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VOL. 2, 2021

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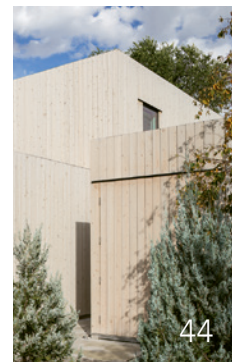
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On the Cover: Paper Mill House by MSR Design.
Photo: Lara Swimmer Photography

RD

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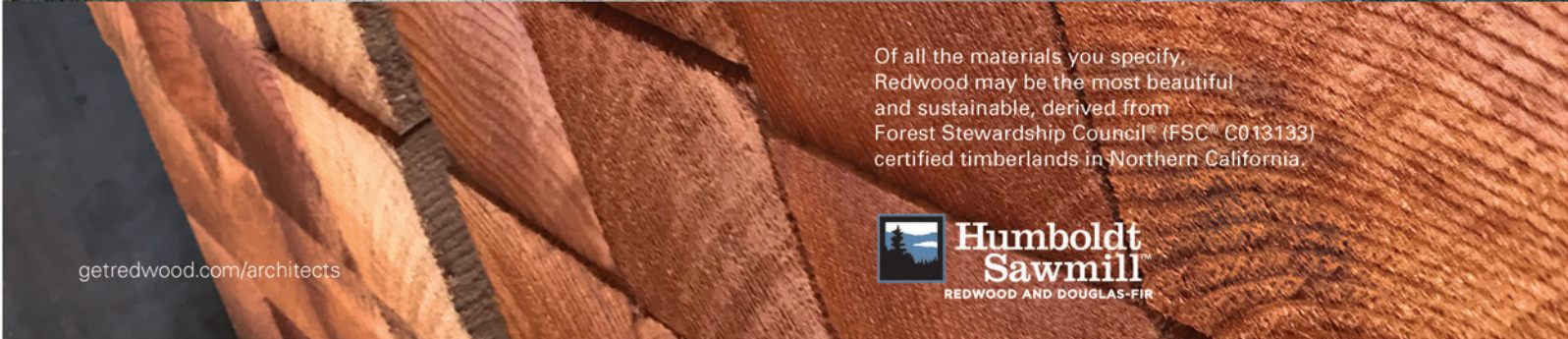
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Come Together



After this excruciating, yearlong pandemic, we are all ready to gnaw our way out of the trap. Isolation is a highly unnatural state for human beings—that's why we use it as extreme punishment in our prison systems. For the fortunate who've remained healthy and financially intact during this interminable nightmare, the biggest privation has been the moratorium on socializing in our homes.

But, as more of us receive our vaccines, this miasma will begin to lift. First, we'll welcome close family back into our houses. No longer banished to folding chairs in the driveway 6 feet apart, we will hug each other again and cluster together at the kitchen island. And, in time, we'll open the doors wide to good friends, neighbors, and even new acquaintances. Once again, we will use our houses as they should be used—fully.

This year has focused our attention on our houses as refuge. While that's an important role they play in our lives, it's only part of the purpose they serve. They're also a locus for us to come together with other human beings and to engage with them on our terms. We curate our homes to express our values and our priorities, and to empower and fuel our passions. We hunger to revive this aspect of their function in our lives.

In this issue of Residential Design, we've selected a very diverse collection of custom homes. What they all have in common is their intention to bring people together in a lovely, inspiring setting. First up is our Case Study, a large residential compound on a vast property in Pennsylvania. It's clear the budget on this project was ample and the ambition grand. The owners tapped MSR Design, a Minneapolis-based firm that specializes in commercial and institutional work, to design the perfect house for entertaining on a grand scale. Before the pandemic, they hosted sit-down dinners for 50 and frequent parties for 200 or more, often flowing outdoors to enjoy the idyllic, riverfront setting.

By contrast, our three Design Lab houses are modest in budgets and scope. Max Levy's small courtyard house for an art enthusiast is on a tight lot, but there's a long view from a backyard firepit that takes in the whole breadth of the house. This is where his client likes to entertain fellow art lovers, gazing back at his own original work of architecture.

At Host House by Joe Sadoski and Kipp Edick, great meals shared with long-term guests were the memorable draw. And at the Baboolal Residence, by Arielle Schechter, family hangouts on the deck overlooking the neighbor's meadow are what restore the spirit.

There's no doubt that the owners of all of these houses are eager to shed the shackles of solitude. Houses like these are meant for sharing, bringing joy to others as well as to ourselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "S. Claire Conroy".

S. Claire Conroy
Editor-in-Chief
claire@SOLAbands.com

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Bringing Work Back Home

BY BLAKE HELD, AIA

As the events of the pandemic began to unfold last spring, the discussion among my fellow CRAN members was that, despite the human and economic tragedies surrounding us, residential architects were seeing a surge in business. While seemingly counterintuitive in a field typically first hit by economic downturns, the reasons why this is happening have grown clear over the past months. Now the new center of our quarantined lives, our homes have become the focus of our efforts to cope with this extraordinary situation. As a result, we are asking them to serve as both comforting refuge and functioning work zones.

WFH, the popular shorthand for Work From Home, is bandied about as if it were a new concept. Much has been written to suggest WFH is a sudden paradigm shift brought about by the pandemic changing the home forever, but this is just a short-range view. Historically, for wealthy and poor alike, the home was where the business of life was centered. Large estates, town homes, and farms were filled not only with family but also workers of all trades, busy in the daily operation of the entity. WFH was a given, and it's a relatively recent development that houses have shed some of their



Photo: John Dimale Photography

Asher Slaunwhite Architects' home office for an artistic, birdwatching client.

occupational traits. If anything, we are rediscovering the home's traditional role as the center of our work, social, and recreational lives.

In its previous incarnation, the house relied upon flexibility of room use and clear division between spaces to allow public and private functions to continue simultaneously under one roof. Despite the seeming rigidity of four walls, separate rooms—chambers, halls, parlors, and the like—demonstrated remarkable functional flexibility. They were equally capable of hosting a small gathering, serving as an office, providing a place to sleep, bathe, dine, and use a chamber pot. Spatial division (walls and doors) was the key to the success of the working home.

With technological advances—toilets, ranges, and so forth—rooms were redefined by function: dining room, living room, bedroom, or bathroom. Technology allowed the



Photo: Brad Feinknopf



Photo: Brad Feinknopf

Be it a fully dedicated art studio or an enticing alcove, a zone to focus belongs in every house. By Studio MM Architect

work of day-to-day living to become easier, reducing the need for household servants. Finally, the growth of the suburb further eroded the modern home's relationship with its working past. Work now occurred in the city; the house, physically removed from the work center, became solely a place of retreat.


Today, we as architects, freed from the former working requirements placed on the home, have concerned ourselves less with individual rooms than with removing the last barriers between functional spaces to create a continuity of flow between them—the open plan. This concept, over a century old now, continues to enrich our homes with exciting, engaging spaces. But it does so at the cost of privacy and, ironically, flexibility.

While we may have designed an office into the home, few of us planned to accommodate multiple offices under one roof. The dining room can serve adequately as a second office for a



Photo: Joseph Kitchen Photography

Even Asher Slaunwhite Architects' beach houses benefit from a workspace away from the fray.

while, but a door sure would be nice. Rather than a paradigm shift, the home has instead returned to its original role. And, as architects, we are now tasked with the reintroduction of work into the home. 

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Square Dance

PARKSIDE HOUSE
MIDLAND, TEXAS
RHOTENBERRY WELLEN ARCHITECTS



It can be a blessing or a curse to remodel the work of another architect, but for Mark Wellen, FAIA, of Rhotenberry Wellen, this project in his home base of Midland, Texas, was a date with destiny. Designed in the 1960s by Dallas architect Bud Oglesby, the house is a landmark for the architectural cognoscenti of Texas regional modernism.

“I always admired this house. I bought a tiny house a block away and I would walk by it frequently,” Mark recalls. “At the time, it was still in the hands of its original owner, an older widowed lady. She gave me a tour back in the 1980s, and we would visit with her on the street. Eventually, she decided to move to Austin to be near family. It went through a series of owners after that.”

A number of those owners reached out to Mark about remodeling the house, as did a couple of his own clients. But for years, the planets didn’t align for the job to happen. “Then a good friend bought it, and the Realtor was also a friend. That put us together.” What sealed the deal was everyone’s mutual respect for the original house. They were all adamant that any changes had to be in the spirit of Bud’s work.

The result is a remodel so subtle it looks like a restoration, with many interim “remuddles” purged. “It’s one of the best houses I’ve ever seen in Texas,” says Mark. “It’s true post-and-beam construction, just like a barn, and an incredible design—so pure. It’s all St. Joe brick and vertical grain Doug fir. The things we tore off that were done incorrectly were not that difficult to take off.”



Opposite and this page: A sensitive remodel preserves the best of Bud Oglesby’s original work, while updating the house for modern life. A new kitchen and living room bar employ vertical grain Doug fir cabinetry, in keeping with the old-growth paneling and beams.



The first-level main bedroom opens to a refreshed porch. New metal strips tucked under its redwood decking protect an outdoor pool terrace below. A flagstone ramp leads to a new game room. A commodious kitchen cabana blocks intrusive sun with a manually operated screen.

Square Donut

The new owners asked for the typical amenities of contemporary life—a bigger kitchen open to a dining area, an expanded main bedroom suite, a pool, and additional indoor and outdoor recreation areas.

The house benefits from “rare topography” for the otherwise flat area, allowing it to keep a low profile on the front elevation and then open to a more layered, exuberant elevation in the back.

On the main level, Mark and his team got the elbow room they needed for the expanded kitchen and dining area by pulling off the carport at the back of the original kitchen and relocating a new one to the south. “I liked the carport,” he says, “but we were able to maintain Bud’s parti: it’s a square donut—a perfect square with a square courtyard in the middle.

“The inner courtyard roof is lower than the outer, with a clerestory window that wraps around it,” he explains. “That detail and section was predominant in architecture of the ’70s, to bring light in. And it’s so adroitly done here. It looks like a roof that sheds from the courtyard all around.”

On the interior, high-quality existing materials—old-growth vertical grain Doug fir, Doug fir plywood panels, and original flagstone floors—were touched up and repaired. Sliding glass doors were reglazed with insulated panels; and the failed clerestory glass was replaced with frosted glazing “to hide the sins of ductwork,” Mark says. But the clerestory still works its magic. “It was beautifully executed. Reflected light goes through the screens and hits all the shed ceilings.”

