

## ReVISION HOUSE

A model for retrofitting America's existing housing stock.



Architectural designer Ray Rocha kept as much of the exterior intact as possible (see original house above) but did modify the entry and the shape and scale of the chimney to create a warm, welcoming feel. He then layered on an updated Napa-style look by specifying stone veneer, stucco, and a complementary toned roof.

# Practical Transformation

The design program for the ReVISION retrofit show home helps a 1950s house better accommodate the lifestyle of today's homeowner. **By Cati O'Keefe**

You've seen this house: tired façade, inefficient kitchen, dirty-grouted bathrooms, chopped-up floor plan, laundry in the garage. America is riddled with these humble houses in desperate need of cosmetic revival and major energy-efficiency upgrades. As part of our VISION House series, we tackled one in the College Park neighborhood of Orlando.

This ReVISION house (a companion project to our new-construction VISION house, which is being built in the same community) is undergoing a deep energy retrofit by builders Kim Foy and Jon Pleveich. Its initial HERS rating was 128, with the goal to get it to under 50.

"We wanted to take a ranch style home and beautify it—give it a new style for today's buyers," Pleveich explains. "We also want to show what you can do without adding a lot of square footage."

Pleveich and Foy enlisted the services of Raymond Rocha, an architectural designer and principal of Catalyst Design. While the team originally wanted the house to be more traditional, Rocha took one look at what he had to work with and went in another direction.

"With the 4:12 roof pitch, overhangs, lateral appearance of the windows, and shallow height of the house, designing a traditional house would be overbuilding and changing the character of the house," Rocha explains. He redesigned the one-story form into an updated Napa style.

Rocha believes that street appeal is key to any remodel. "One of the most important aspects was the entry and the fireplace portion of the front elevation," he says. "Creating a house that could be built today without changing the character of the existing house enabled us to maintain much of the exterior." The team spec'd stone veneer, stucco, and then topped the house with a cool roof product by MonierLifetile, a Boral Roofing Company.

The original 1,800-square-foot house had three bedrooms and one and half baths.

The new design gives it four bedrooms and three and a half baths at 2,400 square feet.

"In the 1950s, when this house was built, all the bedrooms were grouped together," points out Foy. "With the new plan, the master is on the opposite side of the house and has its own master bath."

Rocha designed an addition to accommodate the new larger master suite and also stole space from an oddly located den. "The house had two family rooms right next to each other," Foy notes. "It originally had a detached garage and the space resulted when they attached that garage to the house."

Along with the new master suite and updating the kitchen and existing bathrooms, Rocha addressed a number of other design flaws. He created a proper entry and foyer, brought the laundry room in from the garage, added a powder room, and created an 11' by 20' covered outdoor living space.

"We maintained the general flow of the house while improving those areas," Rocha says. "And the interesting part is that we were able to make the existing parlor a space that could flex as a formal dining room or simply remain a parlor." The team included a family dining room off the kitchen, which they think is more likely to be used by busy home owners than a formal dining room.

Rocha raised the ceiling height to



The roof of the ReVISION house is MonierLifetile's Buckskin CT Slate 900 series, a "cool roof," which means it has high solar reflectance and thermal emittance. For more cool roof options, visit: [www.mlt.boralna.com](http://www.mlt.boralna.com)

