

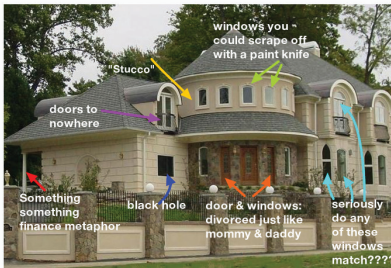
BY CLAYTON DEKORNE

Welcome to McMansion Hell

McLean, Virginia

Aug 18, 2016

This week's McMansion is brought to you by the neighborhood of McLean, Virginia, infamous for being one of the most McMansion-ridden neighborhoods in all the land. The cause of this phenomenon? Nobody has more money and less taste than DC lobbyists, and this week's McMansion proves it. On the market for **\$1,699,900** is this esteemed estate home, built in 2003:



This certified dank™ McMansion comes complete with 100% guaranteed bad decisions including:

- Pre-lawsuit EIFS cladding (aka "stucco") exterior featuring "detailing" and "quoins"
- Obese "rotunda" peppered with stick-on windows
- Three pairs (count 'em) of French doors that open out to spacious and luxurious balconies metal grills.
- Great architecture: look at all those unique windows!
- In typical McMansion style, this 9,702 square-foot house was built on a

Welcome to McMansion Hell

Houston, TX

Aug 25, 2016

Everything's bigger in Texas, so they say. They also say "Don't Mess With Texas®" which was an anti-littering campaign in the 80s(?) and these houses definitely qualify as littering so technically I'm not messing with Texas®.

To say that this house is a mess would be an understatement, and, if you've been reading this blog for the last couple of weeks, you'll know why immediately.



This illustrious house, built in 2007 boasting 5 bedrooms and 7 bathrooms is currently for sale for **\$1,498,000** despite the fact that it looks like it was made for, maybe, like, \$8.

As always, we first admire the dramatic waste of space that is the 2-story foyer.

McMansions From Hell

All architecture buffs, and anyone who has suffered work on bloated buildings and ostentatious homes, will love Kate Wagner's McMansion Hell (mcmansionhell.com)—a smart, well-informed blog that pokes fun at bad residential architecture. Cabinetmaker Mark Luzio, who is a stickler for classical proportion in his woodwork, turned me on to this site while we were working on an article about an entryway on a Colonial tavern he restored (see "All Roads Lead to 'D,'" May/16). "She gets it right," said Luzio. I imagine most *JLC* readers will laugh out loud but also learn a thing or two about exterior design and interior finishes.

Most of her articles critique online real-estate listings and include marked-up photos like the examples above. Some of my favorite labels Wagner has added to other real-estate photos are the following: "More roof than house with soulless window holes," "Car hole," "The after-thought dormer," "Giant pediment boner" (referring

to an oversized triangle balanced on spindly entryway columns), "The Mighty Crown Molding Ziggurat is now welcoming applications for sacrificial tributes" (referring to a triple-decker tray ceiling), and "3-story Pringle can of shame" (referring to a tall, tower entry).

The blog is not entirely critical. Wagner provides many examples of well-proportioned, functional, and beautiful exteriors and serves up a solid education in historical home styles. In a recent message, she clarified that the purpose of her site, which has the face of Ronald Reagan peeking through the logo, is not to air political commentary: "I have no hidden agenda in this blog. My goal, like the goals of the rest of my colleagues in the field of urbanism, is to promote better, more livable, sustainable communities and to urge others to care about architecture, which I love so much."

Clayton DeKorne is editor in chief of JLC.