

● Home Receives Facelift Mesa, Ariz.

Built in 1960, this tilt-up concrete home has stood the test of time. Surviving a number of owners, weathering the Mesa, Ariz. climate, and, most recently, a complete remodel. As an experimental case-study project, the home was designed by Vic Shill—a recent graduate of Arizona State University looking for alternative materials in home building. What resulted was a tilt-up concrete wall exterior with a glass-and-stud frame interior structure.

Owner and architect Ron Peters had always admired the unique 3000-square-foot modern design house from a distance. When it went up for sale, he immediately leapt at the chance to buy it. “It was very well built and such a unique structure,” says Peters.

The renovation project involved gutting the wood frame interior and all the drywall, which had seen incredible wear over the past 45 years, as well as repairing the ceilings. Peters worked with a structural engineer to make two saw-cuts for windows in the concrete frame—one in the kitchen/dining area and one in the master bathroom. It took a number of saw blades to get through the 5 1/2-inch-thick walls.

In addition to structural renovations, the home also needed more electrical outlets to provide enough electricity throughout the home. “We had to be very inventive in how we got electrical into certain areas. Where we could, we ran it through the ceiling,” notes Peters.

During the renovation planning, he also walked through the home with the original architect to understand the concept and layout design of the home when it was first built. A number of modifications had been made throughout the ownership of the home including a wood-frame addition and a relocation of the master bathroom; both of which were torn out and the bathroom returned to its original state. “This house needed to be restored to what it was,” notes Peters. “What had happened over the years, people came in trying to make it a traditional home, so it lost its character.”

“Everyone who comes in comments on how bright and light and warm the home is. They don’t even know it’s concrete until they get up close to it,” says Peters. “It’s really interesting to see people react to it—they think it’s stucco. Nobody believes me. They have to touch it.”

With a fresh coat of paint, some tender care, and a few 21st-century updates, the 1960-built home has retained its unique character and solidified its place for another 50 years.

—Kate Hamilton



This photo was taken during the original construction phase of the house in 1960. Photo: Vic Shill



A sawcut was made in the 5 1/2-inch-thick concrete wall to add a window in the kitchen/dining area.
Photo: Ron Peters



Right: The home is filled with Arizona charm allowing natural light and the outdoors to filter in.

Below: The unique modern design home was built with tilt-up walls almost 50 years ago. Today, new owner Ron Peters only needed to give the concrete exterior a fresh coat of paint to restore its luster.
Photos: Blair Bunting/ Getty Images

