

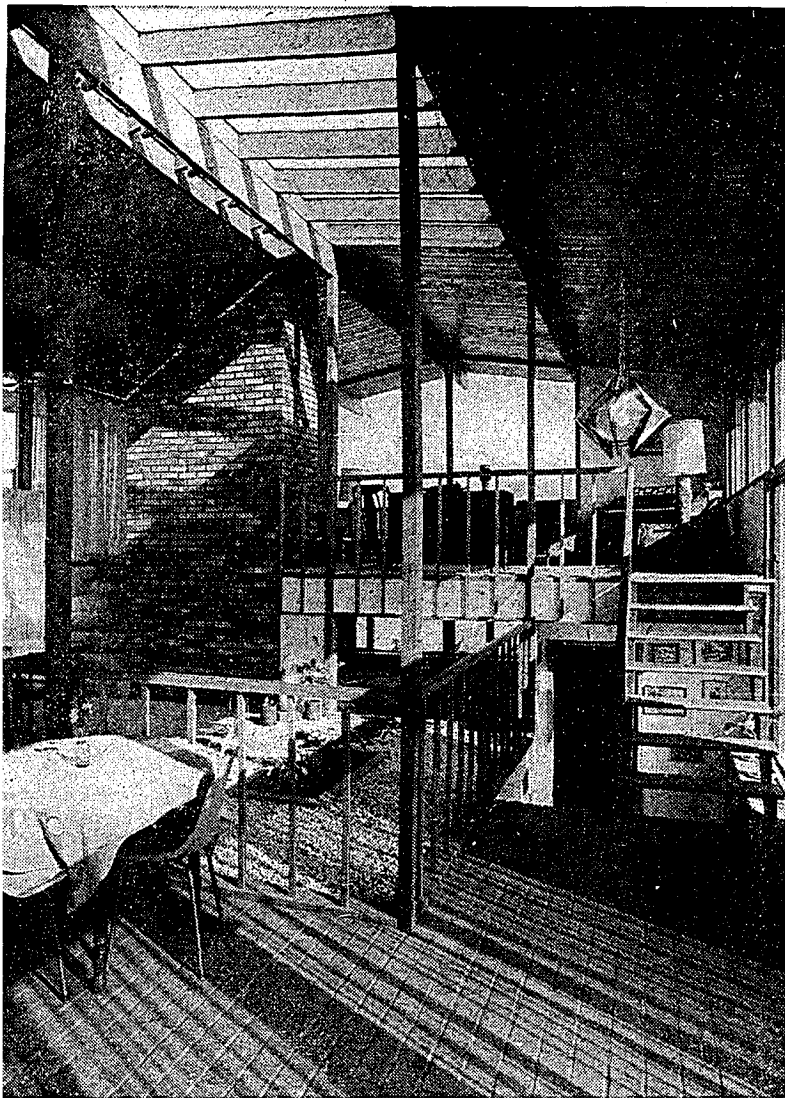
'Spectacular Results' for a Reasonable Price: <span ...

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'Spectacular Results' for a Reasonable Price



Open planning and liberal use of natural materials provide a dramatic interior in Dr. and Mrs. Robert Neff's contemporary home in west suburban Lombard. In the center is the "atrium," a graveled space lit by a skylight and ideal for houseplants. The living room is on the balcony and the bedrooms are on the lower level of this four level home.

BY ANNE DOUGLAS

NO ONE would have been surprised if the Robert Neffs, a young couple without much money, had chosen a reasonably priced new home in a subdivision or elected to buy a big, old house and refurbish it.

But when they were ready for a permanent home after a series of apartments and a small, old suburban bungalow, they bought an acre of land in Lombard and asked an architect to draw up a custom design.

The results are spectacular in many ways. Dr. and Mrs. Neff chose Jean Wehrheim, a member of the American

Institute of Architects, who loves the challenge of providing as much house for as little money as possible, and Mrs. Wehrheim's ideas plus those of her clients produced a modern home built on four levels, flooded with light.

