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VOL. 1, 2021

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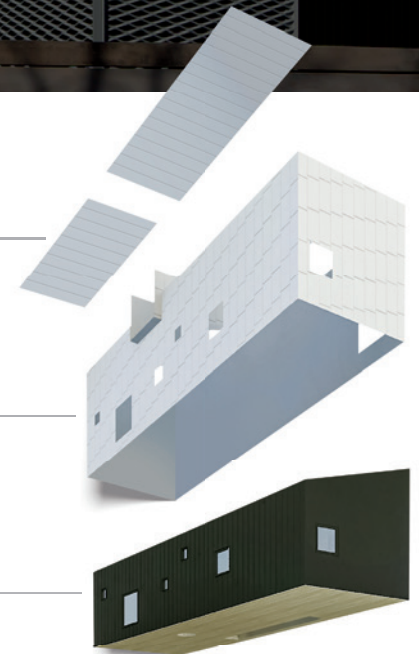
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CONTENTS

VOL. 1, 2021

Features

20 CASE STUDY: SPECIAL EFFECTS

Art, architecture, and landscape ground a Dallas house by Alterstudio Architecture and Steven Hild Custom Builder in its suburban lot.

24 DESIGN LAB: NATURAL COLLABORATIONS

Working in harmony with the landscape tuned a trio of houses to its restorative rhythms.

Departments

10 EDITOR'S NOTE

15 PRO-FILE DESIGN

TGH Architects survived last year's spring tsunami, but a different firm emerged in its wake.

12 AIA CRAN

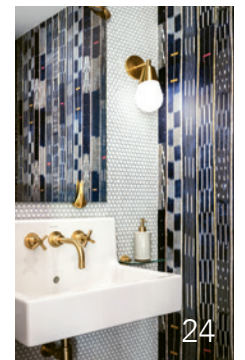
Meet CRAN's new chairperson, Tom Meiklejohn III. The network is introducing a virtual education plan for 2021.

63 RD PRODUCTS

Fresh products for your next projects.

66 PARTI SHOT

CLB Architects designs a sprawling family retreat with showstopping views of the Grand Tetons.



On the Cover: Highland Park Residence by Alterstudio. Photo: Casey Dunn.

RD

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Studio Crit



As we begin the new year, the shadow of COVID-19 still looms over us. Last year, we struggled through weeks and months in survival mode, just trying to keep our businesses and personal lives going. But as the light begins to flicker ahead in the distance, many of us realize we have to do some deliberate planning for the future. After we're vaccinated, we will emerge from our caves and attempt to resume some semblance of normal life. The question is, what will the new normal look like?

For those who have toiled from home even before the pandemic, work life might not change that radically. Certainly, we will all be glad to go out to lunch—and dinner—and all those wonderful activities we've gone without for so long. We will meet face to face with clients and colleagues again, reinforcing those ineffable human connections that are so hard to conjure on video calls and phone calls. We will stand close, putting our heads together over plans, computer screens, iPads, napkin sketches. We will walk home sites unencumbered by masks, breathing in the earthy fragrances of the trees, grass, flowers.

Residential architects who maintain studios outside the home will welcome this return to normalcy, too, but you have more ahead of you to consider. It may be time for a deeper reckoning on how and where you work. Will you, should you, bring everyone back to a shared workspace?

Surely, some members of your firm miss the collaborative exchange that comes of working in close physical proximity. There are those serendipitous moments when someone glimpses another's computer screen and a creative spark is ignited, a problem is solved, a new path is taken. Then there's the more formal crit, when everyone comes together to brainstorm a project pinned to the wall. There is gold in these moments together.

But, there's also the tiresome commute to the office and the real struggle of triangulated trips to the jobsite and school or childcare pickups. Liberated from these concerns, some of your people may have concluded they are more efficient and happier working from home. Or maybe they would be happier working from another home base entirely—from another city or town?

Yes, last year we were locked in the shadows but, at the same time, we may also have seen our lives in a new light. Must we go to an office? Or, must we go there every day?

When the COVID fog finally lifts, not everyone will reinvent their workplaces right away. You might choose a hybrid model for the near term—asking your staff to come in several times a week for full or partial days. You might eventually downsize your space and infuse it with some of the pleasures of home—an outdoor space, perhaps.

Ah, but reinvention is your wheelhouse, and when you figure out what the new program is, you'll know just what to do.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "S. Claire Conroy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

S. Claire Conroy
Editor-in-Chief
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A Letter From the Incoming AIA CRAN Chair

It is my great pleasure to be the 2021 AIA CRAN chairperson.

This is, again, a year of challenge, but unlike last year, one of hope as well. I follow Lindsay Cullum-Colwell, AIA, who so admirably led us through the rapidly changing and difficult landscape of 2020. My thanks go out to Lindsay, to all of the CRAN Advisory Group folks, as well as to Susan Parrish, our AIA director, and all the AIA support staff who stepped up to see CRAN negotiate its way through the year. Together, we send our heartfelt thoughts to all those who have suffered from illness and or death due to COVID-19. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. A huge “thank you” is owed to all the medical people and frontline workers across the country, who have fought and worked endlessly to bring comfort to all who have suffered.

I chose to become involved with CRAN after attending the 2015 Minneapolis/St. Paul CRAN Symposium. The spirit, enthusiasm, and fellowship I have experienced with the architects involved is truly astonishing. Their shared passion for creating high-end and beautiful residential architecture inspires me. I am so pleased that not only have I become associated with so many talented and dedicated professionals over the past six years, but that I can also count them among my friends.

The principal challenge of 2020 extends into 2021: We will not be having our “in-person” symposium this year either. In response, we are already well underway with plans for more online education credit sessions, similar to those we offered in the last few months of 2020. These sessions will continue to be provided through AIAU, and our goal is to create the highest quality, live educational experience we can—one that’s on par with our symposium offerings in past years. Without the backing and faith shown by our many sponsors, we could not do this. We thank them for their ongoing financial support for these sessions.

The challenges of 2020 have likely forever changed how we all conduct business. It has certainly challenged how we at CRAN seek to fulfill our mission. While its effects linger into our new year, we at CRAN are working to assemble a series of wonderful educational sessions for 2021, as well as planning for our eventual coming together in September of 2022 in Chicago. Stay tuned.

Finally, many, many thanks to Ms. S. Claire Conroy and RD magazine for their continuous support of AIA CRAN and the opportunity to reach out to all of you. It means a lot to us!

Sincerely,
Tom W. Meiklejohn III, AIA



Photo: Courtesy AIA CRAN

Tom W. Meiklejohn III,
AIA

AIA CRAN Online Learning Schedule for 2021

The theme of this year's live online sessions is The Iconic House. Speakers will be updated on the AIA CRAN website at aia.org and on residentialdesignmagazine.com, as the information becomes available.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 1-2 P.M. ET

"The Iconic House in Contemporary Design I"

Speakers: Stuart Cohen, FAIA, moderator; with presentations by Jean Rehkamp, AIA, Thomas Ryan, AIA, Chris Baker, AIA, and Peter Moore, AIA.



Photo: AIA CRAN

Stuart Cohen,
FAIA

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1-2 P.M. ET

"Restoring an Iconic House: The Farnsworth House"

Presentation by Ashley Wilson, FAIA, ASID, Graham Gund Architect at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 1-2 P.M. ET

"Iconic Houses: Lessons Learned on Detailing for Durability"

Presented by Matthew B. Bronski, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 20, 1-2 P.M. ET

"The Iconic House in Contemporary Design II"

Speakers: Stuart Cohen, FAIA, moderator; presenters to be determined.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1-2 P.M. ET

"The Iconic Room in Contemporary Design"

Presenters to be determined.

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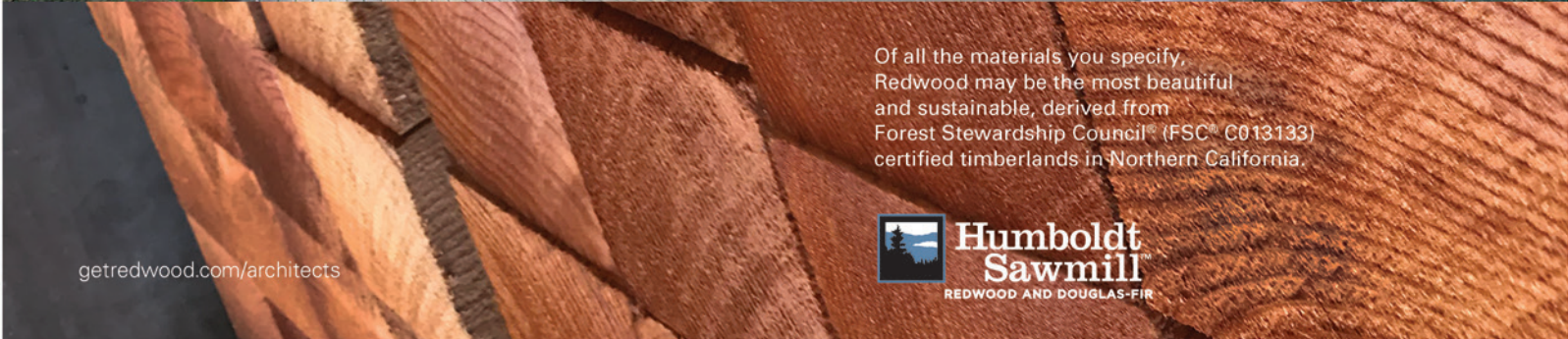
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The Next Chapter

TURNBULL GRIFFIN HAESLOOP
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA



Eric Haesloop,
FAIA

Those of us who have endured the years 2020 and 2021 will look back upon them as a turning point in our lives. No one will remain unchanged by their impact, whether the change was already in the works or came about suddenly through circumstance. For the stellar residential architecture firm Turnbull Griffin Haesloop in California's Bay Area, changes were brewing before the pandemic took hold.

Partner Mary Griffin, FAIA, who had steered William Turnbull Associates following the death of founder and

husband William Turnbull through its transition to Turnbull Griffin Haesloop, was ready to segue into emerita status. Partner Stefan Hastrup, AIA, was also on the cusp of pulling back from the firm to pursue his own interests. But partner Eric Haesloop, FAIA, was in his stride, doing some of the best work of his career with TGH. And then the pandemic hit.

