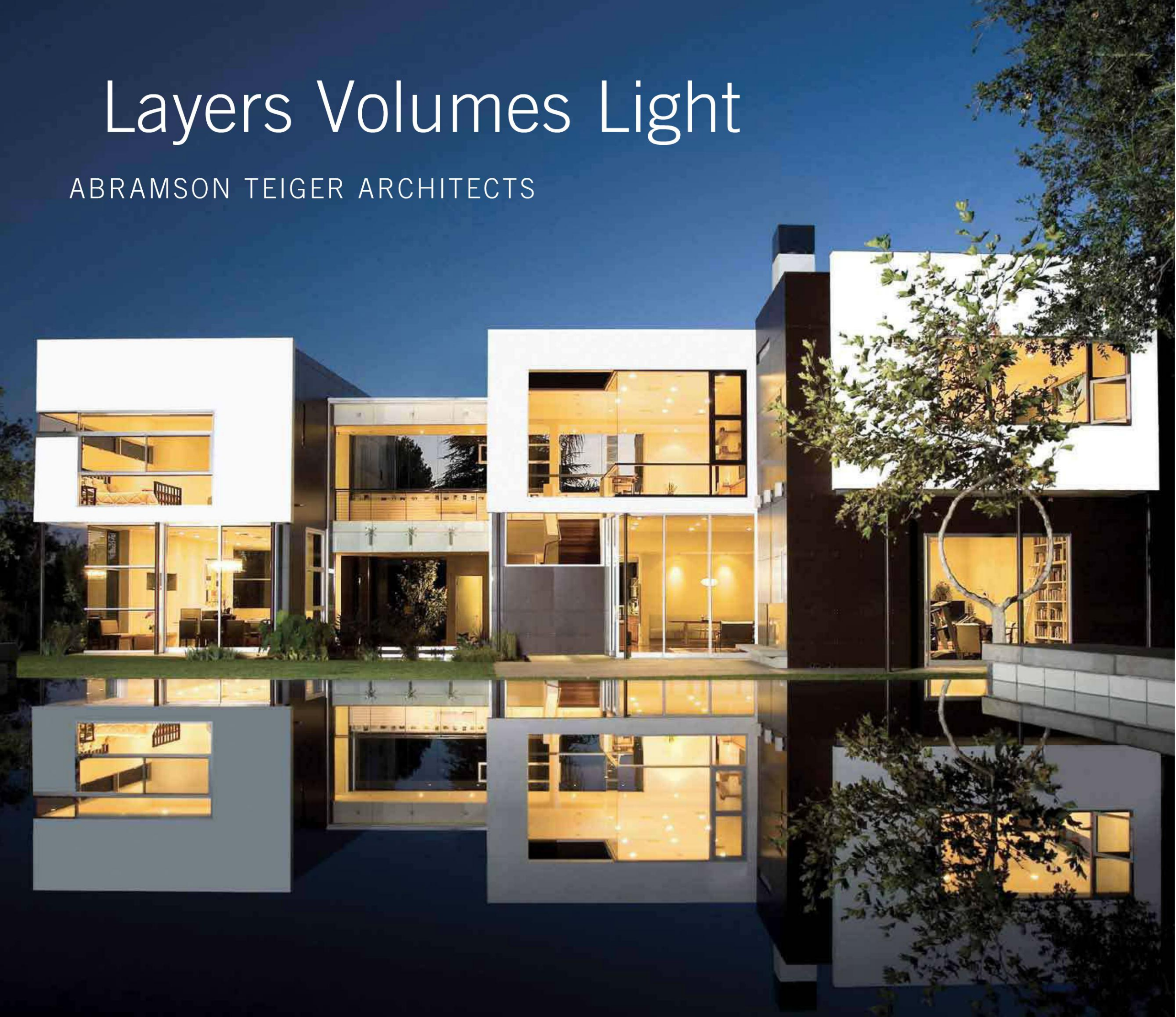
Layers Volumes Light

ABRAMSON TEIGER ARCHITECTS



INTRODUCTION BY JOSEPH GIOVANNINI

Layers Volumes Light

ABRAMSON TEIGER ARCHITECTS

First published in the United States of America by
Architecture/Interiors Press, Inc.
4455 Los Feliz Boulevard, Suite 106
Los Angeles, CA 90027
www.architectureinteriorspress.com

ISBN 978-0-9835132-2-3

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010923925

Printed in Iceland by Oddi Printing
Design: HK Creative Inc., www.hkcreativeinc.com

Layers Volumes Light

ABRAMSON TEIGER ARCHITECTS

Introduction by
Joseph Giovannini

Edited by Carolyn Horwitz
and Anthony Iannacci

ARCHITECTURE / INTERIORS PRESS, INC.

In memory of C. Dennis Abramson

Modernism Enriched

BY JOSEPH GIOVANNINI

Modernists practicing in Los Angeles have two sets of father figures: first, the heroic but distant generation that includes Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, and Carlo Scarpa; second, an internationally prominent but more local and accessible group that includes Irving Gill, R.M. Schindler, Richard Neutra, and the two Wrights, father and son. Los Angeles architects, then, consult not only the same reference books as do all other American architects, but also nearly 100 years of modernism embedded in the cityscape as though it were a living architectural text. Four generations, going on five, have had the privilege and advantage of building on the work of their immediate mentors.

Because these buildings of national and international importance happen to be local, and because Los Angeles is situated a continent away from the trend-generating media centers on the East Coast, modernism in Southern California has been more continuous than discontinuous. Architects in Los Angeles have been able to sidestep the labels that have led the profession through cycles of trends. Allowed to pursue their own paths, resistant because of distance to major style swings, Southern California's modernists have practiced within a creative space of their own, pushing the boundaries of their art on their own terms. The critical mass of exemplary buildings stocked in the streetscape has stabilized modernist practice in the Southland.

Through a series of residential and institutional designs that form an evolutionary sequence of projects, Abramson Teiger Architects has established a path rare within the United States for its sophistication and development, and rare for its maturity and originality even within this ongoing architectural tradition in Southern California. Partners since 2000, Trevor Abramson and Douglas Teiger have expanded their vocabulary of ideas and their repertoire of formal moves, building on their own innovations in increments of invention that have proved additive and cumulative. Their current designs represent a highly enriched modernism, remarkable for its developed notions of space, material, and form, and for the intangible dimension of light. These are buildings that are completed in the experience of living their space and light.

Abramson posited the first theses of his design philosophy

in 1994 as principal in Abramson Architects, in a trio of Los Angeles houses that shared similar attributes: medium-sized suburban lots with a conventional format that assumed front and back yards separated by a house acting as both domestic façade and fence. In keeping with a long Southern California practice that started with the Greene Brothers in Pasadena and R.M. Schindler in West Hollywood, Abramson experimented with a house of his own. Soon thereafter he explored similar ideas in the Sinnott and Bennett residences.

SINNOTT RESIDENCE, 1994

In his own house, on a narrow site where the program pushes up against parsimonious side yards, Abramson delved into one of his major themes at the back façade: he mixed solids and voids and pushed and pulled them spatially to engage indoor and outdoor areas in a reciprocating spatiality. A two-story glass wall, a "solid" fireplace set within it, plays against a blank stucco plane elevated over another glass void. That solid plane, punctured only by a small window, in turn plays off two more voids to the right: an open outdoor room that advances toward the yard, and a glass wall to a second-story bedroom that recedes in the opposite direction. The Mondrian-esque patterns of the window frames establish a sub-theme of linear elements within the larger volumetric composition. Abramson designed solids and voids with line, plane, and volume. He built up the chimney and fireplace as an independent piece within a glass wall that frames and features the chimney as sculpture.

Limited by the site to developing the front and back façades, Abramson turned inward where, inventively, he hollowed out a tall, sculptural passage down the middle of the house, introverting the formal play that might have occurred outside, in the round, on a more generous site. This limitation proved a valuable opportunity, because by sculpting interior space, he gave the house an interior life: He cleaved the whole volume with a two-story space that centers the house, creating a corridor and stairwell that become the heart of the building. Rooms on both stories open onto this interior court, gathering the family around a receptive rather than dispersive space, one that ambles front to back in a relaxed geometry that establishes an informal atmosphere with an inviting call. Abramson liberated the staircase within this court, creating a sculptural event celebrated by boxed wood steps and the interpenetrating planes of the handrail. This is a house in which family sees each other around a catalytic central space that conditions the encounters toward informality. Family matters.

The Sinnott residence in Brentwood allowed Abramson to move his work into fresh territory. For this house, the architect broke the classical roof shape, designing a vaulted copper roof that has no ridges and tapers at the edges to razor thinness. The house plan is structured on a double geometry: one oriented to the principal view; the other conforming to the orthogonal site while shielding the house from an unsightly Tudor next door. The double geometry fragments the house, so that rooms that would normally be contiguous undergo a mitotic split, breaking into individual volumes separated by tall interstitial spaces topped by skylights. The double geometry and the resulting asymmetrical compositions of solid and voids engender spatial porosity both inside and outside, in *x*, *y*, and *z* dimensions. The house is liberated in plan and section. The architect disciplined the apparently free and fragmented design by basing the construction on a two-foot module in both the horizontal and vertical dimensions.

The design broke the box inside as well as out. In addition to the roof plane that flies off the orthogonal, cantilevers project the building into the yard; these gestures are confirmed materially by plaster walls that continue from the inside to the outside. Sliding doors at one corner part to give access to steps into the pool. The pool completes the whole layout—inside space flows into the water.

The language of the Sinnott house is an abstract composition of line, plane, and volume, but Abramson developed the abstraction spatially by setting the elements separately in a de Stijl composition that he actively pushed and pulled. The building is composed with a layering strategy within the whole cube, using equal parts form and space. With the porosity, light is cultivated through the introduction of windows and skylights, which wash the forms and highlight the volumes. The vertical section that cuts through the house introduces a rich porosity top to bottom, front to back, yielding a composition whose volumes and voids recall European modernism—in particular, the sensuous, curving walls of early Le Corbusier.

