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House & Home

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More and more smart builders report a strong upsurge in sales, page 120



Julius Shulman

This is what middle-market buyers see when they walk into the living room of a \$17,500 house at Murray-Sanders' College Park. Inside and out, there is an atmosphere of luxury. The expensive light fixture, the sandstone fireplace, the sliding glass doors to the terrace, the fenced and landscaped backyard—all are marks of custom-like quality and elegance in a merchant-built house.

Here's luxury for the middle market

*By offering quality, variety, and elegance
at repeat-order prices, a smart building team taps
the growing market of middle-income families*

When Partners Ian Murray and Cedric Sanders started their College Park community, they were pretty sure they had picked an area (Costa Mesa, Calif) with a steady middle-income market. But it turned out to be even steadier than they expected.

College Park started fast—75 sales in the first three months. Then, as mortgage money got tighter, volume dropped. But it didn't keep dropping. Instead, it leveled off at 12 to 15 sales a month. By mid-June, only 35 of the 324 houses were unsold.

Of course, the right location paid off. But more important, Murray and Sanders designed the right product at the right price. Their middle-cost houses (\$16,800 to \$18,150) sell well because they have what the middle-income market wants: the extras and overtones of custom-built homes.

Even other builders are surprised at the custom qualities in Murray-Sanders houses

"These are the best houses I've seen in California," said George Goodyear, then NAHB president, after visiting College Park.

"I don't think you could find a better house for the money anywhere," said Ray Cherry of Los Angeles, who also builds bargains but in a lower price range (H&H, April '58). "And these builders sell their houses with the aplomb and approach of Cadillac salesmen. Their merchandising is as good as their houses." (For samples of Murray-Sanders merchandising, see H&H, May '58.)

It takes a lot of ability to design and build houses

that impress leaders like Goodyear and Cherry. Murray and Sanders have what it takes. Both are long on experience, but in different—and complementary—areas. Murray has a hefty background in building, banking, and mortgage finance. Sanders is a former custom-house designer, a former owner of a home manufacturing firm.

Says Murray: "Sanders' prefab and custom-house experience serves him well in this market. He knows more about design than most tract builders. And, unlike a lot of otherwise good designers, he keeps a sharp eye on costs. That, coupled with my own building and banking experience, makes us a pretty good team."

How do you get luxury for the middle market? Here's the Murray-Sanders success formula:

"Make your houses look big, expensive,
and different from each other."p 82

"Vary your plans to get individuality
on the inside."p 84

"Pack your kitchens with thoughtful extras
that appeal to knowing housewives."p 86

"Build convenience into your laundry areas."p 88

"Add distinctive details to your bathrooms."p 89

"Look for ways to put the custom-house stamp
on every room in your merchant-built houses."p 90

Adds Sanders: "You can afford luxury
if you engineer your houses for economy."p 92



SECOND-BEST SELLER is this \$16,800 house with garage in front.



THIRD-BEST SELLER ranges in price from \$16,800 to \$17,100.



FOURTH-BEST SELLER (\$17,000) has garage at right angle to street.



SLOWEST SELLER (\$16,800 to \$17,100) has semi-detached garage.



BEST-SELLING MODEL in College Park is highest-priced (\$17,800 to

"Make your houses look

Take these College Park houses for example:

Each looks bigger and more expensive than it is. Even other builders are surprised when they find out that all but the one above are priced below \$17,500.

Each looks different from the others. Yet four of them (left) have the same size living area (1,400 sq ft) and are built on the same rectangle (28'x50'). The fifth (above) is only slightly larger (1,566 sq ft) and varies only slightly from the basic rectangle.

What gives these houses their big expensive look? Designer



\$18,150). It has extra-large family room, den that doubles as fourth bedroom. "Kissing Couple" sign (above) is College Park trademark.

big, expensive, and different from each other"

Sanders puts it this way: "I keep the plate line as low to the finish grade as possible. My plate height is 7'5" and I build on slab. This gives a sense of width and space.

"To carry out the lengthening effect, I also accent horizontal lines and minimize vertical lines. And I use a minimum of decorative materials on the front elevations. If you mix two or more materials of different types, you're apt to cut up and shorten a house."

How does Sanders individualize his exteriors? He gets maximum difference from minimum changes like these: 1)

he varies house-garage relationships; 2) he sites his houses differently—turns some long end and some short end to the street; 3) he makes slight fenestration changes in some models; 4) he varies the porch-like canopy on the end wall of each house; 5) he puts different masonry planters around each entry; 6) he uses the same siding material in three different ways (see details, p 93).

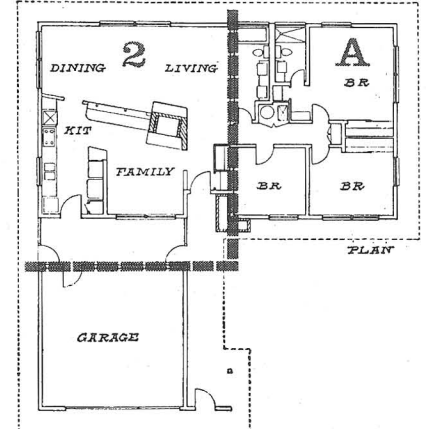
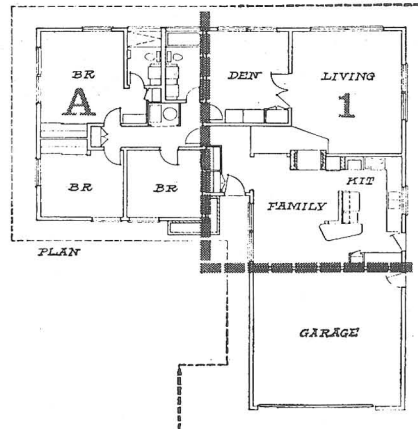
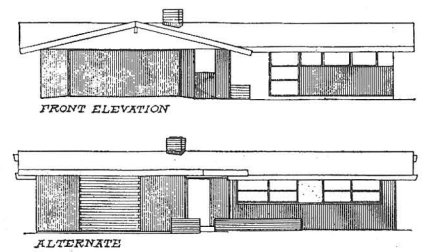
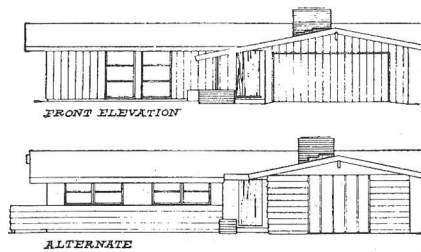
Individuality doesn't stop at the front doof of Sanders' houses. Inside, too, he gets maximum difference from minimum change. To see how, turn the page.

continued

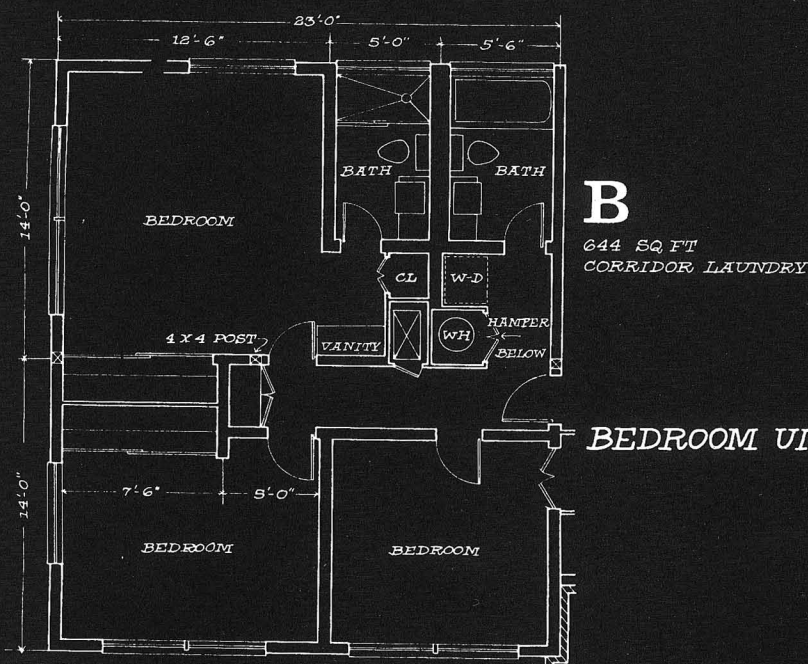
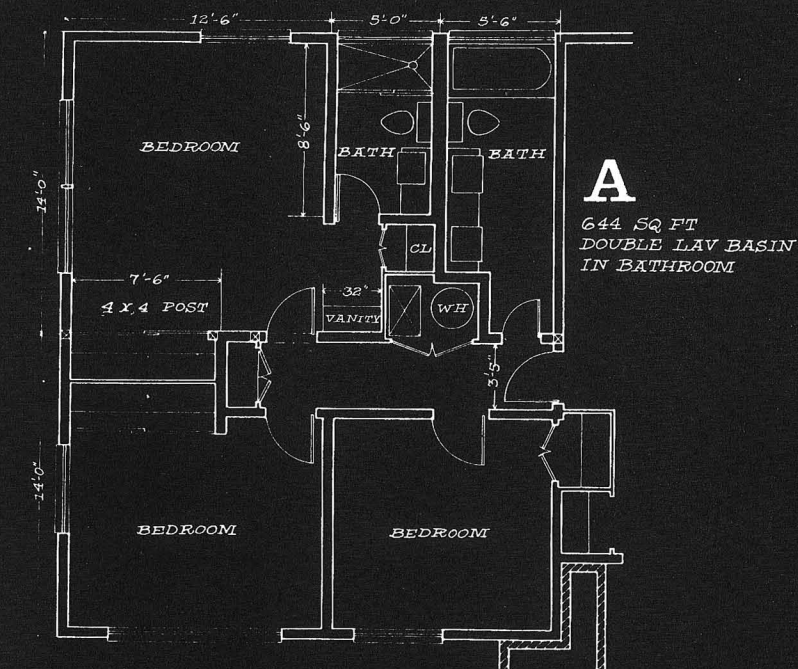
Luxury for the middle market

