still have many windows in our great room, though it is laid out differently,” Doug said. “We painstakingly drew up modifications to the design to incorporate our ideas of what we wanted. Honest Abe and Darlene Dawson were great to work with in helping us realize how to make everything work.”



The Williams wanted an open living area flooded in natural light from many windows and warmed by an intimate fireplace.



Honest Abe's Legacy Clearbrook Plan was flipped to fit the terrain, a screened-in porch was added off the living room and other modifications were made for the Williams.

Honest Abe designer Mike Hix modified the Williams' choice of the Honest Abe Clearbrook floor plan to create the desired open living area on the main floor while making accommodations for stairs to a loft and steps from the basement garage to the main floor.

"A large factor in choosing the Clearbrook was the exterior design of the home, it has a beautiful look on the front," Doug said. "It also incorporated a front porch, which was a must, and we were able to build a screen porch off the end, which was something we would not compromise."



Clockwise from top: House Front, Screened-in Porch, Rear with Patio



However, Doug said that he and Noreen learned there are many compromises involved in building a home together.



A local craftsman created the staircase Noreen Williams had envisioned.

“Noreen had in her mind what she wanted for the staircase leading to the loft,” Doug recalled. “When showed other options, she did not want to compromise. Fortunately, we found somebody locally who built the staircase railings as she had envisioned.”

The Williams had no disagreement about how their 2,456 square foot home’s exterior should look.

“There was never any real issue about the log style,” Doug said, explaining the choice of 8” D-logs.



The home office takes advantage of the view.

“Both of us wanted round logs on the outside and flat logs on the inside, and we both liked the look of the logs overlapping each other on the corners.”

In modifying the Clearbrook plan, the Williams tried to

take into account all possibilities.

They planned the garage using their vehicles’ measurements. When laying out rooms, they actually placed furniture on their plans to ensure that everything would fit.

“We inherited a dining table that will seat 8 to 10, so we made sure that the dining room is big enough if we want to open the table fully,” Noreen said. “We also took into consideration that we might want a king-size bed for our bedroom. The only furniture we did not already own was our living room couch, though we had that picked out and had laid it out to make sure that the fireplace and electrical outlets would be placed advantageously.”



An heirloom dining table was accommodated in the floor plan design.

Doug acknowledged that there were financial considerations to take into account with practical decisions, like lighting and plumbing, as well as in finalizing aesthetic choices.



Natural finishes keep the home’s interior light. The Williams chose D-logs, flat inside and rounded outside.