

Remodel

Home: 1611 Harbal Drive

The task: Expand the living room and turn the adjacent bedroom into a master suite.

Goals: Add dramatic details, daylight and views.

Designed by: Gary Rochman with Kevin Peters

Cost: Over \$250,000

Remodeling by: Rochman Design-Build

About the remodeler: The Ann Arbor company was founded in 1989 and only does residential remodeling. Rochman was an early advocate of combining design and construction services, which has become a local industry standard.

More light, more space

BY PAULA GARDNER

What's an average cost for additions in this part of the U.S.? And how much will you recoup if you sell?

Here's a gauge based on recent surveys that put dollar amounts on five favorite (not upscale) addition projects:

JOB	INVESTMENT	ROI
Bathroom	\$30,586	66.3%
Deck	\$15,081	63.6%
Family room	\$78,884	61.6%
Master suite	\$99,600	63.3%
Sunroom	\$51,398	58.3%

Source: Remodeling online

Gary Rochman reached for the stars while designing a complex addition to a mid-century home off of Pontiac Trail.

Owner Kathryn Clark is a NASA scientist. Her husband, a physician at the University of Michigan, shares her passion for stargazing.

So while the couple wanted more space and increased drama in their 1950s ranch, they also had one specific goal for Rochman: The pair wanted to see expanses of nighttime sky.

One interior solution was to build a skylight over the bed- at the center point, giving each owner an equal view – so that stargazing could be woven into their nighttime routines.

And outside sits a unique and unexpected feature that brings them even closer to their celestial hobby: A rooftop deck for wide-open views of the heavens.

The perch, large enough for both a small crowd and a telescope, is the result of Rochman turning what Clark calls “a wild idea” into something that truly personalizes their home.

The end result is a complex series of changes over a full year that retained the house's basic ranch appearance from the street, just off Broadway, but created a dramatic presence both inside and looking over the heavily treed backyard.

Rochman raised the roof, adding height and visual interest from the exposed wood trusses. It was part of the plan, but ended up feeling like a bonus to Clark.

“I didn't understand how open it would make the room feel,” she said.

Beyond their interest in stars, the couple also values natural daylight, which washes over the interior space thanks to many of the remodeling touches.

A ribbon of clerestory windows runs across the front of the house under the newly raised roof. The addition adds windows at every turn and multiple angles, bridging the indoor space with the outdoor, wrap-around decking. The master bedroom has an open-air connection to the living room, letting light and sound travel as in a loft. And a two-sided fireplace in the master bedroom sends a warm glow between the sleeping area and the hot tub portion of the deck.

The interior addition extended along the back of the house at a variety of angles, adding a dining area to the living room and letting Rochman reconfigure the master bedroom for more closet space and additional windows.

But the size needed to be controlled to keep the scale of the house, which Rochman helped the couple balance. “If we had extended more, it would have been like a bowling alley,” Clark said.

The addition used for dining space “became homey,” Clark said. “It's warm because (Rochman) was clever enough to wrap around the deck.”

But even that required complex planning, since to extend the house and the deck, Rochman first had to build a retaining wall to turn a steep slope into horizontal yard.

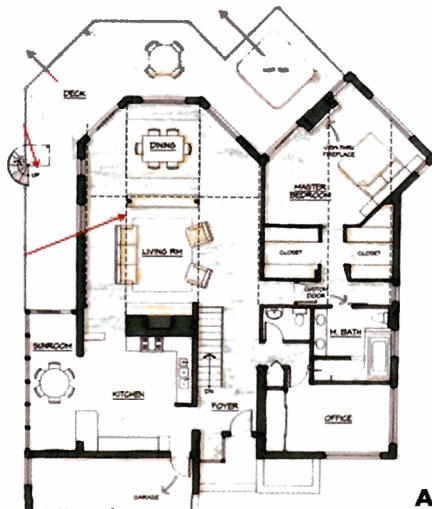
The lower level of the house gained some space, too, along with a new laundry area – with a connection to the upstairs – and storage room.

“For all of the beauty in this house, the laundry chute is my favorite thing,” Clark says, laughing.

But most of the drama in the house is upstairs, the result of weekly meetings between the homeowners and Rochman as decisions and progress were made and slight changes had to take place. One example: plans for a Trex deck were scrapped after they decided that the wood floors inside wouldn't flow with a composite deck.

The couple clearly love their house: “I have very little feeling for what it used to be,” Clark said. ■

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