

DECEMBER 2005

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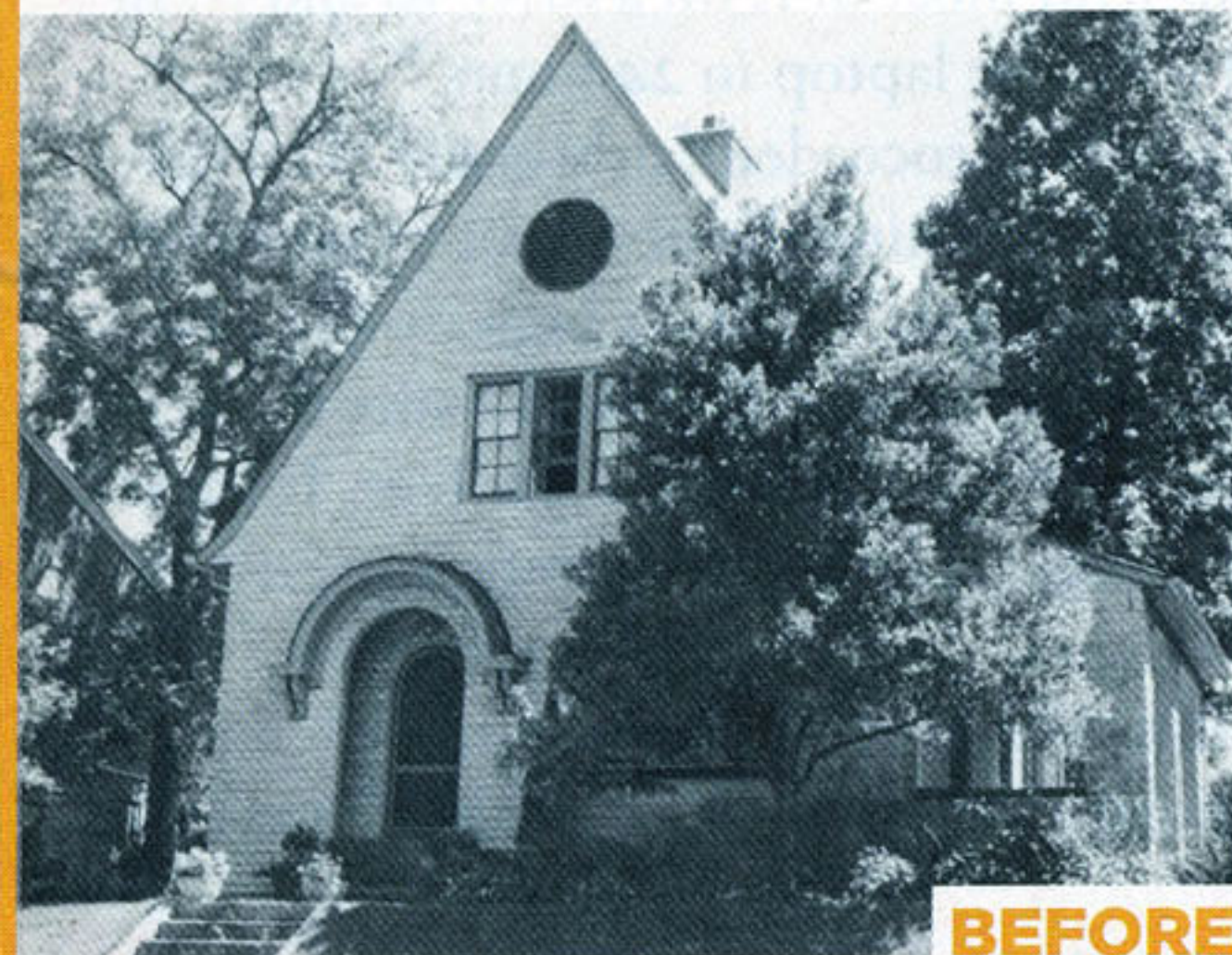
CLADDING THE HOUSE WITH

cedar shakes transformed the exterior, and the new living room/bedroom addition (left) provided the extra space the Carraways needed.



“We saw through the fake stone to all the possibilities”

Liz and John Carraway pulled off the stone veneer, giving their Birmingham cottage the face-lift it deserved



BEFORE

STRIPPING CAN MAKE you feel vulnerable. When Liz and John Carraway bought their small English-style cottage in Birmingham, Alabama, they knew they were in for some exposure before they could add on. The stucco facade, original to the 1924 house, began to crumble in the 1940s.