Paralleling the precipitous drop in stock values back in March 2020, the bottom fell out of the 12-person firm's project pipeline. Houses were put on hold or canceled and, most significantly, a \$40 million hotel commission went dark. Back then, no architects or builders could predict whether the market

Photo: David Wakely Photography



This page: Anchored to its steep, hillside site, the Kentfield Residence captures views of Mount Tamalpais and the San Francisco Bay. Active and passive strategies minimize its consumption of resources.



Photos this page: David Wakely Photography



and the work would come back. The time of reckoning for TGH had come.

With Mary and Stefan’s trajectory pointing toward the exit door, the task of reinvention fell to Eric Haesloop. Eric had worked with Mary since the mid-80s—first at Turnbull Associates and then, following Bill’s death in 1997, as a critical collaborator in Turnbull Griffin Haesloop. He was eager for the design challenges ahead, with a special passion for the custom residential work. It was a given that he would try to continue on in some fashion. The question was, what would the next chapter look like?

“When COVID hit, it happened to coincide with the lease renewal on our studio in San Francisco,” Eric recalls. “They had been great landlords, and they basically gave us an extension on the lease to get our act together. Over the years, we had accumulated a massive amount of stuff. So we had to go through that, and we took the last of Bill’s drawings to the UC Berkeley archives. COVID made us think about where we were as a firm, where we wanted to be, and what we wanted to be doing. It was a good time to reevaluate things.”



This page: TGH designed this modern barn house to engage its 160-acre site devoted to sustainable farming. Bedrooms and kitchen flank the lofty living room, opening to the long view south. Passive cooling and heating, thermal mass, plus geothermal and radiant systems earned it LEED Platinum.

Design DNA

Would Eric, after all these years, go out on his own as a sole practitioner and practice under his name alone? Certainly, that was a viable possibility. But baked into his DNA, as it was with all the partners, is that Turnbull code: a tremendous respect for the landscape and a humble approach to synthesizing nature, climate, and program.

Bill’s work at Sea Ranch, a coastal community in Northern California, helped create the model for site-sensitive domestic architecture. The work was modern but steeped in the modest traditions of industrial and agricultural buildings—elemental and efficient. Eric, Mary, and Stefan never strayed from this path, and it sets them apart from many of their peers.

As Eric was pondering his own path, Mary suggested an alternative. “I’d been thinking about how to restructure, and she said, why not keep on with TGH?” he recalls. The market was returning, with a special vigor and appetite for just the kind of houses TGH excels in—rural retreats in beautiful places. And that hotel project was beginning to heat up again.

“Good things come out of complexity—houses are much more sustainable.”

—Eric Haesloop, FAIA

The stars aligned for a refreshed TGH venture, with Eric at the helm. He’s reassembled key members of the band—Jule Tsai, who’s worked for the firm for 15 years; Sarah Dewey, AIA, 8 years; and Matthew Waxman, Matt Au, and Yan Huang, who’s working as a consultant from his home in England. The San Francisco studio is gone, and everyone is working from home. It’s certainly a change from the bustle and buzz of a highly collaborative open office. Now there’s Slack, Zoom, and SketchUp, combined with cautious in-person site visits to Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino, Carmel.

“I’m of the age where I do miss the studio culture,” Eric says. “And we may look at space in the future. But I think what will happen is we’ll move to a hybrid model of working from home and the studio.

“It’s an interesting mix right now of the virtual and the physical. Our kind of work—small scale buildings—requires intense construction management to get it the way we and the clients want it. Those site visits keep the work grounded and keep it from getting too abstract.”



Photos this page: Matthew Millmann Photography

This page: The net-zero Sonoma Residence embraces its sumptuous site for easy indoor/outdoor living. Pulling apart the plan while continuing the green roof frames the pond and oak meadow for a protected outdoor seating area.



Photos this page: David Wakely Photography



This page: South Bay residence is a compound designed for a creative “maker” couple. It combines his-and-hers studios with a main dwelling centered on the long, protected views.

There’s that DNA kicking in again. TGH’s dedication to putting the site and clients first is matched by a remarkable amount of architectural restraint. Design is never celebrated for its own sake—it results from solving problems of place and program, while also implementing sound standards of sustainable design and construction. Their solutions are always beautiful and original—a seemingly inevitable marriage of house and landscape that allows their

owners to fully inhabit both realms. Although thoroughly modern, the firm’s houses are never cold and hard-edged; they never lose their warm domesticity.

It’s this delicate touch that keeps clients returning, and it’s especially appropriate to this particular moment in time. “We are busier than ever,” says Eric. “In fact, we’re at the point where we’re trying to figure out if we need to hire another person.”

Part of the crunch is that \$40

million hotel project, an extension of Long Meadow Ranch winery, which the firm designed a number of years back. And then there’s the renewed demand for those rural retreats. “As it was with the firm, the pandemic has caused a lot of people to reassess where they live and work,” he notes. “Sea Ranch added fiber-optic internet, so that’s enabled a lot of people to work remotely from there.” Even after all these years, TGH still does a brisk business in Sea Ranch houses.

Although the firm primarily designs second homes, their clients often ask for houses that could function as a retirement home “one day.” So they are more fully developed and programmed than simple weekend cottages.

Simple Little Buildings

The custom work is bread and butter for TGH, but it’s ever more time consuming to execute. There are Title 24 energy-efficiency standards to meet (or exceed), fire concerns along the Wildland Urban Interface, and earthquake codes. Not only do the complexities of permitting and code compliance tax a small firm’s production capacity, they call for coordinating multiple consultants.

TGH’s longevity gives them an advantage over younger firms because

Photo: David Wakely Photography



The soaring main living room segues into a large covered porch overlooking distant hills and bay.

they have a deep bench of experts they can call upon when needed, and the expertise to know when it’s necessary to do so. “We have an amazing energy consultant,” Eric says. “Good things come out of this complexity—houses

are much more sustainable. But we need a lot of production capability just to meet permit requirements. It’s a very cumbersome situation. On the architect’s side, it adds at least another 10% to the time involved.”

“Back when Bill was first practicing, those were simple little buildings,” he adds. “We know so much more now about what we need to do and how we need to build. And the great thing is, people are fully on board with it. Of the projects I have right now, one is completely off the grid and two houses are aiming at net-zero. Clients come in wanting this.”

The complexity and expense of today’s “simple buildings” is regrettable, indeed. But those infused with the TGH DNA will rest lightly, durably, and beautifully on the land. —S. Claire Conroy

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Art, architecture, and landscape ground a Dallas house in its suburban lot.

BY CHERYL WEBER

LOCATION: DALLAS

ARCHITECT: ALTERSTUDIO ARCHITECTURE

BUILDER: STEVEN HILD CUSTOM BUILDER

Kevin Alter has lived in Texas long enough to understand the power of the sun there. The way shadows fall across the land. How the light changes over the course of a day, giving a house an improvisational nature. As intangible as it is vital, sunlight “starts to become a register for one’s place in the world,” he says.

This concept is especially useful when there are no landscape elements or borrowed views to cue the architecture. When Kevin and his partners at Alterstudio were hired to design a house for full-time art collectors on a nondescript lot in Dallas’ Highland Park neighborhood, it became a touchstone for creating a building that would “have presence but not easily explain itself,” enlivened by light and a new, integrated landscape.

As serious art patrons, the closely involved clients already had a relationship with landscape architect David Hocker, and hired him to help knit the house and a separate art gallery into the suburban plot. This was particularly important because of the house’s size. More than 12,000 square feet, including the gallery, it is nevertheless one of the smallest on the block in a tony neighborhood consisting of contemporary Tudor mansions and French chateaus. “We made an effort to see the house as part of a continuous landscape, a slightly enigmatic box, with the landscape meant to continue through,” Kevin says. “The idea was that there would be a private zone in front made with landscape elements, and a different courtyard in back,” with the first floor open to two sides.







This page: Designing a house that holds its own with a stellar art collection is no small feat. Alterstudio's effort is self-effacing without being self-erasing. A second story clad in Indiana limestone cantilevers over a glass main level, punctuated with gardens, terraces, and a reflecting pool. The highly curated insertions of landscape elements ground both the architecture and the art in the temporal world.

On the relatively flat lot, zoning requirements were the most powerful site condition driving the design. Deep front and rear setback requirements meant that most of the building had to sit near the center of the three-quarter-acre parcel. To create that flow-through relationship, the architects came up with an Indiana limestone-clad bar that hovers over a glassy first floor, bending to enclose a private backyard large enough for a pool, play yard, and reception events. The building's boomerang-like contours respond to the lot, which widens in the back and abuts two alleys to the west and north. The footprint is hinged where the garage, office, and family room

on the west meet the main living spaces on the south. Upstairs, the children's bedrooms lie along the west side, with a playroom acting as a knuckle between their wing and the wife's office—an open-to-below "cockpit" in the center of everything—and main bedroom suite.

The lower floor is narrower than the upper one to create covered outdoor space. "We have this big bar that claims the space and defines where living happens, but it's not so definitive about whether you're inside or outside when you're under the overhang or next to the glass," Kevin says. "We like that ambiguity."



Channeling Discovery

The couple, with three young children, lived across the street when this lot came up for sale, and chose Alterstudio among several other firms invited to present a design concept. “They wanted something special, a building that would be commensurate with the kind of art they collect,” Kevin says.

If the house is abstractly modern (the colored site plan recalls the work of Brazilian landscape architect Roberto Burle Marx), it is also complex and cinematic, inviting interaction and discovery. A chunky, rock-covered berm scattered with wildflowers, prickly pear cactus, and mesquite trees weaves like a sine wave along the street and west alley, enclosing a

This page: The house and the separate, partially sunken art gallery share a protected courtyard. The limestone façade’s detailing is echoed in the living room’s fireplace wall.





This page: Glass walls extend below the floor and into channels in the ceiling to encourage the merging of indoors and out. In the kitchen, a large marble-topped island and a built-in banquette, backed by a slatted wall, provide “stasis” against the pull of the outdoors, says Kevin.

garden dotted with cedar elms. Visitors enter on the southeast along an angled stone pathway interplanted with sedum, drawn toward the limestone bar’s 34-foot cantilever. Under the cantilever, a reflective glass-lined hole opens up overhead. “Around that, upstairs, are the most private areas of the house,” Kevin says. “It’s an interesting mixture of public and private”—and also inside and outside: “You’re coming in and being reintroduced to the sky in its frame.”