Another project, a five-bedroom, 4,500-square-foot house built in 1995-96, grew from the DNA of Abramson's two previous houses. This residence, the first of two he designed for Bruce and Paula Bennett, features a poured-concrete frame as a base. Set a half level below grade, the two-bay concrete frame confirms the rich sectional development of the first two houses, and foreshadows more. Above and around this frame, Abramson placed an asymmetrical set of white cubic volumes massed in a composition of solid and void that advances and recedes, into and out of the plane of the façade. He bracketed the composition vertically with a roof plane that hovers over the

composition and laterally with wall planes that sandwich the complex spatial puzzle. Not just a façade, the composition continues through the house to the back as a series of shifted volumes and planes that create a spatially porous structure, with rooms opening onto rooms in a generous flow.

Because the geometries were broken rather than whole, and asymmetrical rather than symmetrical, the vocabulary that Abramson was developing yielded a flexibility especially accommodating for hillsides. California geography has challenged modernists since Wright and Schindler, making special demands in the *z* dimension.

Abramson carried the approach toward spatially porous, formally abstract architecture over to the Porter residence in the Hollywood Hills. The wider, more generous upslope site in this commission allowed the architect to extend the house horizontally into the yard, expanding it laterally with a series of slipped planes that serve as retaining wall, fence, and motor court. The vocabulary of planes and volumes escaped the enclosure of the house proper as it moved into the yard, where it defined and domesticated outdoor precincts. Los Angeles architects, influenced by Wright, Gill, Schindler, and Neutra, had already been blurring the boundary between outside and inside, but Abramson cracked open the box, allowing the parts to spill into the yard and shape a total environment in which the house itself was part of a larger whole. Architectural elements extrapolated into the grounds gave structure to the outdoor spaces. In the previous houses, the tightness of the sites had verticalized the designs, but the Porter property allowed him to pull the volumes laterally. He introduced the notion of horizontally layered strata, with the base of the two-story house designed in contradistinction to the second story, which follows a different formal logic. Pristine white volumes with inset horizontal windows float atop a glassy base, part of which is composed in concrete. Wood was used for the entrance and parking gates, warming the abstract composition outside as much as inside.

In a formal move that recalls the Italian master Scarpa, Abramson began carving the planes with incisions—narrow rectangular voids in the wooded gates, for example—that open the forms and bring a smaller, more intimate scale. The slots allow views in and out, localizing the abstract surface to a particular circumstance, such as a light fixture or a plant. The localizations recall the specificities of Scarpa's interventions, as the Venetian architect adapted his additions to the existing fabric of older structures.

Abramson was operating within the context of an open and receptive aesthetic that could accept change without compromising character or principle. Materials juxtaposed in shifting asymmetries factored the notion of collage into the composition. The surfaces, however, remained clean and abstract, providing a suitable, gallery-like backdrop for the client's collection of modern art.

Abramson tested the versatility of this language at an entirely different level in a design for the Elk Run residence, a vacation home in Telluride, Colorado, on 11 acres of forested landscape with long mountain views. In this rural house, the architect explored and expanded the ideas he initiated in tighter suburban contexts, adapting those principles with a different strategy to the landscape.

ELK RUN RESIDENCE, 2000

This was a commanding site that demanded strong architectural presence, even if the program called simply for four bedrooms and 7,500 square feet. Abramson divided the program into three sections, with a master bedroom and guest wings placed at either end of a loft-like living room with open kitchen. He angled the guest wing in an L off the living room, shaping one side of an entry court with a dramatic roof projection. Guests step down the entry passage, which cleaves the living room section from the master bedrooms, splitting an overall shape that would be monolithic and monotonous if left uninterrupted. On the far side of the living room, a continuous wall of windows, with mullions of rust-red steel, faces the view. Recalling the work of his California mentors, Abramson created corner windows that open the interiors to the vista.

In this generous setting, the house reaches out into the landscape expansively in a single story. But to give the rooms height while endowing the house with a presence sufficient to meet the surrounding grandeur, the architect created a barrel-vaulted roof, all the more solid because it is surfaced in standing-seam copper. Inside, the ceiling is lined with cedar, which warms the room like a wraparound hearth. The wood colors the cold winter light.

As in previous projects, Abramson kept the constituent architectural elements separate, the space-dividing cabinets and closets stopping short of the ceiling, creating a sense of spaces beyond spaces, and forms beyond forms, through a process of layering. Planes that in previous projects remained abstract here take on an organic quality—the forest comes to Dunsinane—as a collage of wood, stone, slate, and copper, inside and out. Exterior columns are wrapped in tree trunks, a visual pun on the origin of columns and a semaphore for the agreement of the house with

nature. The bones of the house are modern, but the crispness of the more tooled buildings in the city cedes here to the softer connotations of nature. As in a Frank Lloyd Wright building, the design intensifies the landscape, both as a focal point and a summary of its materials. Like a ledge or outcropping hunkered down into the hill, the house does not just live off the panorama but becomes part of the view.

KNIGHT RESIDENCE, 2001

The year Elk Run was completed, Abramson faced an entirely different natural context for a new project, the Knight residence in Newport Beach, California—a property with the tight dimensions of a townhouse and a comparable level of required design sophistication. Local codes favored mansard roofs if the roof level was to exceed two-story height.

Spatial generosity is not a given in the calculus of these beachfront properties, where clients and economics usually militate in favor of maximizing square footage at the expense of a sense of spaciousness. The buildings are typically built out to the allowable envelope; in this case, the maximum width was 30 feet on a property 40 feet wide.

Abramson challenged the permissible envelope by conjuring a volume in the form of a sail, or seashell, that captured additional vertical space; the geometry of the curves sidestepped the mansard shape but satisfied code. The consequence was that the architect created a double geometry that played in and around itself, the sail curving within and against the orthogonal frame. The curvilinear gesture arches through the structure and breaks through the top of the frame, all in one continuous volumetric stroke. The two simultaneous geometries create the layering and interstitial spaces that characterize the design of other Abramson buildings on larger sites.

The sail also allowed the architect to increase the total volume of the structure, as the interiors reach up to the extended height of the roof. But he found even more space elsewhere within the tight confines of the site. He widened the walk from the street to the front of the property by angling a path to the front door at grade, carving out an inviting space under a bedroom overhang above. As in previous projects, the architect boldly cleaved the interior volume of the house under a skylight, creating a V-shaped void near the garage, sided by Kal-wall, that funnels a vector of light to the ground floor, at the heart of the house. This skylit stairwell separates the bedroom wing on the street side from the two-story section facing the ocean, and the stairs lace together front and back sections, which are staggered vertically in half-story increments. The stairs lead to a roof deck on the beach side.

The stairwell serving the staggered floors creates a complex section unexpected for a beach building type that usually supports only tight interior spaces on two pancaked floors. The generous opening contradicts the normal expectations for this beachfront typology. Only Schindler, not far away, achieved a comparably rich and complex section in the Lovell Beach House. In the Telluride house, the glow that warms the interior like the fire of a hearth is not a function simply of the wood, but of luminosity igniting the wood. And in Newport Beach, the luminosity of an interior landlocked by the site is not a product of the white walls, but of the stairwell wedging light deeply into the building. Implicit within this design approach is the emphasis on light, which the architect admits, captures, and cultivates as a material: The dark matter that pervades his architectural universe is, in fact, light made visible. Light in these buildings is matter, and a fundamental building block of the environment.

With vertical sections running up and through the house, and the fragmentation of the parts, the architect devised a strategy for bringing in light other than through conventional windows. With the elements of the architecture broken apart, the interstices between the parts, when glazed, can admit light—through the clerestory windows between the tops of walls and the ceilings, through the glass slots that separate walls from one another, and through the large voids between the solids. When the architect breaks open the normally closed corners of a volume with glass, light becomes a cornerstone. The interiors become vessels of light, but the fragmentation of the interiors, the parts of the buildings, are washed or silhouetted, depending on whether the light strikes the surfaces directly or backlights the forms. The light that sculpts the buildings is itself materialized, and therefore revealed, by the buildings.

Shortly after completing the Knight residence, Abramson joined forces with Teiger to form Abramson Teiger Architects. Themes persistent in Abramson's architecture were explored further under the new partnership. Abramson had spent at least a decade preparing design approaches that could have auratic impact on religious structures. If light is substantial in his earlier projects, it is also secular, but Abramson Teiger Architects has been able to bring out light's spiritual dimension in commissions with a religious agenda.

The first religious commission was the renovation of the First Presbyterian Church in Encino, California, housed in a simple A-frame building whose practical, exposed structure did little to convey a sense of spirituality.

On a very limited budget that allowed no major structural changes and no alteration of the exterior, the architects were

asked to create a more uplifting space. They did so by fixing shifted white planes onto the church's interior structural frame; the new planes conform to the shape of the A and, in section, recall hands in prayer. The architects punctured the roof with skylights so that natural (and artificial) light would backlight the suspended planes and feather out behind on the white plaster surfaces.

While Baroque architects designed foci of light that created points of dramatic intensity, Abramson as design partner took a more dispersive Gothic approach, creating a field of light. Careful not to show how the planes were attached to the frames, the architects repressed the tectonics in favor of mystery: The planes seem buoyed on pillows of light and hover magically in a dematerialized space. The asymmetrical composition of planes creates an asymmetrical pattern of light and shade that changes during the day with the movement of the sun and the advent of clouds. Interiors that were once somber now yield phenomenal shifts in light, from subtle to intense. Light entering the south side of the church is regularly warmer than that on the north side. The effect is at once fragile and powerful, and it reinforces the metaphor of the church as a vehicle of spiritual illumination.

The architects took every occasion to design with light when they reconfigured and added to the girls' high school Yeshiva University of Los Angeles, completed in 2005. They were creating not a congregational space of worship but functional spaces: 12 classrooms, a library, Internet lab, cafeteria, and gym.

In a commission that diversified their practice with a strong institutional component, the brief called for Abramson Teiger to do a feasibility study to expand and recast an existing school on the site. The architects did not recommend knocking the entire school down to create a tabula rasa for a ground-up campus, but chose to keep the science lab and the auditorium, which they would renovate. They added 15,000 square feet of space, configuring the buildings around a courtyard, where the library, the heart of the school, was sited.

The emotional quality of the environment was an important consideration in the design. The architects wanted the institutional design to be open, lively, airy, and warm; they also wanted to include some historical reference and symbols to the cultural roots of Jewish community.

The use of Jerusalem stone allowed Abramson Teiger to achieve the goals of warmth and history, and they were very opportunistic, in the best sense of the word, in finding light within an introverted set of buildings. The gym has large windows, and the library has glass walls, not all clear, on two sides. The architects mixed blue spandrel and transparent glass in a Mondrian-esque pattern on the curtain walls facing the court, in ratios that admit more or less light, depending on the exposure. The façade of the library bows out slightly, gently pressuring the courtyard with certain fullness.