“So someone decided to cover the exterior in fake stone veneer. That was real popular on Texaco stations at the time,” Liz says wryly.

Despite the prospects of living in a cottage that looked like a filling station, these owners knew that this property—on a narrow street backed by an ivy-covered, stone-walled alley straight out of Provence—was too good to pass up. Plus, Liz and John are both architects, so not only did they see the beauty beneath the faux-stone beast, they knew an addition, even in such a tight space, was feasible.

Aside from being unattractive, the veneer had, ironically, deteriorated because >



DURING THE EXTERIOR stripping process, Liz and John extended their side porch to the edge of the roofline, creating an outside sitting and dining room ideal for Birmingham's temperate springs and falls. **BOTH BACK DOORS** are English. The entrance door to the right was salvaged from London's Natural History Museum. A balcony above opens off the Carraways' new master bedroom.



of termites. Before pursuing an addition to the two-bedroom, one-bath house, the Carraways had to strip and redress the entire exterior.

"We basically got the house down to its studs, insulated, put on new 1/2-inch plywood sheathing, and replaced damaged studs," Liz says. The couple considered replacing the original stucco, but decided against that because any movement in the wood underneath would make the stucco crack. Instead they reclad the house with red cedar roofing shakes. While that work was under way, the Carraways also remodeled their kitchen, increased the size of the side porch, and finished the plain foundation walls with moss rock.

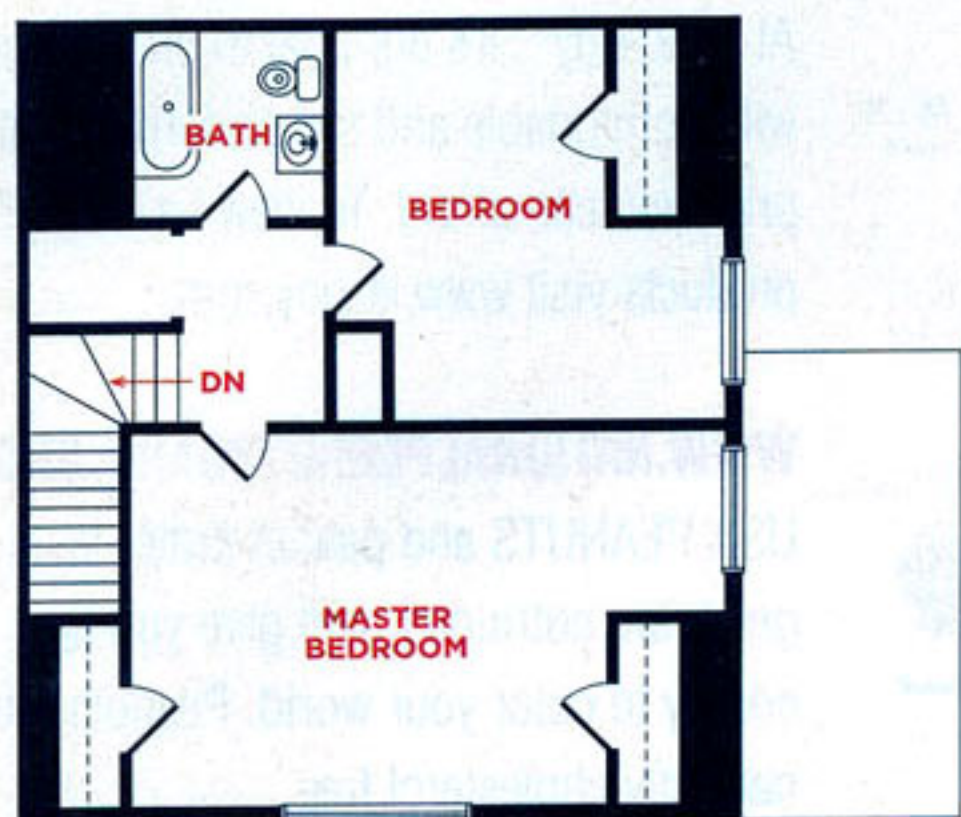
Once the stripping, shingling, and kitchen remodeling was complete, the couple got to work planning an addition to double the size of the house and give them a much-needed master bedroom, bath, bigger closets, and a larger gathering space. Being architects was both a burden and a blessing: They wouldn't have to hire outside help, but they also couldn't spend valuable work time designing their own house. "All of a sudden we were planning at 10 p.m.," says Liz. "We came up with most of it on a drive to and from Virginia. The drive's about 12 hours one way, so I guess we did it on the laptop in 24 hours."