Straight ahead and down a few steps is the detached art gallery, which was dug several feet into the ground to cheat the 12-foot plate height requirement near the lot’s edge. Visitors expect to go straight, but the main entrance is to the left, marked by a pivoting, 4-foot-wide walnut door and, next to it, a glass panel revealing a piece of art in the foyer.

Interiors, too, explore the occupants’ relationship with light and landscape. A look left in the entry hall offers an

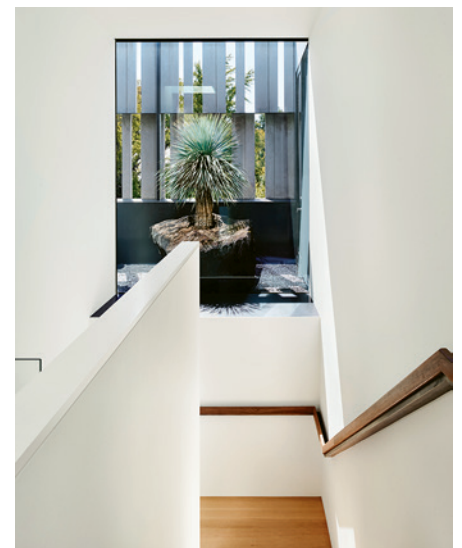


outdoor view, and the living room is caught between the front and back yards, with a void overhead. “The house sets up temptations to see, and when you get there, you realize other things are happening,” Kevin says.

Where the limestone cladding breaks up along the street façade, for example, is a second-floor pocket garden accessible from the playroom, the wife’s office, and the husband’s bath. A window into this garden on the stair landing reveals lava stone hollowed out for a plant. “You’re reintroduced to the out of doors in a way that’s unusual,” Kevin says. The landing places occupants at eye level with the garden, and shadows from the slatted walnut screen around the office create atmospheric light. At night, the office hangs like a lantern over the living room.

Complex Minimalism

Kevin’s admiration for modern design is evident, but he views it more as a setup for special effects than an end in itself. “Modernism in America has generally been misunderstood; blame the Bauhaus,” he says. “We like the Scandinavian version that is warm and cozy. If you ask people to name a modern artist, they’d probably say Picasso, yet his work has all this complexity and multiplicity. I like abstraction, but I think it’s there to allow other things to show.”



This page: The solid limestone cladding breaks into a screen, partially revealing a private pocket garden planted in lava rock. The garden is a focal point for the wife’s second-story office and playroom, and provides a light well for the husband’s bath.



This page: On the second floor, the wife can keep tabs on her three young children in an adjacent playroom. Her view of the pocket garden offers a moment of zen respite amid the chaos. Corridors in the private gallery are wide to keep little hands and feet away from the art walls.

A minimal material palette sets the foundation for this approach. Indiana limestone cladding was chosen because it looks homogenous in flat light, yet sunlight throws its craggy surface into relief. On the other hand, Kevin views showy mechanical details as distracting and “a little self-indulgent.” He says, “My partner Ernesto appreciates that every consultant we’ve worked with thinks our drawings are the best. Meticulous detailing is present everywhere.” However, “we try to detail in a way that changes the way a building feels, and the object of all the effort is usually to downplay the presence of this stuff. Otherwise, you can focus on the details and say, ‘I forgot to look at the house.’ The eye goes to the spider clips. In a way it’s the least interesting thing about architecture. I’d rather you don’t go and examine a stone wall like you would a piece of jewelry.”

Lightweight enough to be set without a crane, the vertical limestone strips sit on an L-channel and are made up of 3-inch, 6-inch, and 9-inch widths. In plane they are adjusted in and out to create a shadow pattern. Strips in the top two rows are 4-foot-8-inches tall, and the bottom row measures about 5-foot-8-inches tall. “They are load-bearing and tied back so they don’t fall out,” Kevin says. “It’s the same technology as on any masonry building, just a little cleaner. We didn’t want to fetishize the details; there are no fancy clips, like a rug starting to fray. There is a sense of continuity with the wall.”

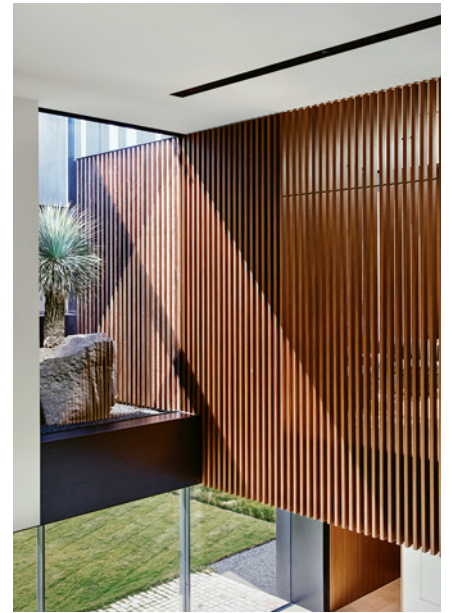
The first floor’s structural sliding glass is similarly seamless. “It’s a beautiful way to open the building to the out of doors and also create amazing reflections,” Kevin says. “Other places, such as on the curve, we affixed large panels

of glass to a steel shape.” Throughout, glass wall and window systems disappear into a channel in the ceiling and drop below the floor surface. Upstairs, the glass inside the cantilevered opening was hung on a parapet wall and back-painted white, except at the husband’s clear-glass closet window and the wife’s bath, where the glass is etched. The glass panels appear blue or green, depending on the light and the color of the sky, and cast a glow into the entry courtyard at night when the lights are on.

“We try to detail in a way that changes the way a building feels. Otherwise, you can focus on the details and say, ‘I forgot to look at the house.’”

—Kevin Alter

This page: In the private gallery, glass railings permit a view of the artwork from the living room. The main suite and children’s wing is separated by the wife’s office and a playroom.





This page: The main suite's fretted door echoes the walnut slats used throughout to provide richness, privacy, and transparency. Glass walls in the two owners' bathrooms are clear where there's privacy and etched where there are exterior views.



Builder Steve Hild was up for all these challenges. “The two steel I-beams holding up the cantilever are 42 inches tall and weigh almost 30,000 pounds apiece,” Steve says. “The glass there is 14 feet tall and all butt-glazed silicone. There are no fasteners on the exterior or trim holding it on, so we had to get the steel frame to 1/8-inch tolerance to get it to work right. If a post was 1/2 inch out of plumb, you’d notice.”

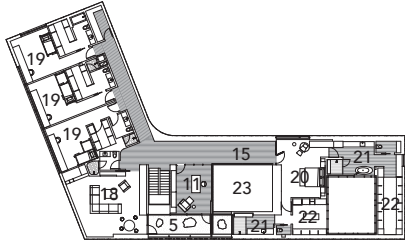
“We had a very ambitious client who was demanding and had an incredible eye,” Kevin says. “We drew to play to Steve’s strengths and to things that could be executed well.”

Points of Stasis

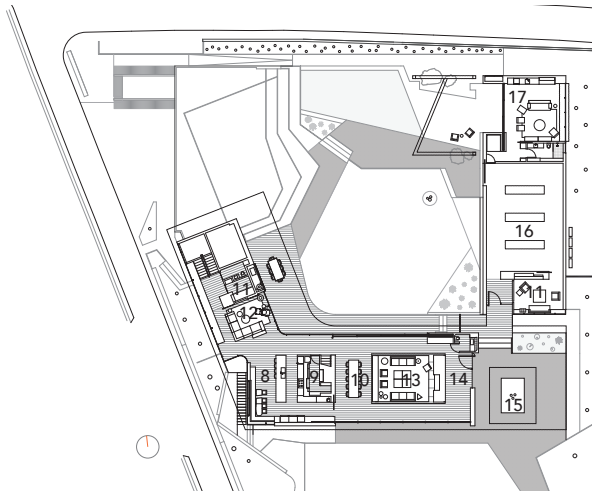
Indeed, a well-built design imparts a sense of ease and purpose. The house is set up to be practical, with a pantry and bar behind the kitchen, small appliances stashed behind the blackened steel backsplash, drawer pulls to keep the cabinets clean, a built-in banquette, and a long island. “The statuary marble-topped island, slatted screen, and eating booth are meant to be like points of stasis against the strong pull of the outdoors,” Kevin says.

The kitchen’s curved glass wall overlooks a stone-lined well that was dug for basement egress. “The wall shows the

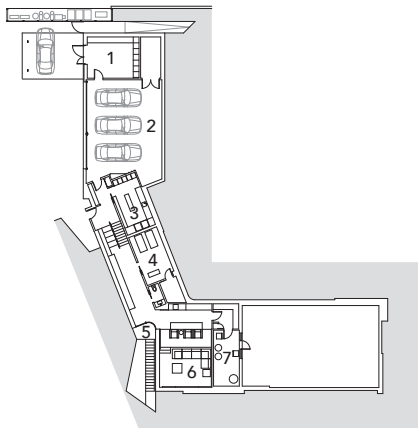
SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

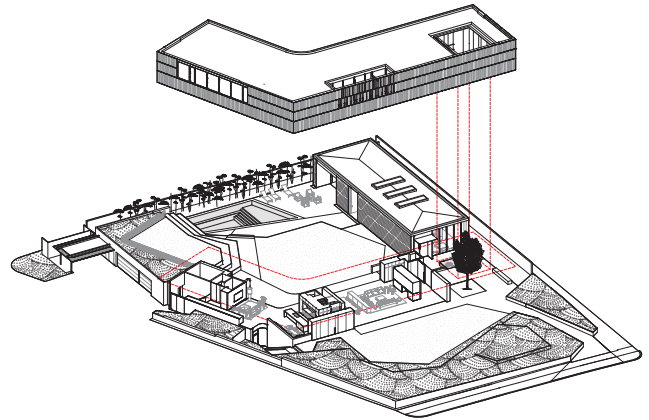


BASEMENT



FLOOR PLAN | 1. Workshop | 2. Garage | 3. Laundry | 4. Exercise
 5. Garden Court | 6. Media | 7. Mechanical | 8. Kitchen | 9. Pantry
 10. Dining | 11. Office | 12. Den | 13. Living | 14. Entry | 15. Gallery
 Court | 16. Gallery | 17. Cabana | 18. Playroom | 19. Bedroom
 20. Main Bedroom | 21. Main Bath | 22. Main Closet | 23. Open to Below

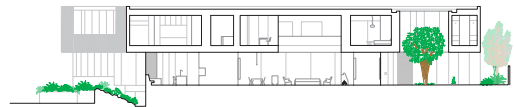
ISOMETRIC



SITE PLAN



SECTIONS






This page: In deference to height restrictions, the gallery is sunken into the site to achieve 14-foot ceilings for art. Volcanic rock tiles on the cabana interior (below) and pool were handmade by a ceramicist in Guadalajara, Mexico.

tool cuts,” Kevin says. “It’s the beauty of something found, and you only discover it when you are next to it. The way a person understands architecture isn’t so much by diagram but intimately.” Materials such as the marble’s black veining, the entryway’s blackened steel with oil and roller marks, and the rough landscape rocks look abstract until you get close, he says. “It’s like a painting that looks one way from 15 feet away and different when you’re next to it.”

