Friday, December 20, 2013 | **M3** THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

MANSION



OLD **HOUSE:**

Insulation and cladding \$34,400

Windows

\$30,000

Heating **S17,900**

Flooring \$16,500

Bathroom and

kitchen \$25,000

Wiring and lighting **S13,700**

Landscaping and hardscape \$34,500

New roof

\$20,500 Furnishings, misc

\$13,000





The extension of the Stättner home in Eichgraben, Vienna, has a large playroom for the children, above and at left. At right is a bridge with clear side walls that links the old house with the extension



NEW EXTENSION:

Concrete structure, bathroom enclosure

S178,000

Timber framing \$62,000

\$21,000

Glass

562,000 Heating and

electric 569,000

Exterior wood cladding

\$21,000

Kitchen, furniture \$34,500

Bathroom

\$7,000

Polished asphalt \$13,500

Decoration, carpeting, misc. \$13,500

> house was built ir the 1930s and totaled about 1,292 square feet



An Architect's Eye to the Future

Over the hills and through the woods of Vienna was a ramshackle one-bedroom home with enchanting views; now, it is a modern, two-story spread with flexible areas for the kids as they grow and an apartment for grandma

BY RUTH BLOOMFIELD

DEEP IN THE VIENNA woods, architect Erwin Stättner has built a house for his young family—but one that is future-

The project began almost exactly eight years ago when Mr. Stättner, now 39 and his wife Christina, 33, a radiologist, went to view a house in the town of Eichgraben, about 20 miles west of Vienna.

They trudged through snow 3 feet deep with their baby daughter Anna, now 9 years old, in tow to inspect the house, which was built in the 1930s. It was small—around 1,292 square feet with just one bedroom—and ramshackle, but the couple was enchanted by its views of mountains and forests.

"It was so beautiful that we felt we had to have it," said Mr. Stättner, who is the director of architectural firm Franz. "Everyone told us not to because of the state it was in but I thought: 'I am an architect, I can handle it. I can do something with this.' "

Before they bought the house the couple had been living in Vienna, but Mrs. Stättner had been brought up in the country and yearned to return. Mr. Stättner's wish was to buy an old house that could be renovated and extended. They paid €100,000, or about \$137,000, for the property in January 2006 and moved in with Mr. Stättner's obliging mother in Vienna for 18 months while he oversaw phase one of the project, giving the old house a complete face-lift.

Outside, the brick walls were clad with a thick layer of insulation topped with highly polished gray plaster to give it a more modern look. "Inproofed as his family evolves. side, the space was reconfigured to provide an open plan living room and kitchen, a television room and large utility/storage room, plus bedroom space in the attic."

> Mr. Stättner also moved windows out of their traditional, symmetrical positions and into something a little more haphazard.

"I just wanted something a little bit cooler," he explained. For this phase, they spent \$206,000.

The family, which by this

point included a second child, Jacob, now 6, moved in in 2007, and Mr. Stättner began property. In September 2011. and with a budget of \$481,000, he spent 11 months creating a two-floor, modular timber-and-glass extension which brought the home's total square footage to 3,552

This second phase proved stickier to achieve than the first. For starters, the local authority in charge of issuing building permits wasn't enthusiastic about approving a twostory extension, which was considered to be too large for the site. And the land has a steep slope, which would make construction a challenge.

square feet.

Mr. Stättner was able to solve both problems at once.

FAMILY MATTERS Christina and Erwin Stättner with their three kids, clockwise from left: Jacob, Anna and David.

The lower floor has been set down into the ground, reducing the roof height to a level acceptable to the local council. This isn't a conventional basement extension, however. The slope of the land means that the front facade is above ground (and lighted by floor ceiling windows), while the rear of the structure sinks underground, with only a thin strip of window to bring in light.

This semi-subterranean ground floor is open plan, with a sleeping and a living/kitchen area divided by a concrete enclosure that is painted a vivid lime green and contains a bathroom. In addition to providing a splash of color, the bathroom enclosure plays a crucial structural role of supporting the weight of the upper floor. At present, the ground-floor level is used as extra living space considering how to extend the and guest accommodations, but in time it could be used as a family apartment for Mr. Stättner's mother.

The upper floor of the extension is entirely given over to a huge children's play room for Anna, Jacob, and their younger brother David, age 5. It carpeted in green to reflect the grass outside and is full of swings, hammocks and rope climbs, as well as a slightly less popular space for homework and piano practice.

As the children get older, Mr. Stättner plans to subdivide the playroom to create separate bedrooms. He has already made this project easy on himself by locating windows and skylights in a way that suits individual spaces. Anna turns 10 next year and she will be getting the first private slice of the playroom. As the boys get older they, too, will get their own bedrooms, leaving the old section of the house to Mr. and Mrs. Stättner, who will then be able to have a large master suite taking the entire attic floor.

Looking even further ahead, Mr. Stättner has plans to cut a hole in the gable wall and build an external staircase giving the children private access to "their" wing.

"When they are 16 or 20 and they want to go out and stay out late they will have their own stairs and then I don't mind," he explained. "They can stay at home forever if they like."

