

Janssens' House Will Grow With The Family

A house with a future, that's the home of Mr. and Mrs. Pierre M. Janssen, 4141 E. Saranac Dr., in the Catalina foothills.

The Janssens have two daughters, Kathy, who will be three in December, and nine-month-old Vicki. So they asked Edward Nelson, AIA, to design them a house that could grow with the family, as its needs changed.

A rectangular plan based on steel post and beam supports was the result. The house, as it stands now, consists of a living room, study, kitchen, combination dining-play room, master bedroom, dual bath and two other bedrooms.

The steel posts and beams support the weight of the house, so that the non-load bearing walls of brick and glass can be changed when needed. This is how it can grow:

A new master bedroom and dressing area and another bedroom can be added beyond the present bedrooms. Electrical outlets are already in the outside wall, safely covered. The partition which separates the girls' two small bedrooms can be removed, making it one large room, more suitable for a teen-ager.

The dining-play area will then become the family room. An adjoining closet already has plumbing installed. It is slated to become a powder room.

What is now the living room will be the dining room, with a large living room being added on.

"It will have a dropped floor," laughed Mrs. Janssen, "Simply because the hill slopes."

"The house was planned for minimum of upkeep and maintenance," she continued. "With steel posts and beams, there'll be no problem of termites or wood drying out. The brick is mortar washed and weathers nicely.

"Only the trim and the posts and beams are painted. The ceiling is a cream colored acoustical plaster. Floors are an orange-brown cement, with vinyl asbestos tiles in the kitchen and bathrooms."

The glass areas reach to the ceiling, but not the floor. Masonite panels make up a quarter to one-half of the usual floor-to-ceiling panels.

"We wanted plenty of window areas," she explained, "but at the same time we didn't want to live in a peek-a-boo house. Also, we had visions of tricycles crashing through the glass."

The house, built on an eight-foot-module, has a well-ordered look and an air of spaciousness and tranquility. Its light feeling is enhanced in the living room by lightly scaled Danish Modern furnishings.

Draperies for all the glass areas in the home are of beige homespun. Indian rugs make a splash of color on the gleaming floors. "They're on loan from my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Heineman."

The kitchen is a special joy to Mrs. Janssen. It has loads of cupboards, a six-foot cutting board for one counter top, and range controls mounted well out of the reach of curious little girls.

"I like things put away and out of sight. Even the wall can opener is installed inside a cupboard."

Another feature the Janssens appreciate is the 14-foot-wide covered rear porch.

"It stops the sun just where you want it to."

All in all, the house adds up to comfort and convenience that will grow as the needs of the Janssen family change in the years ahead.