Beside the kitchen is the family room, where a half-flight of stairs leads down to the garage, laundry, exercise room, and media room. Accessed from the alley, the garage is hidden under terracing on the backyard side, creating a clean, green canvas for play and entertaining. Across the lawn, the art gallery is warehouse-like, with a concrete floor and 14-foot ceilings fitted with three big skylights and track lighting. In front, the husband’s office gazes over the main entry and reflecting pool. In back, a cabana-like space contains a kitchenette and Murphy bed, opening to a trellised terrace and the pool.

Despite the featureless found setting, the Highland Park house is extraordinary for the way it communes with the natural world. The result of craft and technology, collaboration and invention, it manages to be not merely an *objet d’art* but a building that people engage with viscerally. And like the best art, it provides prompts more than answers. As Kevin says, “Architecture doesn’t travel well; you have to see it to experience it.” 





Highland Park Residence

Dallas

ARCHITECT: Kevin Alter, Assoc. AIA; Ernesto Cragnolino, FAIA; Tim Whitehill, Assoc. AIA; Michael Woodland, AIA; Jenna Dezinski, Alterstudio Architecture, Austin, Texas

BUILDER: Steven Hild Custom Builder, Dallas

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Silvia Zofio, SZPROJECTS, New York, New York

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: David L. Hocker, Hocker Design, Dallas

LIGHTING DESIGNER: Essential Light Design Studio, Dallas

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Ellinwood + Machado Structural Engineers, Atlanta

MECHANICAL ENGINEER: Positive Energy, Austin

PROJECT SIZE: 12,398 square feet

SITE SIZE: .67 acre

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Casey Dunn

KEY PRODUCTS

CLADDING: Indiana limestone

FAUCETS: Vola

GARAGE DOORS: MHB Grand Openings

HVAC: Mitsubishi, Aprilaire

LIGHTING: Amerlux

LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEMS: Lutron

OVENS: Miele

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Sub-Zero

SINKS: Vola

TILE: Cerámica Suro

TUB: Blu Bathworks

WINDOWS: Western Window Systems

WINDOW WALL SYSTEMS: Sky-Frame

Cable Railing Enhances the View for a Modern Home by the River

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When a Southern lumberman decided to build a 10,000 square foot home with multiple decks off of the Tennessee River in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, he turned to award-winning builder Rusty Alexander. Alexander and his team at Alexander Modern Homes and RiverWorks Design Studio were charged with designing and bringing to life an ultra-contemporary four bedroom, six-and-a-half bath home.

It was important to the homeowner that the spaces within the home create a harmonious “indoor/outdoor” feel. The interior needed to feel open, natural and warm, while the exterior needed to replicate that warmth. It was also key that every room in the residence featured a view of the river.

To help make this vision a reality, Alexander and his team installed floor-to-ceiling windows throughout the home. Automatic sliding glass doors with retractable screens that disappear into the walls open up the spaces to the outdoors.

A variety of wood species were used throughout the house to create an organic look and feel. The decks, handrails, rainscreen and perimeter fencing were constructed from tatabu, a rich brown wood that features a

coarse, wavy grain and is highly resistant to the elements. Stone from the nearby river bluffs was used for the home’s vertical walls and for the interior and exterior horizontal surfaces. All three levels of decks were surfaced with porcelain tile, which was also used throughout the home’s interior spaces.

To maximize the view from the home’s decks, the design team sought a railing system that would provide an unobstructed sightline to the river and nearby wildlife. They opted for cable railing due to its clean-lined appearance, durability and minimal maintenance requirements. For the exterior railings, the

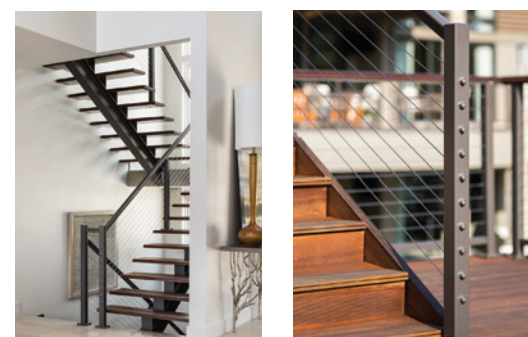


team selected stainless steel CableRail infill from Feeney. A low-profile top rail made of imported tatabu wood completed the look.

The team knew the sleek, horizontal lines would complement the design of the modern home, enabling the indoors to seamlessly connect with the scenic outdoors. At the same time, guests who arrived at the home by boat would be able to enjoy a clear view of the residence from the waterside. RiverWorks also used Feeney’s DesignRail® aluminum railing system in the interior of the home, including for a dramatic staircase.

Perhaps the most dramatic feature is a stunning sky bridge linking the pier with the second-story, main level of the house. The railings were extended to the pier, which the team rebuilt, adding stone columns, and installing tatabu woodwork. Including the pier and indoor areas, the entire project included 450 linear feet of cable railing.

Railing choices can transform the look of a home by not only adding an aesthetically pleasing architectural element but also by preserving the view. By working closely with an architect, builder and design team who shared a similar vision, the homeowner is able to enjoy panoramic vistas of the Tennessee River from every room in his home for a seamless living experience.



Architect: Phil Kean (Winter Park, Florida)
Builder: Alexander Modern Homes (Muscle Shoals, Alabama)
Interior Design: RiverWorks Design Studio (Muscle Shoals, Alabama)

Feeney products used in the home:
DesignRail® aluminum railing system
and CableRail stainless steel infill

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Natural Collaborations

Working in harmony with the landscape tuned these houses to its restorative rhythms.

BY CHERYL WEBER AND S. CLAIRE CONROY



Mariposa Garden House

BOULDER, COLORADO
RENÉE DEL GAUDIO ARCHITECTURE

Butting up against the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, Boulder is a city whose residents take outdoor recreation seriously. With a horizon dominated by the bulky brows of mountains, it's not hard to imagine that this landscape is deeply ingrained in the local psyche, and that domesticity and nature share equal importance. Indeed, this 1948 house's connection to its site was what appealed to the owners when they purchased it nearly a decade ago.



This page: The complete remodel of a mid-century house in Boulder finally optimizes its gorgeous landscape views. Although built roughly on the old foundation, the new structure was reimagined three-dimensionally to create a “house of gardens and light.”

Located in Lower Chautauqua, a neighborhood at the base of the Boulder Flatirons, the house is a short walk from park trails, and its meandering footprint brought in the surrounding gardens at nearly every turn.

Of course, there was a catch. Mid-century ranch houses often suffer from low ceilings and dysfunctional floor plans, and that was the case here. The couple, who have a preteen son, hired longtime friend Renée del

Gaudio, AIA, to undertake a considerable challenge: redraw the building three-dimensionally on the original foundation. They also requested a detached studio for the wife, who paints and owns an interior design business. “The qualities of the original house, the way it connected to the landscape, was what inspired the new project,” Renée says. “The new design made it even stronger, pulling from the original footprint.”

To ground the building in its setting, the working concept became “a house of gardens and light.” This required new massing, reorienting the windows, and a new roof design, including adding a partial second story that expanded the interior to 2,475 square feet from the original 1,750 square feet. “It was complicated working with the existing foundation,” Renée says. “It would have been easier to start fresh. But what we all loved about the original founda-



This page and opposite: A restrained palette of materials—3-inch-thick, heated and polished concrete floors, Douglas fir rafters, rough cedar planking, and Sioux City ebonite chimney brick—defers to the landscape and the wife’s interior design choices.



tion was that because it took all these twists and turns, it allowed the gardens to come in at interior corners. The challenge was to turn the footprint into something that had rhythm, order, and clarity.”

She imposed that order by clearing out every interior wall and rebuilding the exterior walls almost exactly where they were on the original foundation. Diagrammatically, the house has a tall, clerestory-lit living and dining core facing the covered porch and backyard garden, with the entry, office, kitchen and breakfast area, guest room, and the son’s bedroom rotating around it. This move preserved

the inside corners of those slightly doglegged spaces, creating convenient voids for plantings.

“We created a central open floor plan that pushed that ceiling volume up to 12 feet and let all of the more private spaces surround it at a lower ceiling height of less than 9 feet,” Renée says. “Motorized clerestory windows open to vent the house at the ceiling where the heat builds up and bring natural light to all the interior spaces.” The pop-up second level housing the TV room and the couple’s suite stretches front to back along the east side, its balcony providing a roof for the back porch. A glass railing along the hall-



“The qualities of the original house, the way it connected to the landscape, was what inspired the new project.”

—Renée del Gaudio, AIA



This page and opposite: The wife, an interior designer, took charge of the kitchen island and walnut cabinetry specs. Select clerestory windows are motorized to ventilate the space. A solar array generates warmth for the radiant floors.

way opens an airy view to the living area below.

The existing footprint also informed the layout of a 16-foot-wide sliding glass window wall system that opens the core of the house to the rear porch. “We wanted the sliding doors to face north so as not to overheat the house,” Renée says. “They are under the deep cantilever of the main bedroom roof deck.”

