

Gegenheimer House Was Styled To Blend With Sloping Land

By CHARLOTTE CARDON

When Betty and Bert Gegenheimer decided to build their dream house they began by letter-writing a series of ideas to architect Bill Hazard. The informal documents which would make a delightful book started on no preconceived wishes. "A House"—this was the thing but it could be almost any style that suited their gently sloping desert land at Houghton Rd.

"Like the prow of a ship," Betty wrote in early correspondence, "we would like one corner of the home to float above the desert. Perhaps a deck would be nice for entertaining."

Then there was the question of less togetherness. Their two sons, 14 and 16 are Beattie record fans which must be played loudly and repeatedly as all mothers know. They also collect snakes.

"A separate wing for the boys" seemed an excellent idea.

A third wish that evolved was the question of a real entrance hall which would divide the three main living

areas and regulate traffic comfortably.

Bill Hazard worked on the plans slowly because of other commitments adding and subtracting space here and there. The Gegenheimers' first house had been very compact but closet space "for bridge tables, serving trays, linens and glassware" plus bookshelves in living room and Bert's study were almost a necessity.

"You may not feel comfortable with so much room to maneuver in," Hazard ventured to remark while he was still at the drawing board.

But he has put in some superb storage. One of the features which was added during the final building stage was a fireplace in Dr. Gegenheimer's study. As a member of the English Literature Dept. at the University of Arizona and editor of the Arizona Quarterly, Bert has much homework.

He mentioned in an offhand way to a colleague one evening that he would miss his old fireplace in the den.

Betty quickly wrote: "Let's

surprise him and present him with a Hopi fireplace tied up with a red ribbon as a special gift from me."

The house couldn't be a greater success.

When it was put out for bids contractor Jim McClendon was even able to build it below the estimated cost. The "boys' wing, which includes a work room for photography, has its own separate heating and cooling units and can be completely closed off. The old-fashioned kitchen with a fireplace doubles as a family and sewing room.

There is even a dormitory and outdoor runway for the dogs Betty raises and the snakes can barely slither out under the doors.

The materials used were burnt adobe with lots of redwood for beams and outdoor trim. Kitchen cabinets are also of wood but painted a subdued yellow to tie in with the Mexican tile.

"Our next problem was furniture," Betty said.

A good friend and interior decorator Richard Oswald had just opened his shop and was

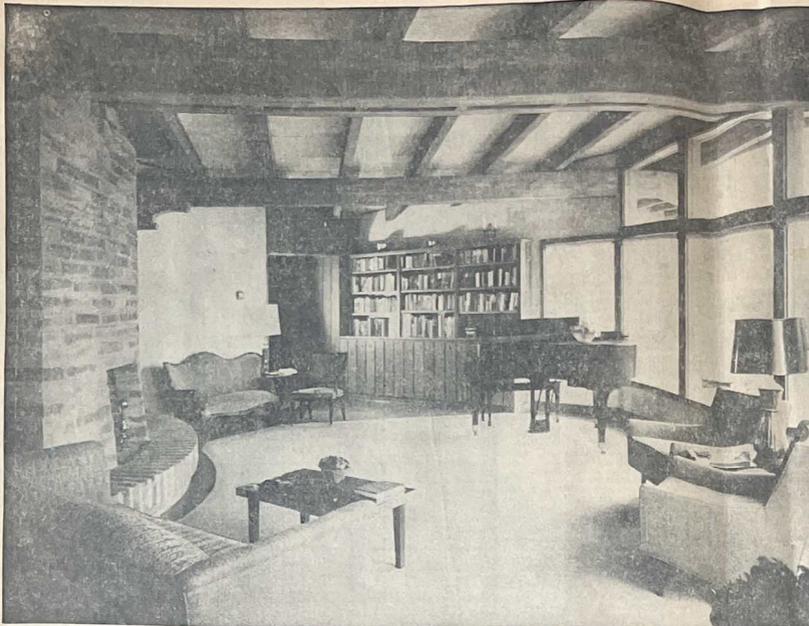
delighted to aid Mrs. Gegenheimer in selecting fabrics for draperies and carpeting. Older family pieces of furniture were coordinated with a few new pieces and covered in shades of aqua blue and seafoam.

Whenever possible the outer walls were built of glass. The desert, filled with wildflowers and pots of bright pink petunias on the deck complement the restful interior shades of adobe and blue. Every tree was left in place so the desert growth is established and gardening can be kept to a minimum.