In the renovated kitchen and main bathroom, fresh materials hew to the restrained tones of the original palette—slim, absolute black counters in a leathered finish, new Doug fir cabinetry, and cork flooring. “For the flooring, we needed something fairly thin,” says the architect. “So, it was carpet,



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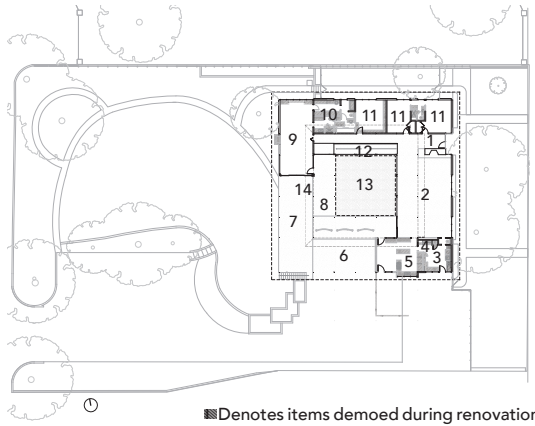
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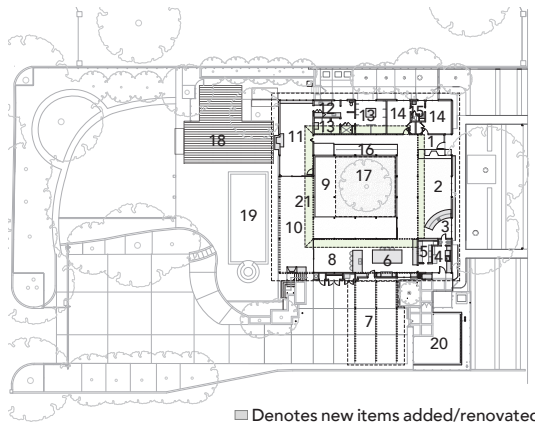
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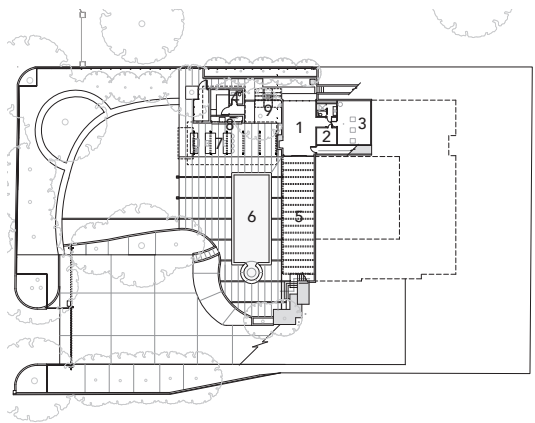
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EXISTING FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry | 2. Living Room
3. Laundry | 4. Pantry | 5. Kitchen | 6. Carport | 7. Deck
8. Dining Room | 9. Main Bedroom | 10. Bath | 11. Bedroom
12. Ramp | 13. Courtyard | 14. Light Monitor



RENOVATED UPPER FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry | 2. Living Room
3. Bar | 4. Laundry | 5. Pantry | 6. Kitchen | 7. Carport
8. Dining Room | 9. Porch | 10. Deck | 11. Main Bedroom
12. Main Bath | 13. Closet | 14. Bedroom | 15. Bathroom
16. Ramp to Pool Yard | 17. Courtyard | 18. Pool Pavilion
19. Pool | 20. Dog Yard | 21. Light Monitor



RENOVATED LOWER FLOOR PLAN | 1. Game Room | 2. Storage
3. Mechanical | 4. Bath | 5. Patio | 6. Pool | 7. Cabana
8. Kitchen | 9. Barbecue



In the main bedroom, St. Joe brick comes inside as a fireplace wall. The reglazed clerestory conveys filtered daylight. New cork floors complement the earthy tones of the original vertical grain Doug fir trim. "It's like being inside a cigar box," says the architect.

Parkside House

Midland, Texas

ARCHITECT: Mark Wellen, FAIA, principal-in-charge, Rhotenberry Wellen Architects, Midland, Texas

BUILDER: Steve Ekstrom, Ekstrom Construction, Midland

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Mark Wellen, FAIA; Angela Lancaster, RID, IIDA; Suzann Haechten, RID IIDA, Rhotenberry Wellen

PROJECT SIZE: 6,600 square feet

SITE SIZE: .75 acre

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHER: Paul Hester, Hester + Hardaway Photographers

KEY PRODUCTS

CLADDING: Bonderized metal siding

COUNTERTOPS: Leathered absolute black granite; Caesarstone

CUSTOM CABINETRY: Vertical grain Douglas Fir

DISHWASHER: Miele

EXTERIOR LIGHTING: Hydrel

FAUCETS: Hansgrohe; Dornbracht; Brizio

FLOORING: WE Cork; Horizon Tile; Daltile

HARDWARE: Mockett

HVAC: Mitsubishi

ICEMAKER: Scotsman

INTERIOR LIGHTING: Lucifer Lighting; Lightolier; Delray; Focal Point

OTHER APPLIANCES: Viking; Perlick

OUTDOOR GRILL: Kalamazoo

OUTDOOR REFRIGERATOR: Viking

RANGE: Viking

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Sub-Zero

SINKS: Kohler; Kraus

SURFACING: Vertical grain Doug Fir Plywood

UNDERLAYMENT/SHEATHING: Huber ZIP System R-Sheathing

VENT HOOD: Viking

VENTILATION: Panasonic

WALLBOARD: Vertical grain Doug Fir Plywood

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thin tile, or cork. Hardwood floors were too thick—even the engineered flooring. And we felt the cork was more in keeping with the character. We gave it a monochromatic finish. Along with the flagstone that darkens over time, it’s almost like being in a cigar box.”

For the main suite remodel, Mark repurposed an extra bedroom into a large, walk-in closet, reinvented the bathroom, and improved the appointments of an adjacent porch. He added a steel outdoor fireplace and had the vertical grain redwood decking cleaned and restored. Just underneath the porch decking, new grooved metal strips direct water away from a patio lounge area below.

The patio and a new outdoor kitchen cabana wrap around the requested single-depth swimming pool. A louvered, weathering-metal screen descends manually to protect the cabana from strong afternoon sun. The same perforated material appears on rolling gates to the parking area. A new standing metal seam roof with a thinner edge profile replaces a lesser quality predecessor.

Taken as a whole, the artful changes subtly and appropriately update the appearance and function of the house, without imposing on the original vision. Sensitively and masterfully done, it was the renovation worth waiting for.—*S. Claire Conroy*



The renovated main bathroom deploys the same custom Doug fir cabinetry and absolute black granite counters as the kitchen, along with cork flooring and Horizon tile.

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CASE STUDY

Great Adaptations

A house that expands and contracts, organized around outdoor spaces, integrates lessons of the past.

BY CHERYL WEBER

LOCATION: SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

ARCHITECT: MSR DESIGN

BUILDER: BOSS ENTERPRISES





CASE STUDY

Minneapolis-based MSR Design's portfolio consists mainly of public and institutional work these days—not a big surprise when you look at the Paper Mill residence, which demonstrates the same through-line of sophistication and clarity. In lesser hands a house this large might have competed unfavorably with its idyllic setting, but the 16,600-square-foot trio of barnlike buildings looks pitch-perfect on the rural Pennsylvania property.

Longtime clients of MSR Design, the couple with grown children had lived here for several years in a house that didn't meet their needs. They hired MSR Design to renovate and configure it for living, entertaining, and working. The key word was entertain, because they do it in a big way. The architectural challenge was to create a house that feels intimate for just the two of them but effortlessly expands to welcome crowds of up to 200. That, and to hit the sustainability benchmarks the firm has committed to through the Living Building Challenge.

An environmental strategy seemed especially urgent given the pristine natural setting. Heavily treed and dotted with rock outcroppings, the property was originally the site of a paper mill. It overlooks a wide stream with a waterfall and originally held a turbine that ran the mill. At some point a log cabin was built on the land, followed by an attached house. "The existing house was not well built and was plagued by humidity control issues," says principal Matthew Krontorád. "Altering it would have made it way bigger. We ended up making a smaller house by not renovating."

For such a complex brief, MSR's design concept is surprisingly simple. It began with acknowledging the local vernacular. "We looked at the barn forms, and also the materiality of stone barns," Matthew says. "You come over the crest and see these three really simple, familiar forms—one garage, one entertainment wing, and a living wing, with connectors between them for entry." Visitors arriving at the parking court are introduced to two wood-clad volumes with pitched metal roofs and a third stone-clad volume. The living and entertaining wings have tall, slotted windows similar to the way old barns were ventilated. In contrast, the rear façade facing the stream is treated in a more modern way with a fully glazed wall that opens almost 100 feet wide, allowing the interior spaces to spill out.

Built on the site of an old paper mill, this house takes full advantage of its natural setting and agrarian roots. Three new volumes and a repurposed log house create a compound that accommodates its owners en famille and when entertaining 200 guests and more.





Marrying vernacular forms and materials with crisp, modern detailing makes the compound look both fresh and familiar at the same time. While it harnesses the bounty of the site, considerable landscape restoration is part of the master plan. Formerly manicured lawns will give way to natural meadows and meandering mow cuts for hikes on the property.

If the first impression is one of familiarity, it's also because the stonework—on the living wing and on the entertaining wing end walls—takes its cues from traditional masonry. “Masonry has changed over time; it's more of a veneer now,” Matthew says. “We started looking at what barns would typically be—not the premier stone and the thinner veneers that quarries are going for. Because of the way stone is almost glued onto a building now, it doesn't have the same proportions as traditional stone. So we went to a local quarry and asked for C-grade stone. We thought we could make something beautiful out of something less expensive and think creatively about how to put it on. It was literally a pile of stuff the quarry didn't want to show us.”





The compound's two main volumes divide into private and public space with an entry hall in between. Folding doors on either side of the hall allow the owners to hunker down when alone or reunite both spaces to accommodate the largest of gatherings.

Open and Closed

From a use standpoint, the couple's entertaining scale and frequency drove the floor plan. They described wanting to feel comfortable when the two of them are working or having dinner together most nights. Once a week they have several people over for dinner or cocktails, with progressively larger gatherings monthly and yearly.