Clean Sweep

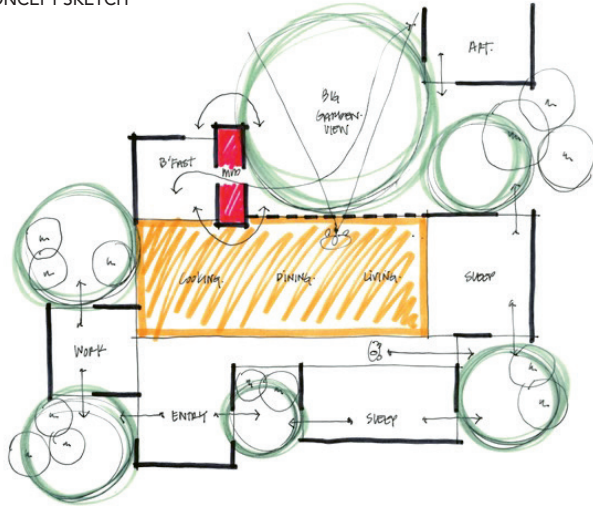
Another key indoor-outdoor connector is the thick masonry chimney, which anchors the entire design and makes poetry out of something mundane. On the first floor, the interior side holds a gas fireplace facing the dining table, while outside it houses a cooking grill. The middle is hollowed out and lined with the same Sioux City ebonite brick that wraps the chimney, creating a



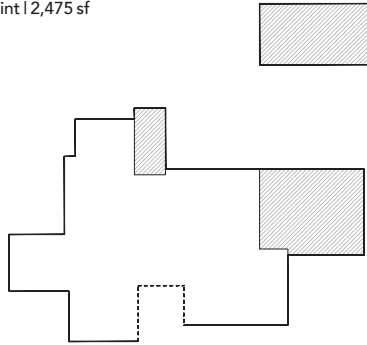
mudroom “arch” between the back porch and breakfast room. Upstairs it holds an outdoor fireplace on the main bedroom balcony. “The couple’s bedroom is really private, nested in trees,” Renée says. “The chimney screens them from the street to the west, and their deck looks to the big gardens on the north.”

If the new floor plan gave the house a more functional layout, the framing, shell, and finishes reinforce that rigor. Layered rooflines express not only its massing and organization but the bold strokes that bring light into the building and send it out to the street at night. Black-painted steel framing complements the king-size chimney brick and the ceilings and soffits made of exposed Douglas fir rafters and rustic-grade cedar planking (only the 12-foot-high

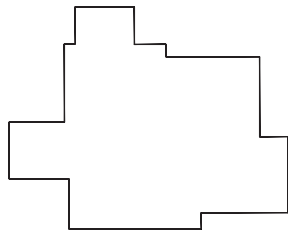
CONCEPT SKETCH



Revised Footprint | 2,475 sf



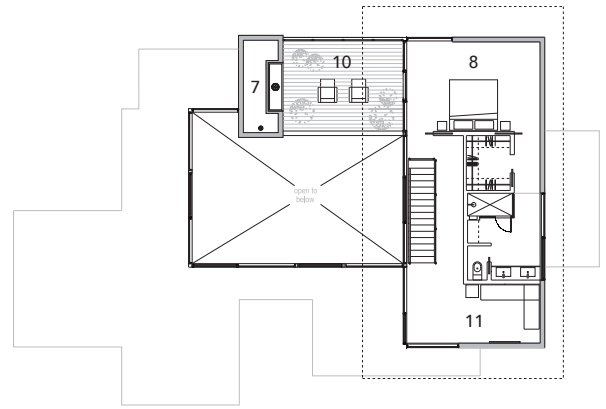
Original Footprint | 1,750 sf



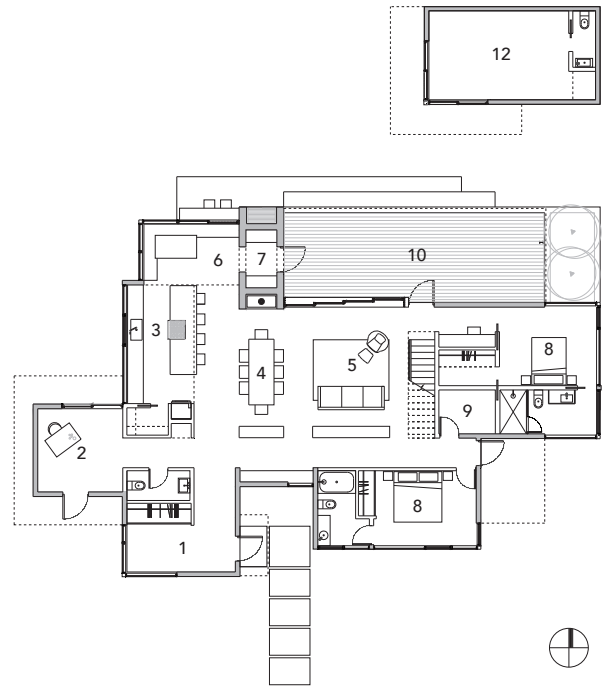
Original Home | Built in 1948



UPPER LEVEL



MAIN LEVEL



FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry | 2. Office | 3. Kitchen | 4. Dining | 5. Living
6. Breakfast | 7. Chimney/Mudroom | 8. Bedroom | 9. Laundry
10. Porch | 11. TV | 12. Art Studio



This page: Nested in the trees, the owners' suite consumes the partial second story. A private terrace overlooks the big gardens to the north, while the chimney screens the street to the west.

core has a drywall ceiling). Dark gray and highly polished, the first floor's 3-inch-thick radiant concrete slab is heated with an 8kW solar array that takes the home to net-zero energy use, including powering the garage's two electric car charging outlets. The stairs and second floor are oak with a light gray stain.

"Inside we were going for earthy neutrals," Renée says, adding that the wife designed all the finishes, including the slate kitchen counter and waterfall island countertop, and custom walnut cabinets.

The reconfigured floor plan syncs nicely with the family's daily life. Positioned near the front of the house, the office bump-out has an exterior door, which comes in handy for meeting clients without sacrificing privacy when she is working from home. And the detached art studio, just across the yard from the son's bedroom, doubles as the perfect hangout for him and his friends or lodging for overnight guests.

Plant Based

Although the design team didn't have the luxury of siting the house on the lot, its large window and door openings now offer a fine perspective on the gardens. Early on, Marpa Landscape was brought on board to create a modern landscape template, using as much of the existing scheme as possible. Private rooms in the notched spaces—office and son's bedroom, plus the detached studio—have their own viewing gardens. New plants are low-water natives, and the liberal use of dark gray gravel reduced the amount of high-maintenance turfgrass. "A ditch runs along the west side, and the original landscape bermed up to it," Renée says. "It's a great feature, and they made it even better with granite boulders that create natural places for people to sit in the back garden."

In many ways, this renovation achieved the maximum effect by extracting and elaborating on the house's positive aspects. And like any success-



ful restructure, it looks more inevitable than it was. “The whole thing was a bit like a Rubik’s Cube because we were working with a couple of old foundations, tying that with the new,” says builder Dan Flohrs, a longtime friend of the clients. “There was at least one, maybe even two remodels that had been added to the original foundation.” The construction crew built another small foundation at the rear bedroom, extending it east and north to make that side of the house slightly bigger so that the couple’s suite could settle lightly on top.

“It was incredibly tricky construction-wise, but those complications were resolved pretty smoothly with this amazing team,” Renée says. “This is an unusual project for me in that it was also very much a collaboration with the owner who was an interior designer, and with the landscape architect. Everyone knew each other, and it was a cool experience working together.”

—Cheryl Weber



This page and opposite: Cedar shiplap cladding allows the house to recede into the landscape. Low-maintenance, native plants combine with zones of dark gray gravel to reduce watering needs. Large, flat-topped boulders offer additional seating.

Mariposa Garden House

Boulder, Colorado

ARCHITECT: Renée del Gaudio, AIA, Renée del Gaudio Architecture, Boulder

BUILDER: Dan Flohrs, Coburn Partners, Boulder

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Stephanie Waddell, Istorla Interior Design, Boulder

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Marpa Landscape Architecture and Construction, Boulder

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Anthem Structural Engineers, Boulder

PROJECT SIZE: 3,150 square feet

SITE SIZE: .31 acre

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: David Lauer Photography

KEY PRODUCTS:

CLADDING: Cedar shiplap

COOKTOP: Thermador

COUNTERTOPS: Slate, PaperStone

DECKING: Cali Bamboo

DISHWASHER: JennAir

DOORS: Kolbe Windows & Doors

FAUCETS: Brizo Litze, Kohler, Delta, California Faucets

FIREPLACE: Montigo, Town & Country (roof deck)

HUMIDITY CONTROL: Panasonic ERV

LIGHTING: FX Luminaire (exterior); Lightolier; Hammerton Studio Rock Crystal Chandelier (dining room)

LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEM: Leviton Decora

PASSAGE DOORS: Quality Doors

PHOTOVOLTAICS: CED Greentech: 8kw Ecolibrium Solar

REFRIGERATOR: Thermador

ROOFING: TPO membrane

SINKS: Blanco, Kohler, Duravit

TANKLESS WATER HEATER: Navien

TOILETS: Duravit

TUB: Jacuzzi Linea

VENT HOOD: Best Range Hoods

WALL OVEN: JennAir

WASHER/DRYER: Electrolux

WINDOWS: Kolbe Windows & Doors

WINDOW SHADING SYSTEMS: Alta Window Fashions motorized shades



Bear Ridge Residence

BOERNE, TEXAS
LAKE | FLATO ARCHITECTS



From the outside, this gabled house is of a piece with the land and Cordillera Ranch, a resort community of traditional homes and preserved open space. On the inside, though, it feels like an elegant pitched tent. With its glass gable ends, open corners, and the dog trot that plays an active role in many of LakelFlato's Hill Country houses, the owners feel like they're outdoors, even when they're not.

Thirty miles northwest of San Antonio and just over an acre, their land faces east toward the Guadalupe River valley, on a spot where deer and other wildlife travel through. The architects and their clients chose to build this full-time residence just below a craggy bluff that exposes the grandeur of the topography. "At the northwest corner of the site is a cul de sac, and pie-shaped lots come off it," says project architect Rebecca Comeaux, AIA. "At the top of the site are oak trees, and we thought it was too pretty to flatten out with a big house. We wanted to build with the landscape and use the hill as a buffer to block the western sun and views to the cul de sac and close neighbors. This gave them a natural setting around their home."



The Texas climate lends itself to outdoor living for three of four seasons (summer is the nemesis), and this house for empty nesters takes full advantage. The courtyard plan places a solar-topped breezeway between the main house and guest wing, evoking LakelFlato's beloved porch houses.



If the dog trot or breezeway started as a humble place for humans and their dogs to catch cross breezes in hot southern climates, it has evolved as a gracious interstitial space, and one with many expressions. Here it acts not only as the formal entry point but poetically as a gateway to the rear landscape, with its spectacular views.

