

## Plenty of choices when renovating bathrooms

When it comes to revamping bathrooms, today's consumers have more choices than ever before. Modern sinks and tubs come in a wide array of colors, shapes and price ranges - with something to suit virtually every taste and budget.

However, if you have a small bathroom and a limited budget, you don't have a lot of options when it comes to remodelling. Short of knocking down walls, there isn't much you can do to increase the physical size of a small room.

If you fit into this category, but want to give your bathroom a new, roomier look, don't despair. By using just a few simple and fairly inexpensive tricks, you can make your bathroom appear much more spacious.

As you begin to plan that new look, keep in mind the old adage 'simpler is better'. This certainly holds true for small rooms. Excessive decoration and bold, overpowering patterns can dwarf a room, making it appear much smaller than it really is.

Try to avoid choosing loud wallpaper or too many ornate accessories. Remember, you want a clean, uncluttered look.

Color is another factor to consider. Dark colors may make a room seem more cosy and inviting, but they make it appear smaller as well. Bulky, dark medicine cabinets and vanities can also emphasize the smallness of a room - appearing to gobble up more space than they actually take.

You should also keep in mind that dark-colored flooring or floor tiles with large, busy patterns can make the floor space of a small bathroom appear to shrink.

Try using lighter colors on the walls and ceiling. A monochromatic scheme can open up a room. Basic colors like cream or white look attractive and allow you

greater versatility when it comes to choosing accessories.

If you have dark, decorative wall tiles with large patterns, you might want to consider replacing them with something simpler - perhaps plain tiles with an attractively-patterned border.

Clear or pastel shower curtains with a light, airy pattern can help open up the room. Use of area rugs as opposed to wall-to-wall carpeting also helps create space because the smaller rugs visually break up the floor space.

Installation of a sleek and stylish pedestal sink can create more room, both visually and physically. However, the drawback is the loss of storage space which a standard vanity unit provides.

Many older, smaller bathrooms have wall-hung sinks. Though often small in size, these sinks can be given a new look when fitted with attractive skirting - this covers the exposed pipes and provides extra, out-of-sight storage space.

Corner sink units are another space-saving option for a small bathroom or powderroom. These units can fit easily into a corner, taking up much less room than a conventional, full-size vanity.

If your bathtub has seen better days, there are several materials available; from elegant but expensive marble to plastic laminate and fibreglass. You could even have it reglazed.

Mirrors are one of the easiest and least expensive ways to visually increase space in a small bathroom. A large, wall-hung mirror or over-the-sink cabinet with mirrored panels works well.

Bright lighting also helps open up a room. A skylight or luminous ceiling are two lighting options, but can be expensive.

This column is provided by courtesy of the Ontario Real Estate Association.



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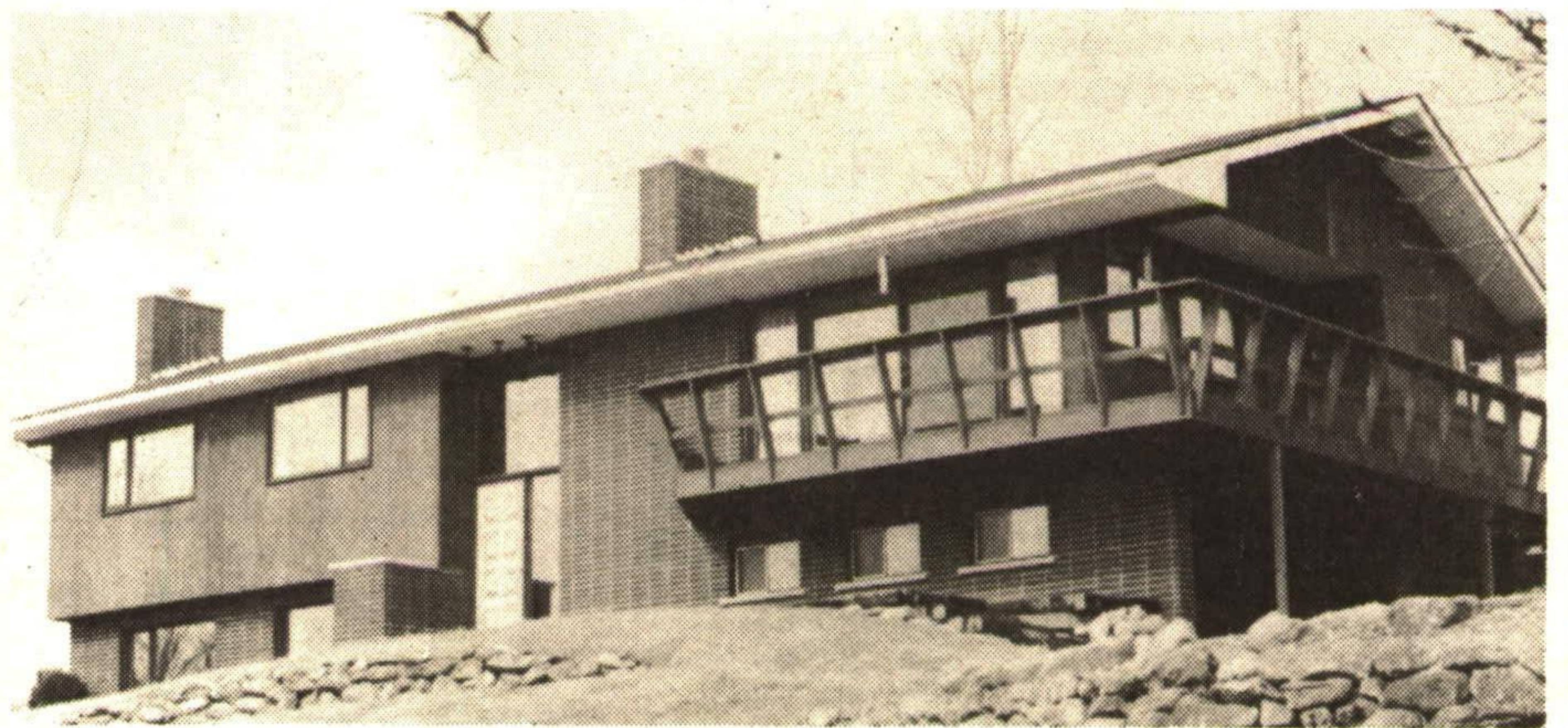
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