Constructed on a slope, the building's main floor consists of cathedralized living and entertaining wings, each with a loft that looks out to the water. The art-filled foyer acts as a spine connecting the east and west wings, and a south-facing roof monitor keeps this space bright throughout the day. Solid chestnut doors on each side of the entry hall allow the owners to cocoon behind them or fold them back for parties.

In each wing, a steel ridge beam, heavy timbers, and a steel moment frame on the back wall liberate the plan from columns. The residential side consists of an open living,

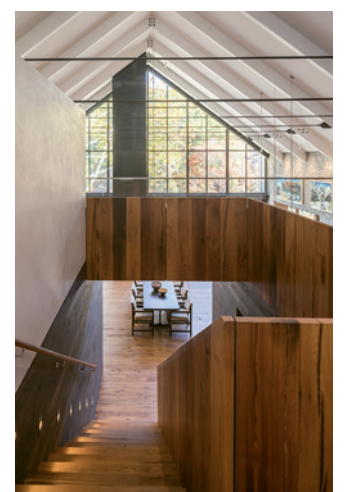
dining, and kitchen area. Hidden behind a continuous wall of cabinetry, farthest from the stream, are a guest room, powder room, and the vaulted primary bedroom suite with a gas fireplace and large walk-in closet. "The owners really like it quiet and dark when they sleep," Matthew says. "The insulated stone walls are nearly 2 feet thick, which produces a very quiet space." Slotted vertical windows send shafts of light across the fissures of the stone wall. Stairs to the skylit loft, suspended in midsection, lead to a gym/yoga space and an additional guest room with a small balcony facing west.

These nested spaces contrast with the opposite side of the 40-foot-wide living wing. As you move toward the stream, the house opens fully with two sets of 20-foot bifold glass walls. Butt-glazed glass above the pergola—a datum line along the back of both wings—rises to almost 30 feet at the peak. "It overlooks the rocky outcrops and trees and stream," Matthew says. "They often see bald eagles flying in."



The architectural challenge was to create a house that feels intimate for just the two of them but expands to welcome crowds of up to 200.

Across the entry hall, the 60-foot-long entertaining zone incorporates a long bar and a nearly 6-foot-tall wood-burning fireplace. An art display wall behind the bar hides a catering kitchen and powder room. This section seats up to 50 people for dinner; for larger gatherings, tables can extend through the entry hall and into the residence—fireplace to fireplace—or, when weather permits, onto the limestone terrace outside the glass walls. The loft offers a more intimate space for overflow, conversation, and views. There are more rooms in the walk-out lower level. In addition to a project room, laundry, and wine room, three bedrooms and a lounge and kitchen give overnight guests some autonomy.



To balance the large footprint, the architects reached high with the vaulted ceiling. The glazed peak of the family volume soars to almost 30 feet, but interiors of both wings remain free of columns with steel moment frames, steel ridge beams, and heavy timbers.



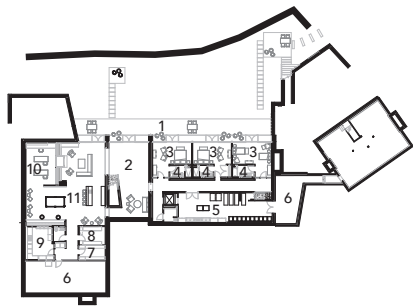
Above: Slotted windows in the main bedroom evoke old barns, where slants of light move across the floor during the course of the day. Instead of a simple veneer, the architects specified C-grade and had it installed 5 inches thick on exterior and interior walls, with a 12-inch layer of insulation in between. Below: A guest room on the mezzanine level of the family wing has its own balcony.



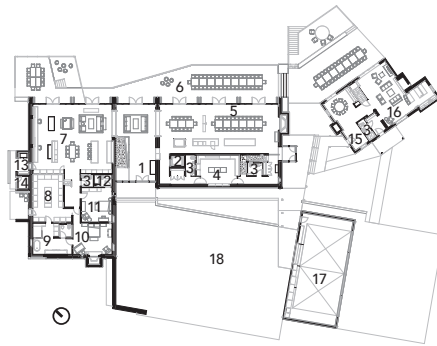
To Scale

If the soaring volumes allow views outdoors from almost anywhere in the building, solid walls, movable art-display cases, and built-ins control scale and acoustics. “It’s not only big in layout but in height,” Matthew says. “We knew that if we didn’t make it tall, it would feel really awkward inside. The spring point where the rafters start to go up is 15 feet high, and the ceiling approaches 30 feet in the center.”

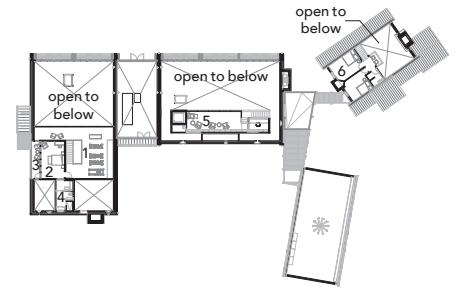
Mullions in the glass walls help to break down the scale, and a minimal palette of blackened steel, reclaimed wood, and stone creates a sense of calm. Exposed timber ceilings and acoustical plaster absorb sound bouncing off the stone walls and stairs, especially in the entertaining wing, which also has an inch-and-a-half-thick limestone floor. Walnut cabinetry



BASEMENT PLAN | 1. Patio | 2. Gallery | 3. Guest Suite | 4. Guest Bathroom | 5. Storage | 6. Mechanical Room | 7. Cedar Closet | 8. Wine Cellar | 9. Laundry Room | 10. Office | 11. Family Room



MAIN LEVEL PLAN | 1. Entry | 2. Elevator | 3. Guest Bathroom | 4. Catering Kitchen | 5. Dining Room | 6. Outdoor Dining | 7. Living Room | 8. Main Closet | 9. Main Bathroom | 10. Main Bedroom | 11. Children's Bedroom | 12. Children's Bathroom | 13. Outdoor Grill | 14. Outdoor Shower | 15. Guest Lodge Card Room | 16. Guest Lodge Bar | 17. Garage | 18. Parking



LOFT PLAN | 1. Exercise Studio | 2. Guest Bedroom | 3. Balcony | 4. Guest Bathroom | 5. Lounge | 6. Guest Lodge Suite

LANDSCAPE/SITE PLAN





The entertaining wing can seat up to 50 within its walls. When folding doors to each wing are open, even larger sit-down dinners can stretch end to end between the fireplaces. Parties for 200 easily flow between the long bar to the outside river terrace; and smaller conclaves can escape upstairs to the loft lounge for a tête-à-tête. Tucked below the lounge are a catering kitchen, two bathrooms, a couple of coat rooms, and an elevator.

lends warmth to this zone, and the residence's wormy chestnut flooring and cabinetry has the same effect. "The finishes are mainly reclaimed wood," Matthew says. "We cleaned up the edges so it has a modern feel but the character of something that's aged over time, and it goes well with the blackened steel used in some locations."

Planes of light humanize the interiors, too. Ceilings are painted white to bounce the light, which includes chandeliers and pendants, recessed lights, and adjustable sconces and track lights for setting a mood or highlighting artwork. Skylights connect the inhabitants to the sun, and the thin window slots are splayed on the inside, creating slants of light at ever-changing angles. In the thick stone walls, "the saw cuts around the windows are clean and smoother so that the light can make its way farther in, even though it's a small opening," Matthew says. "Traditional barns often get this incredible light through thin slots." Such threshold detailing gives the house a finer grain. Downstairs, for example, stone wall jambs are similarly clean-cut and inset with blackened steel lintels.



Window walls and terraces lead guests to the home's strongest features, the river and waterfall that once powered the mill. By day, there's the drama of the view; after dark, the water music claims center stage.





On the ground level, the entertaining wing offers three guest suites and a riverside terrace. In the owners' wing are casual family space, an office, wine cellar, laundry, and storage.

Grounded

Much like the natural world around it, the architecture succeeds in achieving a calibrated balance of comfort and resource-efficiency. Stone on the walls is almost 5 inches thick on each side, with a 12-inch-thick core of sprayed insulation to create an airtight thermal mass that keeps temperatures stable. “Both the wood and stone walls have similar construction with a high R value,” Matthew says. “Our strategy was to make it net-zero ready, and they recently installed the solar array on a large remote maintenance shed.” A geothermal system supplements the solar energy, and a preliminary design was drawn for future hydropower generation, if needed. Floors are radiant-heated and cooled, and ceiling fans circulate fresh air.

“We looked at the barn forms, and also the materiality of stone barns. You come over the crest and see these three really simple, familiar forms.”

—Matthew Kruntorád

Exterior materials, such as the garage and entertaining wing’s locally harvested black locust rainscreen, will not need much upkeep. “We did put a dark cocoa stain on it because the initial color is not great,” Matthew says. “The water-based stain will gradually go away and the black will take over. Again, it’s one of those materials that isn’t necessarily thought of as a beautiful material, but we tried to use it in a way that respects it.”

Part of the master plan, a cohesive landscape now knits the various buildings together. A pergola connects the garage and entertaining wing, and pathways lead to the adjacent log cabin, now used as a guest lounge and sleeping loft. Outside is a terrace that handles overflow from the entertaining zone. A series of steps lead to a lower-level firepit, and on down to the waterfall.

The new planting plan reinforces the buildings’ agrarian vibe. Gone are the manicured lawns and a formal red oak allée that rose over the crest. The oaks were replanted in clusters around the property. This move lends a more naturalistic feel, along with native grass planters on the terraces, a native meadow, and rain gardens. “Our plantings were intended to let the landscape grow more prairie-like and just mow areas where they want to walk,” Matthew says. Ambitious in both scope and conservation practices, the house acknowledges history but is firmly rooted in its place and time. [RD](#)



Paper Mill House

Southeastern Pennsylvania

ARCHITECT: Matthew Kruntorád, AIA, MSR Design, Minneapolis

BUILDER: Boss Enterprises, Wilmington, Delaware

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Leanne Larson, MSR Design

CIVIL ENGINEER: Advanced GeoServices, West Chester, Pennsylvania

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Meyer, Borgman, Johnson, Minneapolis

LIGHTING DESIGN: Gallina Design, Chatfield, Minnesota

LANDSCAPE DESIGN: Ten x Ten, Minneapolis

PROJECT SIZE: 16,600 square feet

PROPERTY SIZE: 300 (5 acres built)

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: Lara Swimmer Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

CUSTOM CABINETRY AND ENTRY DOORS: Artisans & Co.