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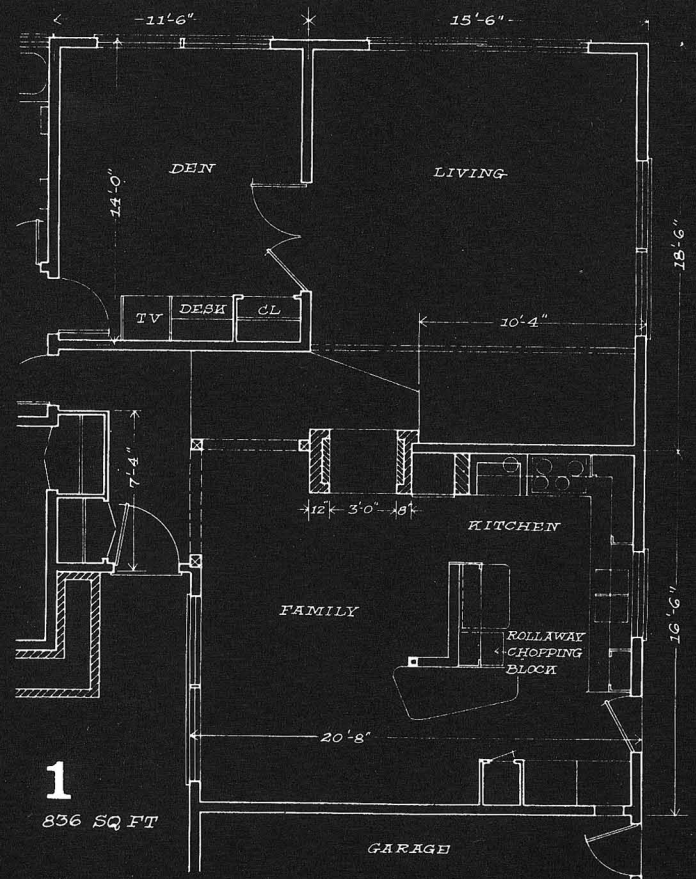
**"Vary your plans
to get individuality
on the inside"**



By combining either of two bedroom units with any of five living units,



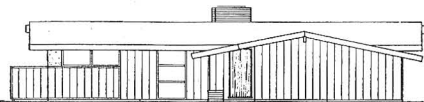
BEDROOM UNITS



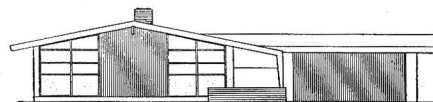
LIVING AREA UNITS



FRONT ELEVATION



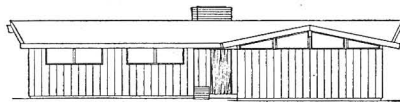
FRONT ELEVATION



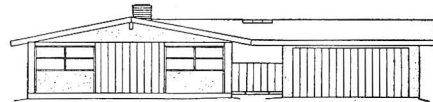
FRONT ELEVATION



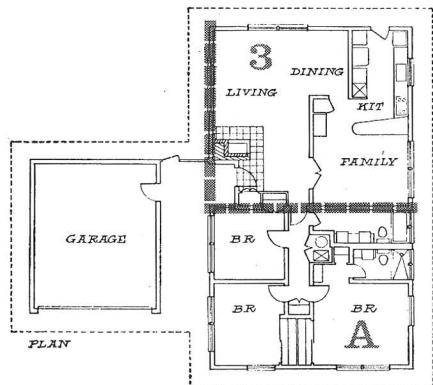
ALTERNATE



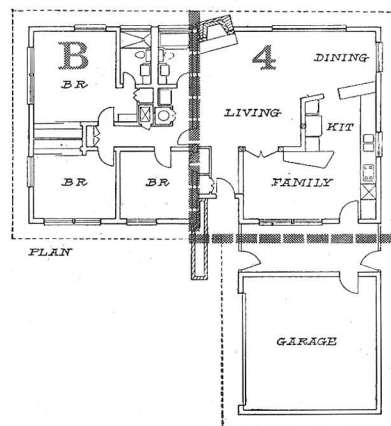
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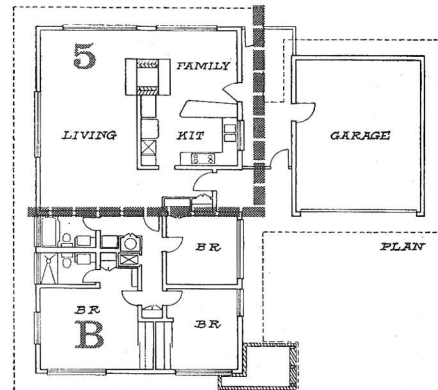
ALTERNATE



PLAN

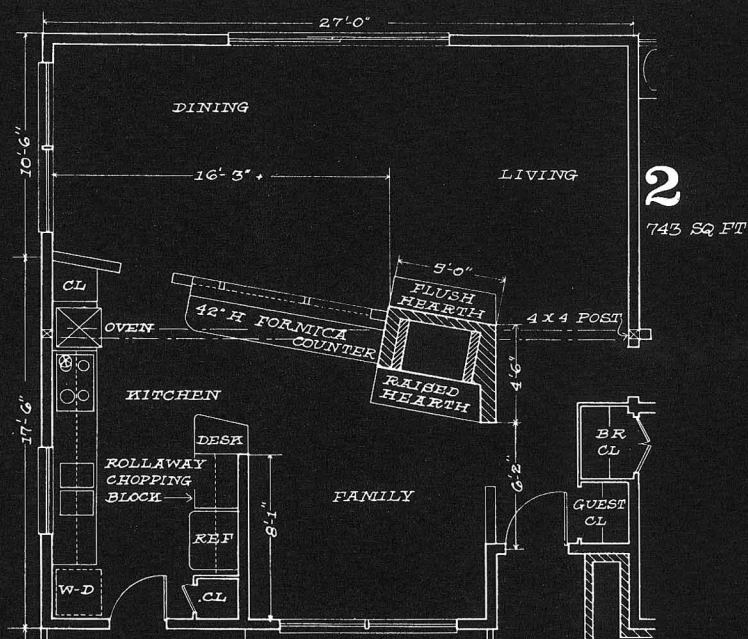


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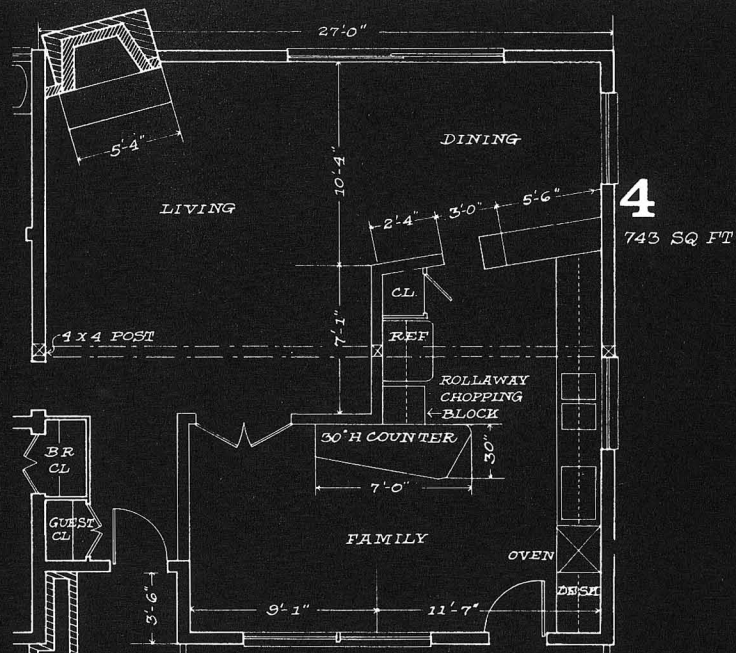
PLAN

