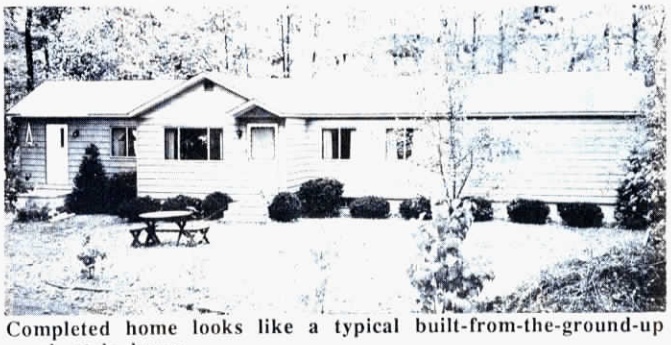


Completed home looks like a typical built-from-the-ground-up ranch style home.

SAVE THOUSANDS BY "BEEFING UP" MOBILE HOME

Trailer House Converted To "Dream" Ranch Home

By Richard E. Henry

We got around the out-of-reach down payment, high interest rates and budget-busting mortgage payments for a new home by breaking the financial monster down into smaller pieces and 'building' our dream ranch house over a matter of several years. Our 'different approach' started with an affordable, fully furnished mobile home that measured 14 by 70-ft.

We lived in comfort all the eight years it took to create our ranch house, with central heat in winter and air conditioning in summer. Modern mobile homes are energy efficient, easily financed and insured.

As the photos show, we took a plain-looking mobile home, set it on a full basement, added a bedroom at the back, extended the living room at the front, put on a new roof and siding and ended up with a very good-looking (and quite 'conventional' in appearance) ranch house. The average person driving by would never guess it started out as a mobile home.

Whether new or used, the mobile home should be as wide and long as possible. Although future additions will expand it, the mobile home itself will be the main part of the finished house. It should be no less than 12 ft. wide, but 14 ft. is better. In a mobile home, two feet of additional width makes a tremendous difference in floor space. Make sure the home is of quality construction with a beefy foundation frame and walls with rugged framing.

A solid foundation is required when making a mobile home into a permanent home. The first thing needed is a 'blueprint' of the basement walls, supports and beam locations. This doesn't have to be elaborate but must be accurate. I measured our home very carefully and made the outside dimensions exactly two inches shorter and narrower. This allowed a 1-in. projection of the foundation all around.

For all but the last two courses of the basement walls, 12-in. blocks were used. The last two courses of block are eight inches, and they were laid after the home was placed on the foundation. It had to be done this way so the I-beam frame of the mobile home would clear the wall as it is moved over it.

Enough support must be provided to prevent the frame of the mobile home from sagging anywhere along its length. Support points must be no more than 10-ft. apart.

As indicated in the drawing, we used four sets of double 4-in. I-beams and two sets of block wall supports (pilasters) between the two end walls. The 4-in. I-beams, plus the 2-in. frame beams, on the mobile home, created a gap an even 16 inches between the home and the foundation walls. The last two courses of 8-in. block (blocks actually are 7 5/8 in. with 3/8-in. mortar joints) fit the space exactly.

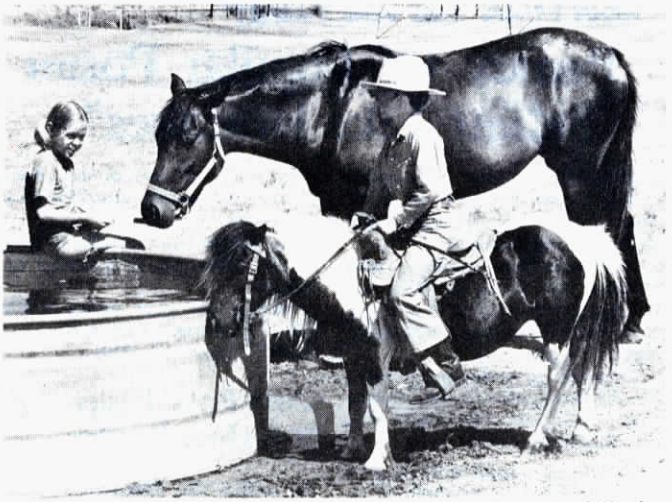
When the basement walls were finished (except for the last two courses), the entire length of the front wall had to be firmly backfilled so a bulldozer could maneuver the home to be parallel with the wall and about one foot from it. The setup crew then used jacks, I-beams and rollers to position the home on the foundation walls.