Since construction affected only one portion of the house, the project proceeded fairly easily. The only major challenges involved planning windows to maintain privacy and attaching the new roof to the existing roof slope. To solve the first dilemma, the Carraways placed main-floor windows high on the living room wall so they don't align with windows and doors into the neighbors' kitchen. To make sure the new roof complemented the old house, they offset it so the adjoining roofs overlap only a few feet. It looks like it's been there forever, the new addition and original growing together into an opening beneath the branches of an old hackberry tree.

So much stripping, replacing, and adding on can be an exhilarating though exhausting proposition for a couple. The Carraways make the process seem easy, though. Sometimes you just have to grin and bare it. >

Rule of thumb

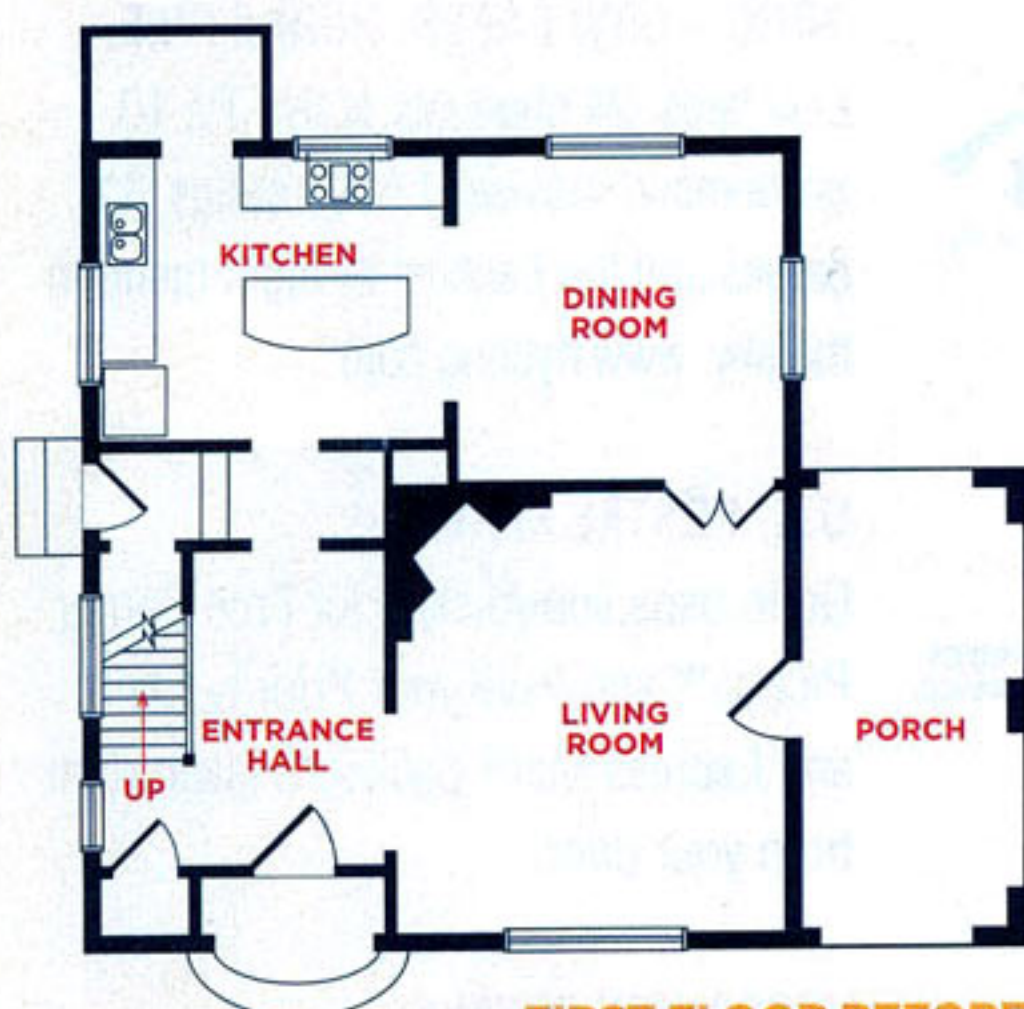
When adding on, match the existing roof pitch. If you vary from this rule you risk compromising the house's final appearance.