The compounded effect of the glass is one of multiple transparencies, the bowed glass structure embedded within a ring of other glass structures. The spaces inside seem to blur across façades in an ambiguity that gives the courtyard, which is not large, borrowed visual depth.

At around the same time, Abramson Teiger was commissioned to design another religious building, the synagogue Young Israel of North Beverly Hills. The demands of a congregational space require a self-contained form for an internalized program, and as an institution on a major thoroughfare demanding civic presence, the commission needed a certain monumentality, if not mass. To avoid overstatement, the architects broke the form into a number of articulate pieces that segment the overall mass. At the corner, they emphasized the entry with a primary form that rises up, creating a signature for the building. Though closed, the volume is not monolithic. Design strategies posited in Abramson's first houses carry over in a transformed language that the larger scale requires.

AMSTER RESIDENCE, 2003

Some of the formal complexity of the design owes its origins to the ways in which the architects brought in light. Le Corbusier set a memorable example at Ronchamp of dense walls punctured with apertures that allow light into the sanctuary, along with clerestory light on which the ceiling appears to float. (Abramson Teiger achieved a similar effect in the kitchen of the Amster residence, a house they renovated in 2003.) In the same vein, the perimeters at Young Israel were conceived as membranes with and through which to interpret light. Abramson Teiger architecturalized the entry points of light into the building, as a physical symbol of the spiritual; for example, light monitors were sculpted and pronounced.

The architects orchestrated several sources that permit light of different qualities to enter. As at YULA, they used Jerusalem stone on the eastern wall, to orient the congregation toward the holy city, and deployed a thin strip of clerestory windows to wash the stone continuously in a soft light. In the ceiling, they placed apertures that allow small, episodic splashes of light, which for them symbolizes moments of enlightenment in prayer. Light monitors in the roof curve the light in from above, illuminating the congregation. The architects also introduced stained glass panels that color the light.

Besides institutional and residential work, Abramson and

Teiger have pursued commercial projects, ranging from hotels and retail stores to a carwash and dental building. The flagship store for Dermalogica, a skincare clinic in Santa Monica, California, is one of the smallest, at 1,660 square feet, but one of the most experimental. Light again plays a defining architectural role.

DERMALOGICA, 2004

Contexts are relative and not always physical, and for a skincare clinic, the architects chose to work within the metaphoric context of beauty: If it is only skin-deep, then it can and should be pushed, pulled, and pinched.

In this project, the materials alone, as surfaces, are environmental. The architects chose indeterminate materials and finishes—translucent glass and high-gloss paints that, cumulatively, create atmospheric effects that mystify space. Houses of beauty have always been arenas of Cinderella transformation, and the architects played with a palette of materials that is illusionistic.

Expanses of translucent glass, often backlit, condition visitors for the main moment in the space, a set of three rounded free-standing organic rooms that serve as treatment cubicles. Colored light washes over the reflective surfaces, bathing curvaceous forms in auratic effects and implying that there is something magical about stepping inside. Patrons feel cocooned when they enter these intimate, freestanding shapes for their treatments; they are in a precious and protective precinct.

Still, it is with residential commissions that Abramson Teiger enjoy their most consistent opportunity for experimentation.

For the Krmpotich residence in Casper, Wyoming, completed in 2008, the architects were able to respond to an expansive landscape, similar to the Telluride project. Here, they generated an angular building split in two with a pair of main wings that reach gesturally toward the hilly site. All the elements of their repertoire are visible here; all realized, too, in a collage of materials that enriches the basic abstraction.

At the approach, the architects layered the building horizontally, starting with a concrete base that drops from the tops of windows to waist height, the concrete interlocking with cedar siding that rises to the roof. On the view side, the double-height façade is glazed to take advantage of the long vista. Mullions are deployed in varying rhythms, animating the façade.

Roofs on Abramson Teiger houses are always restless—ajar, off the orthogonal. Here, the roofs are multiple, placed at different angles, pointing toward the view, where they cantilever past the front facades and fold up toward the sky. The angular roof forms, which shift like tectonic plates, energize the composition, recalling the jagged shapes of rock formations. Each roof operates as a plane, and without coming together at a ridge, they escape any connotations of traditional roofscapes and instead top the already abstract, asymmetrical compositions with another layer of abstraction.

The Davis residence in Toronto, Canada, completed in 2007, represents one of the most complete summations of Abramson Teiger's philosophy: a design in which they orchestrated, refined, and balanced many of their ongoing strategies in a single project. Here, the architects recalled early notions of solid and void; they layered the design vertically, with a lower floor built in wood, which forms the base for an upper floor whose walls, surfaced in stucco and set back from the walls below, seem to form a set of pavilions. Separating the first and second floors liberates the geometry of each. The house is not an extrusion.

The whole composition rests on a plinth of stone that steps down to the rear yard. As in Wyoming, the roofs enjoy great geometric freedoms, taking wing above the body of the house, where, on the second floor, they cover loft spaces that rise freely to the angled planes. Glass makes up the geometric distance between the walls, which fall and rise in notches, forming windows and clerestories that offer views and admit the sun in huge light blocks that project on the wall and floor planes. Light, again, is treated as a building block, an intangible tangible integral to the composition and the environment. In the rear facades, the architects subordinate the mullions so that the glass appears to be structural. Liberated from the controlling geometries of the frame, glass is an integral part of the composition, not just an infill.

In the Krmpotich and Davis residences, the designs so completely develop ideas posited over a decade of practice that they leave almost no more room for further development: They have reached aesthetic saturation. To find room for further innovation and investigation, the architects reversed the process of addition that had led their designs to a cumulative richness. In the next two projects, they initiated a process of selective subtraction, and the roofs that had given their most recent projects great lyricism disappeared. The architects purposely challenged themselves by removing one of their most successful innovations. They restricted their new research and invention to the bodies of buildings with flat roofs.

In the Kelly residence, completed in 2006, the designs are more cubic, with blocks one and two stories high, some angled, and all carved with slots. Gaps separate the volumes, affording opportunities for fenestration. The architects questioned the purity of the volumes, detaching planes off of them in an

ambiguous relationship, so that the planes are neither dependent nor independent of the parent volume. The architects introduced pipe columns to support the planes, which add a linear element to the planar and volumetric elements. The compositions, which Abramson says carry references to Le Corbusier, are complex—less romantic and more cerebral than earlier designs. The house rests on a thin, horizontal datum of stone set in the grass, and so is dissociated from nature by the man-made substratum.

A second residence for the Bennetts, completed in 2007, is somewhat transitional, with the vestiges of a gable roof, resting on cubic walls that are similarly notched. The materials palette, however, is warmer than in the Kelly house, with woods applied to fascias and used as mullions and door and window frames. A poolside pavilion, with an angular roof canopy and chevron-shaped wall, is a striking piece of sculptural abstraction that implies what the architecture of the house would be without the burden of enclosure.

Having subverted the traditionalism of the roof shapes, the architects also subverted the traditional use of stone and wood by using it in a modern way: The stone does not touch the ground, removing the notion that it is load-bearing. They applied stone and wood to different planes and volumes so that the materials reinforce the spatial separation and differentiation of the parts.

In the memorable phrase of Mies van der Rohe, architecture cannot be reinvented every Monday. Abramson and Teiger have long memories and attention spans, and while they practice in the same modernist tradition as Mies, it is a different branch altogether—they practice a modernism that is additive rather than reductive, within an open rather than closed system that allows them to cultivate density rather than spareness. The innovations are cumulative—they compound their inventions and insights, remembering strategies from previous projects as they move forward to new ones. Over the course of their careers, they have mixed geometries and materials into rich spatial collages, composed of articulate planes and volumes. Interiors are as rich as exteriors; the architects achieve a design continuum from outside to inside, in sustained textures that give their designs depth. They do not practice as façadists; rather, their practice is spatial.

Always they take cues from the context—suburban, rural, or urban—demonstrating the versatility of their open architectural language to a range of circumstances, whether the vast expanses of the West or neighboring houses eight feet away in Newport Beach. What remains consistent are the design strategies: Layering the basic architectural elements of plane, volume, and line led them to the layering of space, and then to the layering of light in space. In the West, the orchestrations of light endow the buildings with an environmental levity that buoys the temperament of the building. The architects' handling of this light has especially distinguished their practice, leading them to innovative work in religious buildings.

Accessible, likeable, beautiful, the designs are appealing even to people who say they dislike modern architecture. The designs may be abstract, but the environments are warm and tactile. In a country where modernist traditions tend to be Germanic, Abramson and Teiger practice with the humanist touch brought to design by Scandinavian architects working in wood. Wood warms the visual temperature of the buildings, and the complexity of the environmental collages elevates the energy. Meanwhile, the quality of light quiets the designs, sending them toward tranquility. Thus the designs are simultaneously charged and calm.

It is an enriched modernism, and the architects achieve it by playing every note of their instrument.