Designer Sanders gets maximum difference from minimum change in plans



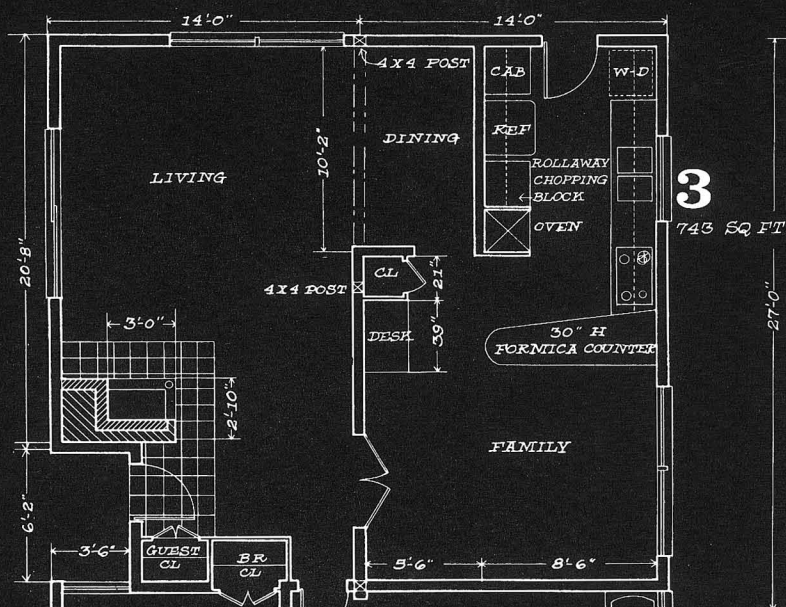
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743 SQ FT



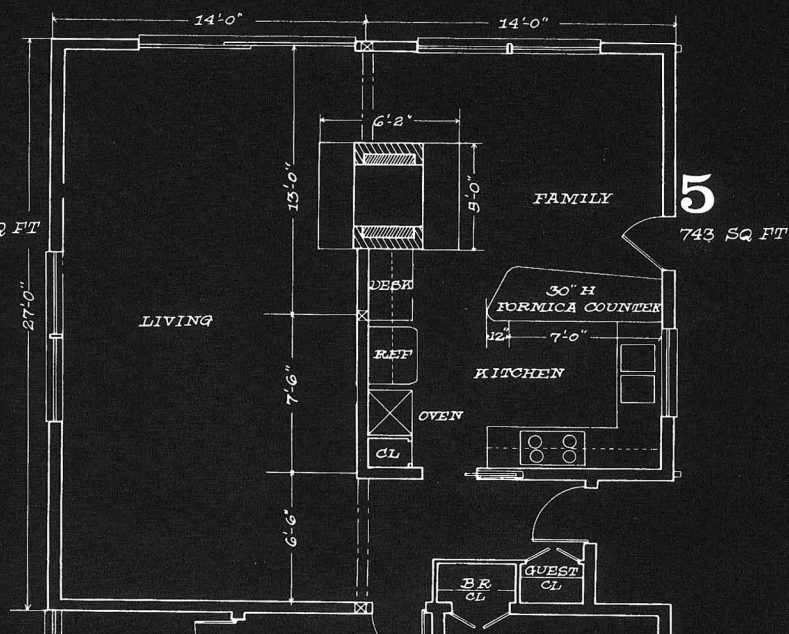
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743 SQ FT



3

743 SQ FT



5

743 SQ FT



Luxury for the middle market
continued

OPEN KITCHEN—seen from near front entry of one College Park house and framed between family-room fireplace and translucent space divider—gives an immediate sense of custom-house luxury. Exposed beam and sloping ceilings are also characteristic of many individually designed California homes.

Photos: Julius Shulman

"Pack your kitchens with thoughtful extras that appeal to the knowing housewife"

Years of experience with custom houses showed Designer-Builder Sanders what the woman who can afford luxury extras wants in a kitchen. When he switched to development building, he set out to put the same sort of extras in more modestly-priced for-sale houses.

The pictures on this and the facing page show how well

he has succeeded. His kitchens are packed with thoughtful touches that catch the housewife's eye. And, as you'll see on the following pages, he doesn't stop there. Throughout his houses, he includes the kind of designs and materials that give a feeling of elegance, the kind of built-in extras that make day-to-day living easier for middle-market families.

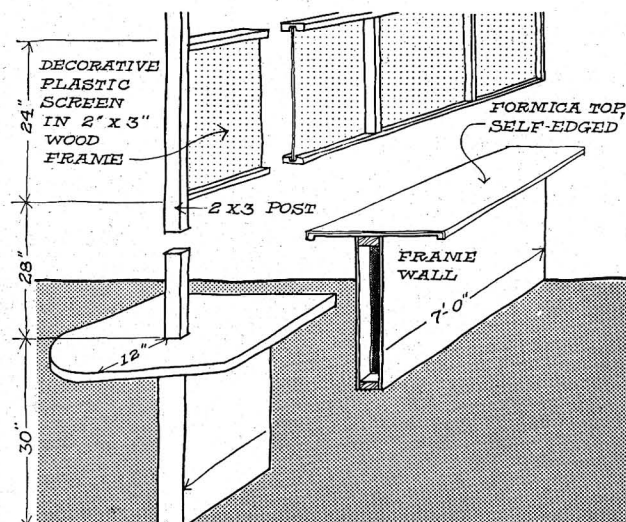
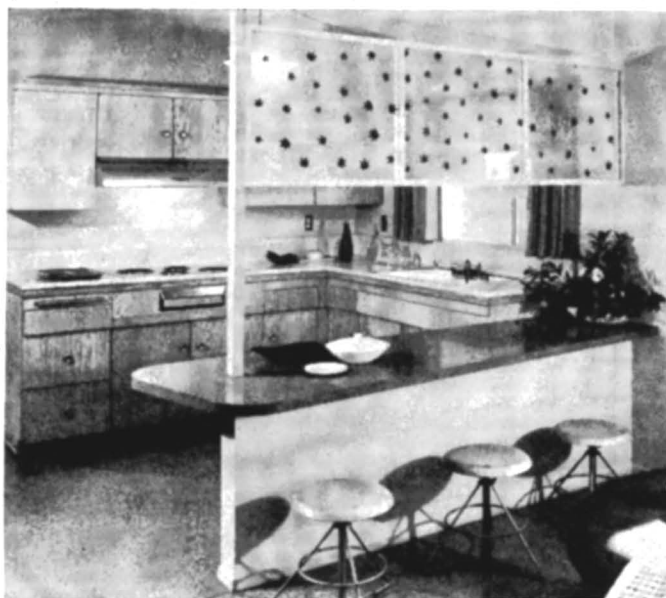
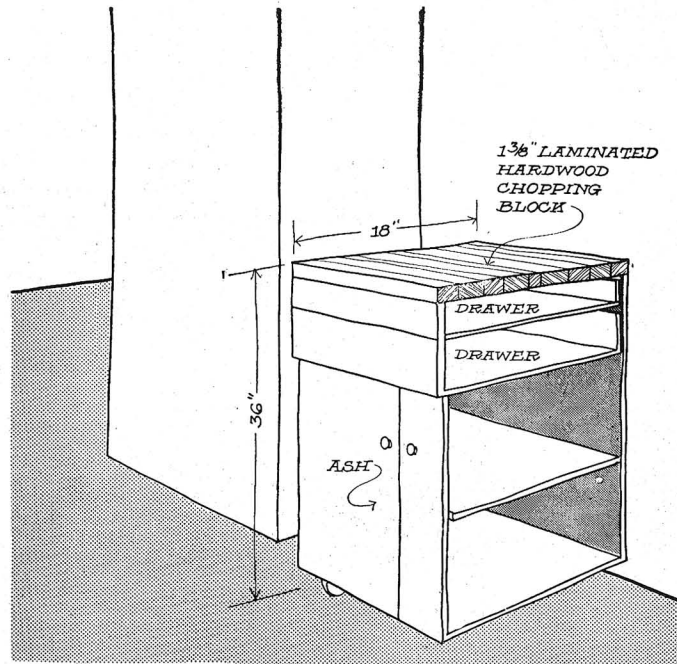
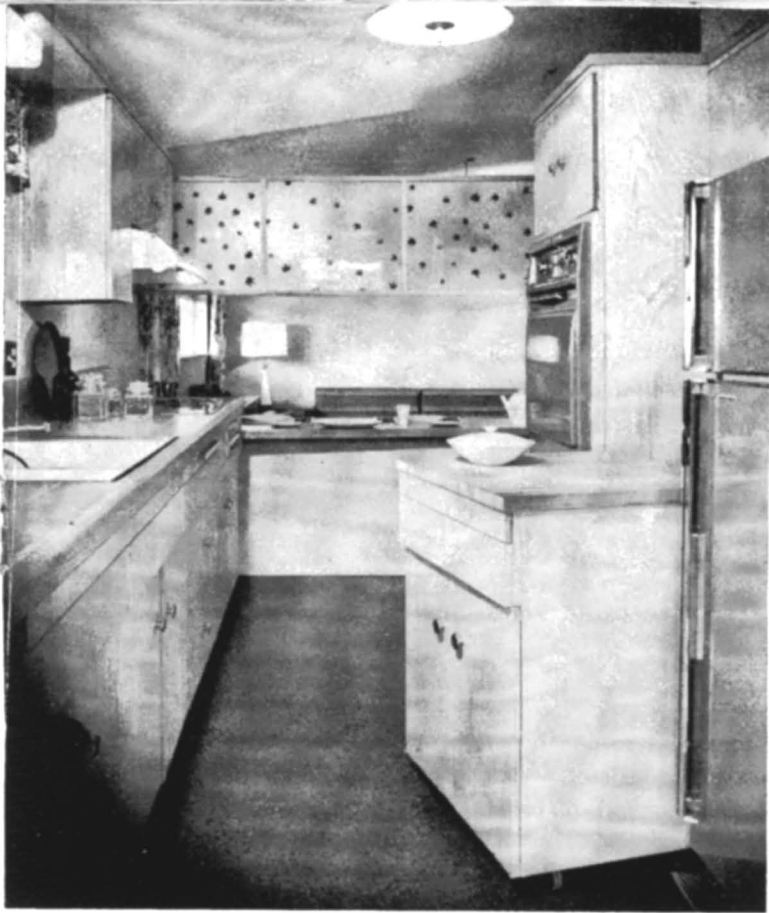
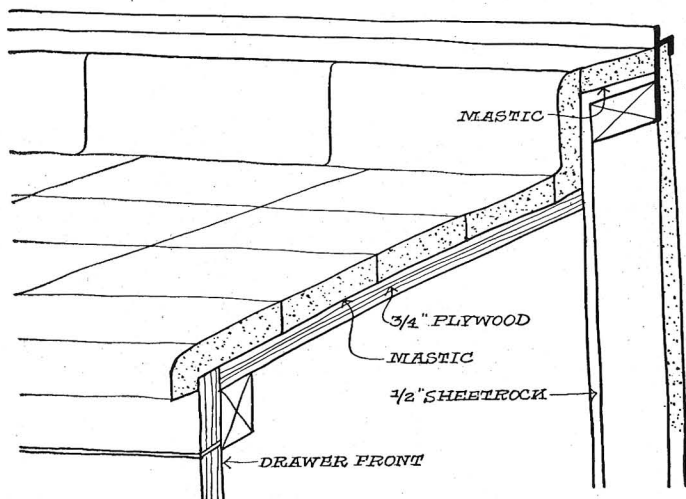


