

A GAME PLAN FOR BACKYARD PATIO DESIGN

CONCEPT

Not all patios have to be rectangular or square slabs poured against the back of the house. See how designer Maureen Gilmer massages the opportunities and constraints presented by this large family home so that all site problems are solved, homeowner requests are met, and the end result is a perfect mix of beauty and usability.



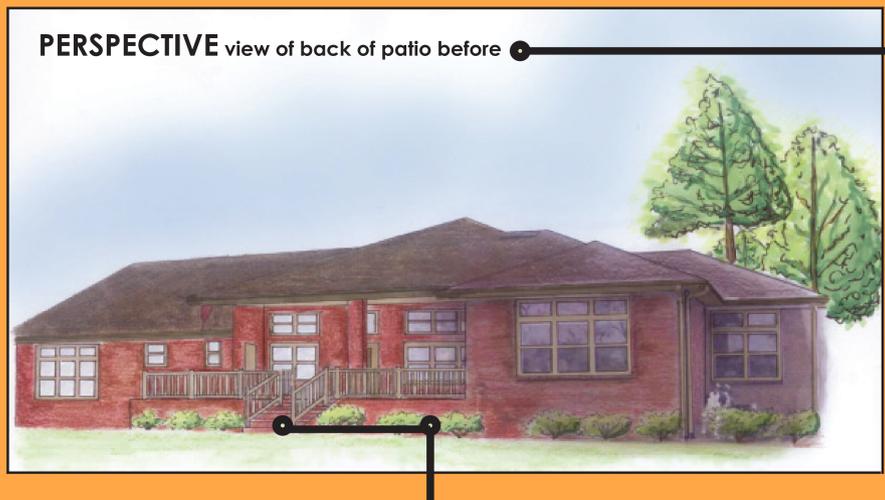
LandscapingNetwork.com



FLOOR PLAN

The floor plan is a large family home with its doorway access to the patio which drives the entire circulation plan, but once free of the building the outdoor living spaces take on a life of their own. The developer provided an elevated patio for this raised foundation brick home with its oversized view windows. A single staircase connects the elevated space to the ground level backyard.

PERSPECTIVE view of back of patio before



DESIGN PROBLEMS

The finish floor elevation is four feet above grade, making the home feel overly massive when viewed from future ground level outdoor living spaces. The connection to this house pivots on the large staircase that descends three feet down to finish grade which makes it a hub and potential bottleneck when entertaining.

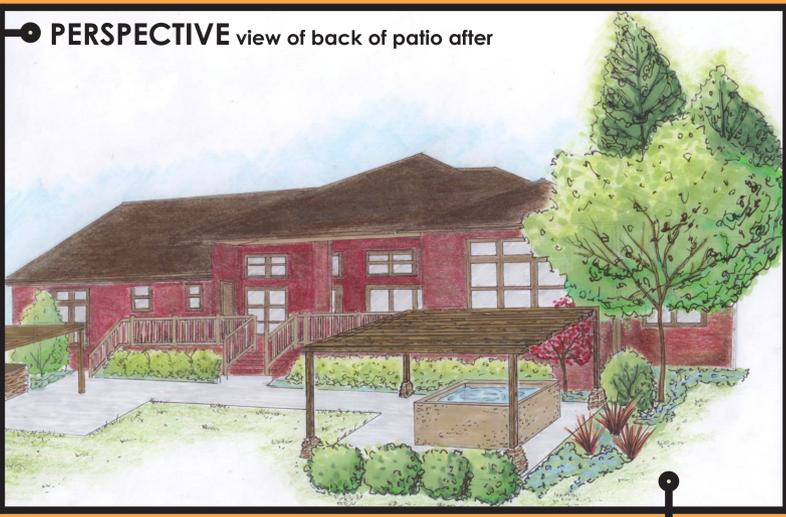
DESIGN GOALS

- A QUIET SPACE FOR EVENING GETAWAYS.
- A LARGE OUTDOOR DINING AND ENTERTAINING AREA WITH BUILT-IN BARBECUE COOK CENTER.
- SHADE COVER FOR OUTDOOR LIVING AREAS AND TO MAKE THE SPA MORE INTIMATE.

THE REVEAL

This plan is laid out into two primary use spaces. On the north end is passive space next to the master bedroom. The active outdoor entertaining area is on the south end where it is better linked to the bathroom, kitchen and family room. In between these, the paving is minimized (which cuts costs and allows for higher end materials to be used). It is possible to add more paving in a future phase should there be a need for more square footage on this very large lot.

PERSPECTIVE view of back of patio after



FINAL PLAN VIEW

PATIO ON GRADE

Rather than accentuate the long north-south face of this home, the patio edges ebb and flow in size to create as much irregularity as logical design permits.

PLANTING AREAS

The elevated finish floor demands more extensive foundation planting, so these beds are larger and more irregular to nest the home in greenery of varying height and depth.

OUTDOOR KITCHEN

The outdoor kitchen requires a direct link to the indoor kitchen, which is facilitated by the new stairs that provide a more intuitive, efficient relationship while retaining a wide open view of the yard in every season.



SPA AREA

The spa is linked to the master bedroom and set off in a passive space of its own that remains private and peaceful even when the main outdoor living and dining areas are busy. Here may also be provided screen planting for additional privacy from neighbor views from the north and east sides.

SECONDARY STAIRCASE

A secondary staircase added here provides more direct access between indoor and outdoor kitchens; easy entry for the bathroom and a bypass that protects the main stair case and patio from muddy shoes.