Focal point of the ground level has to be the atrium, as they call it, tho it is not really an open space surrounded by house. Rather, it is a grveled square in the center of the floor lit by a skylight in the roof, where plants flourish and where a section has been cut out of the floor for sinking a glass-bottomed fish pond so light can filter thru it to Dr. Neff's study below.

This has been railed off as

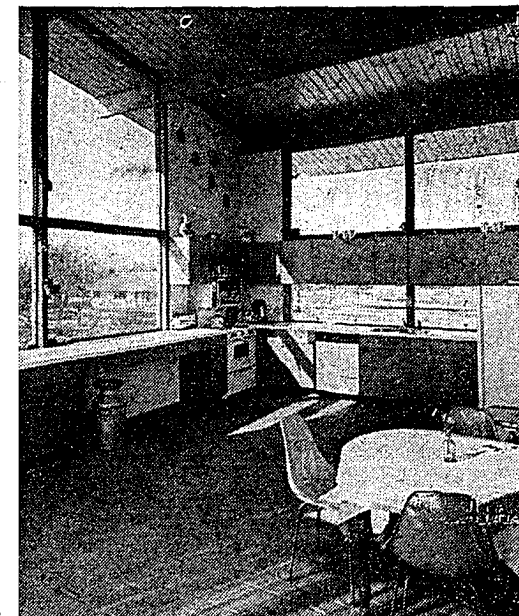
a safety measure, considering the Neffs have an infant daughter, Heather, as well as a 9-year-old son, Scott.

Mrs. Neff said she spends virtually all her time in the kitchen, and she made sure it would be a place she'd want to be in. Instead of blank wall between base and wall cabinets, it's all glass with a view in every direction.

The kitchen, dining room, and atrium are all two stories high, soaring to the open ceiling under the gable roof. Upper sections all the way around are glazed.

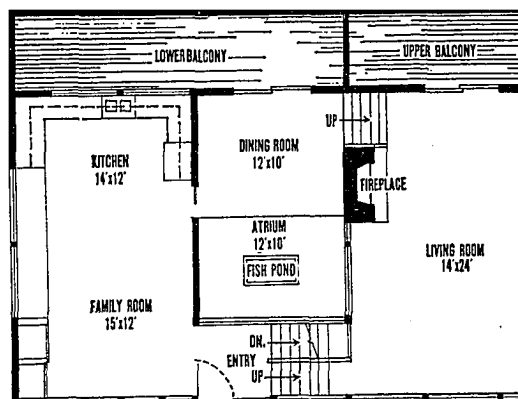
The kitchen is the width of

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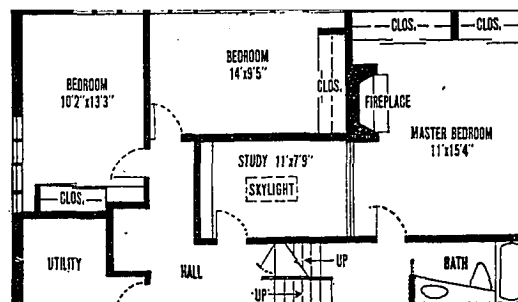


The kitchen, with brick flooring laid by Dr. Neff, is flooded with natural light by big glass panes, some of which are tinted to cut the glare of the sun.

Home of the Week



Upper level plan.