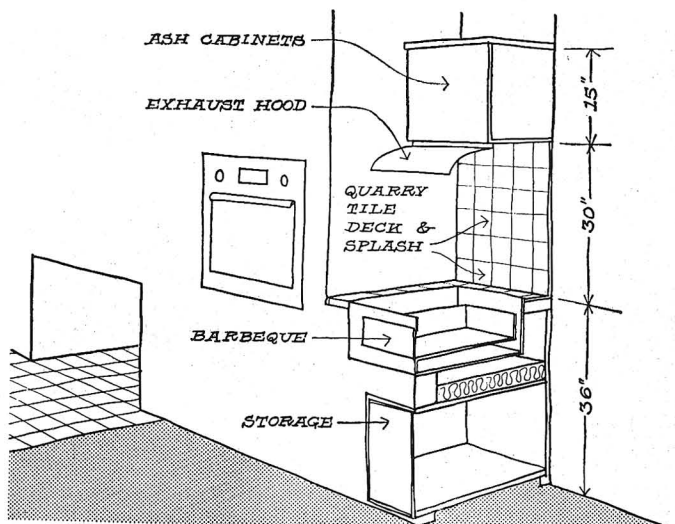
TABLE-HEIGHT DINING COUNTER serves both kitchen and family room, foreground. Combined with decorative plastic screen, it defines limits of each room, yet lets each borrow space from the other.



CABINET ON CASTERS is a self-storing unit that does double duty as a kitchen counter and cabinet and as a rollaway serving cart. Its top surface is a laminated hardwood chopping block.



TEXTURED COUNTERTOP and coved backsplash are made of oversized ceramic tiles. Rounded corners and edges don't catch dirt, so cut cleaning time. Backsplash eliminated need for trim under window.

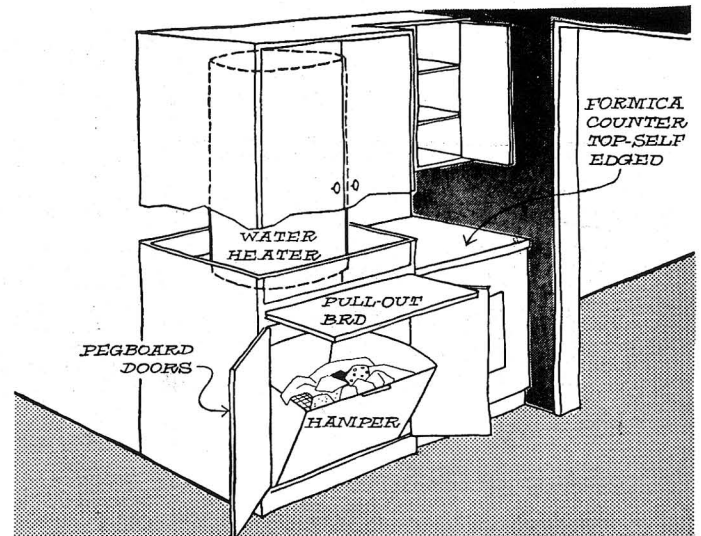


CHARCOAL BROILER with electric spit is a kitchen feature in College Park's fastest selling model. It's vented by the same hood as the range. Clever touch: charcoal storage compartment under the barbecue unit.

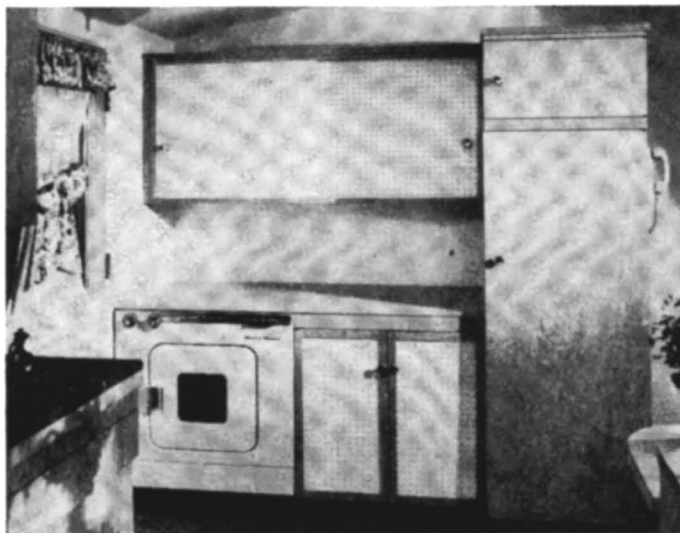
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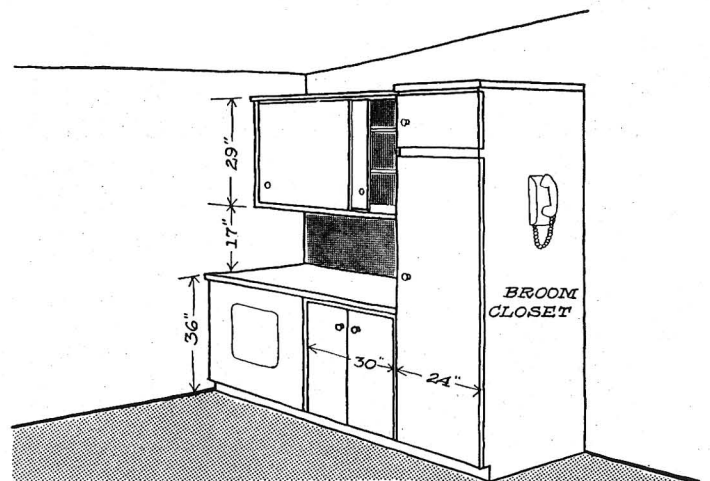
Luxury for the middle market *continued*



CORRIDOR LAUNDRY with combination washer-dryer, is used in models with the "B" bedroom wing (p 84). To save space, hot water tank is put on a platform, with clothes hamper built in under it.