COOKING APPLIANCES: Wolf

COUNTERTOPS: Caesarstone

CURTAIN WALL: Colfab Metal Fabrication

DISHWASHER: Asko

DRYER: Maytag

FAUCETS: Dornbracht

GARAGE DOORS: Wilson Industrial Doors

GRILL: Wolf

HARDWARE: Frost, Valli & Valli, Hafele

HOME CONTROL SYSTEMS: Savant Systems

HVAC SYSTEMS: GeoExcel, A.O. Smith, Honeywell, REHAU

ICEMAKER: Scotsman

LIGHTING: Lucifer, Kurt Versen, Gammalux, Vistosi, Cheope, Leucos Fairy SC, Vode, ConTech, MP, Winona, BK Lighting

LIGHTING CONTROL SYSTEM: Lutron

REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

SINKS: Orion, Kohler, Elkay

SKYLIGHTS: CrystaLite

SLIDE/FOLD DOORS: Duratherm Window Company

TOILETS: TOTO

TUB: Kohler

VENTILATION: Panasonic

WINDOW SHADING: MechSystems

WINDOWS: Brombal USA

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

TIMBER CURTAIN WALL

AUTHENTIC



Loewen

This Timber Curtain Wall, with its integrated bi-parting LiftSlide doors, connects the indoor and outdoor lounge areas of this Clarksville residence. Another example of Loewen handcrafted capability, commitment to authentic materials, and enduring design.



LaRue Architects | Foursquare Builders | Casey Dunn Photography

LOEWEN.COM



Modesty Becomes Them

Three modern dwellings find expression in understatement.

BY CHERYL WEBER AND S. CLAIRE CONROY

Merrilee Lane

DALLAS, TEXAS
MAX LEVY ARCHITECT

“The most common building type in America is a modest house in a modest neighborhood, and yet architecture seldom results from that,” says Max Levy, FAIA. “I always wanted to do that type of house—to see, what is the problem here.”

He got that chance on Merrilee Lane, a cheerful street name that could come from Anywhere USA. Indeed, this 2,000-square-foot house was designed on a featureless lot in an ordinary 1950s neighborhood and replaced “a sad little house.” Think of the Levittowns on the outskirts of metro areas—single-family, slab-on-grade dwellings with dense bundles of rooms and small, punched windows. What interested Max was that, despite their small scale, these homes are dark inside and not very pleasant because they don’t connect with the outside. “That’s what we were trying to do here, somehow acknowledge nature,” Max says. “Everybody knows this kind of neighborhood; they are wall-to-wall carpeting across America.”

The budget was relatively modest too, but Max has found that budget doesn’t matter as much as a sympathetic client. A physician, the client’s only request was for more natural light during the day. He didn’t ask for more space than the existing house’s two bedrooms and an open kitchen, dining, and living room. That, and a place to enjoy his collection of art by friends who are serious artists.

The only request from the client was a house filled with natural light. The architect responded with a courtyard plan that pulls apart day and evening wings, and rejoins them with a glass breezeway.





A sliding LUMAsite screen that divides the courtyard from a small backyard and firepit can be closed and locked. The ¼-inch-thick material resembling rice paper is screwed to a welded aluminum frame. Max specified the least expensive brick he could find and had it painted white to hide the flaws of material and of the less-skilled masons who applied it.

“The most common building type in America is a modest house in a modest neighborhood, and yet architecture seldom results from that. I always wanted to do that type of house—to see, what is the problem here.”

—Max Levy, FAIA

Max went to work figuring out how to make something artistic out of this limited palette. Starting with the idea of “light and delight,” he imagined a band of sunlight and a march of trees right down the middle of the site. That move parted the floor plan into a day side and a night side, with a kitchen, dining, and living room in one volume and two bedrooms in the other across a gravel

courtyard. Perpendicular to the street, they are linked by a glazed breezeway that doubles as an entry foyer. In this way the architecture frames the trees—crape myrtles with exfoliating, cinnamon-colored bark; white summer blossoms; and vivid fall color. On the street side, a carport caps the east wing, and a one-bay garage terminates the west wing.

Poetic Utility

As one discovers here, when architecture intersects with nature, the forms can be fairly basic. Glass walls make the two rectangular volumes seem much larger than their 14-foot-wide interior dimension. The simple, identical structures could be constructed economically. Roofs consist of repetitive, gang-nailed 2x4 trusses, the kind homebuilders use, so the framing went up quickly and efficiently. Max also specified the most inexpensive brick he could find and had it painted white. “At this price point the masons you get are not very good, so by painting it white you don’t see all the hiccups,” he says. The standing steam metal roofs were a pricier item, but the



labor cost was reasonable because the forms are so elementary.

This simplicity has other gifts, too. “Modernism has a tendency to be strident in an ordinary modest neighborhood,” Max says. “We wanted to be a good neighbor; the forms are quiet, and something of the light of that central courtyard is given back to the street.” The light also gives back to the house. Each volume’s shed roof relates to the passage of the sun through the day: The east- and west-facing roofs are pitched so that in the morning the courtyard is bright with sunlight but shaded in the afternoon. And the sun coming through the trees fills the white interior with dappled light. “The client



Eight precisely placed steel runnels usher rainwater to thirsty plantings. Downspouts terminate just above them, so the poetics of the process is perceived and enjoyed.



The architect blurred the distinction between inside and out by repeating the color palette in both realms: white interior walls and gray concrete floors echo the gravel and brick outside. Solid fabric screens slide to cover window walls. A LUMAsite screen divides the open-plan great room.

has commented on the pleasure of seeing that,” Max says.

In detailing the landscape, Max was inspired by the Jeffersonian notion of Yankee ingenuity, aka poetic utility. “The trick when you do that is, it can’t be overwrought, just very simple,” he says. The trees are native to Louisiana, which gets more rainfall than Dallas does. However, the amount these trees get is greater than the typical rainfall. That’s because eight evenly spaced runnels, fabricated from ¼-inch-thick steel, channel water from stock downspouts to the trees in their circular beds, as well as to a stand of bamboo screening the west property line. With their crisp repetition, it doesn’t have to be raining for the runnels to read as poetry, but when it is, one notices. “We stopped the downspouts





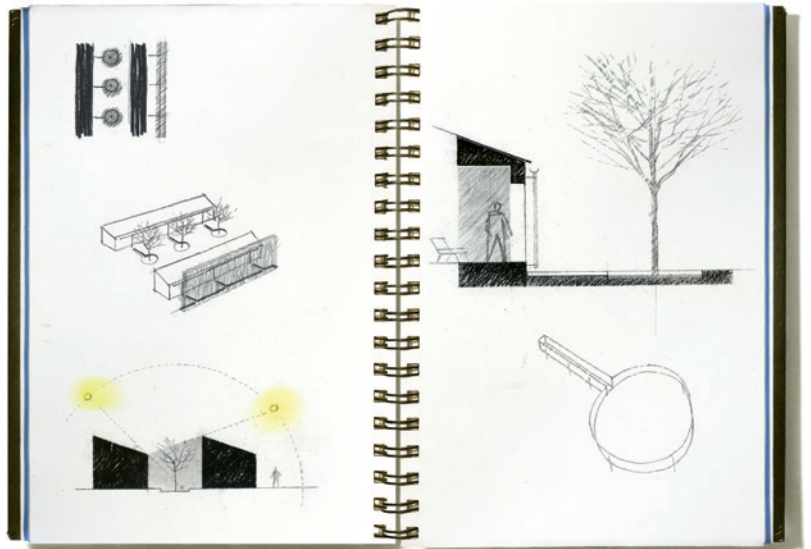
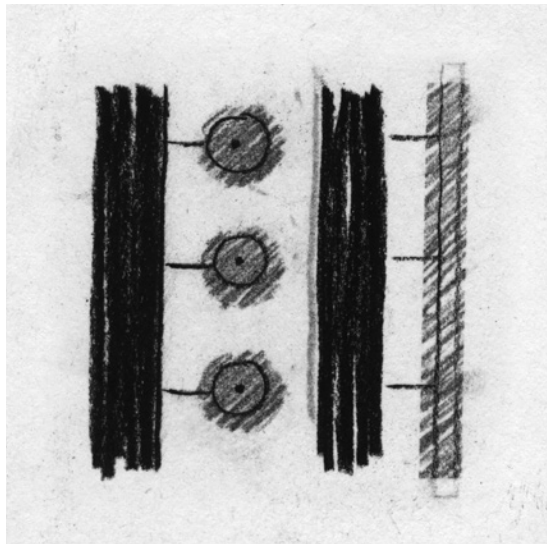
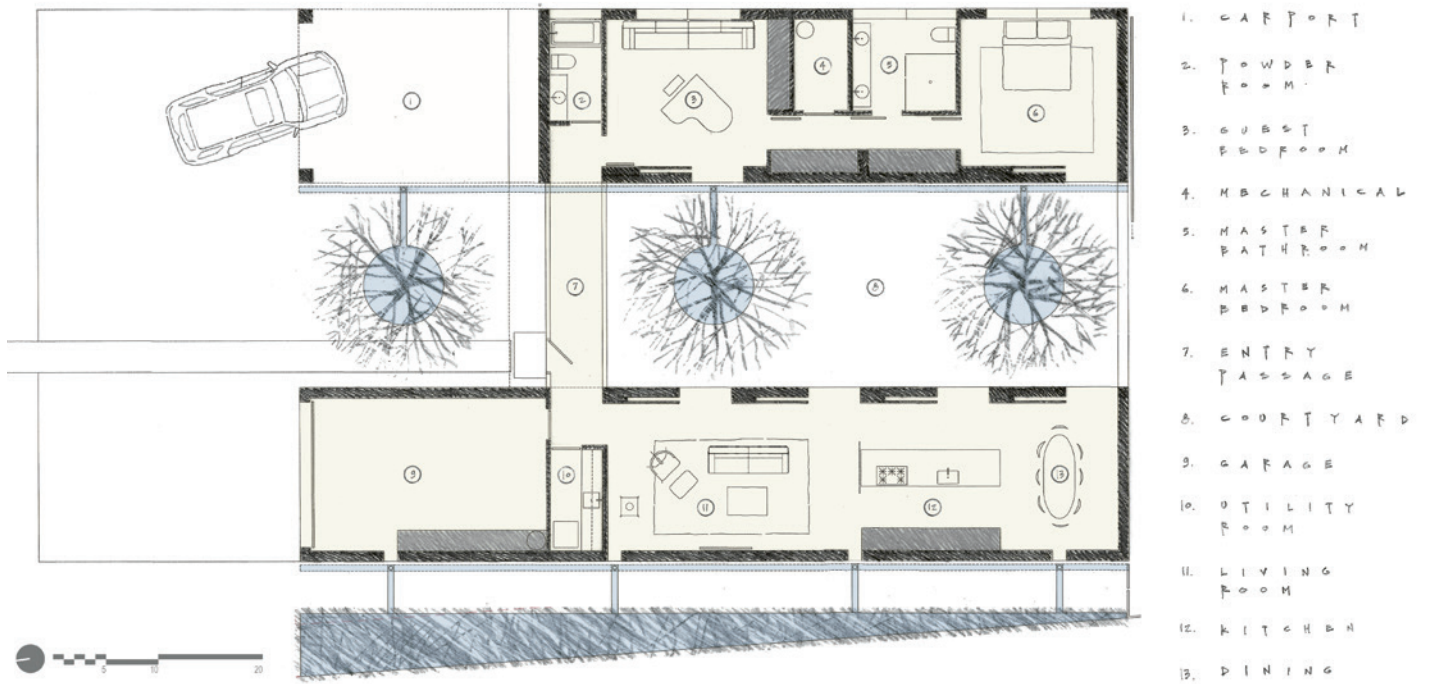
Simple materials deployed artfully elevate the modest house above its budget. Glimpses of nature and infused natural light are subtle players in its overall success.

above the runnels so that when you're sitting in the house you can see the rain coming out of the downspouts and rushing through the runnel to the planting," Max says. "It enhances the feeling of being sheltered, and it's kind of meditative to watch the rain in that context."

