



TOUR – Bill Beck’s Pump House

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Riverside pumphouse-turned-home in Fredericksburg on market for \$1,375,000

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Now this is a property to get pumped for. The keyword here is “pump,” folks. The historic pumphouse on the shores of the Rappahannock River in downtown Fredericksburg that has been creatively turned into a dynamic abode is for sale. Located at 301 Sophia Street, it is listed with Christina Beck of Century 21 Redwood Realty for \$1,375,000.

Former Fredericksburg Mayor Bill Beck is the current owner of the one-bedroom, 1.5-bath home. In an interview a few years ago with The Free Lance-Star, Beck said he and his wife Susan planned “to keep it forever.” But, alas, here we are, and it’s set to dazzle a buyer or two out there.

“I had never planned to get older, but I have gotten older,” said Beck. “We realized we don’t live there full time and taking care of two places is a bit much these days. We’ve been talking about putting it on the market for a while, but resisted listing it with an agent until the right time.”

For the Becks, the right time equated to when their granddaughter, listing agent Christina Beck, officially obtained her real estate license. The Sophia Street property marks her very first listing and according to Bill Beck, “nobody knows it better or has enjoyed it more.” And what a home it is to know.





The Becks originally purchased the pumphouse from Spotsylvania County in 1998. It was on the auction block and their winning bid was \$71,101. Spotsylvania had owned the site since 1980, shortly after the FMC Corporation plant shuttered in 1978.



The pumphouse was originally built in 1947 by American Viscose Corporation, shortly after it bought Sylvania Industrial Corporation's cellophane business. It was constructed in an effort to improve productivity—pumping water from upstream to cool machinery in the plant. Throughout the plant's existence, it was a major economic driver for the region and, at one point, was the world's largest cellophane facility. Much of the pumphouse structure was underground and many of those underground core components remain today.





“A lot of people will go down in the deep basement, where the pump equipment is, and say, ‘Oh, wow, you can do this’ or ‘I can do something with this here,’ ” said Beck. “I have given that a lot of thought, too ... but I think its best use is to keep it as is. It gives you a chance to show a little bit of Fredericksburg’s industrial history.”

To access the 25-by-80-foot basement space, you must walk down five flights of stairs from the upper rooms. Once you arrive, you’ll see all the original water pumps and electric motors, which have remained untouched since they were turned off in 1979.

As for the Becks' enhancements to the space, the two-floor upper area has been tastefully morphed into a pied-à-terre space with expansive river views. Among the highlights on the main floor are a full kitchen with forest green cabinetry and silver appliances, a full bath and hardwood floors.

Just below the main level, you'll find a cozy, wood-clad office and lounging space, layered with custom book shelving.



The home is within walking distance to all downtown Fredericksburg has to offer, spanning award-winning restaurants, shopping aplenty and cultural landmarks.

For commuters, the Amtrak Virginia Railway Express station is approximately 200 yards away.





The dynamic home has also seen its share of serene moments and lively events throughout the years. On one end, Beck says he'll miss the eagles and geese flying by, as well as the osprey fishing along the Rappahannock. On the entertaining end, the property has played host to weddings, dinner parties, graduation events and, a Beck family favorite, annual Fourth of July parties for friends and family galore.

The 301 Sophia Street story is incomplete without mentioning the acre-plus of open yard that comes with it. In total, the property boasts approximately 425 feet of riverfront land, making it an incredibly rare find and prized gem in today's market. With the home, you'll have a stunning, unobstructed view of the Fredericksburg railroad bridge, too.



Outside is a riverside utopia. The lower area boasts a large concrete deck with layered patios right on the shore.

There's a large summer room, too—measuring approximately 15-by-50 feet—with screened windows, ceiling fans, a half bath and small kitchen.