KELLY RESIDENCE, 2006

Layers

TORONTO, CANADA 2007

Davis Residence

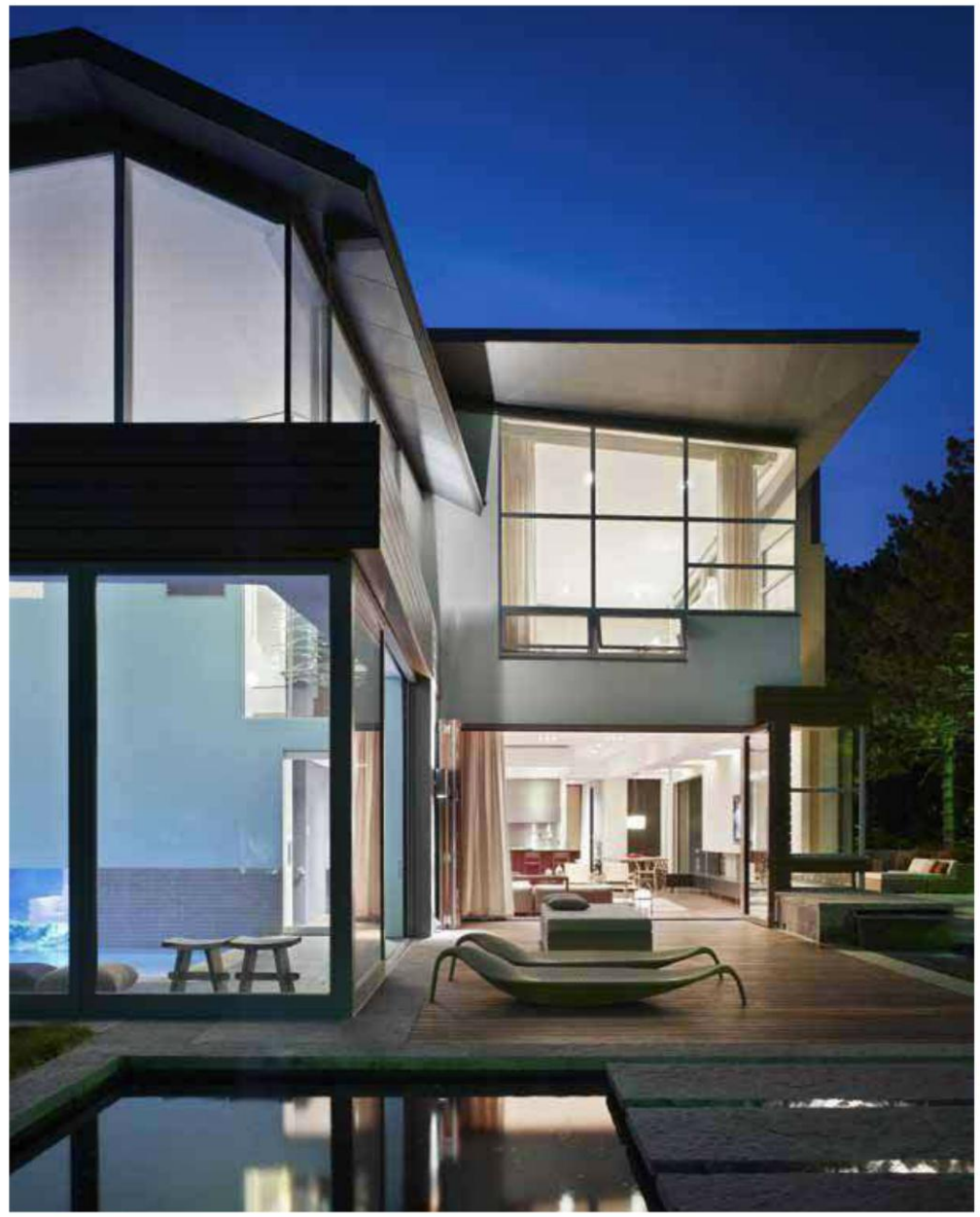
Abramson Teiger was commissioned to design a house with the light-filled spaces and indoor/outdoor integration seen in the firm's Southern California work, but adapted to the Toronto climate.

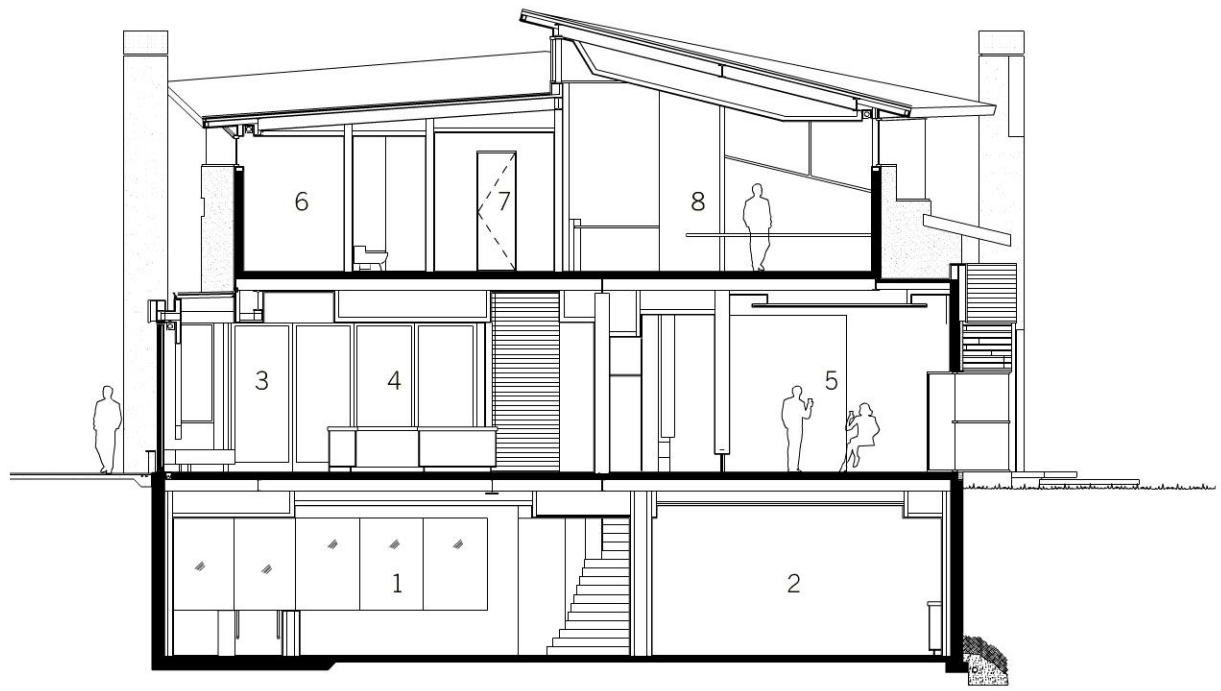
The first floor is clad in black Algonquin limestone, used commonly in Ontario, and layered with wood, detailed as a rain-screen, which stands proud of the stone below it. In contrast, the second floor is light, with exterior walls that disappear as they rise toward the roof, turning into windows that allow for views of the densely wooded surroundings. (The effect is inverted inside the house, where walls at times do not meet the floor.) The sense of lightness continues to the roof, which has a thin, six-inch profile.

Inside the house, natural light is central to the design. On the first floor, the combined kitchen/family room—with Abramson Teiger signatures such as a skylight and expansive, disappearing sliding doors—has an open flow to the living and dining rooms. From these rooms, views are layered through the 16-foot-wide by 5-foot-high fish tank and over the water of the swimming pool to the garden beyond. Upstairs, the airy bedrooms open to a central hall with a sitting area, lit by clerestory windows.

Right: The façade features a layered materials palette of Algonquin limestone, cedar, and Rheinzink, a zinc/copper/titanium alloy. Low windows provide glimpses of the pool and garden to those seated in the family room.

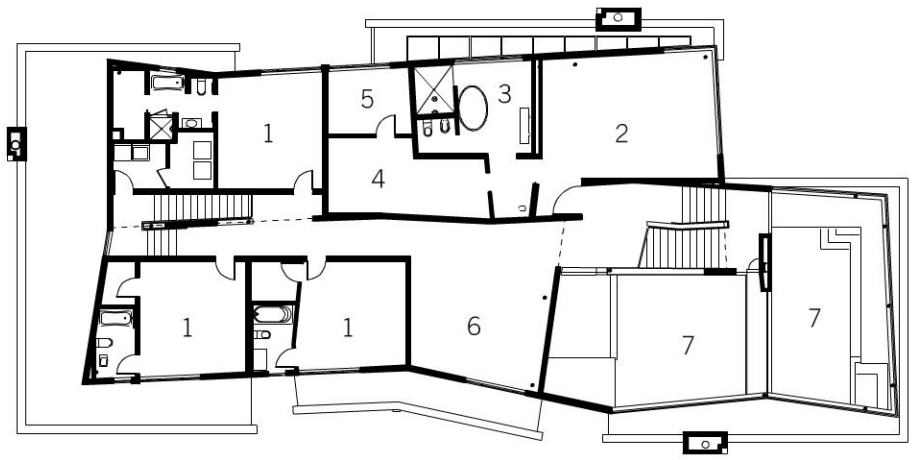
Left: The breakfast room juts out from the massing of the house and is topped with a linear skylight.





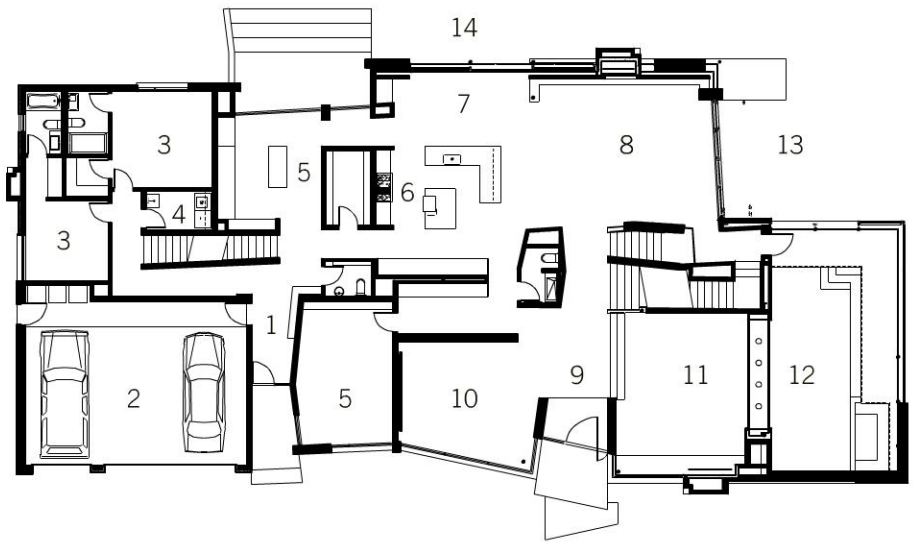
1 sports bar
2 media room
3 breakfast room
4 kitchen
5 dining room
6 master bathroom
7 master closet
8 sitting room

From the indoor pool,
the living room can be seen
through the fish tank.