Inside, materials are well-edited and executed. The flooring is concrete slab-on-grade, with 10-foot ceilings

painted a matching deep gray, and drywall and cabinets painted white. In the living wing, LUMAsite-backed wood slats create a visual baffle between the kitchen and living room. Window shades are a single sheet of fabric that slides on a track, adding to the sense of weightlessness.

With the interiors painted the exact same hue as the exterior, the house's



A careful balance of solid and void, and the ability to tweak the two according to mood or time of day, optimizes the utility and delight of the small house. Flexibility replaces the need for single-use spaces and ones that chase the daily course of the sun.



Crape myrtles are a thirstier species than Dallas can typically sustain, but runnels supply them with ample water directly from roof runoff. The client opens the courtyard privacy screen for his weekly social gatherings around the firepit.

“Modernism has a tendency to be strident in an ordinary modest neighborhood. We wanted to be a good neighbor.”

—Max Levy, FAIA

apparent size is magnified as one gazes outside and into the other wing. The one splurge was another magnification device—sliding glass doors that pocket into the courtyard-facing walls on both wings, leaving clean openings with rolling screens. In mild weather when the doors are retracted, the house becomes an open-air pavilion with

circulation back and forth across the courtyard.

At the far end of the courtyard, a LUMAsite screen, mounted to the back of the house on rolling barn hardware, can be closed and locked. A 1950s-looking plastic that resembles rice paper, the ¼-inch-thick material is screwed to a welded aluminum frame. Behind it in

the small backyard, the row of trees in circular beds culminates in a round firepit, an island in ground cover. “Every Thursday the owner has a group of friends over; they sit around the firepit, have their drinks, and look back at the house,” Max says.

The house on Merrilee Lane is not the usual suburban trope, but it is familiar nevertheless. And while the neighbors may have been concerned when they saw this unusual pair of forms going up, “a passerby also enjoys the lightness of this house,” Max says, “so it’s been well received.” —*Cheryl Weber*



The client, who is a serious art collector, enjoys meeting with other enthusiasts and gazing back at his own work of architecture from the backyard firepit.

Merrilee Lane

Dallas, Texas

ARCHITECT: Max Levy, FAIA; Matt Morris, Tom Manganiello, Max Levy Architect, Dallas

BUILDER: Constructive, Dallas

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Max Levy Architect

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Hocker Design Group, Dallas

PROJECT SIZE: 1,968 square feet conditioned; 772 square feet unconditioned

SITE SIZE: .25 acre

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHER: Charles Davis Smith

KEY PRODUCTS

BATHROOM FAUCETS: Waterworks

BATHTUB: Duravit

CABINETRY: PHD Millwork

CERAMIC TILE: Daltile

CLADDING: Kinney Brick Co.

COOKTOP: KitchenAid

COUNTERTOP: Neolith

DISHWASHER: ASKO

DOOR HARDWARE: Baldwin, IVES, Hager

EXTERIOR LIGHTS: T&B

FIREPLACE: Wittus

HOUSEWRAP: Tyvek

INSULATION: Demilec

INTERIOR LIGHTS: Leviton, Akari

KITCHEN FAUCET: Hansgrohe

OVEN: Bosch

PAINT: Sherwin-Williams

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Sub-Zero

ROOF TRUSSES: Colonial Truss Co.

ROOFING: StazOn Roofing

SINKS: Wells Sinkware

TOILETS: TOTO

TRANSLUCENT PANELS: LUMAsite

SWITCHES & DIMMERS: GP Drapery

WINDOWS: Western Window Systems

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Jose Garcia Design | Cincinnati, OH

Architect Jose Garcia strives to achieve the best balance between aesthetics, construction, technology, budget and environment. So when he began designing his latest modern woodland residence, he chose Pella Reserve – Contemporary to achieve the awe-inspiring sightlines he envisioned.



ALAN PICKETT
*Director, Architectural
Business Development*

“Everything about these windows needed to be very simple in order to maximize as much of the view as possible,” said Alan Pickett, director of architectural business development at Pella. “That’s why the squared-off edges and minimal sightlines are so important.”

Garcia chose to create a floor-to-ceiling window wall to help dissolve the boundary between outdoors and indoors. But unlike many expansive window designs, this one featured substantial swaths of wood structure between each glass panel.

“Each frame has its own view, but when you look at them comprehensively, the windows fade away and you get one striking panorama,” Pickett said.

The lavish wall of Pella Reserve – Contemporary windows also allowed Garcia to create drama with light and shadow, accentuating the modern aesthetic of the space.



“With modern design, it’s really about keeping the forms and materials simple so the house can serve as the background for the life that’s happening in the space,” Pickett said. “Light and shadow are what animates the architecture. Of course, the windows play a key role in that.”

A major consideration when installing window walls of this scale is how well they’ll perform in terms of wind and water resistance and energy efficiency.

“Larger panes can require thicker glass to stand up to wind loads. But that can make it harder to maintain energy performance,” Pickett said. “We designed these windows to provide enough structure and resist wind and water infiltration while maintaining a sleek, contemporary look.”

Another way Pella Reserve – Contemporary windows help ensure a clean aesthetic is with their discreet yet easy-to-operate hardware. While minimal hardware is preferable from an artistic standpoint, it’s important to deliver on the homeowner’s need for simple ergonomics. Pella Reserve – Contemporary achieves both goals with its innovative hardware design.

“This project is a great testament to Pella’s ability to play inside the luxury space,” Pickett said. “With our full portfolio, Pella can achieve architectural goals on any level.”



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While designing a contemporary home set against a backdrop of lush trees and broad horizons, architect Jose Garcia had one primary objective – simplicity. Inspired by the structure’s natural surroundings, he chose Pella Reserve – Contemporary windows for their expansive sightlines and minimalist profiles to create drama with light and shadow while inviting the outdoors in. The result was a luxurious, modern sanctuary with timeless elegance – and time-tested performance.

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Host House

SIGNAL ARCHITECTURE & RESEARCH | ARCHITECT ASSOCIATES
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH



Designed for privacy on a tight, narrow lot, the cedar-cloaked Host House belies the light-filled spaces found inside. Precise alignments and detailing lend outsized importance to sparse openings. Hefty industrial aviation hangar doors, concealed in cedar, tie back deep into the structure.

Architects Joe Sadoski, AIA, and Kipp Edick met as teenagers at the Rowmark Ski Academy in Salt Lake City, which draws students from across the U.S. They lived near the school with the late Alan Hayes, a ski-racing coach who would become their mentor. After high school, the two young friends found themselves on a parallel career track, not as professional athletes but as architects. They went on to earn graduate degrees in architecture on opposite sides of the country, Joe at the University of Oregon and Kipp at Yale.

Although the two kept in touch, their professional paths might never have crossed had it not been for a call from Alan, asking if they would design a full-time house for him along the western front of the Wasatch Mountains. Joe was just leaving grad school and Kipp was working for Adjaye Associates in New York. “We had done our own things, and we came back together and talked, ‘Can we do this? We had never worked together and were on opposite coasts,’” Joe says.

They decided they could. In addition to their similar modernist

sensibilities, the two benefited from knowing their client well. And having lived with him for several years, they were familiar with his domestic routines. “Coming from the University of Oregon, I could push some of the sustainability aspects, and Kipp could bring his design-forward and technical experiences from working at David Adjaye’s office,” Joe says.

The project kicked off with a design workshop in Salt Lake City. After many sketches studying massing and day-lighting strategies, a model was made



The enigmatic box opens up with a curtain wall on the east elevation, supplying views of the Wasatch Mountains to the communal living, dining, and kitchen space. A small outbuilding holds a workshop, storage, and a barbecue.



and the concept was set. “We came into the picture as kids who got to know the client by living with him as part of the ski program,” Kipp says, “so we were able to synthesize the program in a clear and clean way, and the design kind of followed.”

Several requirements drove the design, and because of the long, slim site—57 feet wide by 169 feet long—there were only so many ways to vary their early diagram. One request was for a three-car garage, which started to dictate the house’s dimensions. Another was for one-level living, and the other was a request for privacy. In a community of tightly spaced lots, that desire drove the house’s expression. “He had close relationships with kids, family, and friends,

and wanted to live in a private space filled with daylight,” says Joe. “In shaping the house, we needed to figure out where we could dump in a lot of light” without exposure to the neighbors.

The Slip

Taut and clean-lined, the aptly named Host House appears as an almost unarticulated, cedar-clad bar with its short end facing the street. Only a few small windows punch through the long sides, emphasizing the building’s linearity and helping it blend into the surroundings. Inside the front door, rooms are stacked front to back along a skylit side corridor opening to the garage, owner’s suite, office, and internal courtyard, culminating in a kitchen/living space whose curtain wall reveals an eastern view of the Wasatch Mountains.



The client asked for a house suffused with natural light. The architects complied largely through skylights, which answered his other request for privacy. Wherever light enters the building, it is strategically guided to adjacent spaces.