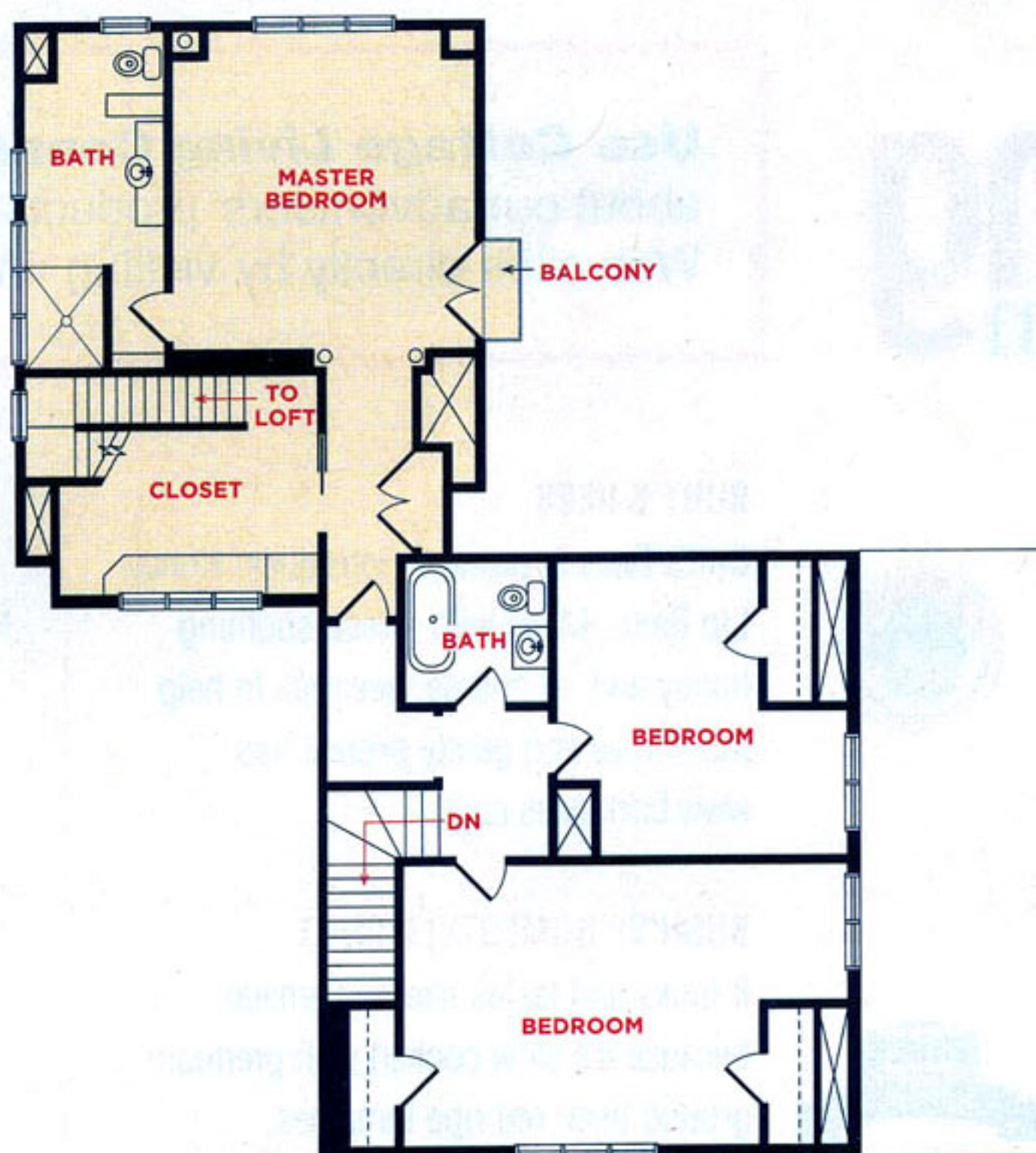
SECOND FLOOR BEFORE

BEFORE

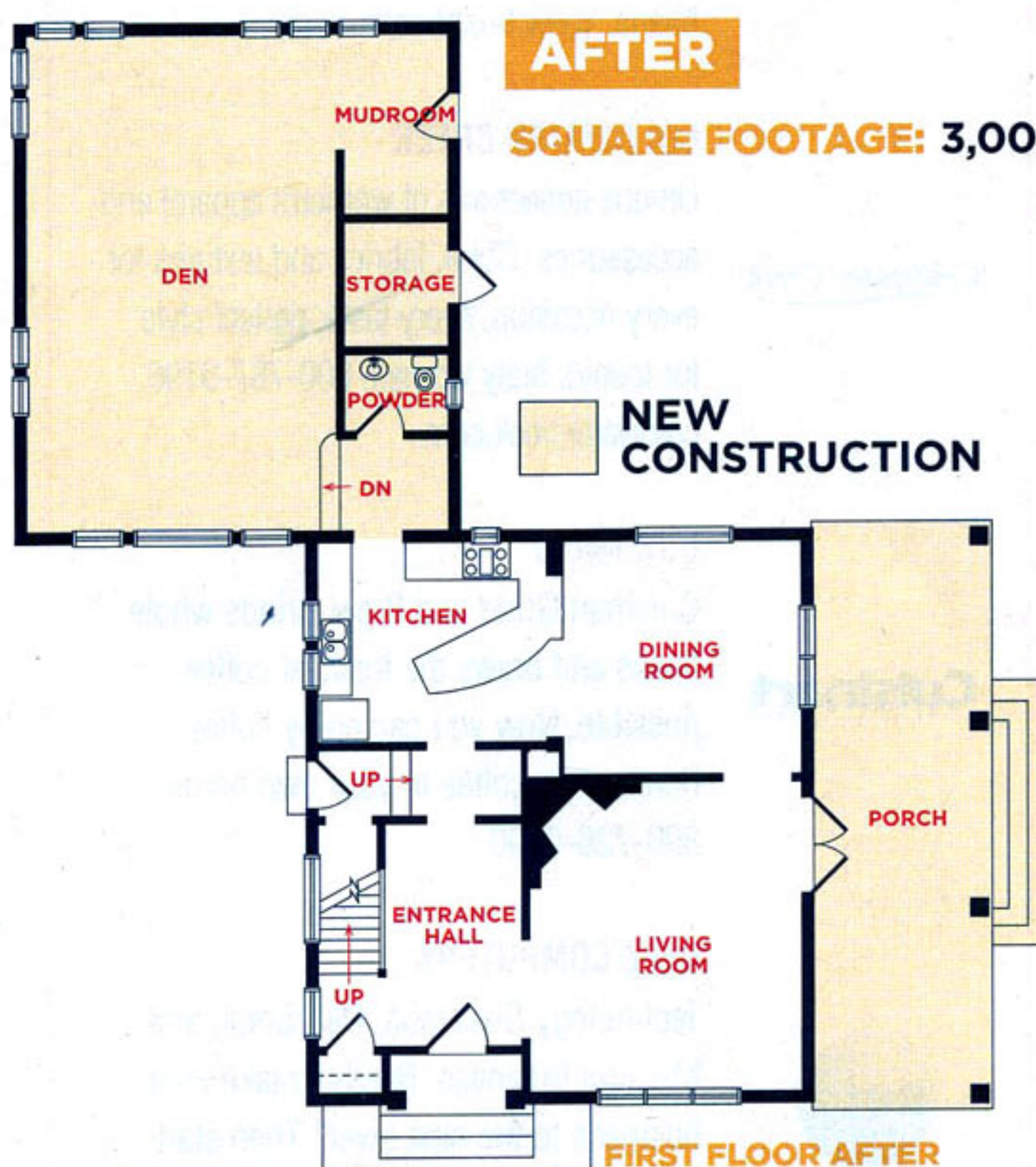
SQUARE FOOTAGE: 1,500



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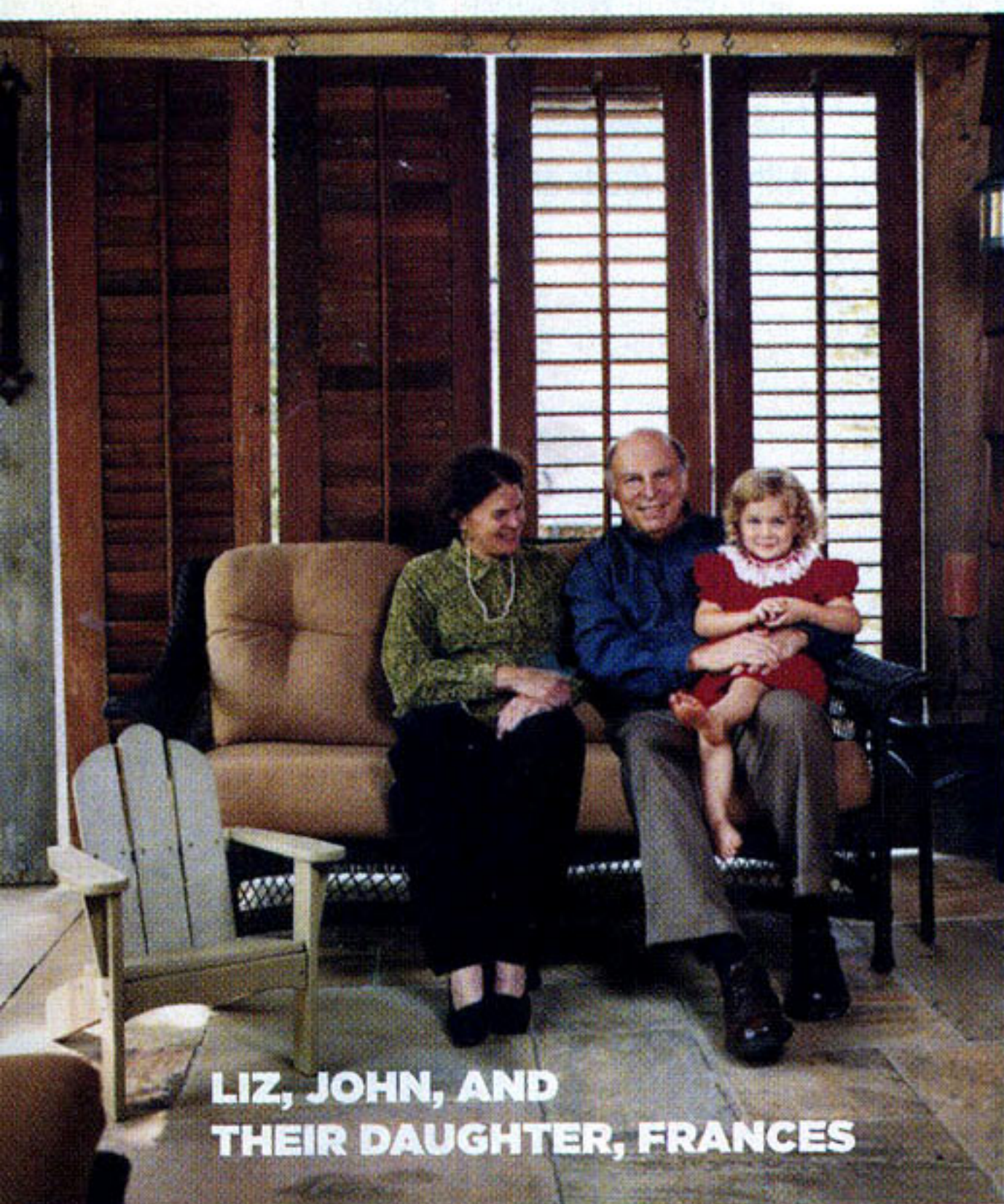


SECOND FLOOR AFTER



FIRST FLOOR AFTER

“Once the stripping, shingling, and kitchen remodeling was complete, the fun began. Psychologically, it’s easier adding on than stripping off”



LIZ, JOHN, AND THEIR DAUGHTER, FRANCES

Learn from Liz and John

■ **STRIPPING THE EXTERIOR** John says, “First, take out a second mortgage.” Strip down to the studs; repair any existing damage from water, termites, etc.; insulate the walls from the outside; and put in some type of treatment (boric acid for pests sometimes works). Then install the new wall finish material.

■ **NEW EXTERIOR WALL MATERIAL OPTIONS** Do you want to deal with painting every few years? Today’s paints lack longevity, so choose materials that won’t need frequent touch-ups. Hardie Plank concrete-based siding is a good option. Brick and stone are best for long-term care.

■ **THE CEDAR SHAKEDOWN** John and Liz used No. 1 red cedar shakes (see Glossary, page 128), which are resistant to rot and treated with a fire-retardant solution. They nailed the shakes onto their cottage so that 10 inches of each rectangle is visible—the shake above covers the rest. John says, “We used stainless staples to attach them to the house. Copper or bright steel fasteners wouldn’t have looked good.”

■ **SELECTING AN INSPECTOR** “If you don’t already know of one, ask around, but be discerning when checking the inspector’s educational and work background; some are simply not qualified.” ■