

[Return to Document](#)

Bush ranch home takes shape Bushes plan innovative ranch

New house near Waco will be innovative yet proper, architect says

BYLINE: Pat Walker

DATE: January 3, 2000

PUBLICATION: Austin American-Statesman (TX)

EDITION: Final

SECTION: Metro/State

PAGE: B1

WACO -- The house that George W. and Laura Bush are building on several hundred acres of land near Crawford is much smaller and more modest than most people might think, the architect designing the house said last week. David Heymann, associate dean for undergraduate programs at the University of Texas School of Architecture, said the Bushes prefer not to release much information on the house just yet, but he did describe the building as "pretty innovative" and "very proper, quiet and orderly." The structure will be a long, low one-story dwelling, with breathtaking views from virtually every room, Heymann said. Each room will be situated to receive sunlight and cool breezes, he said. "There will be long views of the surrounding landscape and short views to a clump of huge oak trees," he said. "The (private) lake will be visible, as will some nearby ravines and the rolling landscape of the area." A long concrete porch will stretch most of the length of one side of the house, and covered patios are incorporated into the design at several points, Heymann said. "The design really lets you get inside and outside quickly," he said. "Most of the rooms lead immediately to outside spaces." The house will be finished in stone and have a metal roof. Several environmentally friendly features will be included in the plans, including solar panels for heating water, rainwater collectors for landscape irrigation, a system that uses ground water to cool the air conditioner and a graywater reclamation system, which would recycle dishwater. But even though the environmentally sensitive features would appear to shed favorable light on the Republican presidential candidate, Heymann said the Bushes haven't once during the design process come across as though they were thinking in political terms. "They're some of the most fun clients I've ever worked with," he said. "They're easy to work with; they know what it is they don't want. They're very decisive." Heymann said the Bushes want the house to be completed in time for the November presidential election. Meanwhile, a farmhouse on the 1,600-acre ranch -- which is located west of Waco in McLennan County -- is being remodeled to serve as the family's quarters until the new structure is built. Heymann declined to reveal the size of the house or estimated construction costs. The architect added that the Bushes have said they will release more details in the future. Heymann, who's working with another architect on the Audubon Sabal Palm Sanctuary in Brownsville, was recommended to the Bushes by Deedie Rose, a member of the UT architecture school advisory board and the wife of former Bush business associate Rusty Rose. Although work is already under way on the Bushes' new property, Crawford Mayor Robert Campbell said residents of the community don't know much about the nature of the work. "There are big trucks going in and out of there, but that's about all we know," Campbell said. Pat Walker can be reached at pwalker@wacotrib.com or at 757-5735.

Illustration: LM Otero/1999 AP

COLOR PHOTO

Texas Gov. George W. Bush and his wife, Laura, are building a ranch home on 1,600 acres west of Waco.