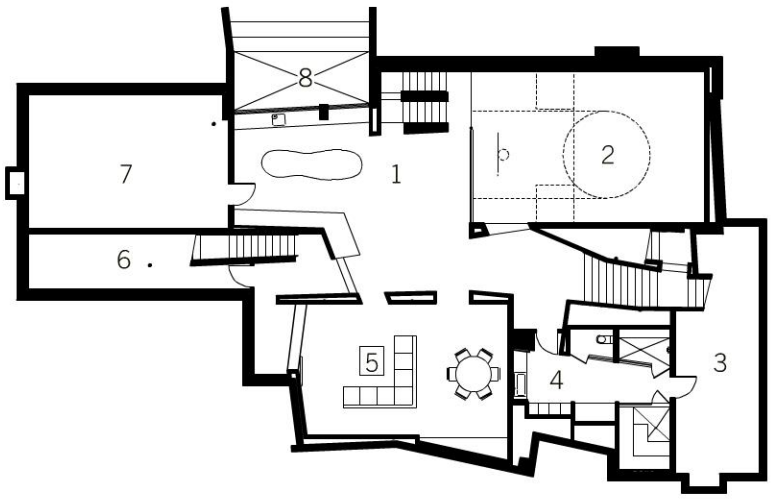
Second Floor

1 bedroom
2 master bedroom
3 master bathroom
4 closet
5 gym
6 sitting room
7 open to below



First Floor

1 mud room
2 garage
3 bedroom
4 laundry room
5 art room
6 kitchen
7 breakfast room
8 family room
9 entry
10 dining room
11 living room
12 swimming pool
13 terrace
14 patio



Basement

1 sports bar
2 squash/basketball court
3 pool equipment
4 changing room
5 media room
6 electrical
7 mechanical
8 lower garden

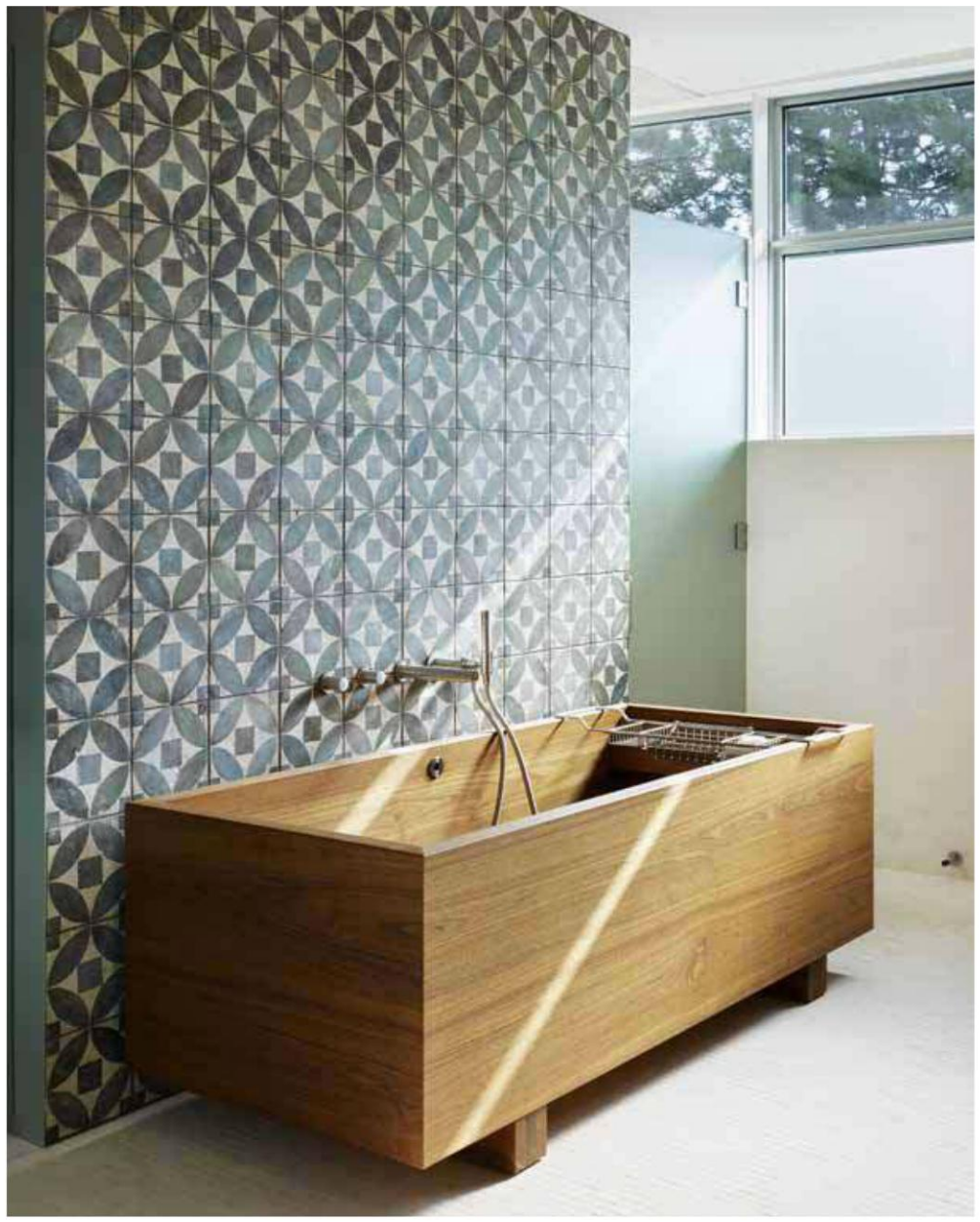
Right: The cedar finish of the façade is repeated indoors in the living room. On the opposite wall, layered planes conceal pockets that allow the glass doors to slide open completely and create space for a fireplace.

Left: The art room, with its chalkboard wall, is adjacent to the breakfast room.

The living room, seen here from the dining room, has a wall of backlit onyx that conceals a catwalk used for servicing the fish tank.

Right: Window mullions create a Mondrian-like composition that maintains the horizontal line of the adjacent wall. The operable window at bottom promotes air circulation.

Left: A teak tub and tile wall add texture and warmth.

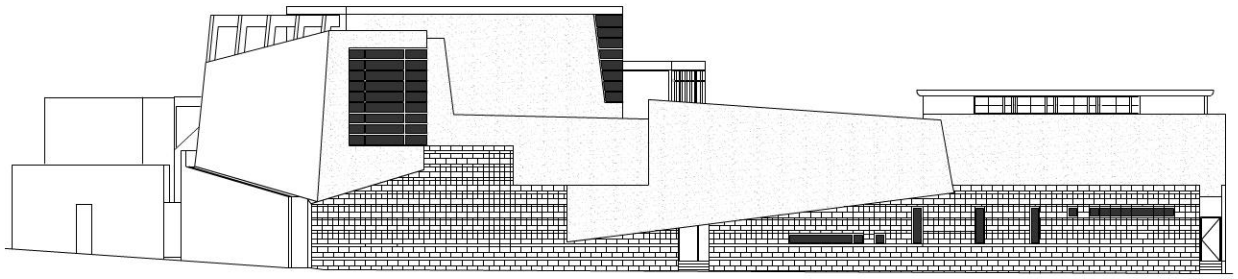


LOS ANGELES, CA 2005

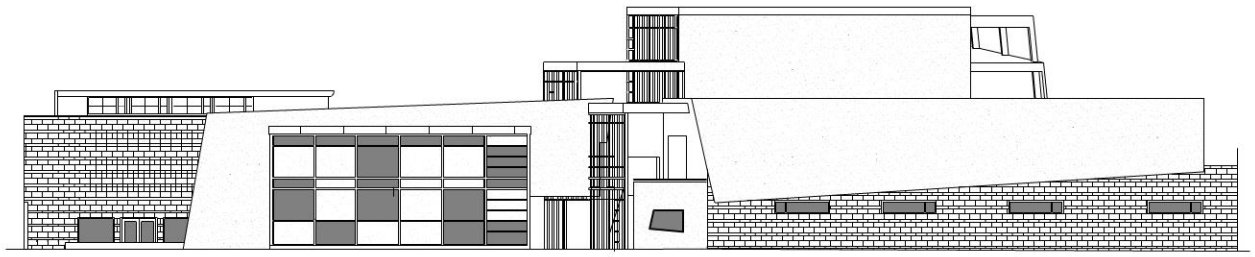
YULA Girls' High School

Seeking to create a new image through a distinct campus with aesthetic appeal, Yeshiva University of Los Angeles commissioned Abramson Teiger Architects to renovate and design an addition to its girls' high school, which is situated on a tight urban site with strict zoning constraints.

The renovation included a new entrance to the facility, off a quiet alley in the rear. Views unfold upon entering the heart of the campus, a courtyard surrounded by linked buildings that include a new two-story library. From the courtyard, open-air hallways lead to classrooms on the first and second floors. A generative spiral circulation can be traced throughout the campus.

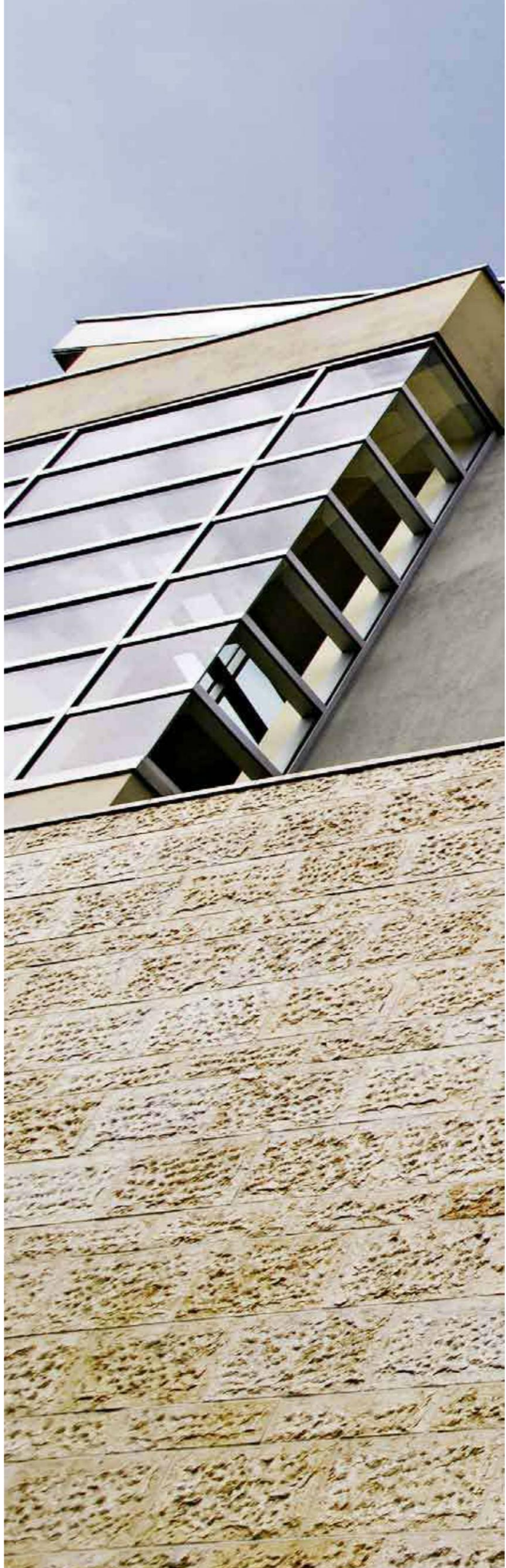


Southeast Elevation



Northwest Elevation

The street-side façade is a composition of layered Jerusalem stone, cement, and painted stucco.