Designed to welcome long-term visitors to the ski school, Host House devotes considerable attention to communal areas. An avid chef, the client enjoyed entertaining over a great meal, but wanted cooking clutter neatly stowed when the party came to an end. A small courtyard provides natural light for the office, hall, and stair.



A laundry and powder room are tucked between the courtyard and kitchen. Guests are housed in the set-back second story containing two bedrooms, a bath, and lounge.

A hallmark of thoughtful architecture, the floor plan's logical simplicity belies the three-dimensional dynamics. Sectionally, a large light well over the staircase splits the one- and two-story volumes, funneling light into the center of the house. The upper-level cube is held away from the back wall of the house, creating the feeling that the bedrooms and open-to-below lounge are suspended in space. "The way we detailed the stairs, with open risers, when you're standing on either side of the stair you see the slip—the skylights, and that the actual cube isn't connected on those ends," Kipp says. "It's a nice

moment.” This cutaway also allows warm morning light from the living room’s glass wall to bounce into the upstairs lounge.

“One of the most surprising things for people is that you can only see two punched windows on the second story and one on the first,” Joe says. “But there are eight skylights throughout the house and strategic curtain wall sections

“The interior has a daylight that people don’t expect.”

—Joe Sadoski, AIA

to maximize light in the social spaces. The interior has a daylight that people don’t expect.” The other curtain walls were hung around the internal courtyard. The office, facing the courtyard with corridors on either side, allowed Alan to watch the snowfall and the winterberry tree’s changing colors without neighbors looking in, and to be connected to the people who lived in his home. “It is a social zone, large enough to let multiple people work there,” Joe says.

Materials and colors contribute to the uniform, unfussy interior that Alan requested: radiant-heated concrete floors, white oak cabinetry and casework, glass, and blackened steel. A consummate cook and breadmaker, his appliances in the all-Gaggenau kitchen hide behind wood panels and a large tambour door. “When we were living with Alan in the previous house, he would make elaborate meals in a tiny kitchen tucked into a corner,” Kipp says. “One of the bigger rewards was to have a meal with him in the kitchen after it was built.”

Quadruple pane window systems mitigate extremes of heat and cold while allowing light and glimpses of nature to enter the house. The flexible office can accommodate multiple workstations at the same desk.





Light filters through the house and into the stairhall, second-level guest lounge, and bedrooms. A combination of fixed skylights and venting units control the flow of light and air. Behind the scenes, south walls are radiantly cooled to prevent excessive heat gain.

“This project was profound for us. There was a lot of trust, which allowed the project to sing.”

—Kipp Edick

Skintight

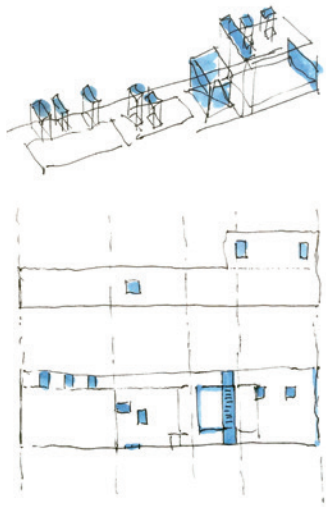
In pursuit of a minimalist box, Joe and Kipp clad every exterior surface in a western red cedar rainscreen, including the three garage doors. The heavy, industrial aviation hangar doors open on a horizontal fold and are engineered to tie back deep into the house. Seamlessly detailed, “the splices of each piece of cedar needed to hit the edges of the garage

doors and corners, and also the edges of the windows on that whole south side,” says the builder, Brady Sherman.

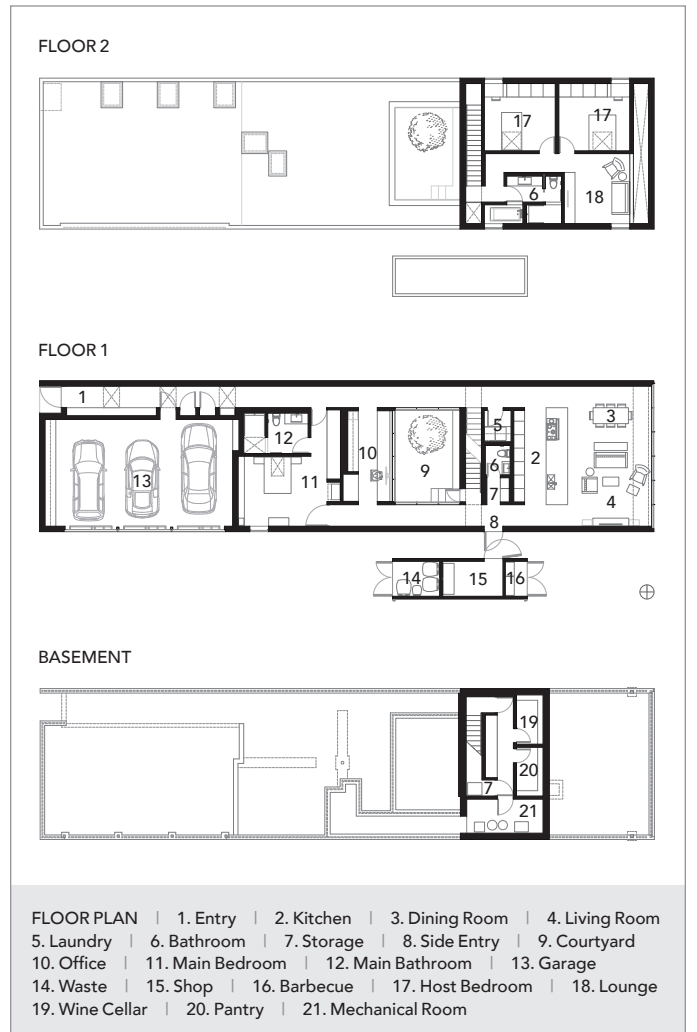
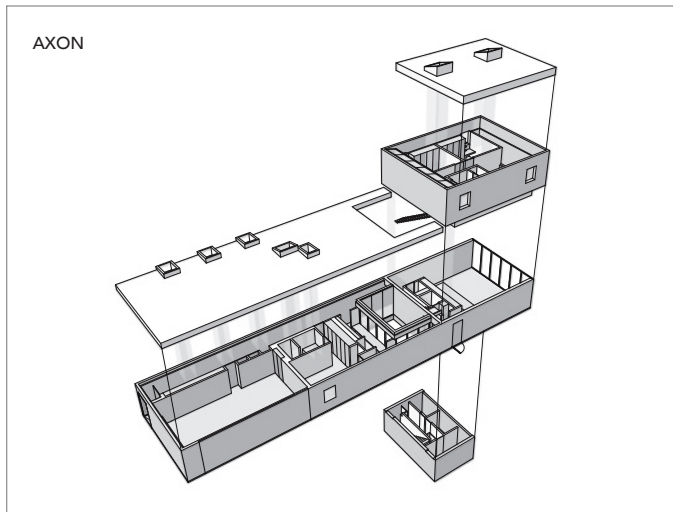
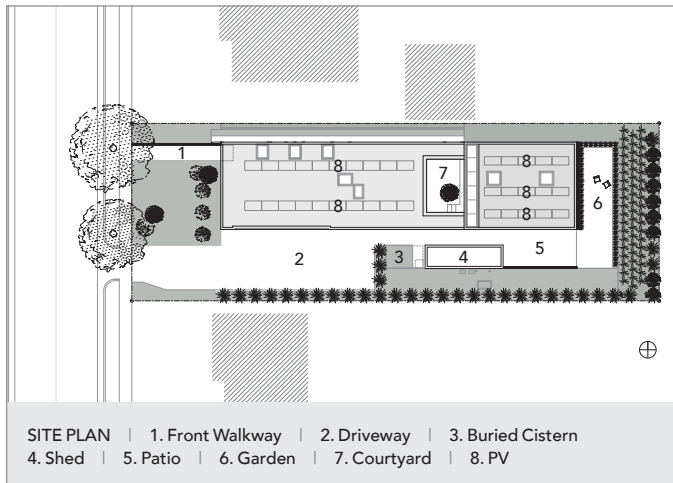
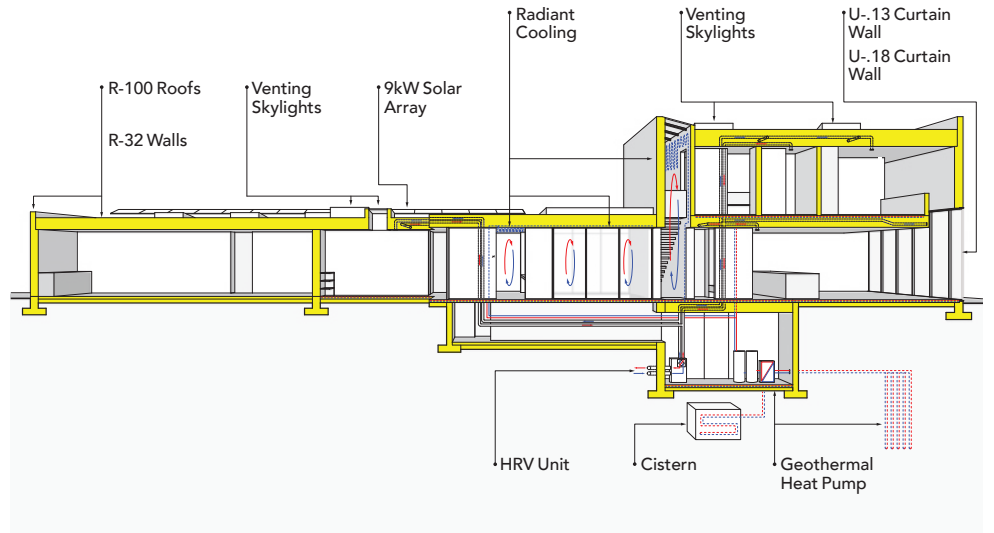
It’s a tight box performance-wise, too. Using SIPs construction for the walls, “we had an insulative layer on all six sides of the house, including under the footings,” Brady says. Steel framing supports the garage doors, large skylight, and curtain walls, which

were fabricated locally. The ambitious sustainability program also included quadruple-pane windows, solar panels on the TPO-membrane roof, and a 3,500-gallon cistern, which also acts as a heat sink to keep the basement wine room cool. Five geothermal wells supply radiant heating and cooling. “When they modeled solar gain throughout the day, some walls were getting hit by sun, so we

SKETCH



SECTION DIAGRAM
HVAC STRATEGIES





ran electric radiant tubing to cool those sections,” Brady says. “Upstairs, the wall on the south is radiant cooled, along with the south wall in the atrium area.”