“We wanted to emphasize traditional craft and ways of doing things, and let the form be more modern.”

—Rebecca Comeaux, AIA

The house’s long, gabled roofline sits parallel to the ridge, and the 23-foot-deep breezeway bisects the garage and living spaces. A perpendicular guest wing off the garage forms the northern arm of the private rear courtyard, while the couple’s suite encloses it on the south.

Visitors engage with the land from the moment of arrival—another benefit of pushing the house partway down the hill. This allowed the owners and their guests to experience more of the bluff, “as if the house were a bench” on the side of a hill, Rebecca says. From the parking court, a stone path hugs the hill along the house’s upper side, where colorful wildflowers and staggered boulders enhance the scrubby native vegetation. These intimate vignettes contrast with the long view that appears at the breezeway. Beyond, a pathway leads down to a fire pit set among cedars. “If we had moved the house up on the ridge, we would have had more drop-off at the back of the house,” Rebecca says. “We wanted it as level as possible on the vista side to encourage people to go outside.”



This page: The resort community required a minimum roof pitch, which the firm deployed like an abstracted tent form. Overhangs provide welcome shading for expansive walls of glass, while open gables convey light through the spaces. Rebecca designed the hand-carved alabaster light fixture over the dining table. High on the kitchen wall, a window draws light into a loft sitting area.



This page: In the great room, dark-stained framing contrasts with honed limestone walls and terrazzo-like concrete floors. The specks of color in the floor come from the Medina river rock aggregate used in the pour. Ceilings are hemlock with a transparent white glaze to preserve the evenness of the finish.



Traditional Craft

The couple, who have two grown children and have lived all over the world, requested a sophisticated, net-zero house where they could enjoy the wildlife. That brief drove the design, as did the proximity of neighbors and restrictions specifying a minimum roof pitch. LakelFlato's design marries modernism with Cordillera Ranch's predominantly Texas Tuscan and Mediterranean architecture. "To meet the challenge of working in a more traditional community, we wanted to emphasize traditional craft and ways of doing things, and let the form be more modern," Rebecca says.

Beneath the pitched metal roof, Lueders limestone walls and exposed, double Douglas fir trusses are deployed in a way that creates opportunities for large expanses of glass. The dark-stained framing forms a continuous span between the garage, breezeway, and living space, which contains a seating area, dining room, kitchen, and office. On the breezeway roof, translucent solar panels let light into this enigmatic place. In fact, you can see them from the living room's glass gable end. "The entry space is deep, so a full roof would have felt dark, and this felt like a great way to express net-zero," Rebecca says. "If we can create an opportunity to make it part of their everyday life and celebrate it, all the better."

Materials and connections also celebrate the everyday wildlife in this up-close slice of Texas. From the breakfast bump-out, the owners can watch animals approach. "They sent me quite a few videos of encounters

This page: Although primarily a one-story building, there are two loft spaces tucked into roof pop-ups, including this TV/sitting area over the kitchen. Uniform quartzite kitchen counters unite wood cabinetry of various hues.



This page: The owners' suite roughly parallels the guest wing on the other side of the house. Its glazed gable end pairs with floor-to-ceiling windows to bring in balanced natural lighting. The owners' bathroom lies between the bedroom and the wife's office.





This page: The husband's office occupies the terminus of the main volume. Its glazed gable lightens interiors but also lends a loftiness to the overall architecture. Deep overhangs shade the glazing from the southern sun. *Opposite page:* Set apart from the main house by the breezeway and garage, the guest wing is its own realm, complete with a raised deck that reaches into the view.

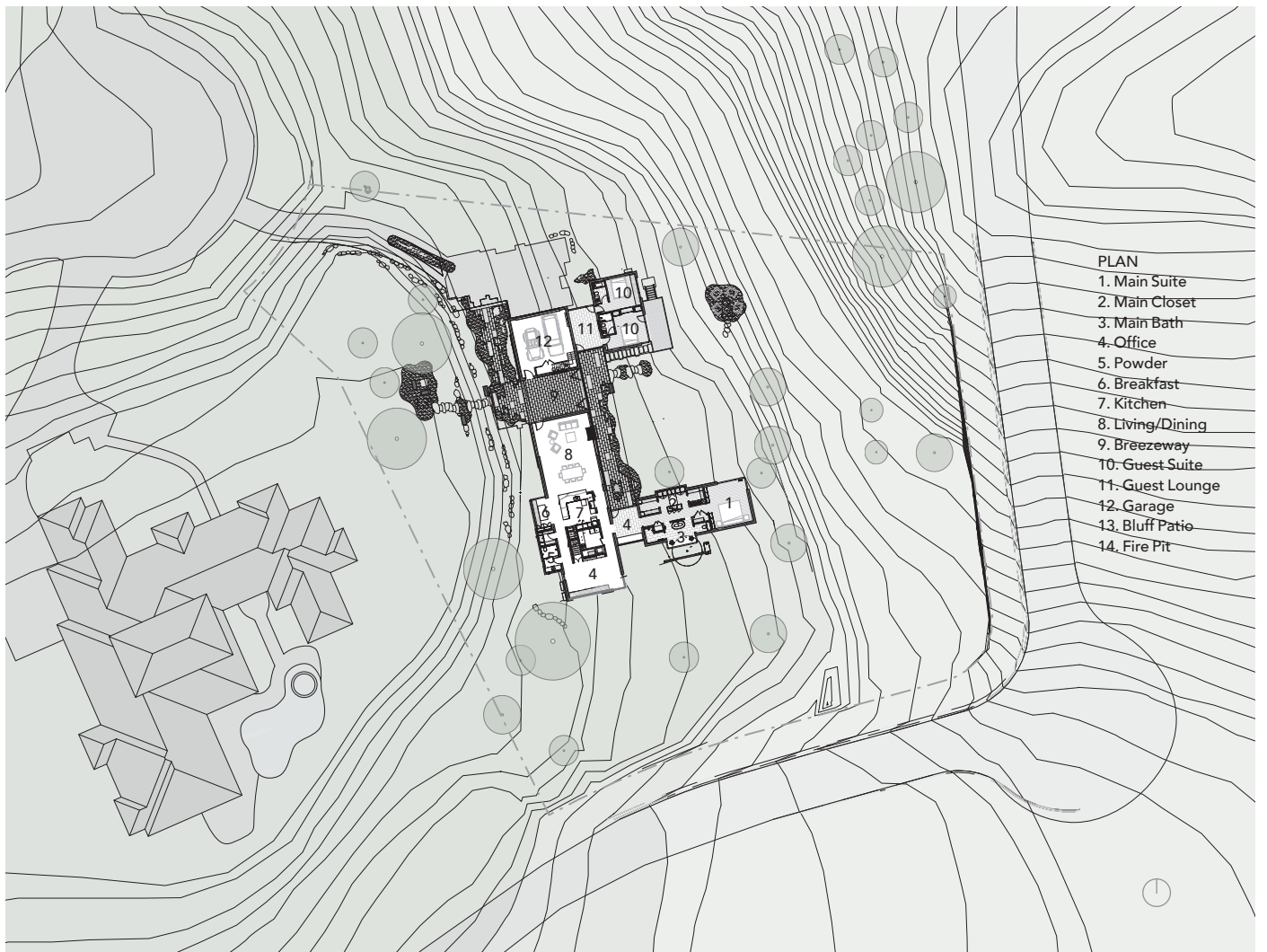
with birds and other wildlife,” Rebecca says. Glass links at the guest wing and primary bedroom wing allow the exterior stone to wrap inside, as though you are leaving one building and going to the next. This treatment also occurs in the kitchen and at the couple’s bath, where the wood siding slips inside. “It was a way for us to create a little bit of compression below those gables,” she says.

Indeed, the crafted interior finishes add another layer of structure and rigor. Walls are honed limestone; ceilings are hemlock with a transparent white glaze to preserve the natural color. Floors are a creamy, terrazzo-like ground concrete with flecks of brown, red, gold, and gray that comes from the Medina river rock aggregate used in the pour. Quartzite slabs bring refinement to the kitchen counters and tub and shower walls. “The builder was craft conscientious; he had very high standards and was willing to put in extra work to get things right,” Rebecca says.



In-Between

Cordillera Ranch touts its peaceful terrain of golf courses, trails, and connections to the river, and LakelFlato's felicitous design does those attributes ample justice. "From the living space you can see far to the Twin Sisters mountaintops; it's popular to be able to see them," Rebecca says. The offices also have a view. Hers is tucked into the glass threshold outside the main bedroom suite, and his is at the south end of the house, where light pours in through a clerestory gable, a glass corner, and a long, desk-level window that focuses the view.



Two roof pop-ups provide more private niches. The one above the garage carved out space for a small workshop. Another loft above the kitchen and laundry holds a TV/reading room, where a small window overlooks the husband's office and the rolling hills beyond.

And if a bedroom is a sanctuary, its suspension above grade enhances that sense. The land drops off under

“We wanted [the house] as level as possible on the vista side to encourage people to go outside.”

—Rebecca Comeaux, AIA

the bedroom wings, and a floating porch outside the guest suite offers the pleasure of stepping outside to survey the world around it. Both bedrooms have a glass corner that opens them to the land, and cedar trees just outside the main bath provide complete privacy.

Texas vernacular architecture is always a reference point for LakeFlato's work, and the breezeway is but one manifestation of the inspiration and in-betweenness the architects breathe into their designs. Although it took some convincing for the community review board to approve it as a front door, the design prevailed. An 18-foot-long barn door on the entry side closes the space against wind and keeps animals out at night, while the backyard side has bifold doors. Mounted on sliding hardware, the slatted front door can be pulled across the living room for shade.