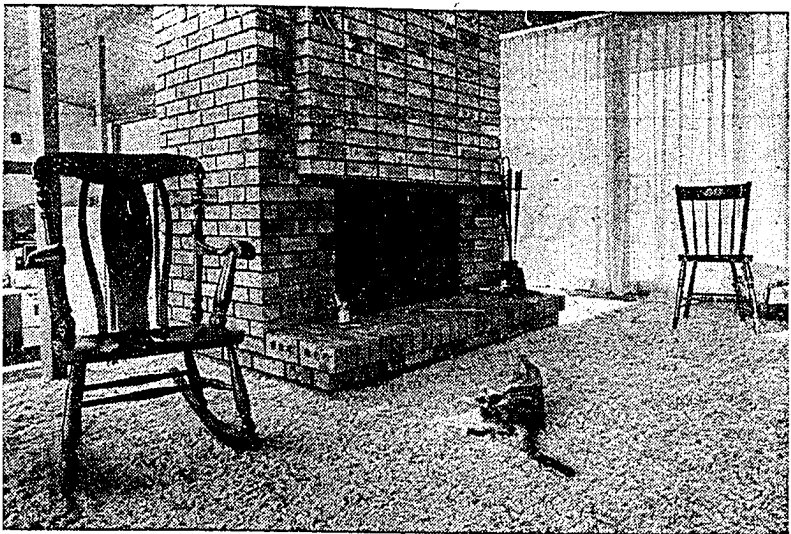


Lower level plan.

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microfilm.

The exterior is of cedar siding with lots of glass, almost all of it double pane insulating glass. Dr. Neff did much of the interior finishing. This summer, he plans to build a garage and connecting breezeway.

(TRIBUNE Staff Photos by James Mayo)



Living room has a brick fireplace sharing the stack with another fireplace in the master bedroom beneath it. Shag carpet in tones of yellow and a modern striped sofa are combined with a few antiques such as the rocking chair and a drop leaf table.

Lombard Home of Week

[Continued from first page]

the house at the west end, and there tinted glass was used to cut the sun's glare. The Neffs enjoy watching spectacular sunsets framed in this enormous window.

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The kitchen floor is natural brick, laid by Dr. Neff, who also put down the brick flooring on the lower level and did some of the wiring and carpentry to cut costs. Mrs. Neff has what seems to be acres of custom made cabinets and counter space—enough to use for cutting out

sewing projects and to hold the gerbil cage and a fish bowl as well as to prepare food—plus a big pantry at one end.

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Behind the atrium is the dining room; in front of it is the foyer area with stairways up to the living room and down to the bedrooms. Placement of the bedrooms downstairs was deliberate. The higher one goes in the home the more spectacular the view, and the Neffs thought a view more important to the living areas than the sleeping areas.

A broad brick divider separates dining room and balcony-style living room and houses the stack for the fireplaces in the living room and in the master bedroom below it. The brick fits in with the family's liking for natural materials, which are emphasized thruout.

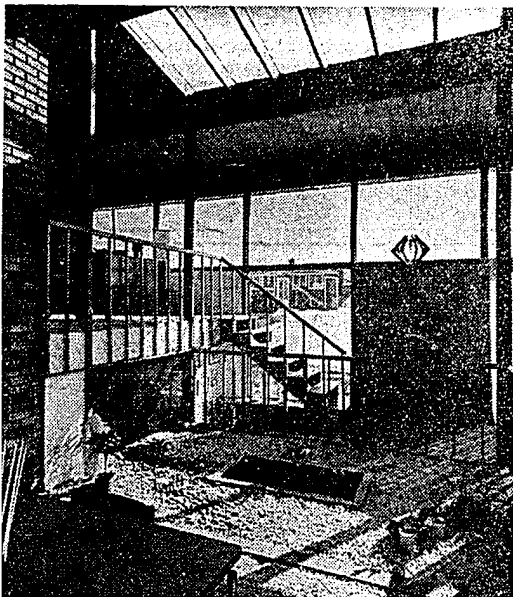
On the lower level are three bedrooms, bath, Dr. Neff's study, and laundry

area, off the hall, that may be closed off with folding doors. Mrs. Neff is turning a niche at the end of a hall into a sewing area with built-in storage. The family also has plentiful storage area in the concrete floored crawl space reached from the study or Scott's bedroom.

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The home has about 2,200 square feet. Built on a 6-foot module, it took stock sizes for its double glazed, insulating windows, its sliding glass doors, and other components, saving a substantial amount on material.

The Neffs also did their own landscaping. When spring comes they plan to extend the brick flooring to the outside with a patio, and also have plans for a garage when the budget permits. It has already been designed to fit at right angles with the length of the house, giving privacy to the patio, which will be behind it.



View from the dining room shows the "atrium" in more detail. The double doored entrance is the only light barrier in the far wall. Some of the glass is draped where needed for privacy.

