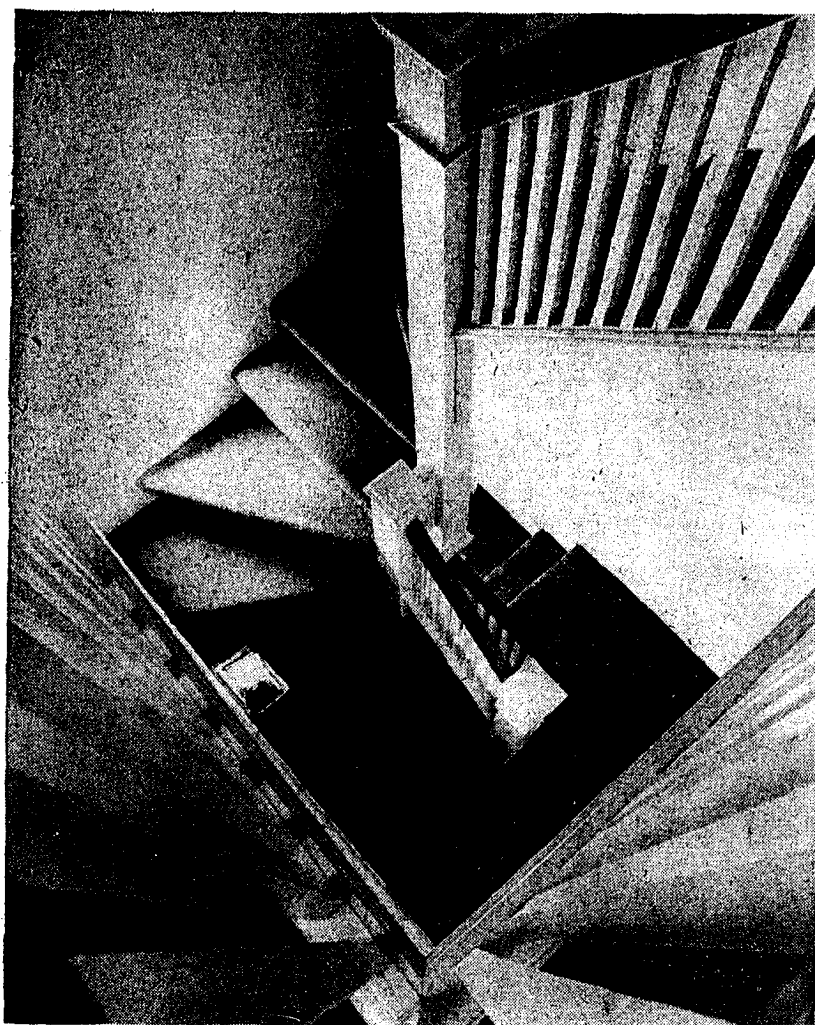
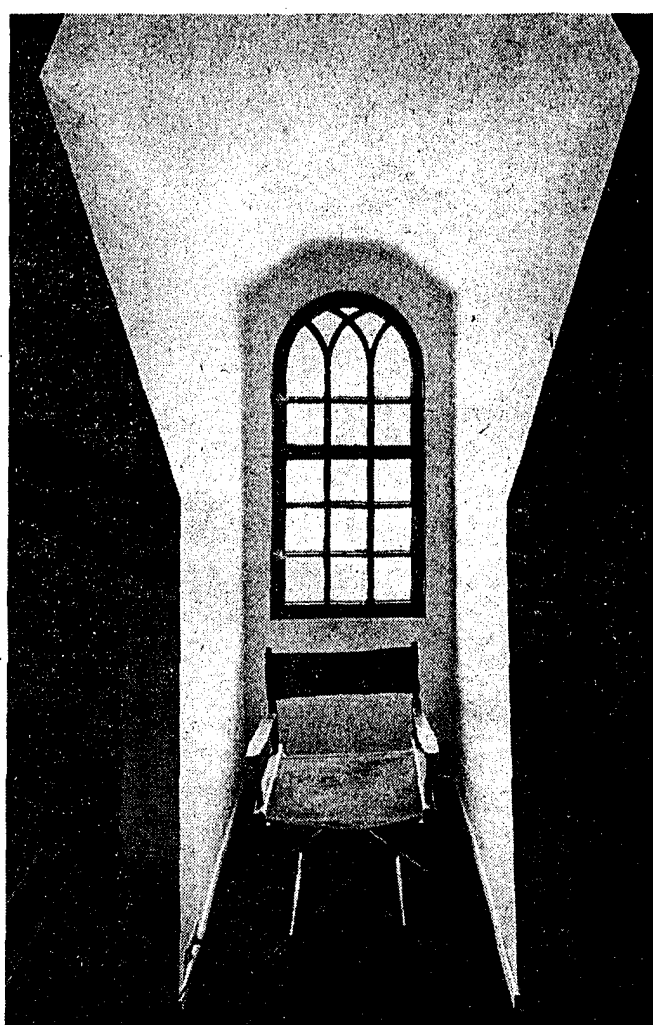


Home Guide



The fine old three-story staircase in Tom and Ricky Rosengren's home has been preserved, while most elements were updated to 1982.