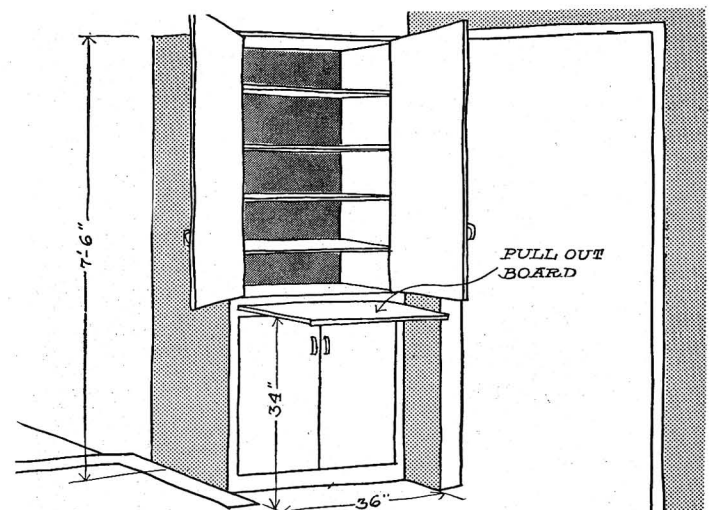


Photos: Julius Shulman

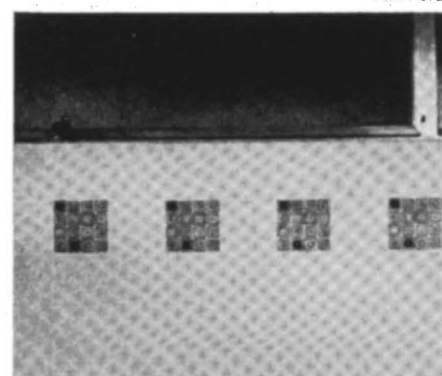
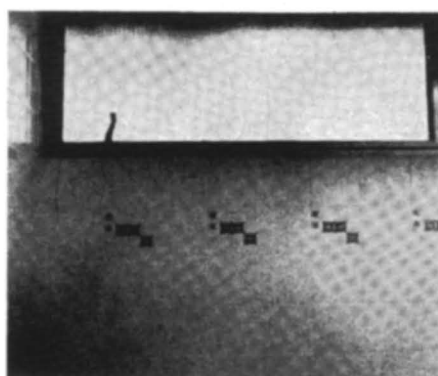
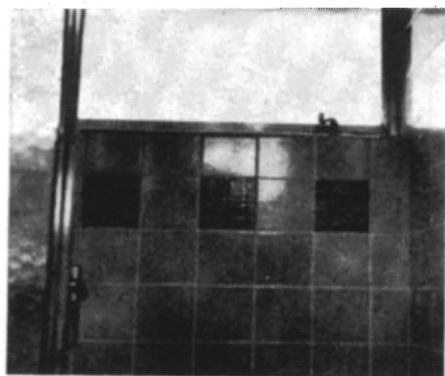


KITCHEN LAUNDRY is used in models with the "A" bedroom wing. Storage cabinets and hamper doors—made of economical perforated hardboard—are trimmed with ash to blend with ash kitchen cabinets.

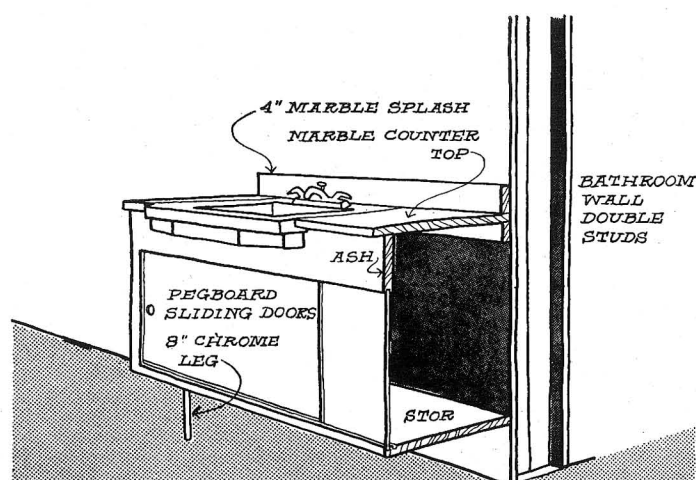
"Build convenience into your laundry areas...



LAUNDRY SORTING BOARD slides out of linen closet at end of bedroom corridor in all models. Closet is close to bathrooms, adds interest and utility to a part of the house that is usually a blank wall.



PATTERNED INSERTS in ceramic tile are an extra decorative note in all bathrooms. Inserts—in a wide variety of designs—help to give bathrooms the individuality that spells luxury in the middle market.



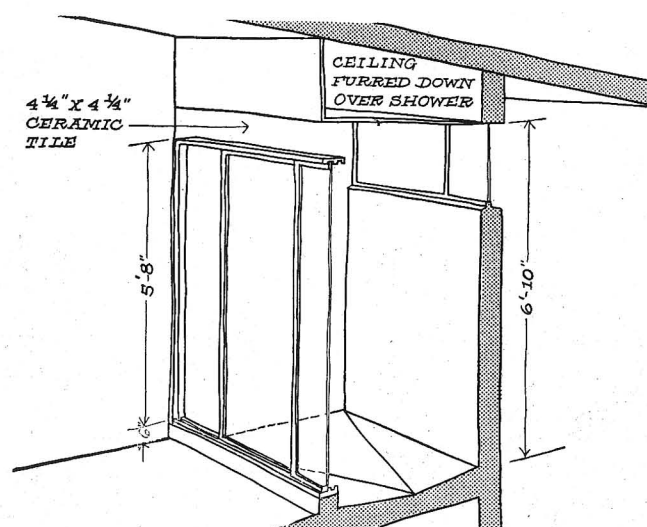
MARBLE COUNTER with backsplash is a mark of luxury in family bathrooms, which also have double basins. Sanders designs his counters to use small pieces of marble, which he buys as scrap material.



Julius Shulman

and add distinctive details to your bathrooms”

Julius Shulman

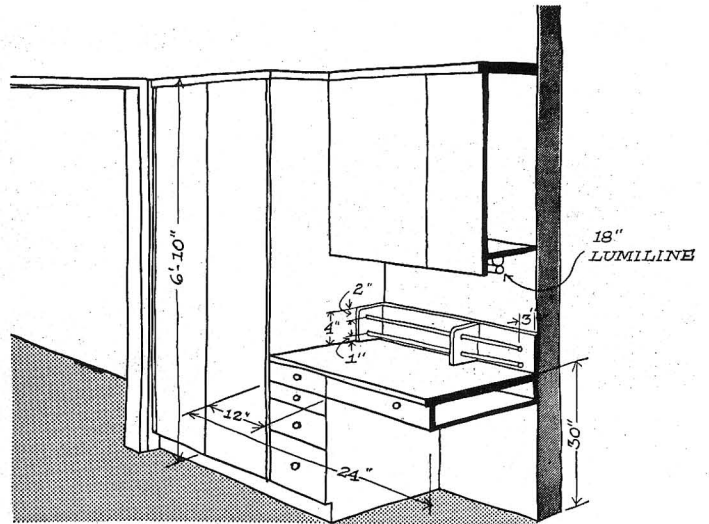


SLIDING GLASS DOORS enclose shower stall in master bathrooms. Sanders says the public wants a stall shower in the master bath, a tub-shower combination in the family bath.