The design’s massing and details support the premise of an introverted house. The second-floor volume fades into the back of the site, so the house appears to be the same height as its neighbors. Inside, it’s the long corridors, light well, and full eastern view that create a memorable living experience.

Sadly, Alan died in 2019, a few years after he moved in. “I think he was really proud of the design we all got to, and that he could have a legacy,” Kipp says. “He brought kids in for skiing and they turned out to be architects who could translate what he wanted.”

“This project was profound for us,” Joe adds. “It meant a lot to do it for an old friend and mentor. There was a lot of trust, which allowed the project to sing.”—*Cheryl Weber*

Host House

Salt Lake City, Utah

ARCHITECTS: Joe Sadoski, AIA, Signal Architecture & Research; Kipp Edick, Architect Associates, Brooklyn, New York

BUILDER: Brady Sherman, Sherman Homes, Salt Lake City, Utah

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: Alexandria Donati, Miranda Brooks Landscape Design, Brooklyn

PROJECT SIZE: 4,460 square feet

SITE SIZE: 9,609 square feet

CONSTRUCTION COST: \$448 per square foot

PHOTOGRAPHY: Lara Swimmer

KEY PRODUCTS

CABINETS: Gaggenau

CLADDING: Western red cedar, plate steel

COOKTOP: Gaggenau

DISHWASHER: Gaggenau

DOOR HARDWARE: FSB

FAUCETS: Grohe

GARAGE DOORS: Schweiss Bifold

GARBAGE DISPOSAL: InSinkErator

GRILL: Weber

ICEMAKER: Gaggenau

LIGHTING: Bega, Martco, Mega Bulb, Alinea, Juno, Diode LED

OVENS: Gaggenau

PAINTS/STAINS: Cabot, Benjamin Moore

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Gaggenau

ROOFING: TPO Membrane

SINKS: Kohler

SKYLIGHTS: Aladdin

TOILETS: TOTO

TUB: MTI

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Gaggenau

WINDOW SHADING: Lutron

WINDOWS: Brombal USA



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Baboolal Residence

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA
ARIELLE C. SCHECHTER ARCHITECT, PLLC

Yes, there are custom residential projects where money truly is no object, but those are the exceptions to the rule. Unless your clients are bitcoin billionaires, there's a limit to how much they can or will spend on their house. Architect Arielle Condoret Schechter, AIA, understands this acutely. Her clients in North Carolina's Research Triangle are ordinary people tired of their ordinary houses, and they trust her to keep their best interests at heart. That drives her to seek out value at every turn on her projects, trying to hit that perfect balance of budget, sustainability, livability, and delight.

"I love working with individual clients and their families," she says. "Many come to me frustrated with their cookie-cutter houses and all the wasted, illogical space. They are never quite right, and there's never enough space where they need it. But that's usually what you get when an architect is not involved."

The clients on this house suffered from just such an experience in their prior house. The function was lacking and the aesthetics were lackluster. They wanted a house that worked for them, instead of against them, and one that serves as a refuge from their very demanding careers in healthcare.

The Grass is Greener

They were drawn to Arielle's work for its environmental awareness and its decidedly modern flair. Their lot was in a typical upscale development with generic "McMansions" on commodious parcels. Although somewhat featureless, the lot was located next to a large septic field that serves the neigh-

Amid a large lot development of McMansions, this modern house is an oasis of modest family living. Its site borrows expansive views across a neighbor's meadow, allowing it to feel larger than its size.





Triple-glazed sliding doors open wide to a large deck, nearly doubling the home's living space in good weather. Restrained specifications for appliances, finishes, and lighting helped reach the building's net-zero goal without busting the budget.



boring “estate” home. Their two-plus acres could live like far more, but it would take skill to unlock its greatest potential.

Not only do many developer-driven houses misplace square footage, they typically misalign key orientations and squander the best views. Getting these aspects right is part of a good architect’s toolkit, but this essential, ineffable value is often overshadowed by the flashy finishes and flourishes available to anyone with a checkbook.

Arielle’s clients, who have precious little time for themselves and their family, have learned to value experiences over things. Therefore, at every turn on this project, she prioritized the qualities of light, views, and building performance over superficial, budget-busting bling. And she harnessed its best quality, the priceless one that cost nothing at all—the broad, sweeping panorama over the protected septic meadow. “We applied the principle of *shakkei*, or borrowed scenery,” she says.

Placing the key living areas and deck to take advantage of the main view to the north and west drove the rest of the orientations and floor planning. “There





were also some views we wanted to back away from, like a big neighboring play structure,” she explains. “To the east, in the winter you can see the development houses, but when it leafs out, you can’t. That was the perfect place for the screened porch. We wanted the kitchen to see the entry and guests coming up the walk, so it’s at the front of the house. And because we wanted the kids’ rooms to be sunny, their bedrooms and playroom face south.”

At just under 2,500 square feet of conditioned space, the house is very efficient in plan. Other program must-haves included a study for the husband, who likes to relax by listening to old vinyl records, and a soothing spa-like bathroom for the wife. The main bedroom suite is its own Tetris-like assemblage, orchestrated to allow one spouse to rise early or return late while on call without disturbing the other. Borrowed light and scenery through a long window cheers the hallway

The clients requested the cantilevered, inverted roof as their big design splurge. The architect flipped roof trusses to achieve the effect without supporting columns.





connecting their bedroom, bathroom, and shared walk-in closet. Proceeding down the hallway is its own act of decompression from the cares and tensions of the outside world.

“The main bedroom is a restful space, a quiet zone with rich, dark paint,” Arielle says. “And the study is away from all the noise of the house at

“[My clients] discovered that it’s not as expensive to go green as they expected.”

—Arielle Condoret Schechter, AIA

the northwest corner. I always like the mudroom right between the garage and the kitchen, and I tuck in storage everywhere I can. The budget was very tight, so I had to consider every inch of the house to make sure there’s no waste. But I do think 2,500 square feet is a real sweet spot for a house.” A guest room did not make the final cut, but it may be added in the future.

Even within its tight plan, the house offers getaway space for everyone. There’s a study where the husband can listen to his jazz records while admiring the view, and cheerful sun-soaked spaces for the young children.





The spa-like bathroom is the wife's refuge from a hard day in the healthcare field. The entire suite is designed to enable the spouses to work on call without disturbing each other. A lengthy hallway puts the bathroom and walk-in closet at an auditory remove from the bedroom.



The one purely design-driven splurge was the cantilevered roof. “The clients had seen another house I did where I had a big, cantilevered roof. They wanted that, but without the columns I used. I had been experimenting with roof trusses, so on this house I inverted them to achieve the 13-foot cantilever over the back deck. Water goes down rain chains to catch basins and then drains safely away from the house.”

Deep overhangs protect the fiber cement and cypress siding and help shade the house, but the cantilever element is more a gesture of shelter than sun protection, says the architect. Triple-glazed window systems from Poland, a rooftop solar array, and a building envelope designed to Passive House standards get the house to net zero. “The windows have a low solar-heat-gain coefficient,

Baboolal Residence

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

ARCHITECT: Arielle C. Schechter Architect, PLLC, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

BUILDER: Newphire Building, Kevin Murphy, Chapel Hill

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER: Jean Bernard, Petal Stone Landscape Design & Consulting, Carrboro, North Carolina

SOLAR CONSULTANT: Julian Nuñez, Action Solar & Electric, Chapel Hill

HVAC SYSTEMS: Boer Brothers, Carrboro

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Brian Moskow, PE, Red Engineering & Design, Apex, North Carolina

PROJECT SIZE: 2,446 conditioned square feet; 222 square feet screened porch; 630 square feet garage; 406 square feet covered deck

SITE SIZE: 2.74 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHER: Tzu Chen Photography©

KEY PRODUCTS

CLADDING: Nichiha Fiber Cement; stained fine line cypress siding

CUSTOM CABINETY: Designed by the architect, crafted by Bo Taylor Custom Woodworking, Raleigh, North Carolina

DECKING: Thermory

DISHWASHER: Bosch

ENGINEERED LUMBER: BCI Joists wood I-joists; LVL beams; Glulam beams

ENTRY DOORS/WINDOWS/WINDOW WALL SYSTEMS: Awilux triple-glazed Passive House suitable

FASTENERS: Simpson Strong-Tie

FAUCETS: Blanco (kitchen); Danze (bathrooms); Delta (shower control); Crosswater (tub filler)

FITTINGS: Moen

FOUNDATION: Sealed, conditioned crawl space

HVAC SYSTEMS: Trane 20 SEER variable speed heat pump with modulating zoning system

INSULATION: Open cell spray foam

LIGHTING: Kuzco

LIGHTING CONTROL: Lutron

MICROWAVE: GE

PAINTS: Sherwin-Williams

PHOTOVOLTAICS: 11.4 kW; Axitec and Hanwha panels

RADIANT HEATING: Schluter DITRA-HEAT (main bathroom)

RANGE: BlueStar

REFRIGERATOR/FREEZER: Samsung

ROOFING: Carlisle SynTec Systems 60 mil Sure-White EPDM membrane

SINKS: Lenova (kitchen, mudroom); Dakota (main bathroom)

THERMAL/MOISTURE BARRIER: Tyvek

TOILETS: TOTO

TUBS: Victoria & Albert (main bathroom); Oceana (secondary bath)

