

PROHOME

Elevating the Standard of Building

The completed house is durable, efficient, and attractive with a flexible floor plan on each level

BY SEAN GROOM

Last spring, when designer Michael Maines, builder Mike Guertin, and *Fine Homebuilding* editorial director, Rob Yagid, sat down to sketch out ideas for the first ProHOME, they laid out basic goals: The house had to be modestly sized, energy smart, healthy, flexible, and durable. These targets guided the design process and the construction methods and products Maines used.

Our coverage has followed the build from breaking ground through framing to installing mechanicals, insulation, and drywall. Now, with the interior finishes and fixtures installed, the end result is a gracious, comfortable house that more than meets its energy performance objectives. In this wrap-up coverage of the 2016 ProHOME, we'll show how Maines and interior designer Pamela Unwin-Barkley organized the floor plan and chose interior and exterior finishes to create a modern farmhouse that fits an established neighborhood, has a timeless appeal, and will adapt to the lifestyle changes of its future homeowners.

Verified performance. Guertin and a team of students depressurized the house with a blower door to find and seal leaks. The extremely tight result—0.4 ACH50—and well-insulated shell are evident in the even temperatures across the house in this FLIR image. The net-zero-ready house has a HERS rating of 43 without PV.





The Assembly at a Glance



Roof: 22 in. of blown-in fiberglass insulation in the attic provides R-60. CertainTeed's MemBrain, run across the bottom of the ceiling joists and sealed to the top plates, creates a continuous air barrier.



Walls: Zip panels with taped joints act as the primary air barrier. Taped R-21 CertainTeed SmartBatts act as a secondary air barrier. Exterior Roxul Comfortboard 80 prevents thermal bridging and reduces the chance of condensation on the interior.



Foundation: Amvic Silverboard subslab insulation and the Amvic 3.3 ICFs insulate the basement to R-15 and R-30, respectively. Concrete is an effective air barrier and ProtectoWrap's Triple Guard Energy Sill Sealer air-seals the transition between the foundation and framing.



Accents set the style

Deck rail

From a distance, the Feeney Cable Rail system disappears from view, and up close the horizontal cables reinforce the lines of the lap siding. The fascia-mount metal guardrail posts are clean and minimalist. Under-rail LED lights discreetly light the deck without interrupting the clean lines of the railing.



Stone base

A mix of three colors of Cultured Stone veneer mixed with small infill rocks from the site cover the foundation. The suggestion of a rubble foundation emphasizes the traditional farmhouse style. The dark siding above the stone on the walk-out level indicates it's a different type of space than the upper levels.



Trim

4-in.-wide casing with thick sills at window openings and 6-in.-wide corner boards create shadow lines and reinforce the traditional look of the clapboards. Omitting trim on the wall sections with dark nickel-gap siding and butting the siding to the windows and mitering the corners creates cleaner lines and focuses attention on the bigger siding reveals.



Timeless farmhouse style

The style of the traditional farmhouse was Maines' design inspiration for the ProHOME. The low eaves, achieved by tucking the second-floor bathrooms and laundry room into dormers on the front of the house, reduce its perceived height, bringing the home to scale with its neighbors. At the rear of the house, the saltbox-style roofline grants the three second-floor bedrooms full-height ceilings, taking advantage of the southern exposure and bringing sun deep into the rooms. The simple white clapboard siding fits the look of the neighborhood, but the shed dormer and the front entry—cladded with Boral 8-in.-wide nickel-gap siding painted a rich espresso with Sherwin Williams' Black Fox—is the first clue that this home is a modern take on the traditional farmhouse vernacular.

Wherever this siding is used, corner boards and casing are eliminated; the siding is butted to the windows and doors and outside corners are mitered. These crisp, modern details continue with the Feeney Cable Rail system on the nearly 400-sq.-ft. deck, which divides the modern treatment of the walkout from the traditional lap siding above. The 2-over-2 windows that Maines chose are appropriate to a classic 19th-century farmhouse, and by using them throughout the house he weaves the traditional and modern treatments into a unified contemporary aesthetic.