continued

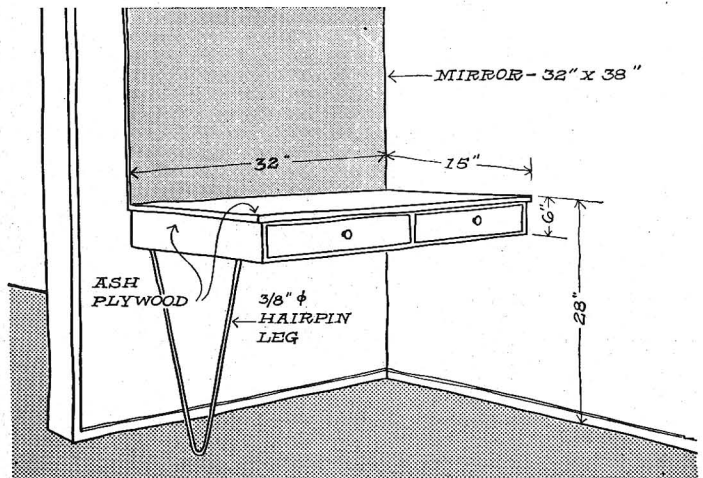
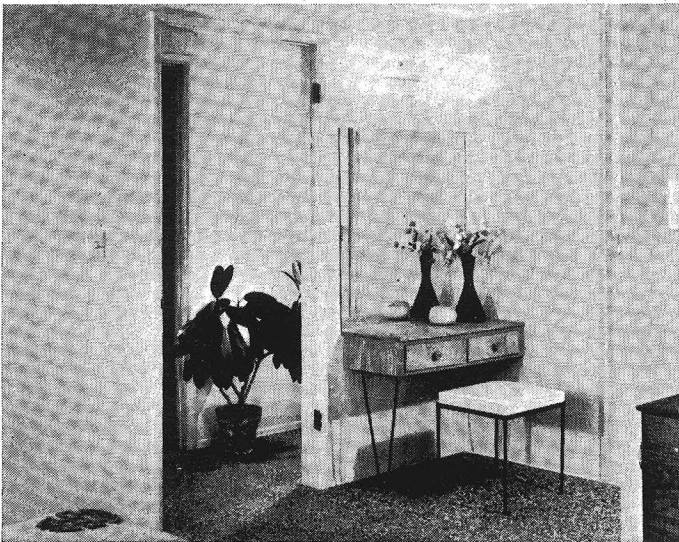


Luxury for the middle market *continued*



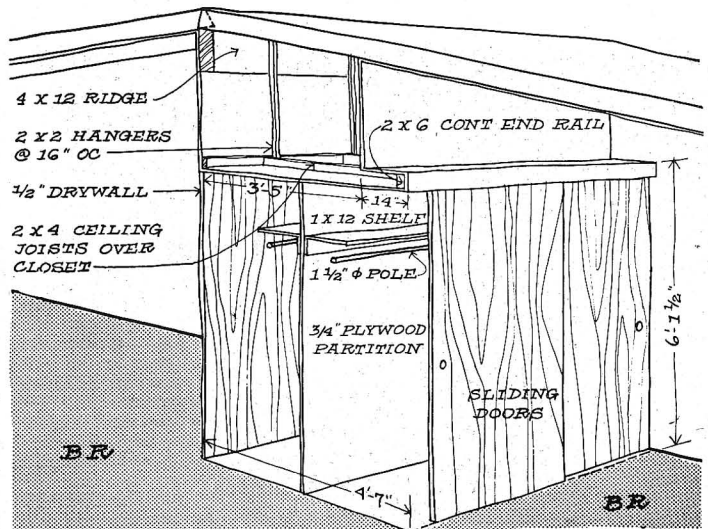
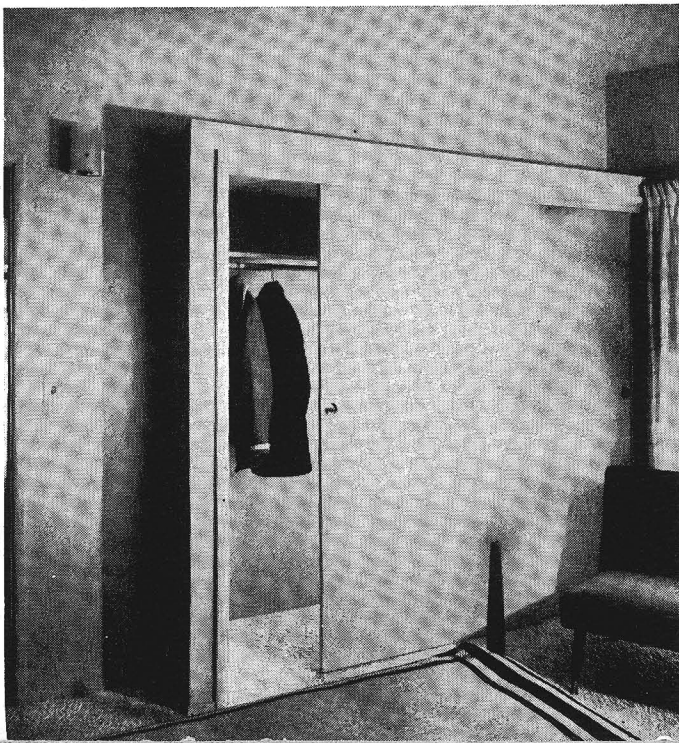
BUILT-IN DESK, flanked by storage units, has telephone outlet and light hidden under overhead cabinet. Desk is shown here in fourth bedroom of one model, is also used in kitchens of other models.

Photos: Julius Shulman

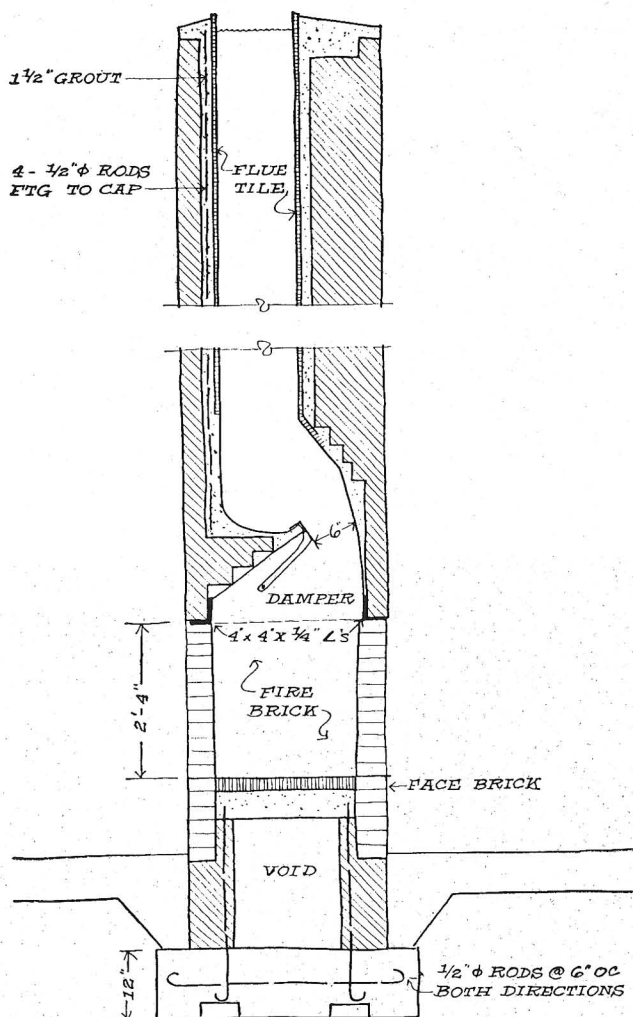


BUILT-IN VANITY and wall-hung mirror help dressing alcove give a suite effect in master bedroom of every model. Vanity table is supported by light "hairpin" leg that adds visual space below it.

"Look for ways to put the custom-house stamp



BEDROOM CLOSET which protrudes into room, is stopped at window height. Says Sanders: "This creates a room dimension to the wall rather than to the closet face, thus effectively widens the room."