UNDERLAYMENT/SHEATHING: Huber ZIP System R-Sheathing

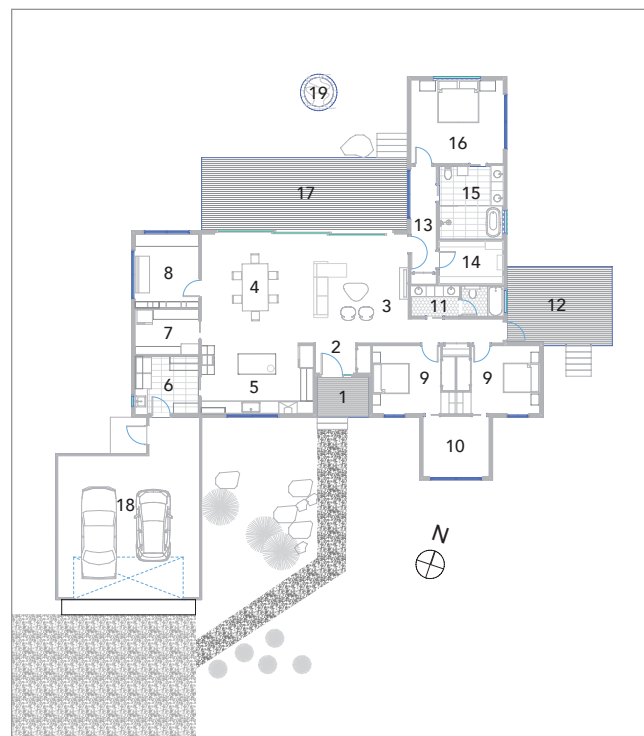
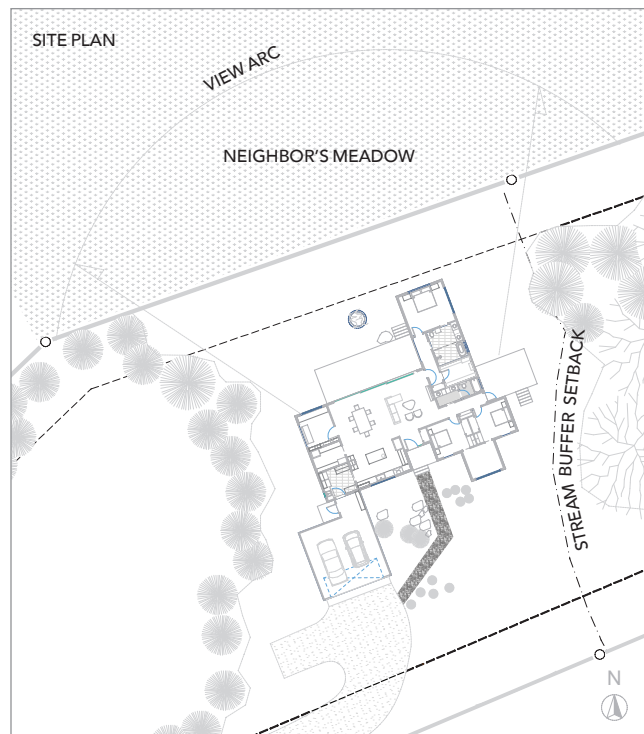
VENTILATION: RenewAire ERV

WALLBOARD: USG Corporation

WASHER/DRYER: Samsung

WEATHERIZATION: Prosoco R-Guard AirDam; Prosoco R-Guard Joint & Seam Filler

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Kalamera



FLOOR PLAN | 1. Covered Entry | 2. Foyer | 3. Living Room | 4. Dining Room | 5. Kitchen | 6. Mudroom/Laundry | 7. Pantry | 8. Study | 9. Bedroom | 10. Playroom | 11. Bathroom | 12. Screened Porch | 13. Quiet Zone | 14. Walk-in Closet | 15. Main Bathroom | 16. Main Bedroom | 17. Covered Terrace | 18. Garage | 19. Fire pit



The clients wanted a low-maintenance and low-consumption house so they could focus on relaxing, satisfying life experiences with their family.

so they absorb less sensible heat into the house. And they are as solid as a vault.

“My clients wanted to do a green house and they wanted to save money. They discovered that it’s not as expensive to go green as they expected.” Although this house and many of the others Arielle designs are built to Passive House standards, most clients don’t want to pay the premium to have them certified, she adds. “The process is quite expensive.”

The tight budget guided the choice of stock modern-style garage doors, restrained selections in light fixtures and

“I consider all my houses to be on tight budget ... But I still have to provide my clients with something spectacular that gives them a lift.”

—Arielle Condoret Schechter, AIA

tile, and conventional gutters instead of an integral system for the flat roof areas. “I go with my clients to lighting, tile, and plumbing showrooms,” she says,

“and I am brutally honest about costs.”

Unchecked, the little things certainly can add up, yet it’s square footage bloat that inflicts the greatest penalty. Says Arielle, “I consider all my houses to be on a tight budget. To make them affordable, I have to keep plans tight, tight, tight. But I still have to provide my clients with something spectacular that gives them a lift.”

A swooping cantilevered roof, a sweeping meadow view, and a fully functional family home amount to a mission very well accomplished. —S. Claire Conroy

Flexible Flyers



1



2

1. ART OF THE TEAL

The color black is still trending, paving the growing appreciation for modern design. At the same time, natural hues and organics are resurging. Cambria's new Kendal quartz surfacing combines veining in greens and blacks, bridging the gap between the trends. The company claims the green element is a perfect match with Benjamin Moore's 2021 color of the year, Aegean Teal. CambriaUSA.com

2. FOUR PLAY

Do your clients have trouble committing to a panel color for their refrigerator? Samsung's new BESPOKE 4-Door Flex model allows mixing and matching now or during the life of the appliance. Samsung.com

3. IT'S A LOCK

Robern's clever new digital lock box mounts securely in most of their medicine cabinets, preventing unsanctioned access to valuables and medications. The box integrates with the company's IQ phone app to lock/unlock, issue reminders, and track usage. Backup keys are provided for the analog aficionados. Robern.com



3



4



5



6



7

4. STERN LOOKS

The office of Robert A.M. Stern turns its considerable talent to a new line of plumbing fixtures from Kallista. Central Park West blurs the line between traditional and transitional, aiming for the firm’s “modern classical aesthetic.”
Kallista.com

5. WIFI AND DRY

The newly redesigned and updated W1 washer and T1 dryer from Miele apply WiFi technologies and innovative laundry science to everyone’s essential chore. The T1 dryer, powered by a heat pump, requires no external venting.
Mieleusa.com

6. MED SCHOOLED

New from Spanish surfacing expert Cosentino is Dekton Citizen. A large-format, stucco-like material, Citizen comes in five hardy, Mediterranean-inspired hues: Nacre, Micron, Albarium, Umber, and Argentium.
Cosentino.com

7. THE COLD ONES

Coming in the third quarter of 2021, Signature Kitchen Suite’s two-drawer convertible refrigerator/freezer is a handsome problem solver. The 24-inch-wide drawers adjust independently from 7 to 50 degrees, for maximum chilling flexibility.
SignatureKitchenSuite.com

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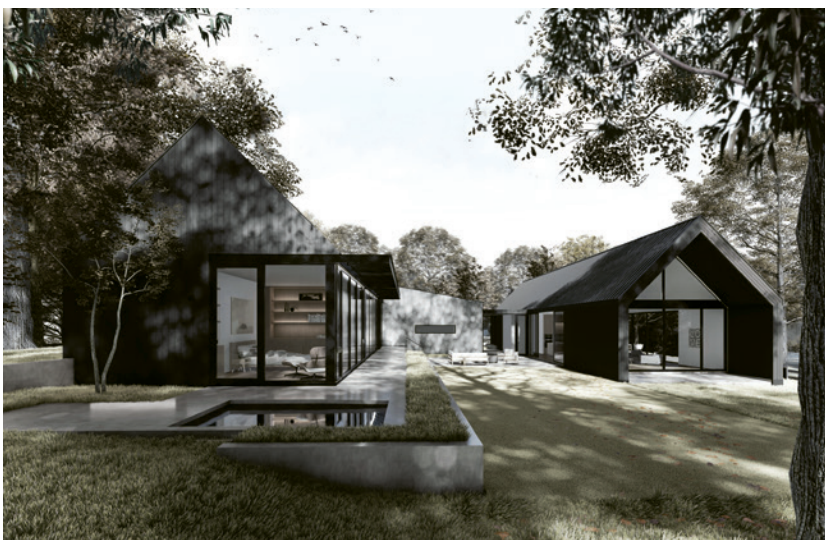


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The Road Home

THREE GABLES

STUDIO B ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

BOULDER, COLORADO

Although not a vacation home, this house for a couple and their young daughter is designed to live like one, while still nestling conveniently in the city of Boulder. Located on a large lot with shared open space and mature cottonwood trees, it has a distinctly rural vibe that appealed to its owners' outdoorsy nature. "It's at the end of a cul de sac with no traffic and great morning views," says architect Mike Piche, AIA.

Three gabled volumes negotiate the site's gentle topography and compartmentalize the program into its different functions or "pods," as Mike calls them. There's a sleeping pod, a living/kitchen/dining pod, and a hobby pod—a combination garage/workshop/gear room. There's also a carport shelter for the owners' getaway vehicle, a tricked-out Sprinter van.

Pulling apart the plan into the trio of volumes creates a private, tiered courtyard, and focuses the gabled ends of the main buildings directly on the best views, including the distant mountains. On the south side of the house, another more social outdoor area engages the neighborhood.

Exterior materials are specified for low maintenance and Colorado's weather extremes: sustainably harvested New Zealand Abodo wood for cladding and standing seam metal for roofing. A solar array (the hobby pod's roof is sloped to accommodate it), efficient radiant heat, and triple-paned windows from Poland take the house to near net-zero.

—*S. Claire Conroy*

Project: Three Gables, Boulder, Colorado; architect: principal Mike Piche, AIA, Studio B Architecture + Interiors, Boulder; builder: Jeff Becker Construction, Boulder; landscape architect: Elevate by Design, Boulder; project size: 4,800 square feet; site size: .75 acre; renderings: Kyle Burds, Mike Piche

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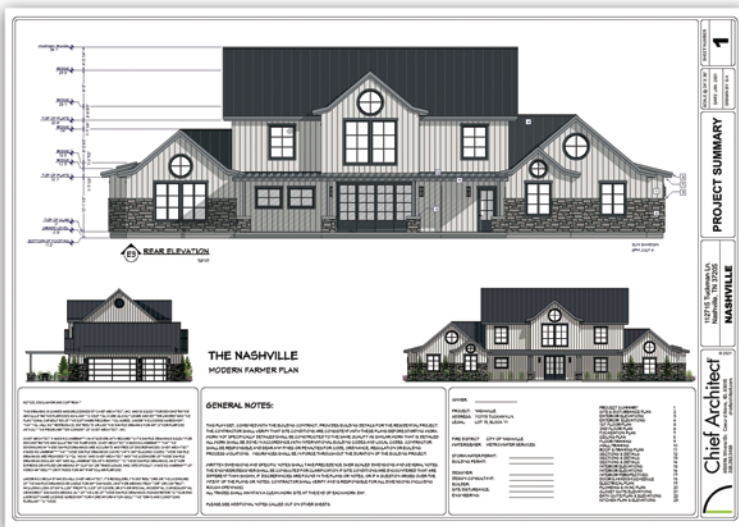
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