YESHIVA
UNIVERSITY
OF
LOS ANGELES
GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

Left: The main entry is toward the library, with the classroom wing at right. Blue spandrel glass used throughout the campus is not visible from the street.

Right: A fountain for ritual hand-washing features the same Jerusalem stone used on the façade.

TELLURIDE, CO 2000

Elk Run Residence

This house, situated on 11 acres, has four distinct elements—great room, master suite, guest wing, and art studio—unified by sweeping sculptural copper roofs.

The house is modern in concept but features traditional materials suited to the mountain environment. Walls are stone and thick wood, accented at points by structural tree-trunk columns anchored with steel. The windows and window walls are steel frames painted rust red. Stone chimneys rise like funnels from the copper roofs.

The great room is a rectilinear barn-shaped building with soaring, vaulted, open-truss ceilings. An expansive 50-foot-long by 12-foot-high window faces Telluride's two dominant mountain peaks.

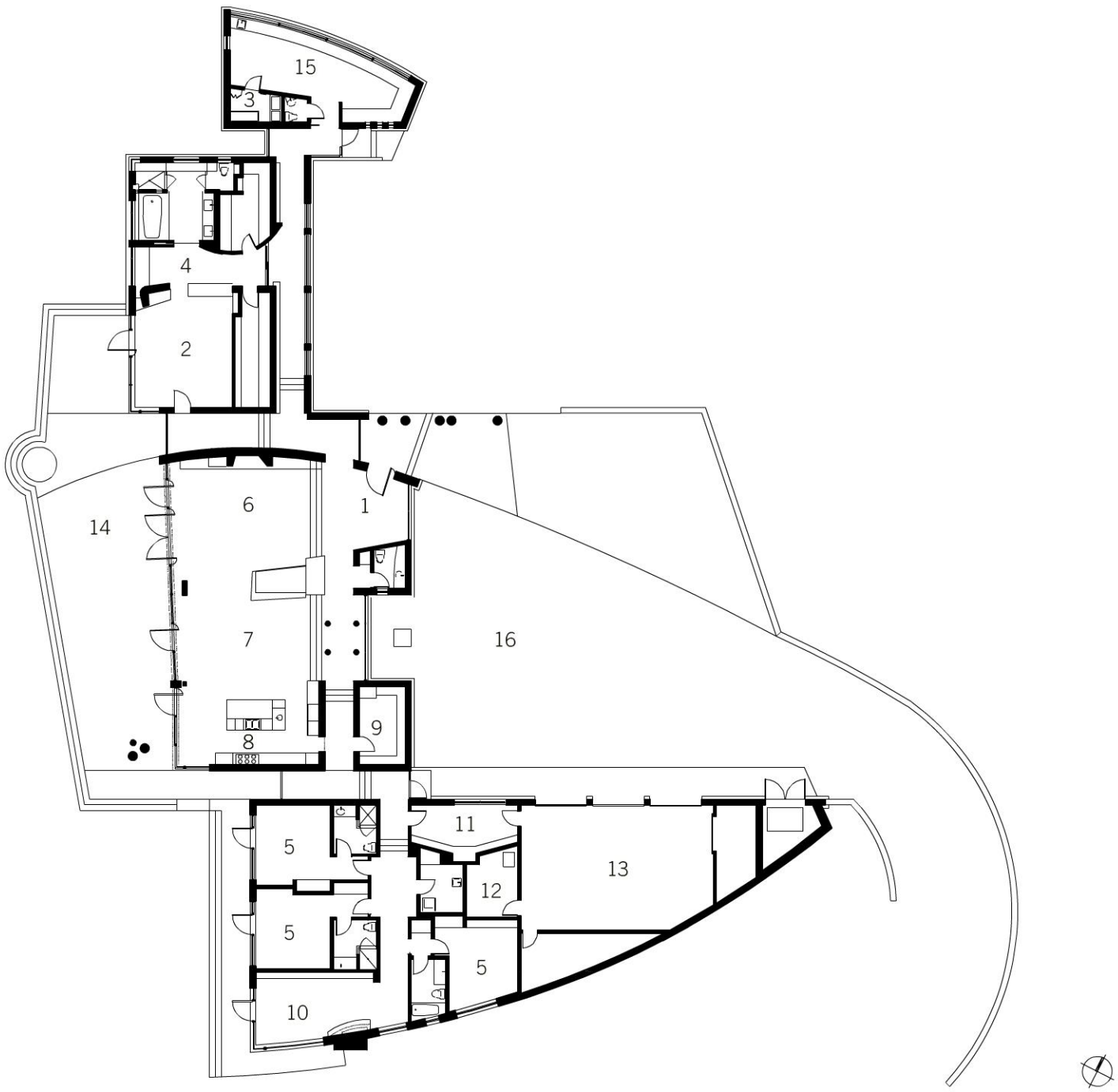
The great room's barrel-vaulted roof is echoed in the master suite, which is accessed by a flat-roofed hallway. The master suite is thus visually connected to the rest of the house but functionally separate from the main living spaces.

The guest wing is similarly separate, allowing the house to operate as a smaller unit when there are no guests. This wing has a long roof that sweeps to a low point of just six feet above the ground. Its curved shape relates to the driveway and leads to the motor court beyond.

Nestled in the forest is the art studio, with a wide panoramic window that gives inhabitants the feeling of being in a tree house.

The design features traditional mountain-house materials of stone and cedar, seen here on the entry and motor court, used in a modern architectural context.

1 entry
2 master bedroom
3 darkroom
4 dressing room
5 bedroom
6 living room
7 dining room
8 kitchen
9 pantry
10 den
11 mud room
12 mechanical
13 garage
14 exterior patio
15 art studio
16 motor court



The house, which is on an 11-acre lot, lies at the edge of a spruce forest. The motor court and entry face a grove of Aspen trees. Views are of Telluride's dominant mountains, Wilson and Sunshine.

Right: An expansive wall of glass brings a sense of the outdoors to the great room. On the patio, spruce trunks used as columns reference the adjacent forest.

Left: The stone and cedar of the façade continue indoors in a hall that leads from the entry to the master bedroom and art studio.

LOS ANGELES, CA 2007

Bennett Residence

This house overlooking a golf course was designed to capitalize on layered outdoor views, created by a garden terraced into three levels: a flat lawn adjacent to the house, an outdoor dining pavilion a few steps down, and an infinity swimming pool below that. The dramatic views continue down the fairway to the ocean in the distance, framed by the pool and retaining walls.

All of the house's principle rooms have expansive walls of glass. Further, a skylight caps a two-level volume at the heart of the house, creating a relationship with the outdoors in both the horizontal and vertical directions.

The door and window systems are of mahogany, clad in bronze on the exterior to stand up to the harsh Southern California sunlight. A rain screen of phenolic resin wood paneling increases thermal stability. Photovoltaic panels are hidden on the roof surfaces.

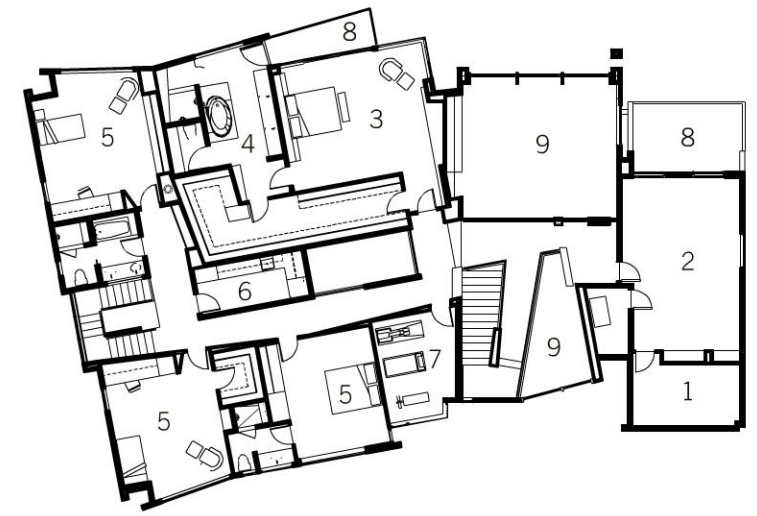
Right: The garden was terraced to create a progression from the main house to the dining pavilion to the pool.

Left: A wall of manufactured stone brings texture, intimacy, and warmth to the dining pavilion; the opening at the bottom allows those seated to have views in all directions.

In the two-story living room, a pivot hinge allows an oversize glass door to open, fostering a strong indoor/outdoor interaction. The fireplace wall is a composition of layered materials that include stone, painted drywall, and wood.