The 6,000-square-foot house has room for many nooks and crannies such as this third-floor alcove.

Surprise, surprise! Staid exterior belies the delights that lie within

By Stephanie Fuller

ANYONE WHO ever has bitten into a chocolate cream surprise cupcake knows a little of what it's like to visit the home of architects Tom and Fredericka (Ricky) Rosengren. The brick Colonial exterior with bronze-tone trim conceals a multitude of surprises inside the house and in the back yard where a sunken garden has been turned into a volleyball court. The slopes leading down to the court make excellent sled tracks. There's also playground equipment for Erik, 8, and Mark, 5. Kristin, 11 months, is a little young as yet. "Ours is a 1982 house sitting in a 1910 Colonial shell," says Tom.

The exterior trim was painted dark so its age is not evident. The home was tuckedpoint in a sand color for a Williamsburg glow.

The house literally was falling apart when the couple first looked at it. They previously were living on Chicago's North Side and had viewed some property in Barrington, but the deal fell through. Tom's sister is a Realtor and asked him just to evaluate the home for her.

"The foyer floor was black," he recalls. "The oven door was falling off, and there were little furry things

of light allowed. The electric lighting is on ceiling-mounted tracks.

Off the living room is a sun room, with windows on three sides. It doubles as a music room, and the piano that Erik and Tom both play is placed in one corner. Access to the sun room is through doors on either side of the living room's white marble fireplace wall.

IN THE DINING room, casual living area and throughout the house are examples of Tom's line of built-in cabinetry and freestanding storage units. Both the living room and the kitchen area have large doors opening to the back terrace and garden.

The kitchen and informal eating space once were occupied by three pantries and an ice storage room. The long, narrow kitchen serves the dining room and the informal eating space. To one side in the kitchen area is an entertainment center. There are also a fireplace, planning desk and pegs where the children can hang their coats.

A back stairway, which probably once led to the servants' quarters, now serves the whole family. In a niche across from the stairway is a wet bar that keeps the bartender out of the cook's way and is convenient to the living room, dining room or informal eating area. Hidden under the stairway is a powder room.

Standing on the landing to the second floor, Tom said, "This gives you a nice shot in the morning when you come down the stairs," referring to a large window looking out to the sunken garden and half-acre of property.

THE SECOND story, where there's a camel blanket at the head of the stairs, is divided into adult and children's wings. Off the service stairs are linen closets and a laundry. The nursery room has a changing table decorated in lime green and white hearts. Even though there are seven bedrooms in the house, the boys share a room and probably will until they outgrow each other or their possessions outgrow the situation.

In the master bedroom, a wall partition separates the sleeping area from the dressing room and closet area where there also is a makeup and sewing table. The fireplace along one wall had been bricked up, but the Rosengrens uncovered it and found the original mantel in a hallway. Above the fireplace is a modern Frank Stella print.

Off the master bedroom is a sitting room with television where the whole family gathers. The combination of fixed and casement windows provides balmy breezes in the summer.

Up on the third floor, Ricky has a combination office and guest bedroom. She works as managing

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Relaxing in the living room are Tom [from left], Erik, Maxwell the dog, Mark and Ricky holding Kristin.

People on the move

all over the place. The electricity didn't work. The shutters were hanging. Not one system functioned, and things were rapidly getting worse."

THIS WASN'T one's idea of a dream house. Perhaps Tom and Ricky's skills as architects helped them see beyond the wreck that confronted them. Their X-ray vision revealed a solid house, with many good details, that was ready for a thorough fix-up.

Entering the three-story, seven-bedroom home, one finds the foyer now has a bright Welsh quarry tile floor. The treads, newel post and handrail of the main staircase all were stripped, restored and saved. There's an immediate feeling of clean, crisp openness whether one turns into the living room or the dining room at the opposite side.

The interior is predominantly white, with large and small splashes of color beaming from a collection of rugs and artifacts the couple brought back from Iran where Tom was working with Skidmore Owings & Merrill. Kilims, turkomans, and soumaks are everywhere, along with camel saddles and intricate pieces of salt bags.

Blinds and plants—no curtains or draperies—hang at the windows, where the blinds control the amount



Windows on three sides bring light and air to the music room/sun room where the family congregates.



The brick Colonial exterior with bronze trim conceals a multitude of surprises inside the home which has a contemporary flavor.