A floor plan for today and for tomorrow

The most important aspect of the ProHOME is its ability to adapt over time as its occupants' lives change. Maines' floor plan provides options to accommodate a growing family, multigenerational living, empty nesters, and those who wish to age in place. For now, this means that with the partially finished basement and the bonus room over the garage, the house has a phenomenal amount of storage space. However, the framing, electrical, and plumbing rough-ins in the basement are ready for a self-contained apartment with a kitchen, full bath, bedroom, and large, open living area. Four tall windows on the south wall flood the basement's great room with natural light. If the basement is set up as an apartment, Guertin will install a separate permeable-paver driveway from the street to the lower level that will provide single-level access and privacy

Flexibility in the floor plan

Double duty describes the ProHOME's first-floor open plan. The borders between the kitchen, dining, and living areas are fluid, with the intention that when any one of these spaces is in use, it can borrow additional room from the adjoining area. This allows the space to feel and function larger than its 425 sq. ft.

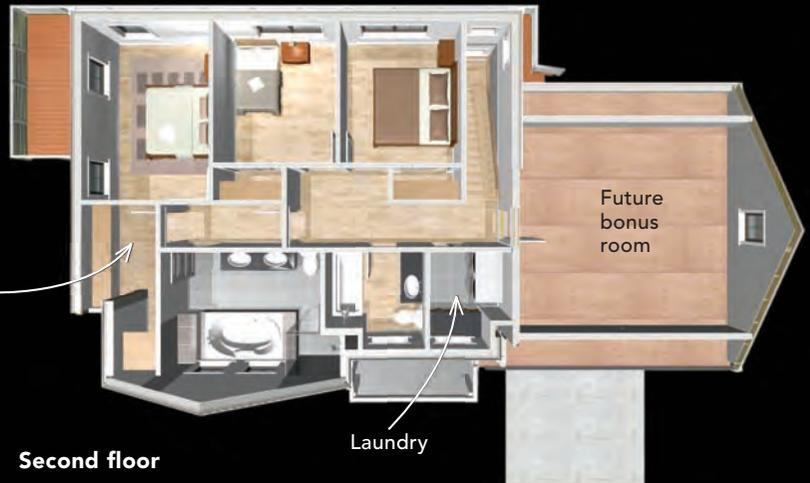
Storage can't be an afterthought in a smaller house. In this house's current configuration, there's plenty of storage space in the above-garage bonus area and in the basement. But if those areas are converted into living space, Maines has included other convenient storage for daily items throughout the plan including the pantry in the kitchen, two closets off the front entry, a closet in the flex room, and a large walk-in closet in the master suite. Finally, the garage, which can be thought of as an oversize one-car garage, has plenty of additional room.



Clutter cutter. Garages tend to become dumping grounds for tools, toys, and seasonal items. Gladiator's storage system of cabinets, shelving, and wall storage provides organized storage and dedicated work space.



First floor



Second floor

SPECS

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 2½

Size: 2,533 sq. ft.

Completed: 2017

Location: East Greenwich, R.I.

Designer: Michael Maines, michaelmaines.com

Builder: Mike Guertin

to the in-law apartment. By finishing the underside of the deck and including an integral water-collection and gutter system, he has already created a covered entry and dry patio space.

The flex room, though, is the most intriguing space in the house. The configuration of pocket doors around the first-floor flex room and half bathroom may seem like overkill at first glance, but they serve two purposes. First, the doors into the flex room itself allow the room to be closed for privacy if, for

example, someone is working from home. Plus, the second hallway pocket door allows the room to function as a small guest suite with a bedroom and half bath. Second, if the occupants ever decide on one-level living, the pocket door between the bathroom and the entry can be replaced with a wall and the half bath expanded into the pantry to create a full bathroom, converting the flex room into a first-floor master suite.

If additional space is needed on the second floor, the garage attic, which is insulated and

drywalled, could provide about 284 sq. ft. of living space after adding 42-in. knee walls.

Farm table at the center of the kitchen

When interior designer Pam Unwin-Barkley begins thinking of the space in a project, she considers both a client's needs and their things. "In effect," she relates, "I'm telling a story about who they are and how they live."

With this property, there is no specific client, so as she and Guertin discussed the



Gather here. Illuminated by Kichler fixtures, the large, multipurpose island with seating for three anchors the kitchen. Cosmopolitan White Caesarstone counters were chosen for their durability and natural warmth.

interior design, they focused on the modern aspect of Maines' contemporary design. By using clean lines and a minimalist style, her goal was a timeless aesthetic that would weather changing design trends.