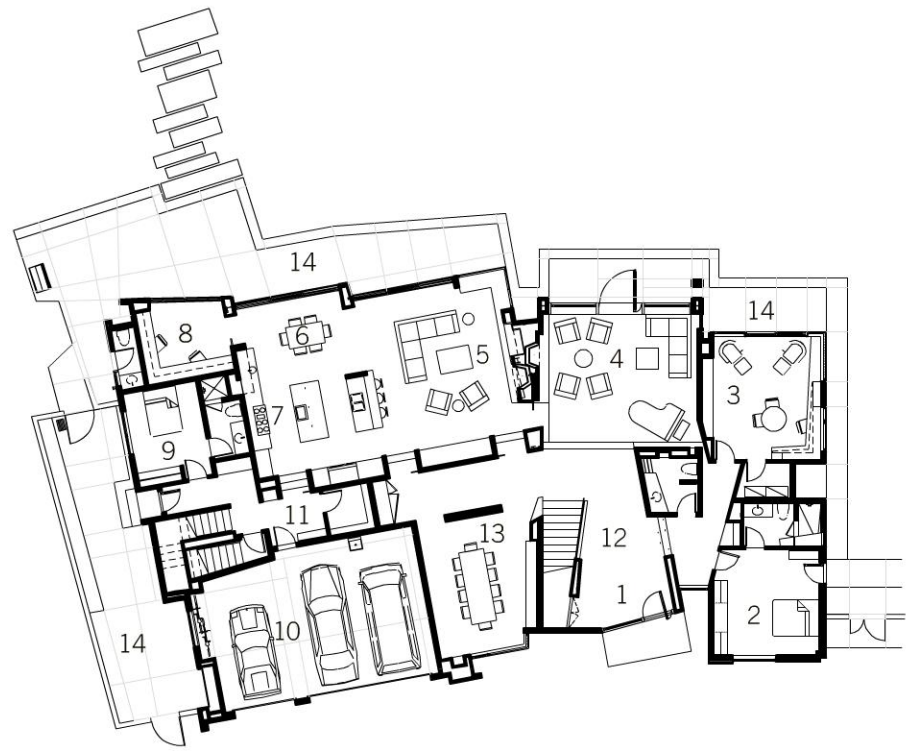
Second Floor

1 attic
2 playroom
3 master bedroom
4 master bathroom
5 bedroom
6 laundry room
7 gym
8 balcony
9 open to below



First Floor

1 entry
2 guest bedroom
3 study
4 living room
5 family room
6 morning room
7 kitchen
8 art room
9 bedroom
10 garage
11 mud room
12 atrium
13 dining room
14 terrace



The infinity pool was angled on the site for optimal views of the 18th hole.

Volumes


2055

LOS ANGELES, CA 1994

Abramson Residence

This single-family house on a 50- by 150-foot city lot is organized around a central two-story entry hall, lit from above by a skylight and activated by a sculptural staircase.

The entry hall begins a theme of volumetric compression and decompression that echoes throughout the house, whose interior volumes are expressed externally as well. The skylight shaft, prominent from the street, forms a hollow volume into which one arises when ascending the staircase. The living room ceiling slopes upward, expanding toward the view, the garden, and the sky.

The open feeling is enhanced by strategically placed windows that offer glimpses of land or sky while blocking the sight of adjacent houses; the windows terminate the circulation axis with views to the rear garden. The connectivity between indoors and out continues in the kitchen/family room, where 9½-foot-high doors open completely to the patio and pool.

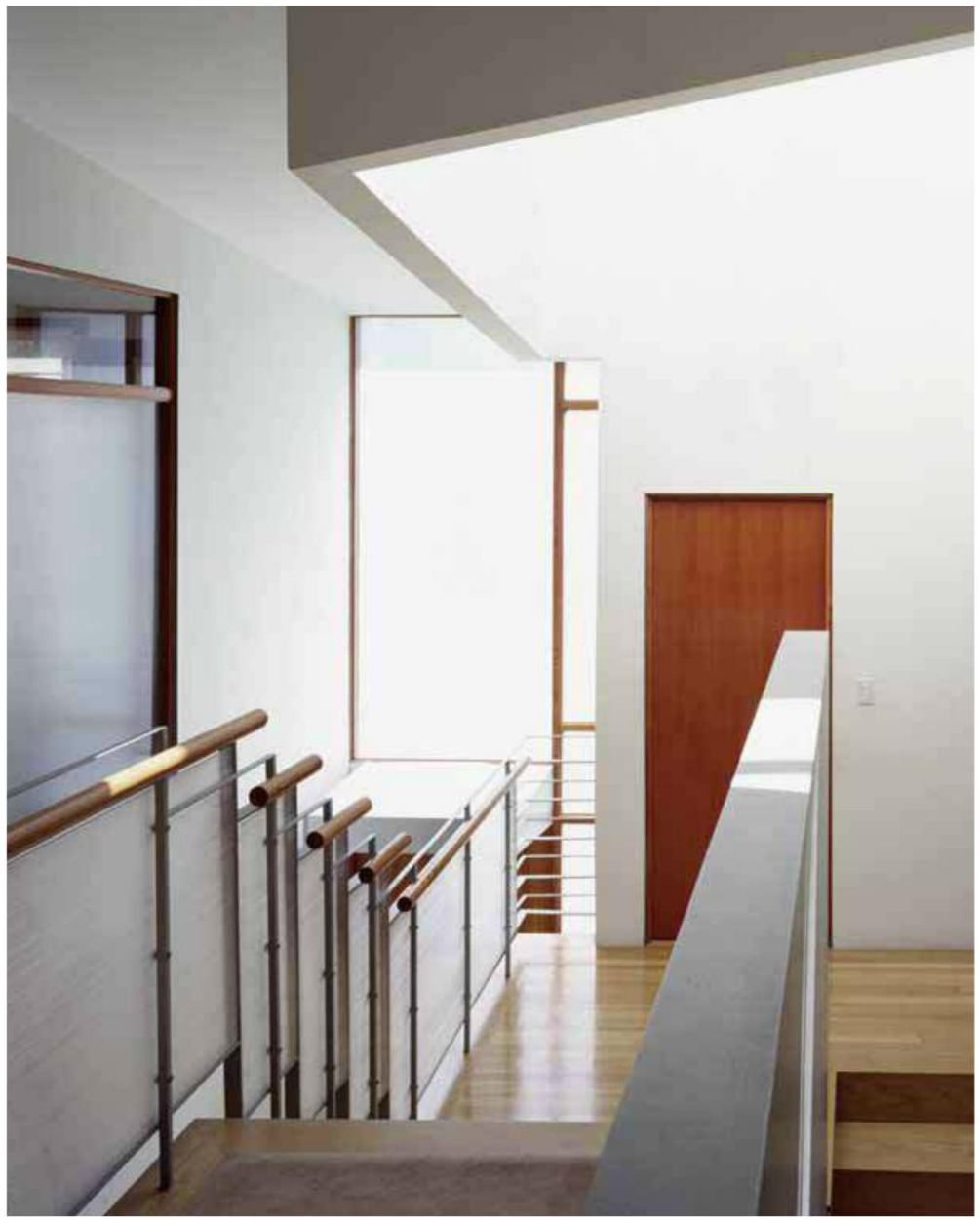
Primary materials include smooth concrete, natural wood, and white gypsum-board walls. The rough scraped plaster of the facade is carried through to the interior in the living room.

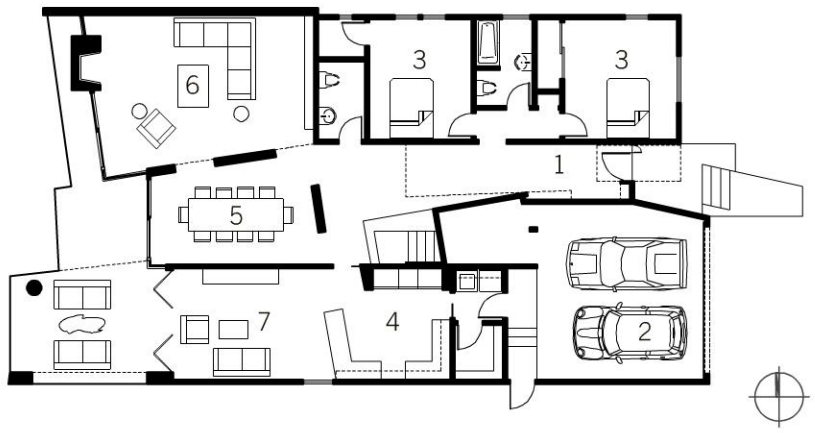
Left: The design is a play on solid and void: The primarily open façade at left incorporates some solid elements, while the white central volume has a void in the form of a small window.

Right: The patio of the master bedroom upstairs forms the roof of an outdoor room off the family room/kitchen. Continuous concrete floors enhance the indoor/outdoor interaction.

Right: The sculptural central staircase is bathed in natural light by a 10- by 10-foot skylight.

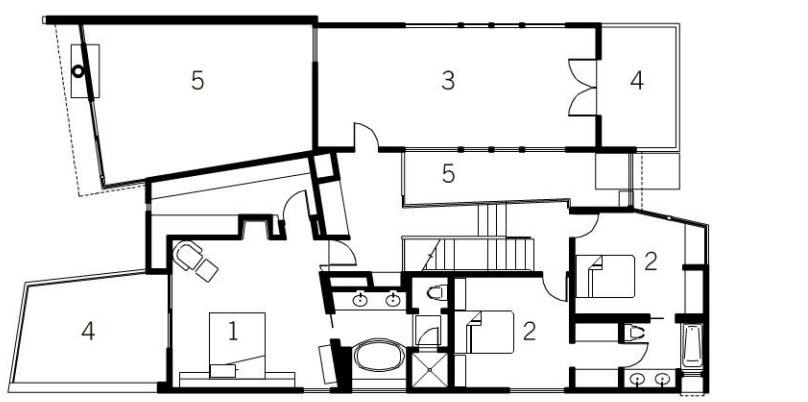
Left: Cellular Lexan panels on the landings allow light from the skylight to filter to the spaces below.





First Floor

1 entry
2 garage
3 bedroom
4 kitchen
5 dining room
6 living room
7 family room



Second Floor

1 master bedroom
2 bedroom
3 playroom
4 balcony
5 open to below

LOS ANGELES, CA 2004

Berger Residence

Views and openness are the defining features of this light-filled house. The initial impression is of a strict, high-modern aesthetic, but a more careful inspection reveals distortion of perspective, folded surfaces, and obliquity. The structure is a series of volumes that fan outward; walls bend to project the spaces away from the center of the house, enhancing the views and the flow of light.

Exterior walls of glass, coupled with doors that disappear into pockets, create a seamless indoor/outdoor interaction. Inside, there are few walls. The flowing spaces were sculpted to control the natural light, which is harsh and direct in some places but, in the heart of the house, filters in softly through a north-facing skylight.

Strategically placed windows frame the views, proportion the walls, and hide neighboring houses. From the curving galley kitchen, carefully controlled sight lines extend through the breakfast room to the garden beyond—a view that expands when the doors at the end are retracted into the wall.

Windows take on particular drama in the bedrooms, each of which has one glass wall. Privacy is maintained by cantilevered wing walls that extend over the garden and direct the views away from neighboring homes, while a metal-clad roof overhang provides shade.