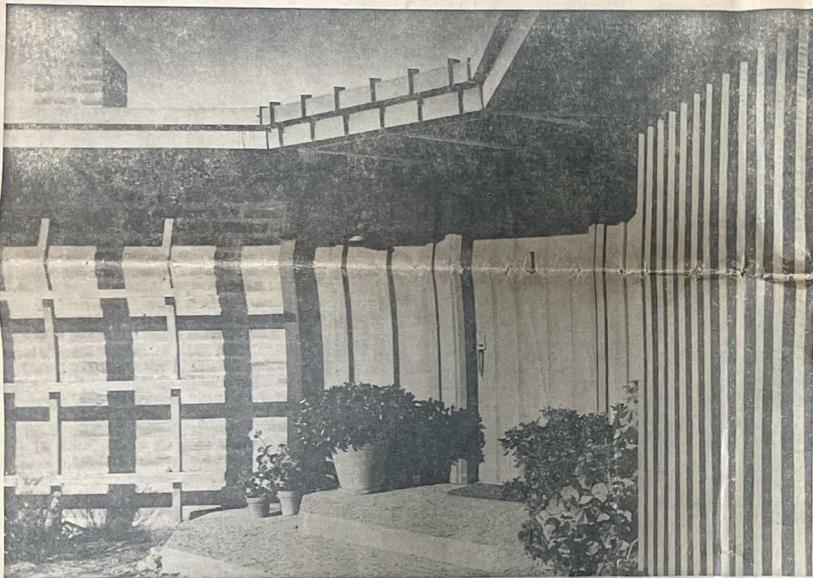
The deck on the northeast side of the house doesn't actually float (it is on concrete footing) but it is an ideal place for entertaining.

Redwood benches backed by the low railing make comfortable seating arrangements. The space is wide, the paving is pebbled concrete. Betty can move easily in and out of the kitchen.

"We enjoy living and entertaining informally," Betty said. "It's just how I imagined it several years ago."



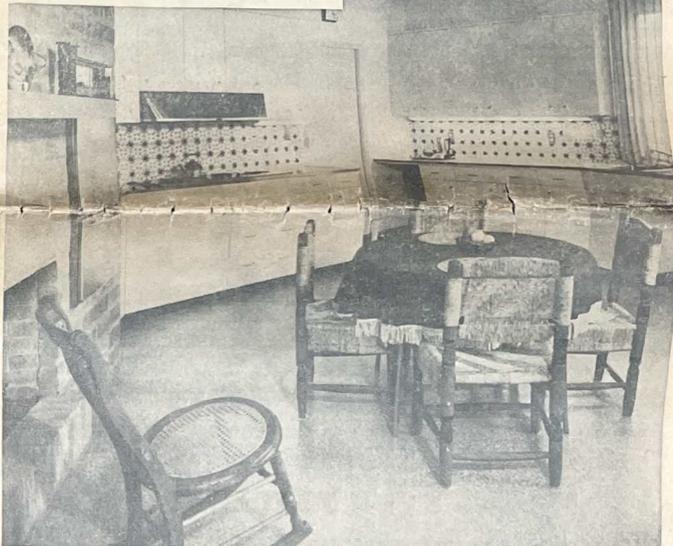
Open-window walls look out on deck surrounding living room



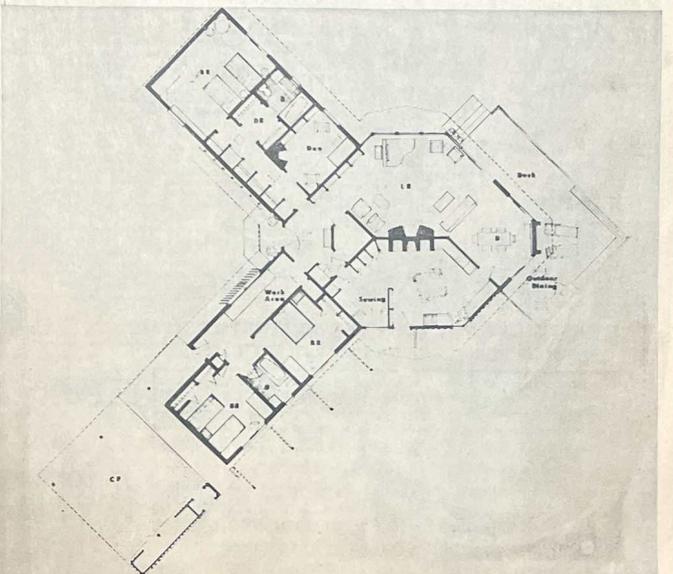
Wood facade on entrance makes easy transition from desert to interior



Seafoam and aqua tints in living room set off adobe and beams



Corner of kitchen featuring Mexican tile, sit-down sink



Bill Hazard's plan for a roomy house