She chose a minimal trim package with drywall returns for the windows rather than casing. The door casings and baseboards have simple, flat profiles. The color palette of the Sherwin Williams paint used on the walls—light grays, soft blues, and pale greens with touches of cream and yellow—work

together to create a light and airy interior. At the center of the first floor, a deep-gray tone (Sherwin Williams' Let it Rain) on the four pantry walls is a focal point, surrounded by related, softer tones on the perimeter, like the bluish Mountain Air in the kitchen.

Just as the farmhouse theme drove the exterior design, it also guided Maines in the kitchen where he interpreted the classic farmhouse table as a modern island.

The kitchen island gives the room an L-shape that allows circulation during par-

ties and room for two to work around each other. It also serves as a boundary, delineating the cooking space and separating it from the adjoining dining and living spaces. It is intentionally placed close to the front door and the garage entrance as a landing spot for groceries entering the house. And, to ensure there's plenty of storage in the kitchen, Maines incorporated a pantry near the stove end of the island.

The Shaker-style pine kitchen cabinets echo the three-panel, Shaker-style doors

ProHOME SPONSORS

The following manufacturers supported the design of the interior of the ProHOME. Visit FineHomebuilding.com/prohome for a complete list of project partners and for more information on the products and materials used in the ProHOME.





Modern master. The crisp blue walls and clean lines and white surround of the soaking tub create a bright, airy, and welcoming master bath.

throughout the home, and the natural pine coordinates with the 5¼-in.-wide carbonized bamboo flooring.

A bit of luxury in the hardest-working spaces

The second floor of the ProHOME is a hard-working space. The bedrooms are only as large as they need to be, which allows a lot of amenities to be packed into the compact plan. In addition to two bedrooms, their associated full bath, and a laundry room, Maines also worked in a full master suite.

The bathrooms are an especially important design element in the house. Because they are used daily, the spaces shape the occupants' experience in the home.

In the full bathrooms, Unwin-Barkley chose 8x6 and 12x24 gray tiles for the floors with matching grout to play down the grid pattern. In the interest of comfortable winter mornings, Guertin installed ProtectoWrap's Peel and Heat Complete electric radiant heat mats before tiling the floors.

The master bath includes both a shower and a soaking tub for a bit of luxury. The shower has white, 2-in.-square mosaic floor tiles and stacked 3x9 horizontal tiles in a bond pattern that helps draw the eye horizontally around the room. The soaking tub is centered between the windows, both for the outdoor connection and to bring natural light into the room, which is

reflected around the space by the vanity mirrors on the opposite wall. The tub deck, as well as the vanity top and shower curb, are Caesarstone's Fresh Concrete, a light-colored surface with hardly any lines or veins. Without any grout lines or visible seams, the durable, solid-surface tops are easy to clean. Guertin took advantage of the area beneath the tub surround to add storage by building 12-in.-deep drawers into the front of the surround.

The other full bath has the same design sensibility, tweaked slightly for the space. Because the room is smaller, the 4x12 tile in the combination tub/shower runs vertically in order to draw the eye upward instead of horizontally, creating the perception of more space. These tiles have a raised curvilinear pattern that adds texture and interest and also emphasizes the vertical lines.

The choice of bathroom fixtures was driven by both performance and aesthetics. They had to be WaterSense qualified, which means third-party certified to be 20% more water efficient than the average fixture in their category while still performing as well or better than those less-efficient products. Aesthetically, the fixtures had to have clean, modern lines.

Both upstairs bathrooms have American Standard Town Square toilets with their Right Height design, which makes it easier to sit and stand from the toilet. The 1.28 gal.



ELEVATING THE STANDARD

American Standard plumbing products

The ProHOME plumbing fixtures needed to be efficient and attractive. American Standard's Berwick and Serin series products in the upstairs bathrooms offered the WaterSense efficiency and the clean, modern design features the designer needed. Designer DXV products add a luxurious touch to the more public first-floor powder room and the kitchen.

flush is water efficient, while the concealed trapway offers visually clean lines.

Building a conversation, one house at a time

The goal of the ProHOME has been to create a resource, in both the magazine and online, for designers and builders interested in good design and building high-performance houses. By showing and discussing the materials, methods, and proportions used in the house and the reasons for each decision, we hope to stimulate discussion about best practices and good craftsmanship, resulting in more homes built to the ProHOME standard. In a small way, we hope this effect has already started with the high-school students from the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center who worked alongside Mike and Bruce Guertin throughout the build.

The mission will continue with the 2017 ProHOME. Look out for the introduction to the new build in our next issue. □

Sean Groom is contributing editor. Photos by Nat Rea, except where noted.