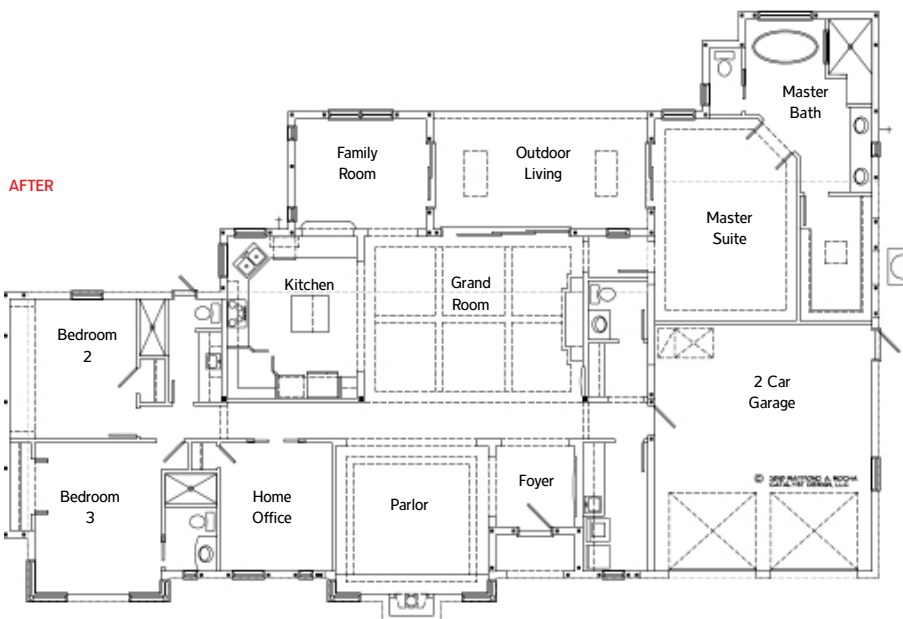
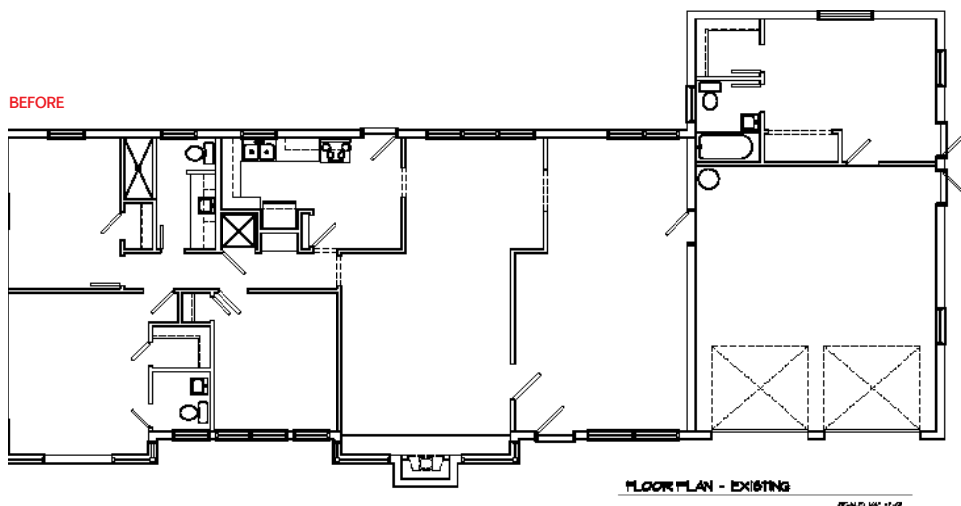
9'4" in the new addition, which includes the kitchen, grand room, and master bedroom. "We didn't want too much of a discrepancy with the 8' ceilings in the rest of the house," Rocha explains. "We only cut out the center rear of the house to make it taller."

All told, the team added about 600 square feet of space (approximately 125 lineal feet of foundation), but the livability of the house is imminently more usable.

Rocha kept the unique aspects of the house intact. "We tried to keep the costs down and also keep the architectural character of the house," Rocha says. "We kept the corner windows in the bedrooms and living room and maintained the chimney placement and location and the way the windows flank it."

The house will fit nicely into the neighborhood of bungalows, Key West-inspired homes, Spanish Revivals, and mid-century moderns. "The house has the biggest lot on the street," Pleveich says. "We didn't want to overbuild for this neighborhood. ... Keeping the ranch without a second story is a cool look."

Most important to the builders, though, is that the house inspire other people interested in remodeling. "We want people to know that you don't have to get crazy," Pleveich emphasizes. "You can take an older house that needs love; give it love, and make it energy efficient. People should never shy away from doing this kind of project." GB



## Behind the VISION

Green Builder Media's VISION House Series presents sustainable new housing and retrofit models appropriate for today's economy.

The ReVISION House Orlando '11 is a retrofit home that Green Builder Media is constructing with partners Southern Traditions Development [www.southerntraditionsfl.com](http://www.southerntraditionsfl.com), Catalyst Design, and Designs by Pat Gaylor [www.patriciagaylor.com](http://www.patriciagaylor.com). The project will incorporate the essentials of sustainable design and construction and will incorporate education and training for building professionals and consumers about green building products and techniques, as well as broader aspects of sustainable living.

Visit the ReVISION House Orlando '11 pages regularly during the course of the project for updates, case studies, videos, articles, and other important information.

To learn more about green design and construction, visit Green Builder College [www.greenbuildercollege.com](http://www.greenbuildercollege.com), our online educational platform, which offers a comprehensive curriculum about sustainable development.