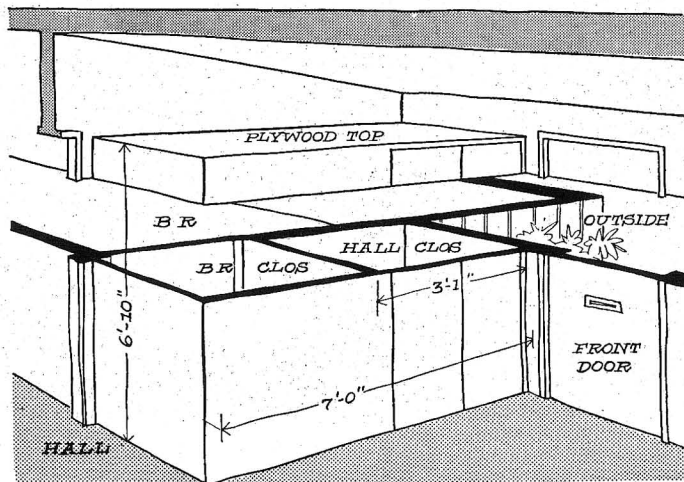
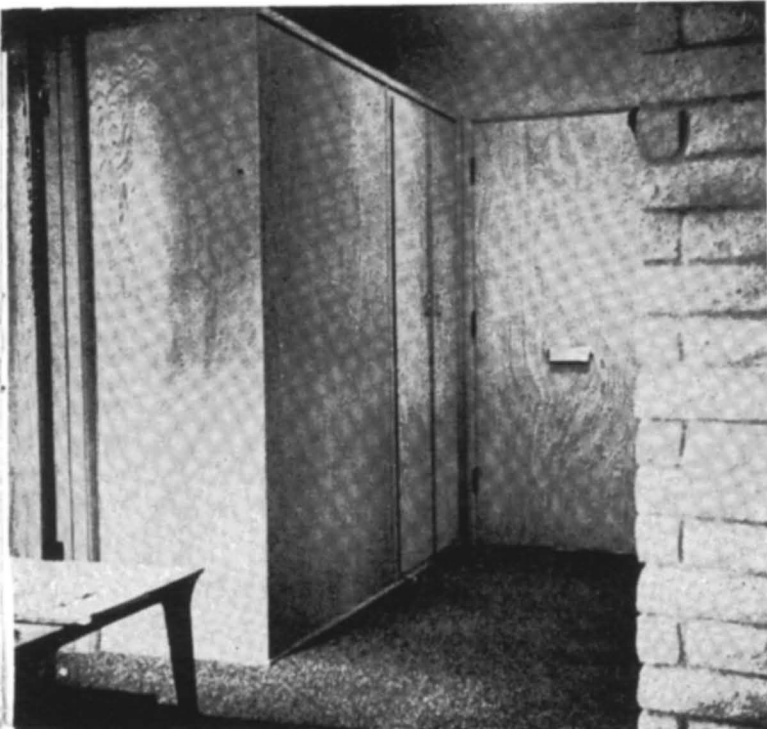


SEE-THROUGH FIREPLACE is shared by dining and living rooms in some models. Fireplaces, standard in all models, are varied in style and materials (antique brick, modular brick, fossilized sandstone).



on every room in your merchant-built houses"

H&H Staff



GUEST CLOSET and one bedroom closet are installed as one unit to form an ash-paneled entryway. Cost of ash plywood as backing for bedroom closet is partly offset by elimination of a stud-wall section.

continued



Designer Sanders adds: "You can afford luxury if you engineer your houses for economy"

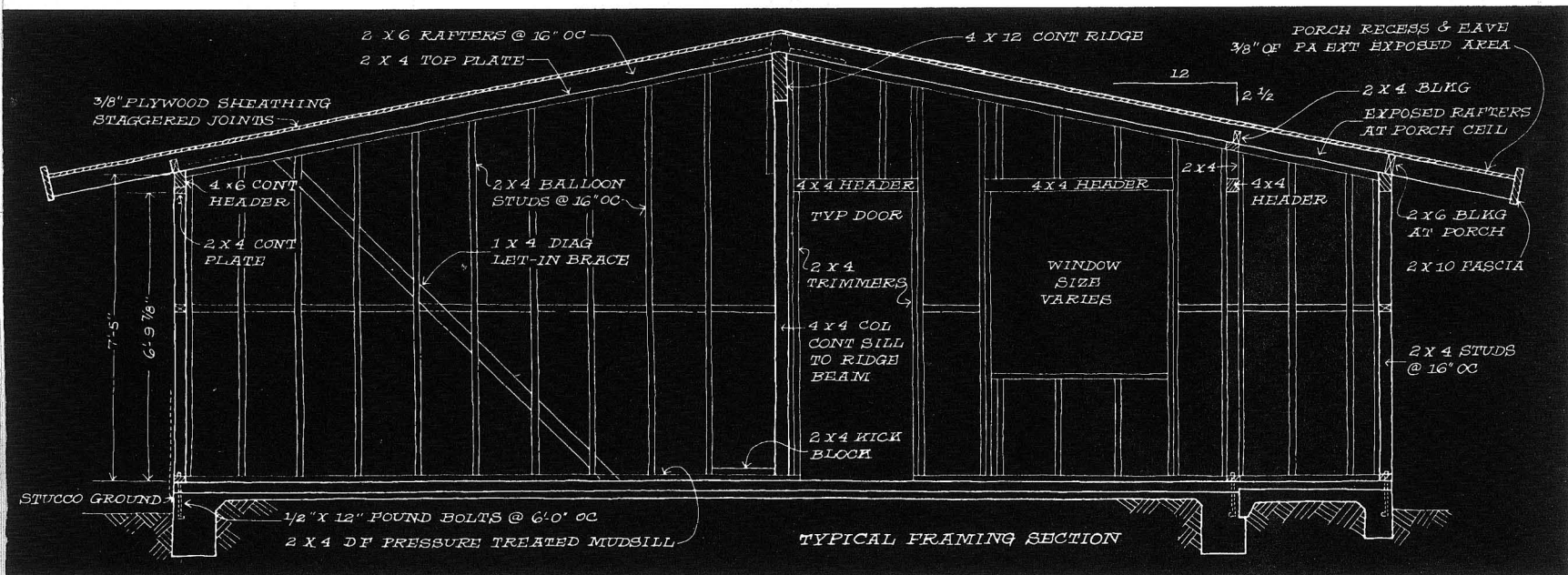
"A little extra time at the drawing board often saves a lot in construction costs," says Sanders. "And what you save in construction can go into the luxuries that buyers want."

"In framing, for example, we take pains to use the fewest possible materials needed to do the job right. How? For one thing, we draw up a floor plan exactly as a framing carpenter would lay out the job. We start from a corner and space the studs 16" oc. Then we adjust our partitions and door and window openings to the layout. That way, the number of studs required is held to an absolute minimum."

"Sometimes we use more lumber to save labor. For in-

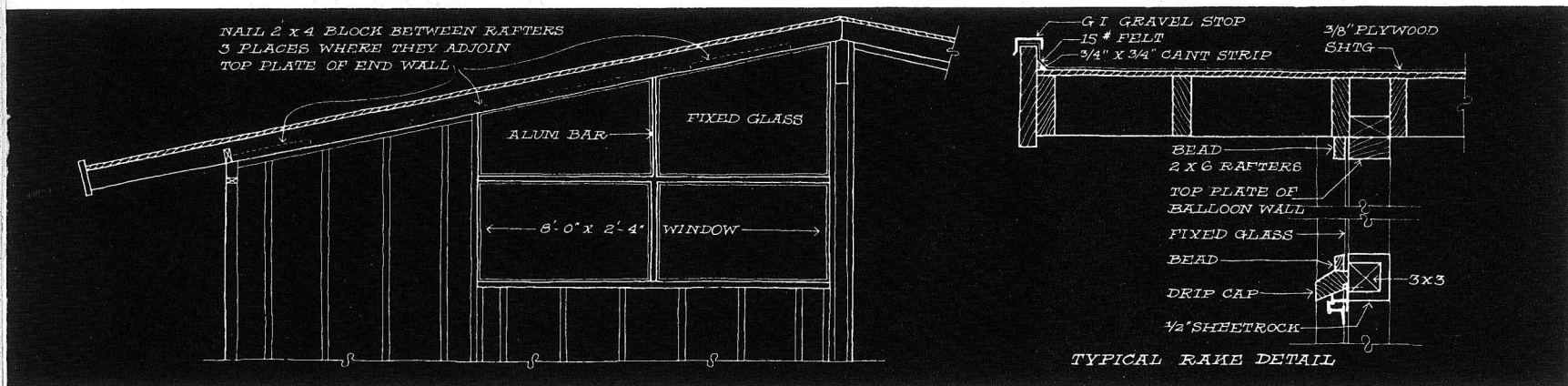
stance, it's easier to assemble walls while they're lying flat on the slab. To do this, we use an extra piece of lumber—a 2x4 top plate—to serve as a nailing member under a 4x6 continuous header. We nail the top plate and a 2x4 treated mudsill to the studs. Then we raise the wall into position, set the header on it and nail up through the top plate. Result: no need to toe-nail the studs into the header, a time-consuming job that leads to poor stud alignment behind dry wall.

"Why a 4x6 header instead of a 4x4? To get a longer span for large-window and sliding-glass-door openings. And to carry the rafters on our 2' to 3' rake overhangs."