Before backfilling, we made sure the wall wouldn't collapse from the weight of the backfill and all the equipment so close to it, by rigidly bracing it inside with 2 by 4's and 2 by 6's angled down from the wall to the back footing.

As soon as our home was set up, and water, electric and sewer connections were made (provision for these should be made ahead of time, of course), we moved right in and started living.

Because there still was a large hole in our basement where the back bedroom was to be, we began construction on it next. The floor was built first and the framing was cantilevered six inches beyond the back wall of the basement to make the room a little wider. The innner ends of the floor joists are supported by a triple, 20-ft. 2 by 10-in. beam. The beam is suported under the center by a pilaster and I-beams.

Siding was removed from the mobile home to expose the wall studs. Then, extension walls were assembled on the floor, raised into position and fastened solidly to the wall studs. A 2 by 6-in. ledger, also fastened to the wall of the mobile home, supports the roof rafters. It's positioned so the finished roof matches the original roof edge. This makes the ceiling in the extension a little lower than the ceiling in the rest of the home, but that cannot be helped. The flat, sloping roof over the extension is finished with double coverage roll roofing.



A miniature horse must be no taller than 34-in. At full size they can weigh as much as 225 lbs.

HIS PRIZED STALLION IS 27 IN. HIGH

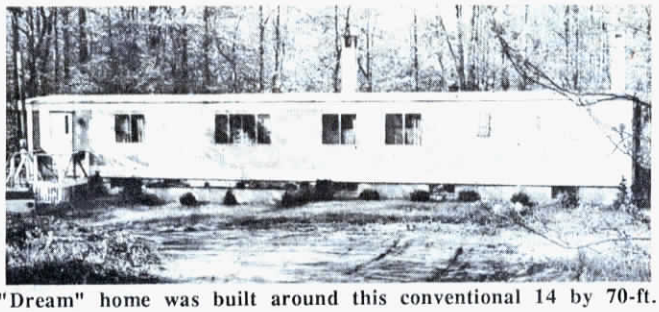
"Mini" Horses Great Pets For Children

"They're easily trained to saddle or cart. A 3-year-old child can handle one and ride it for 5 or 6 years," says Leon Blair, Kennedale, Texas, who maintains a herd of 48 "mini" horses, including a prize stallion that's just 27 in. tall.

Blair started raising miniatures so his grandkids could have their own horses to ride. Mini horses were originally developed about 300 years ago in Europe for pulling ore carts in restricted mine shafts. To be registered by the American Shetland Pony Club, the miniature horses must be no taller than 34 in. At full size, they can weigh as much as 225 lbs.

Mini's eat whatever full-size horses eat but in much smaller quanties. One quarter acre of good pasture, or lawn, will sustain one mini. "I can feed my whole herd for considerably less than I spend on my five Arabians," says Blair.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dr. Leon B. Blair, 3604 Kimberly Lane, Ft. Worth, Tex. 76133 (ph 817 292-1405).



"Dream" home was built around this conventional 14 by 70-ft. trailer house.

Building a completely new roof over a mobile home isn't as difficult as it might seem, especially if the mobile home has a straight roof line as ours did. A 2 by 6 is nailed solidly to the roof edge and into each truss. This was done right through the metal roof covering. Care had to be taken to make sure the nails hit what turned out to be 1-in. truss members.

The rafters, then, were nailed to the 2 by 6's and the roof completed as on a conventional building. As a precaution against the rafters spreading, I nailed 1- by 4-in. collar beams horizontally be-tween every third pair of rafters.

When the front extension was added to the home, the picture window in the original mobile home was removed and installed in the new front wall in approximately the same position. An opening 10 ft. wide was made in the wall of the mobile home, and a 4 by 4-in. beam installed over the opening that now leads to the new room. The beam supports the roof trusses, and this construction is the same as in a conventional home.

A steel-clad door with a small roof extension over it completes the new front entrance. The front-facing gable of the roof over the living room extension blends into the main roof to create an attractive overall T-shape.

A local contractor was called in to install aluminum fascia and soffits on the roof edges, and siding on the gable ends. We then, decided to go the whole way and apply new siding to the entire house. While this was purely 'cosmetic' it certainly removed all traces of the mobile home appearance. In the future, replacing the existing windows with modern vinyl-framed, double-glazed units will make our home even more energy efficient.

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