

A new patio or deck can increase your living space

If you and your family are looking for ways to spend more quality time outdoors this summer, you may want to consider installing a deck or patio. Not only will this give you a chance to take more advantage of all the best the season has to offer, but it will expand your living space considerably.

You'll also find that the addition of a deck or patio enhances your home a great deal, making it more attractive and inviting.

A deck or patio may also be appealing if someone in your family suffers from grass allergies, because both help to minimize direct contact with the lawn.

Consider usage

When planning your deck or patio, consider what primary uses it will serve. For instance, do you want it mostly for entertaining? Do you want to use it as a play area for your children? Or do you simply want a place to relax and unwind in peace and privacy? Remember to factor in your family's daily activi-

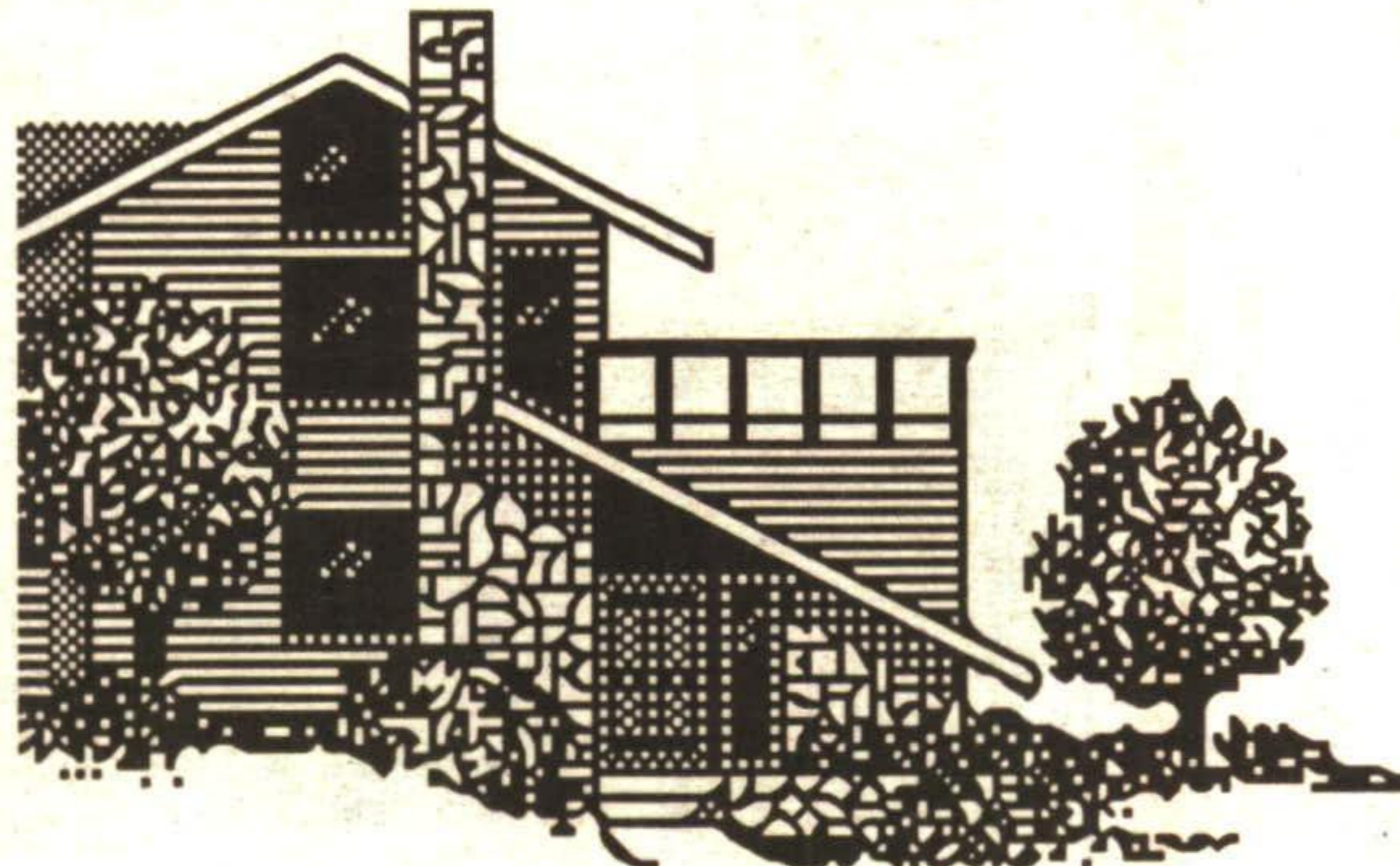
ties and preferences.