Opposite the entry, a path leads up to the ridge at the top of the lot, where small boulders provide a seated view of the sunset. “The owners like a peaceful, quiet, natural experience,” Rebecca says, “and they feel like the house is a great place for that.” —*Cheryl Weber*



Bear Ridge Residence

Boerne, Texas

ARCHITECT: Ted Flato, FAIA, principal -in-charge; Rebecca Comeaux, AIA, project architect, LakeFlato Architects, San Antonio, Texas

BUILDER: John Rubiola and Shane Valentine, Rubiola Construction Company, San Antonio

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Nicole Roberts, NR Interiors, San Antonio

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: David Beyer, Rialto Studio, San Antonio

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:

Scott Williamson, Austin, Texas

MECHANICAL ENGINEER: Kristof Irwin + Eric Griffen, Positive Energy, Austin

METAL FABRICATOR: Oliver Adamson, Citizen Build, San Antonio

STONE MASON: Mike Hunt, Curtis Hunt Restorations, Elmendorf, Texas

PROJECT SIZE: 4,436 square feet

SITE SIZE: 1.12 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Matthew Niemann, Dror Baldinger



KEY PRODUCTS

CLADDING: Roughback Lueders limestone, western red cedar, copper

COOKING APPLIANCES/VENTILATION: Wolf

COUNTERTOPS: Taj Mahal Quartzite

DECKING: Ipe

DISHWASHER: Asko

DOOR HARDWARE: Emtek, Baldwin

DOORS: Marvin

EXTERIOR STAINS: Cabot

FAUCETS: Hansgrohe, Dornbracht

GARAGE DOORS: Raynor

HUMIDITY CONTROL: Ultra-Aire

HVAC: Mitsubishi

INSULATION: Demilec

LIGHTING: WAC

LIGHTING CONTROL: Lutron

MILLWORK: White oak/Aris Designs

PHOTOVOLTAICS: SunPower, Lumos Solar

RADIANT HEATING: Nuheat

RAIN SCREEN: Benjamin Obdyke Slicker Classic

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Sub-Zero

SHEATHING: ZIP System

SHOWER ENCLOSURE: Krown Lab

SHOWER FAUCETS: Hansgrohe, Dornbracht

SINKS: Blanco, MTI, Ronbow

TOILETS: Duravit

TUB: MTI, Dornbracht

VENTILATION: Panasonic

WASHER/DRYER: LG

WINDOW SHADING: Lutron

WINDOW WALL SYSTEMS: LaCantina

WINDOWS: Marvin



Tranquil Abiding

GLEN SPEY, NEW YORK
STUDIO MM

This unusual custom retreat for a spiritual couple from New York City began as a request for a simple cabin in the woods. The couple was familiar with the rural Glen Spey area, about two hours outside of the city, after years of coming to a Buddhist temple there and spending much time in its community. Their initial search for a site was broad, however, and their goals for its program were small. But, as residential professionals know well, the beginnings of a project offer just a hint at the path it might take.

Studio MM, a 10-year-old firm led by Marica McKeel, AIA, has built a practice of making its clients' second home dreams come true. Its buildings are modern, modest, and muscular. Their straightforward solidity anchor them in their wooded settings, providing orderly refuge within nature's haphazard bounty.

The firm is also highly collaborative with its clients, which helps make the somewhat mysterious process of residential architecture less intimidating and more accessible. All this attracted the clients to Marica's work and led to a journey as compelling as the ultimate destination. "They realized we were a young firm—eager and excited," she says. Indeed, the 10-year mark is often when a talented firm begins to get the more sizable commissions (and healthier budgets) that unleash creativity.

This journey took the clients, architect, and builder from the notion of a small cabin in the woods somewhere to a stone-clad quartet of linked pavilions on 115 acres, just a short, meditative walk to the Glen Spey temple.

This rural retreat for a spiritual couple curates varied views of a large wooded property. The plan balances the owners' desire for natural light, privacy, and inward-focused meditation by pulling apart key components into four linked pavilions.





This page: Entry to the house is through a large pivot door. Inside, visitors find themselves at the intersection of a corridor that connects the four pavilions. Straight ahead, but not fully revealed, is the meditation pavilion, on axis with the couple's temple in the distance. Sliding pocket doors close the room off from the main spaces when focus is required.

One can't help but wonder if some divine force guided them all to this fortuitous site. It was, after all, not for sale. "Somehow my client managed to contact the owner by email," Marica recalls. "The property had been left to her and she didn't want it, so she agreed to let him buy it." The wooded parcel comprises a meandering creek that suggested the siting for the house, but there was yet another obstacle to its ideal location.

"We all agreed that we wanted the house on the western side of the property and that it would be best to enter from the south," says the architect. "But there was a problem with the access, and we thought we'd have to enter from the north."



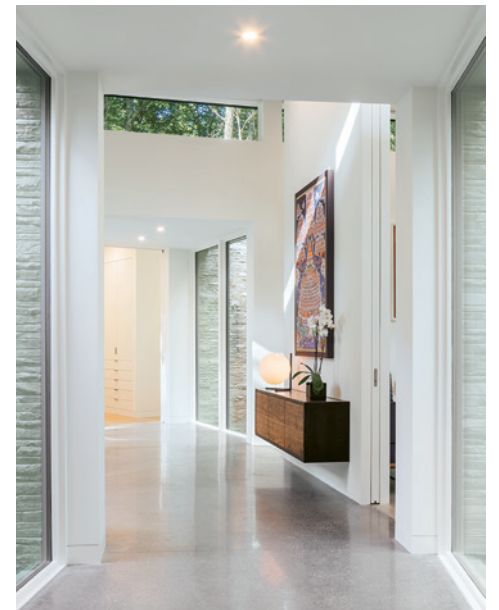
Somehow, the client fixed this problem, too, and secured access to their preferred entry point. Says Marica, “He just solved the issue.”

The Four Pavilions

With the macro problems resolved, it came time to develop the program and tweak the home’s exact siting and orientation. “Our clients are very well traveled and they had rented a ton of places,” she says. “They were extremely involved in the placement of the house. They walked every inch of the 115 acres, and I’d meet them out there and traipse through the snow with them. They were up on ladders with compasses all through the process. We spent an entire day just siting the orientation to the temple.

“They wanted total privacy and a view of that creek. Part of the year, it’s underground but you can still see the

Although most rooms are immersed in light and views, the meditation room pushes windows to the perimeter. Attention is guided away from outward distractions and toward inward contemplation.





The living pavilion revels in views and light. Its main exposure is almost directly to the south. Trees help protect from the harshest light, but recessed tracks conceal window coverings that can be drawn as needed. The radiant concrete floor cantilevers beyond the foundation. Sliding doors lead to an ipe deck.





A Bulthaup kitchen system combines with white oak built-ins to keep the kitchen, which is located in the living pavilion, sleek and clean. A glimpse of the ipe-clad garage is seen through the kitchen window.

mist rising from it, and in the summer it's greener there. You can hear the water sometimes, but it was less about the water than about how nature is transformed by it. They wanted to see the sun coming down through the trees, and they wanted the interior spaces to be very bright and filled with natural light. That led us to a lot of windows."

Although the program had blossomed from the small cabin idea, it was still a fairly compact plan—a main bedroom suite, an open living area, a meditation room, a guest suite that could double as a home office, and a one-car garage. Total square footage was just a tad over 2,400.

Because the house is in service to the owners' spiritual goals, the architect used the process of meditation as inspiration. "Meditation has a series of corridors to

"Meditation has a series of corridors to it, so we brought that into the concept."

—Marica McKeel, AIA

it, so we brought that into the concept. We developed three scheme options for them, and we went through each one and considered how they would live in it."

The clients ended up picking the most radical scheme, their program pulled apart into separate floating pavilions connected by a corridor, with the main orientation to the temple and creek. "They wanted the house to be elevated, while preserving the topography of the site," she adds. "Above all else, they wanted a feeling of tranquility."

The meditation pavilion aligns with the temple but does not focus on it directly. Instead, at the far end of the room, windows are pushed to the perimeter in a frame around the Buddha figure and a series of thangkas, or inspirational paintings. The physicality



The owners' pavilion is its own jewel-box realm. White oak floors and a custom wood vanity add warmth to the otherwise bright, white appointments. Clerestory windows above the vanity balance light from the tub's window wall.

of nature is sidelined in this space, in favor of internal exploration. Sliding doors can close it off fully from the rest of the house.

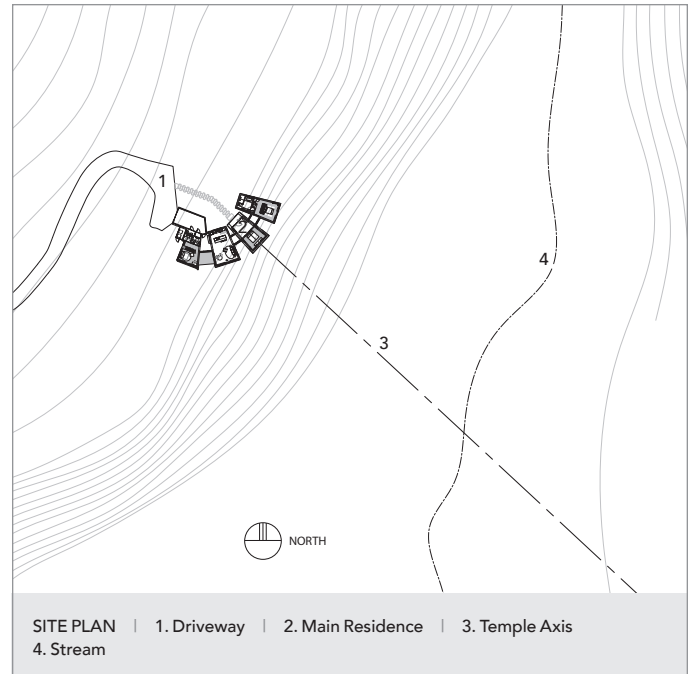
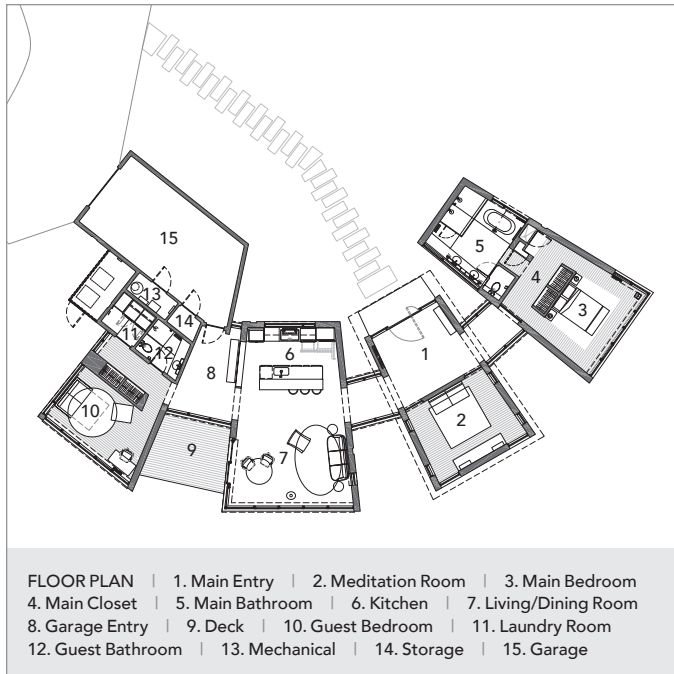
In contrast, the main living spaces and bedrooms are glassy pavilions immersed in targeted views of nature and the creek and bathed in natural illumination. Eastern light dominates the terminus of the rooms, but because the pavilions spread apart like a fan, they allow southern exposures as well. The windows—a mix of operable and fixed units—extend beyond the ceiling plane to conceal hardware for window coverings.

