

atomic ranch

MIDCENTURY MARVELS



SPRING 2012



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photography Steven Begleiter

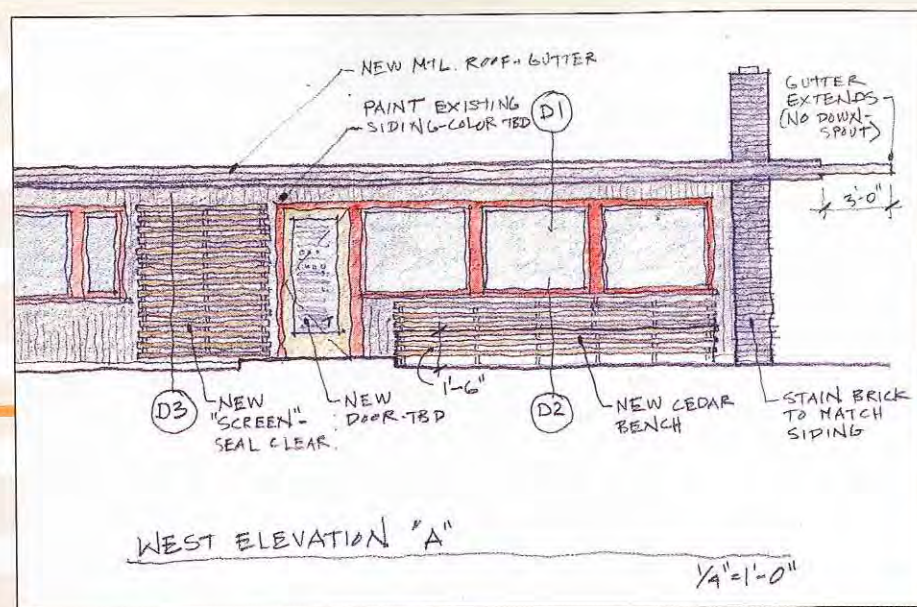
"My brother, Seth Wilson, is a conservation biologist and his wife, Jennifer Ellis, is a teacher," says Portland, Ore., architect Webster Wilson. "They and their three kids have lived in a 1960s ranch in Missoula, Mont., for several years and always had thoughts of a modest remodel, especially to the exterior."

Web Wilson looked for a creative and economical way to modernize the exterior without having to rip off and discard the T-111 siding, which was in good shape. "On a modest budget of 45K, we

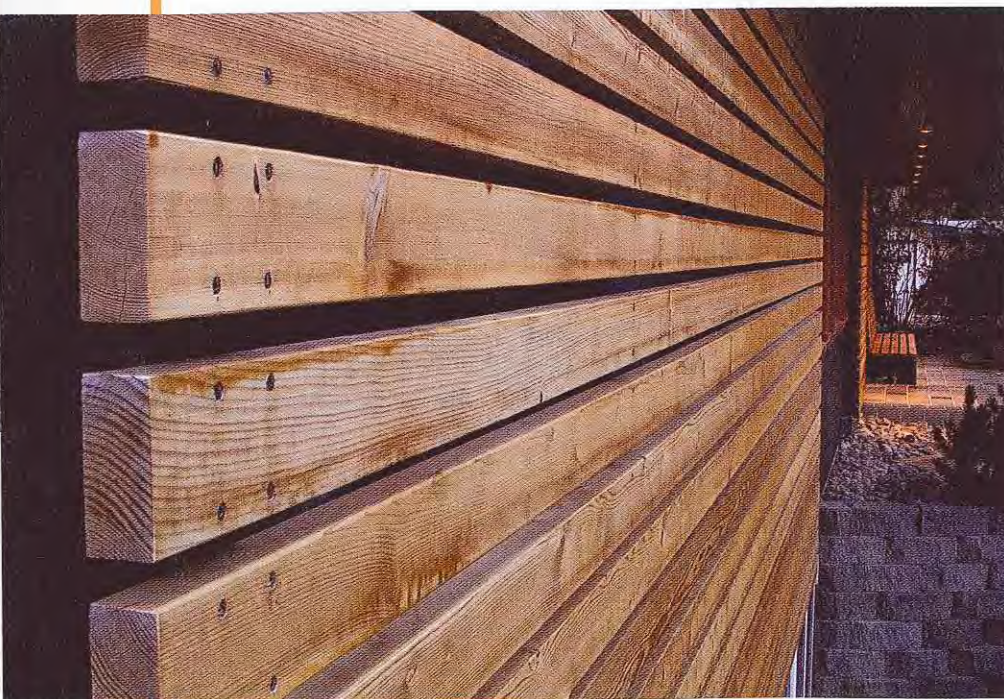
Missoula Makeover



Before



The same material forms **a bench,**
clads a portion
of the now-painted **brick chimney**
and serves as **privacy fencing**



repainted the siding a dark gray and added wood screens that float on the building and extend into the landscape to delineate exterior rooms and provide privacy," he says. "The scope of work included a membrane roof and new soffits, fascia, custom gutters and recessed lighting. To me, these simple and affordable upgrades transform the house but still maintain the lines and integrity of a midcentury ranch."

The horizontal larch wood screens are mounted to the house on vertical gray-painted 2x4s; the larch was milled locally and finished with penetrating oil, which means it will weather to a natural gray. The same material forms a bench, clads a portion of the now-painted brick chimney and serves as privacy fencing near the front door and a storage shed.

The metal gutters are integral to the new fascia and extend past the roofline several feet; this means no downspouts and an exaggerated horizontality that pleases Wilson's architect aesthetic. The red door and trim color was a joint effort, with Jen doing many paint tests before landing on the right red. And while all concerned would like to replace the previous owner's busy tile-clad patio with dark gray pigmented concrete slabs and site-poured pavers in a year or three, the two-month exterior makeover was deemed a success.

"I think in turns of budget-to-value it is a good recession-era model for people who have a generic or aging ranch house and want to modernize it without having to pump hundreds of thousands of dollars into it," Wilson says. "And by working with the existing shell of the house, the project has a responsible, green aspect, as well." ✂

See more of Web Wilson's work at websterwilson.com; photographer Steven Begleiter's site is begleiter.com.