"On end walls, we balloon-frame—run studs up to the roof—to avoid the expense of the headers and top plates used on our side walls. We can do this because our side walls are technically nonbearing (4x4 posts, that carry the ridge beam,

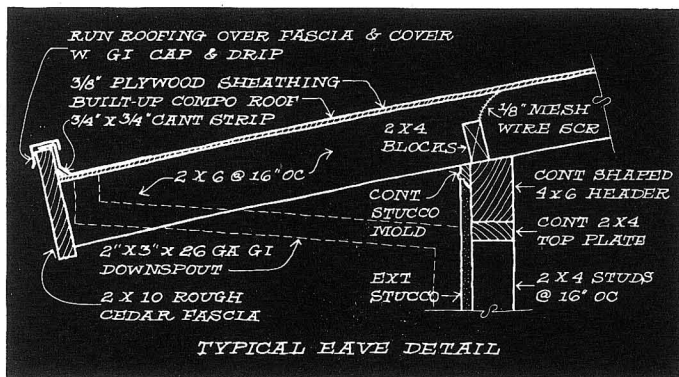
support the roof). Of course, we let in headers and cripples at doors and windows, but we hold doors and windows in end walls to a minimum. For speed and accuracy, we frame end walls and interior partitions in light jigs."



"In some non-bearing end walls, we install trapezoidal transom glass above our aluminum windows (see window details at upper right on facing page).

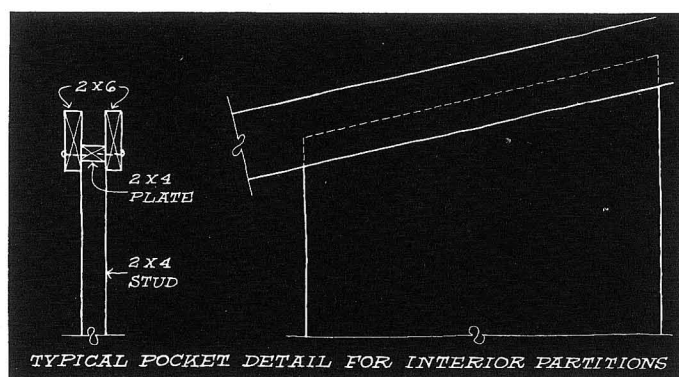
"This calls for thorough detailing, right, where the transom glass meets the rake and the aluminum window frames.

Why so? Because transoms like these are unfamiliar to most carpenters. If we simply let the carpenters decide what to do and how to do it, chances are we'd run into trouble. And we'd probably lose much of the potential saving and structural strength inherent in the design."



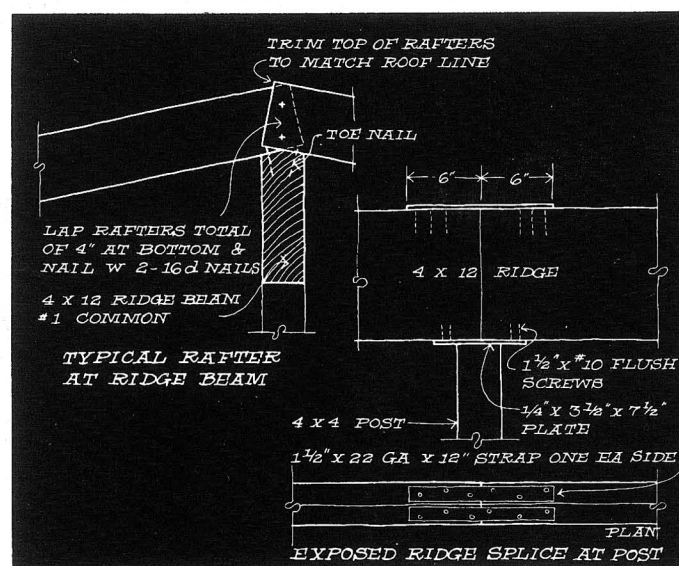
"To reduce gutter costs and make eave lines more attractive, we build concealed gutters into our roofs. Here's how:

"We use a 2x10 cedar fascia—surfaced on the inside, left rough on the outside, extended 4" above the rafters and backed by a cant strip. We turn the roofing paper up over the top of the fascia. To keep water from working under the paper, we cover the fascia top with a G I cap with a drip detail. And we install downspouts through the overhang."

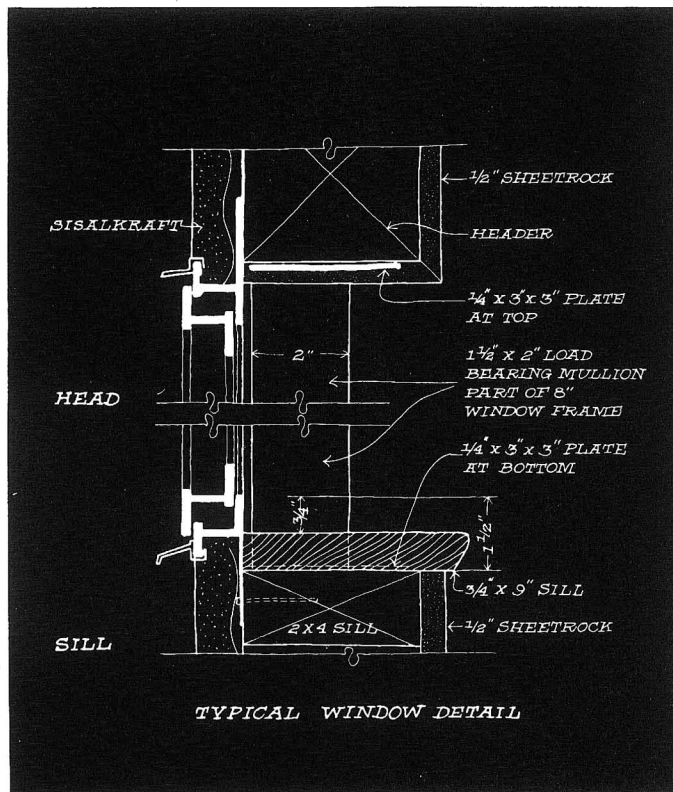


"As you know, it's hard to fit partitions to the bottoms of rafters when you build on slab. This is because the slab is often somewhat uneven. Here's how we solve the problem:

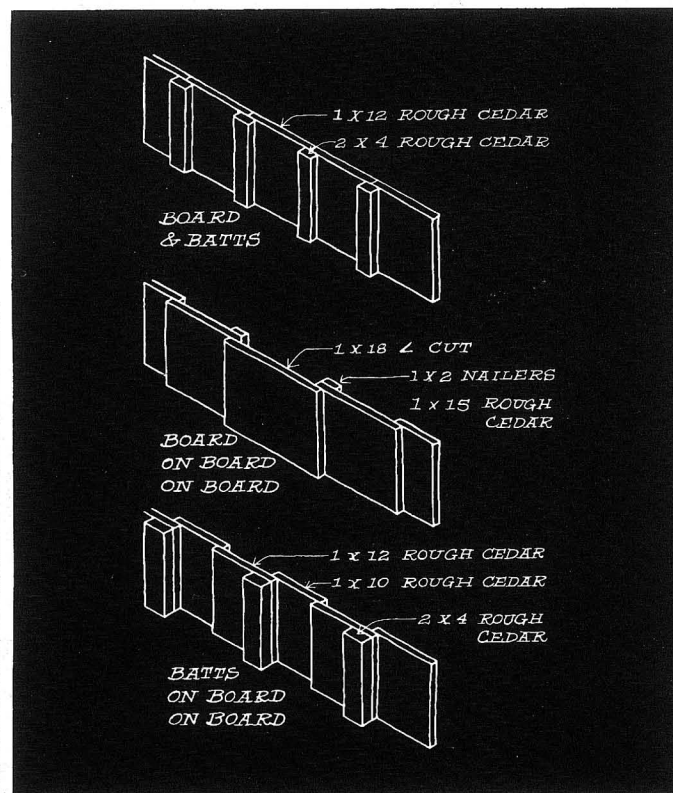
"We make each partition higher than the net dimensions required. Then we space two rafters 3 5/8" apart to form a pocket, left, for the partition. The partition slips into the pocket at any level—and is secured by nailing through the rafters into its top plate."



"We shape the top of the ridge beam to the roof pitch to 1) eliminate seat cuts in rafters, 2) get better rafter alignment. We lay up the rafters on the roof, lap—rather than butt—them and toe-nail them into the beam. Then we trim off their projecting top corners with a power saw."



"Here's a special aluminum window—we designed it—that cuts costs (it needs no trim) and permits extra flexibility in window layout. Under FHA requirements, we can make our window openings up to 6' wide because of the way we frame our houses (facing page). To get an 8' width, we put two windows side by side so that the meeting rail forms a load-bearing mullion, then install a steel bearing plate between the ends of the mullion and the framing. This slender interior mullion helps give the horizontal lines we want on exteriors."



"This rough milled cedar siding is a design and cost-cutting asset. Its rough texture softens our exteriors. And it saves labor because we can spray on stain (local unions prohibit spraying except on rough textured wood). To give our siding variety, we use the cedar in the three ways shown here."/>