Keep in mind that decks and patios can also be designed to incorporate your landscaping. If you have large trees for example, consider building around them instead of avoiding them altogether — or worse yet — removing them. It's a good idea to try and blend with your environment wherever possible.

Also remember that with a deck, you're not limited to one level. You can incorporate varying heights and levels to accommodate different uses. For example, you could have a main deck area for entertaining and relaxing, another, adjoining level for the kids to play on, and another for a hot tub.

You can also have different levels of a patio, if you have varying levels of land or you can create different levels of land by making alterations to your landscaping. It's a good idea to consult a professional first, if you decide to go this route.

When planning your deck or patio, don't forget to think about aspects of your home or yard that you want to accentuate — like the french doors opening up from the family room — or camouflage like



the neighbors' unsightly storage shed. You can be very creative with privacy fencing.

If you're handling the job yourself, remember to check and see if any building permits are required. Or, if you're hiring a contractor to

do the job, make sure all the necessary permits are obtained.

Materials

If you're building a deck, do some research on the different materials available. Many homeowners opt for pressure treated wood because it's very affordable, durable and resists decay.

Other materials like cedar, are available as well. Consult with the experts at your local building supply store, or your contractor, to help you decide on the material you want to use.

You'll also have to decide if you need railings (a must if you have youngsters) and depending on the height of your deck stairs.

If you're installing a patio, you have a wide variety of materials and patterns to choose from: brick, stone, field stone and pre-formed concrete squares are all popular options. Choose something that

compliments you home and surrounding elements. For instance, if you have a home which is faced in stone, you may not want to use red, interlocking stone in your patio. You may want to opt for grey-colored stone instead.

And don't forget to carefully consider pattern and texture if you're using interlocking brick or stone. There is an endless variety to choose from.

To get some help with design ideas, consult the appropriate experts — like a landscape architect. Also talk to neighbors, friends and relatives who have decks or patios to see what they have had done.

With a little careful planning, you and your family will be able to spend more time in the great outdoors this summer on your new deck or patio.

This article is provided by local Realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