The owners' request for a low-maintenance house drove the selections of stone on the exterior and the predominantly concrete floors (there are wood floors in the meditation room and main bedroom).

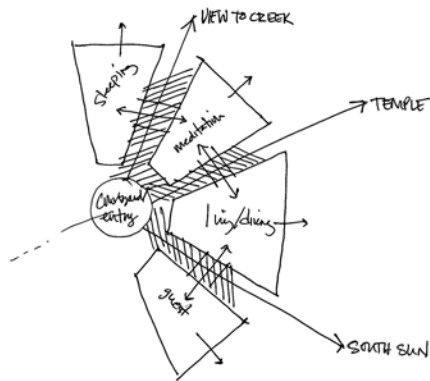
To achieve their floating appearance, the pavilions cantilever off the foundation walls, so those concrete floors become structure. "We had a great builder, but he was certainly stressed," Marica recalls. "The floors had rebar and radiant and had to be done in a single pour resulting in a finished surface. And for the cantilevers, we had to figure out how to build formwork and structure and then take that formwork up. So we built the ground up to support them and then dug them out again when they were done."

Masons culled much of the stone for the exterior cladding from the site, and cut and chiseled the odd-sized pieces to fit. "It was amazing to watch—they are true artisans. It's a very thick stone veneer hung on big steel angles with a

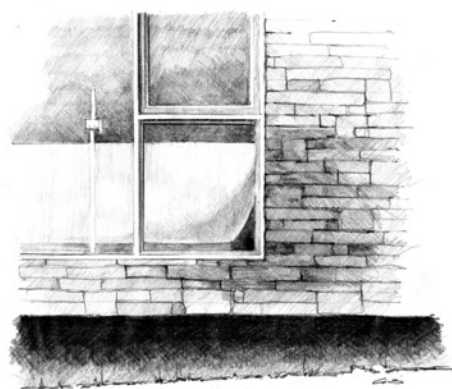




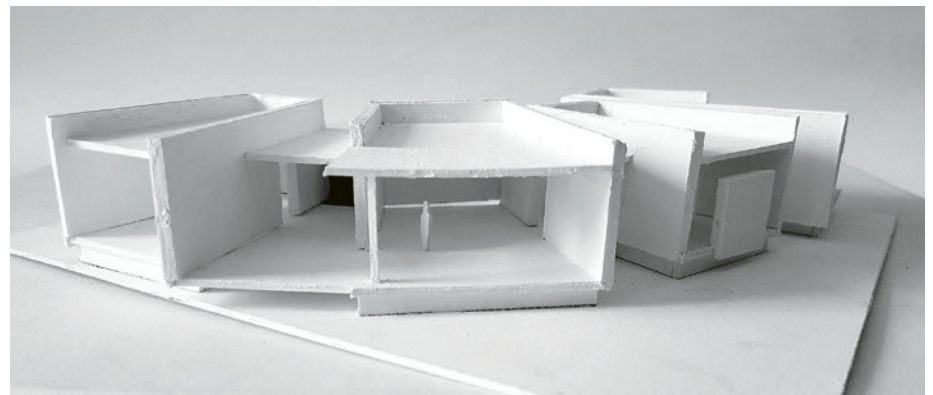
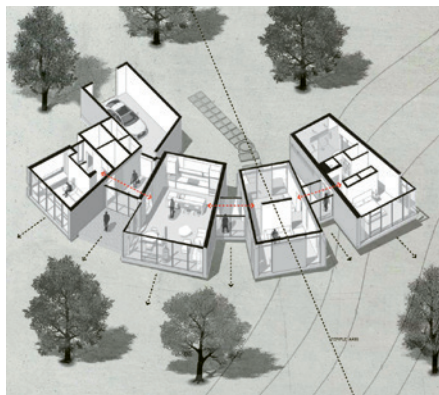
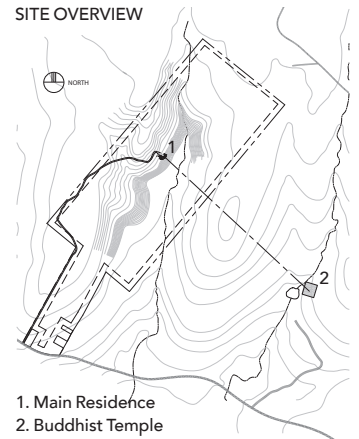
CONCEPT SKETCH



STONE SKETCH



SITE OVERVIEW





Tranquil Abiding

Glen Spey, New York

ARCHITECT: Marica McKeel, AIA, principal-in-charge; Colbi Campbell, project architect, Studio MM, New York, New York

BUILDER: Hobbs, Inc., Saddle River, New Jersey

PROJECT SIZE: 2,408 square feet

SITE SIZE: 115 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHER: Brad Feinknopf

KEY PRODUCTS

COOKING APPLIANCES: Gaggenau

DISHWASHER: Bosch

ENGINEERED LUMBER: Weyerhaeuser Trus Joist

ENTRY DOORS: Singcore Doors

FAUCETS: Kohler

FIREPLACE: Morso

HVAC: Mitsubishi split system

KITCHEN SINK: Kohler

KITCHEN SYSTEM: Bulthaup

RADIANT HEATING: Warmboard

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Sub-Zero

SLIDING DOOR: Centor Doors and Windows

TILE/TUB/BATHROOM SINKS: Porcelanosa

VENT HOOD: Best

WINDOWS: Marvin Ultimate Series

rainscreen. There are stud walls behind it, a lot of rigid insulation, and foam between the studs.” Metal cladding sets off the stone walls, and ipe covers the garage and deck to set them apart from the main house. Trees were cleared in a small perimeter around the house, to give it breathing room from the dense forest, and along the nearly mile-long stretch of driveway.

Tranquility Now

Pulled apart into separate components, the house is nonetheless grounded and centered in its varied views of nature and her uplifting, tree-dappled sunlight. Hovering just above the forest floor, it elevates the experience of this world and offers a glimpse into other journeys yet to come. —*S. Claire Conroy*

True Colors



1



2

1. RETRO COOL

Beverage refrigerators are *de rigueur* for entertainers and large, thirsty families. True's twist on the species is commercial-style with a sliding top. Now available in Retro Red and other bright hues; 24-inch and 26-inch models; for indoors or out. True-residential.com

2. NEW HOPE FOR DOORS

Hope's Windows is expanding its One55 series to include operable windows and doors. Both new products employ the company's trademarked recipe for improved thermal efficiency without sacrificing the hot-rolled metal profiles architects love. HopesWindows.com



3



4

3. TIME TO FILL

No one likes waiting for a large vessel tub to fill. Voilà, a new problem-solving, single-handed tub filler from California Faucets. The company says its 10 GPM units can do the job in half the usual time. Available in four popular styles. CaliforniaFaucets.com

4. A LITTLE OF EACH

Pantone's Color of the Year for 2021 is actually a duo—the durable “Ultimate Gray” and the quietly optimistic “Illuminating” yellow. A compact Marvin project shows the tandem at work. Pantone.com
Marvin.com

5. CRANKY NO MORE

Pella's new Easy-Slide Operator opens casement windows with a clever up-and-down sliding motion. Up is open; down is closed. Available now on its Impervia fiberglass line of windows and doors, but coming to additional product lines later this year.
Pella.com



5

6. CLAD TIDINGS

Terraçade, a new ceramic cladding system from Glen-Gery Corp., part of Birkworks Limited of Australia, offers design flexibility, durability, fire resistance, and low maintenance. Available in a variety of colorfast hues.
Glengery.com



6

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Petersen Aluminum	6, 65
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True Manufacturing Company	9
Western Window Systems	2-3



Grand Gestures

SPRING CREEK RESIDENCE
CLB ARCHITECTS
JACKSON, WYOMING

When you design houses in the mountains, you master a whole new vocabulary to describe building sites. This new house on 40 acres in Jackson, Wyoming, will occupy the “toe of the slope of one of the buttes,” says architect Eric Logan, AIA, of CLB Architects. All that we flatlanders need to understand is that the location affords a spectacular prospect and enough level ground for the house and outdoor spaces.

“The views slope down to beautiful ranch land that’s protected property,” Eric explains. “It’ll have a daily light show, and the grandness of the Tetons.” The complex will encompass a main house of nearly 9,000 square feet, along with a 1,000-square-foot guest house—or “Nugget”—as the firm calls their smaller guest quarters.

The entry is topside and then, “like a layer cake,” the building steps down the hill. Principal living areas and the

owners’ suite occupy the main level. Says Eric, “One of the architectural moves is, as building form bends around, it leaves the hillside, becomes a bridge, and then returns to the hillside. The hillside gently rolls underneath. The lower level is not apparent, unless you’re downhill looking up.”

The bifurcated lower level places secondary bedrooms to one side and recreation areas to the other with a partially covered terrace between them. Punctuating the terrace is the other grand move: “She’s a swimmer, so we designed a lap pool with a disappearing edge. It extends into the view like an exclamation point.” —*S. Claire Conroy*

Project: Spring Creek Residence, Jackson, Wyoming; architect: CLB Architects, Jackson; builder: KWC, LLC, Jackson; project size: 8,890 square feet (main house), 1,000 square feet (guest house); site size: 41.6 acres; rendering: CLB Architects



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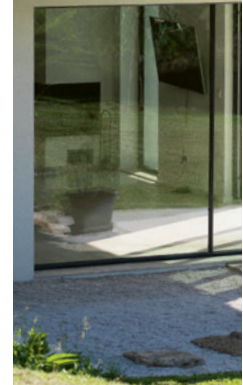


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