

Architect's House Design Copes With Slope

By Liz Johnson

When Pat and Kay McGuire bought a lot on Center Street in Clinton to build a home they planned to retire in, they were faced with several dilemmas.

First, it wasn't a level lot. The other problem was that it was located in a well-established neighborhood lined by Victorian-style homes.

The couple, who have built and designed four of their homes, had a floor plan in mind and a desire to make the house "fit comfortably in its surroundings," said architect Susan Rochelle of Alexandria Township, who helped them devise their retirement home.

"Victorian houses typically want to change vertical surfaces. There are a lot of bays popping out, gables doing funny things. The idea is to approximate the look of the materials used in that day," said Ms. Rochelle.

So she used fish-scale siding and gable roof lines to capture the theme. She also included gingerbread molding along the porch with Victorian columns.

"If you were a historian you'd come up to this house and know it's a new house," said Ms. Rochelle.

"We were looking for an increase in energy efficiency and we wanted low maintenance," said Mr. McGuire. For example, the siding is vinyl and the trim is aluminum wrapped so that neither require paint.

"We were trying to get within the confines of the footprint the feeling of openness. Susan was able to do



OLD MEETS NEW — Architect Susan Rochelle of Alexandria Township was able to capture Victorian elements in a modern home, above, built for Pat and Kay McGuire on Center Street in Clinton.

Photo by John Hester

that," said Mrs. McGuire.

Ms. Rochelle designed cathedral ceilings in the library and entrance way and long, wide windows across the front of the house.

Other modern amenities include a four-zone heating system and a two-unit central air conditioning system, a sunny breakfast nook, a rear deck, a master bedroom on the first floor with a Jacuzzi and an office with several phone jacks for telephone,

fax and modems.

Borrowing from the "old world" elements, the McGuires put in hardwood oak flooring and built-in cabinets made of cherry. They were able to design the living room to fit an antique cherry mantel above the fireplace.

Because of the topography of the property, elevation was a problem. The McGuires had to use a concrete pump to install the foundation,

which differed by 13-feet from one end of the home to the other.

While trying to capture some of the Victorian elements, the McGuires also wanted a home designed for the future. The kitchen, for example has several electric, cable and telephone outlets. There is a built-in vacuuming system.

"We didn't think of everything, but we came close," said Mrs. McGuire.