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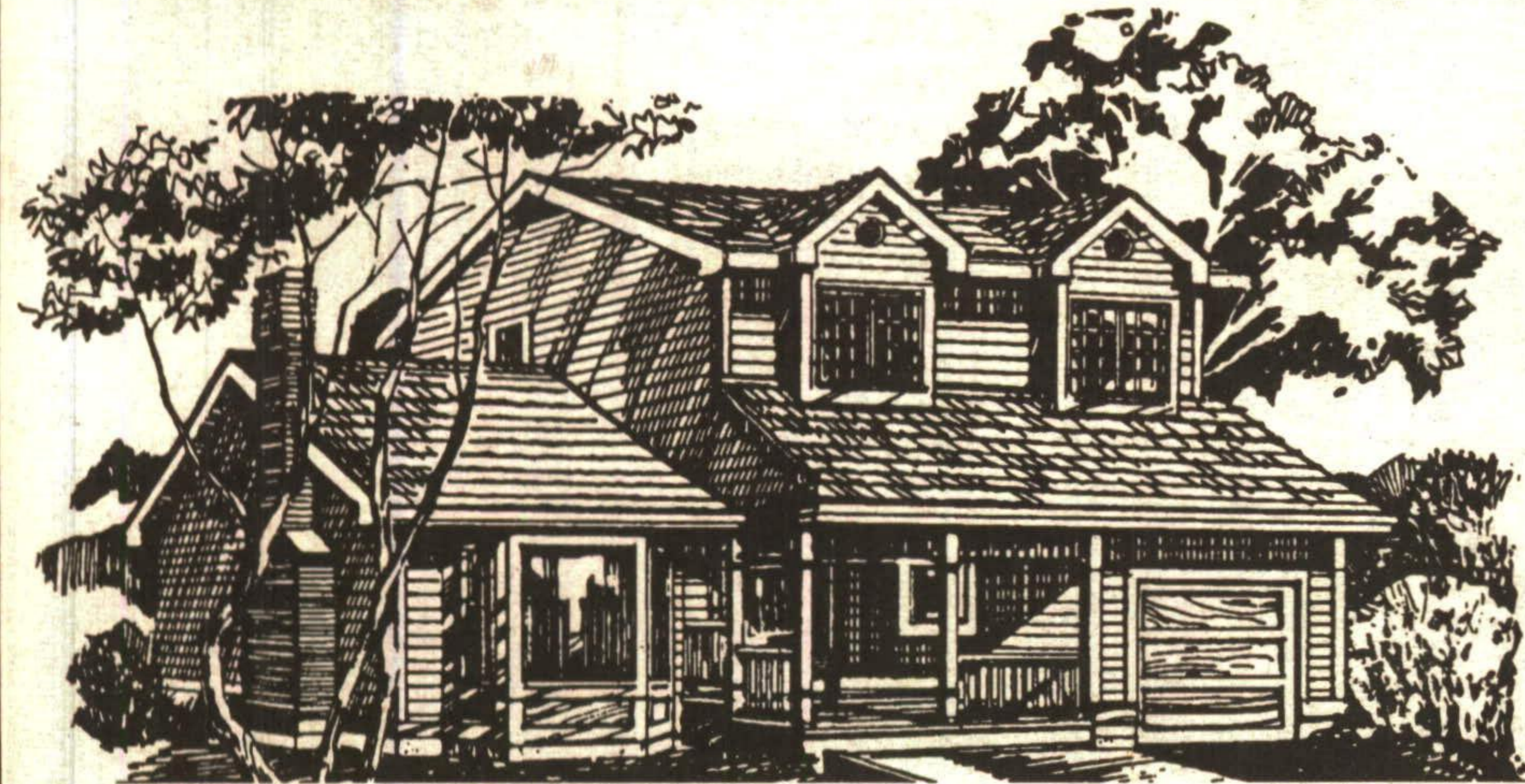
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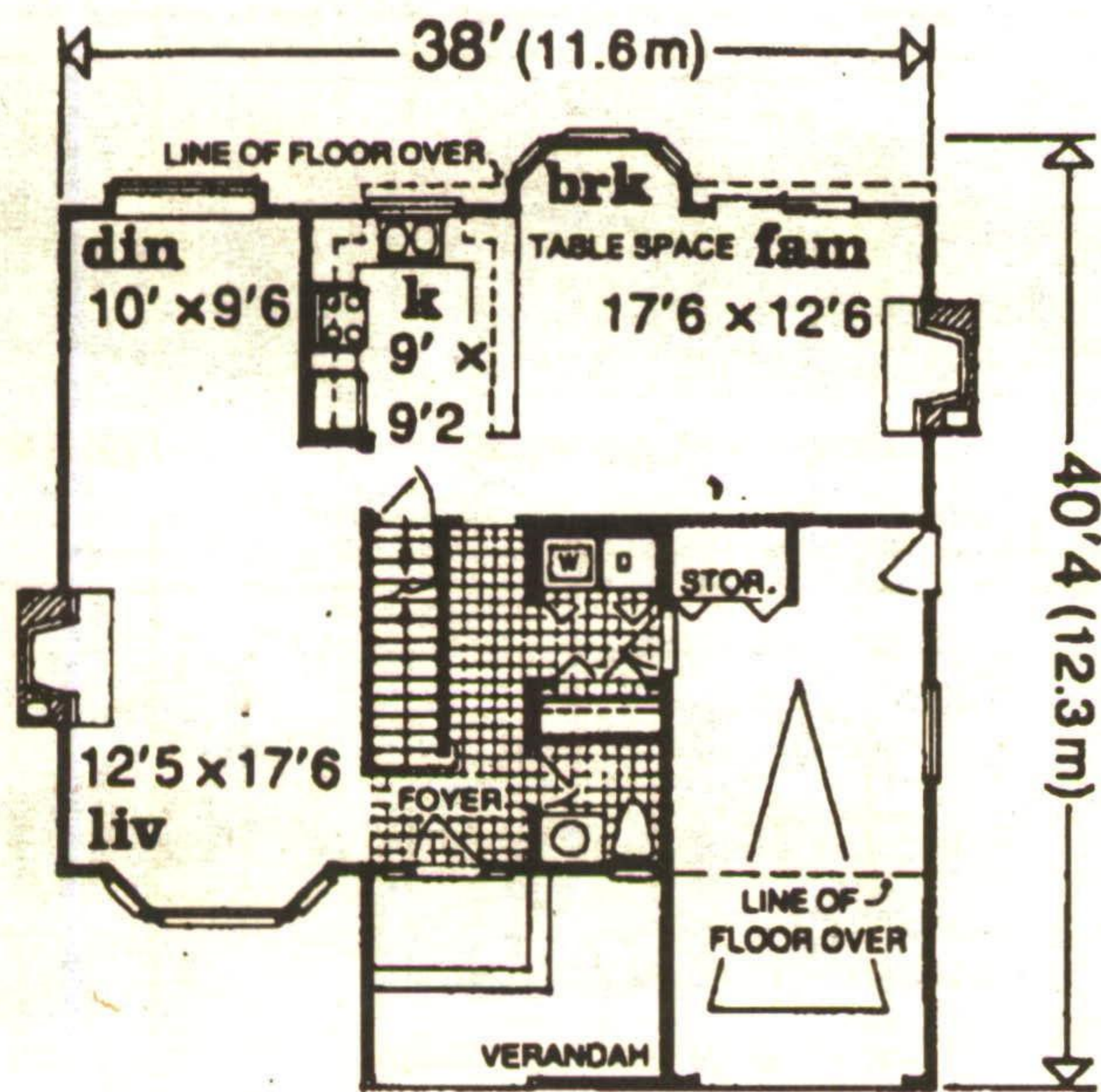
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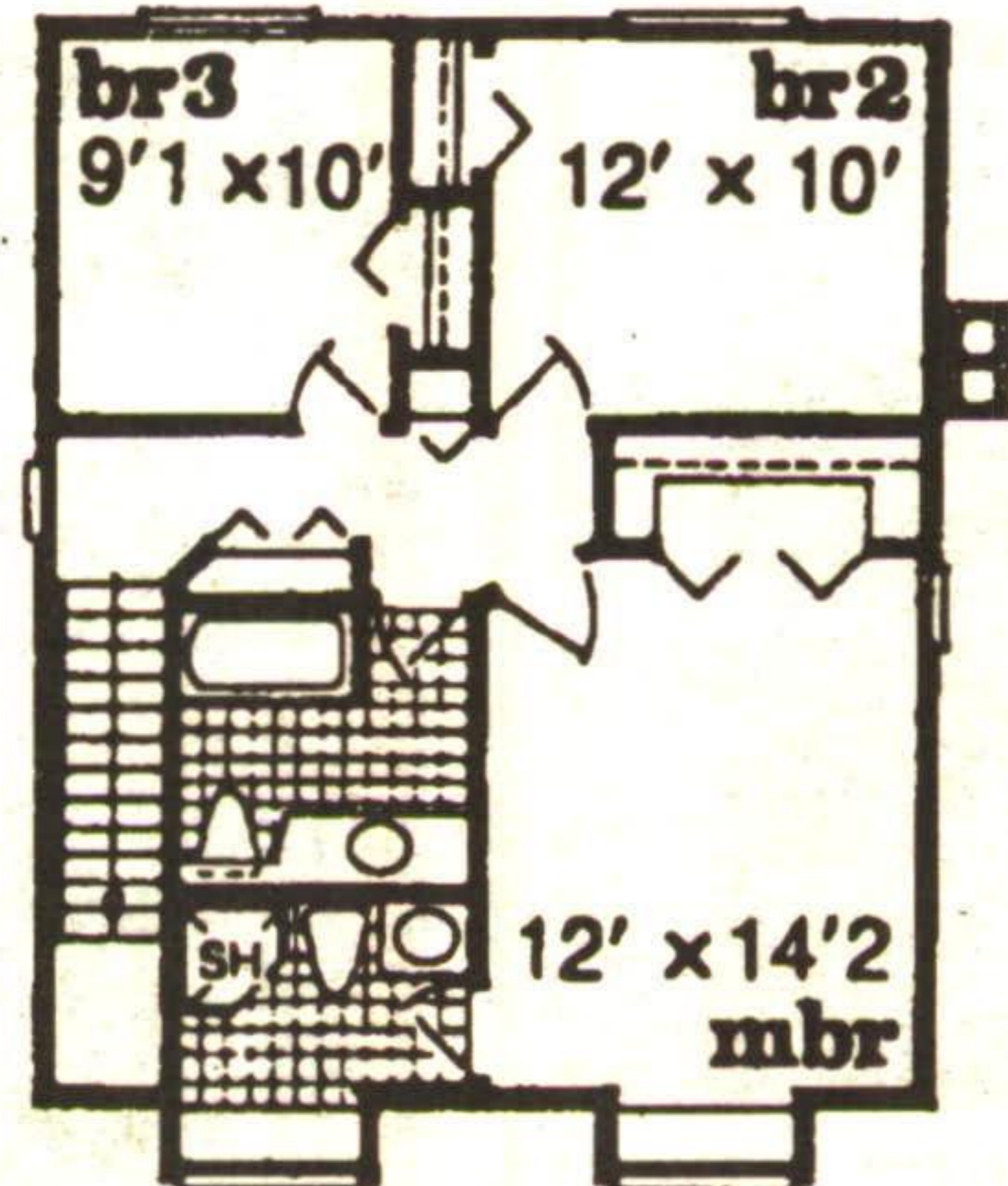


Designer Features

- Railed verandah provides a protected entry
- Living room boasts a large bay window
- Kitchen features an abundance of counter and shelf space.
- Windowed-bay offers ample space for a kitchen table.
- Twin gable windows grace the master bedroom and three-piece ensuite



First Level 953 square feet



Second Level 749 square feet

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