Left: Exterior wing walls maintain privacy in the upstairs bedrooms, each of which features a floor-to-ceiling glass wall.

Right: The volume of one bedroom projects out from the massing of the house on pilotis, creating a patio space below.

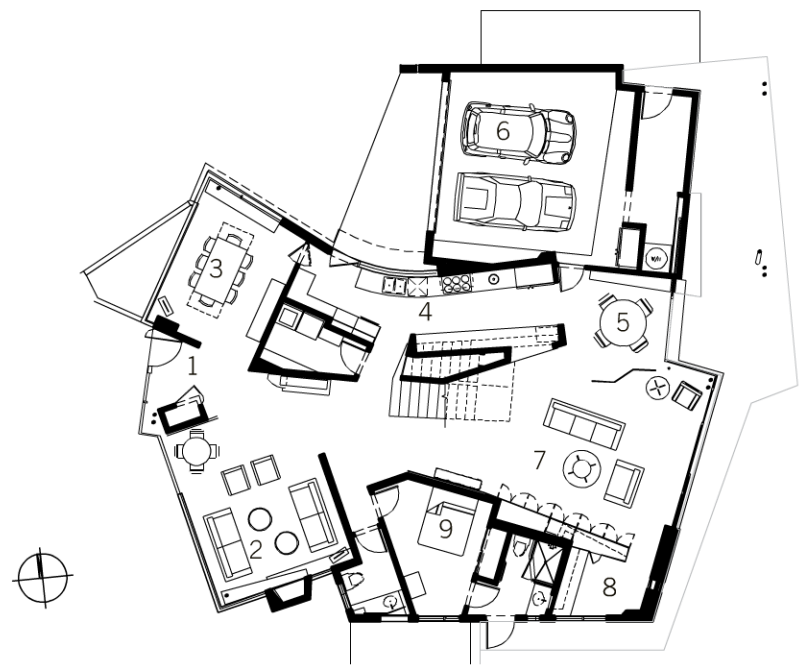
Sculptural wood panels in the two-story living room visually lower the space, enhancing intimacy. A structural column anchors the mantel to the fireplace, which is constructed of steel-troweled natural cement.

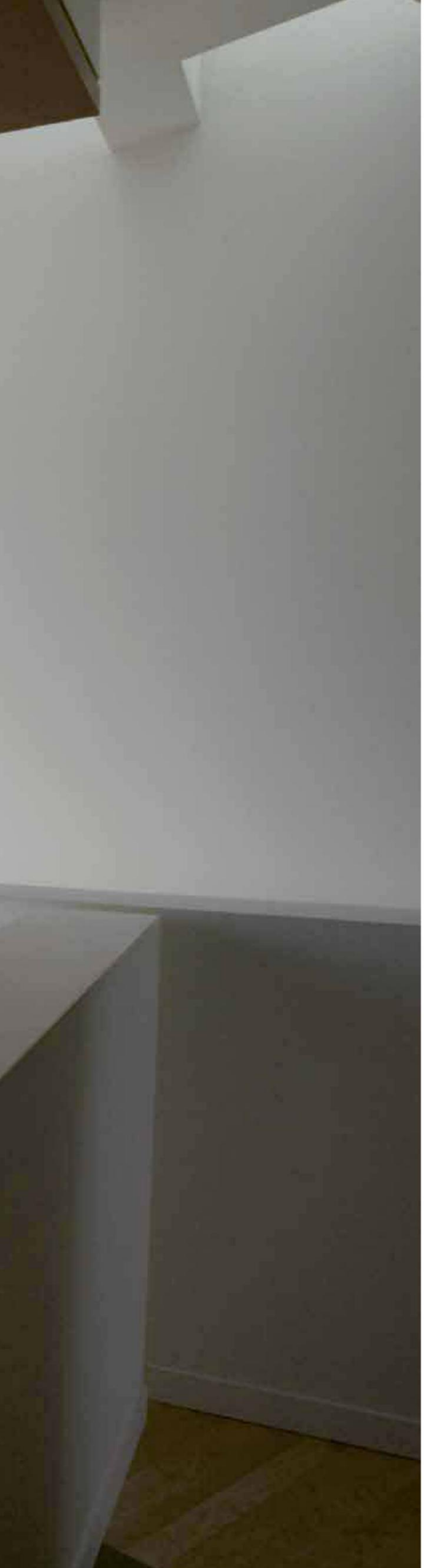
Second Floor

1 master bedroom
2 master bathroom
3 study
4 bedroom
5 sitting room
6 open to below

First Floor

1 entry
2 living room
3 dining room
4 kitchen
5 breakfast room
6 garage
7 family room
8 study
9 bedroom





Left: The second-floor study overlooks the living room and main entry. High windows offer treetop views.

Right: In the living room, silicon butt-glazed windows and discreet skylights create an interplay of light and shadow.

LOS ANGELES, CA 2006

Kelly Residence

The Kelly residence is a volumetric exploration of contrasts: solid versus void, formal order versus amorphous flow, private versus public.

The volumes are articulated as white plaster boxes raised on steel pilotis. Voids are carved into the boxes at various degrees, creating a façade that is solid at some points and almost transparent at others. Each of the volumes has on one side a panel of the sustainable material Trespa, resembling dark wood. These panels are installed as rain-screens and are punctured with stainless steel inserts, emphasizing the sense of the cladding as non-load bearing.

Sustainability was a key factor in the home design. In addition to the Trespa, which enhances thermal stability, the house incorporates photovoltaic cells in the roof, grey water reclamation, sub-surface drip irrigation, flash water heating, artificial lawn, and bamboo floors. Additionally, pools of water promote evaporative cooling in front of large expanses of glass.

Left: The house is composed of multiple volumes clad in steel-troweled white cement plaster, each with one side of Trespa paneling resembling dark wood.

Right: An operable window hovers in the silicon butt-glazed glass over the front door, enhancing air flow upstairs.

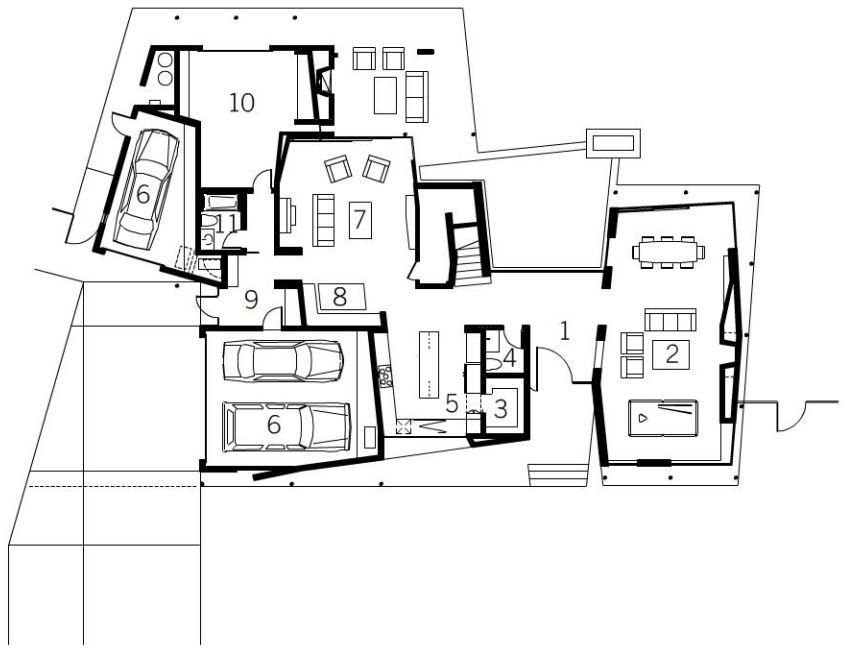
Left: Trespa, punctured by stainless steel inserts to emphasize the sense of lightness, serves as a rain screen.

Right: A two-story glass wall is supported at midpoint by steel spider brackets.

Any sense of solidity is eroded due to extensive fenestration on all sides.

Second Floor

1 master bedroom
2 master bathroom
3 master closet
4 roof
5 bedroom
6 closet
7 bathroom
8 mechanical
9 laundry
10 playroom
11 storage

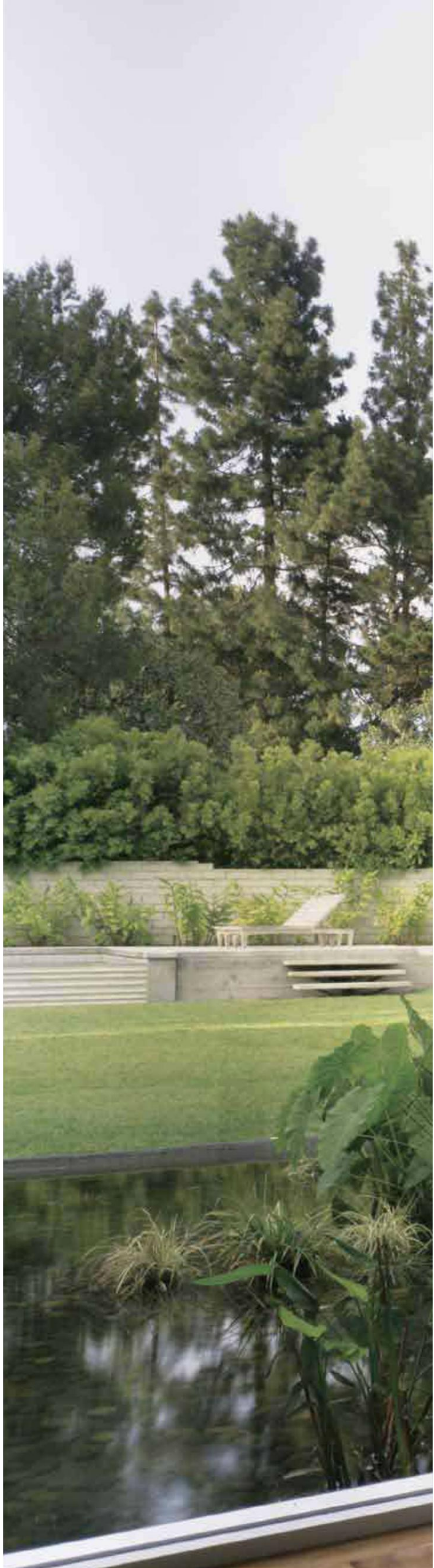


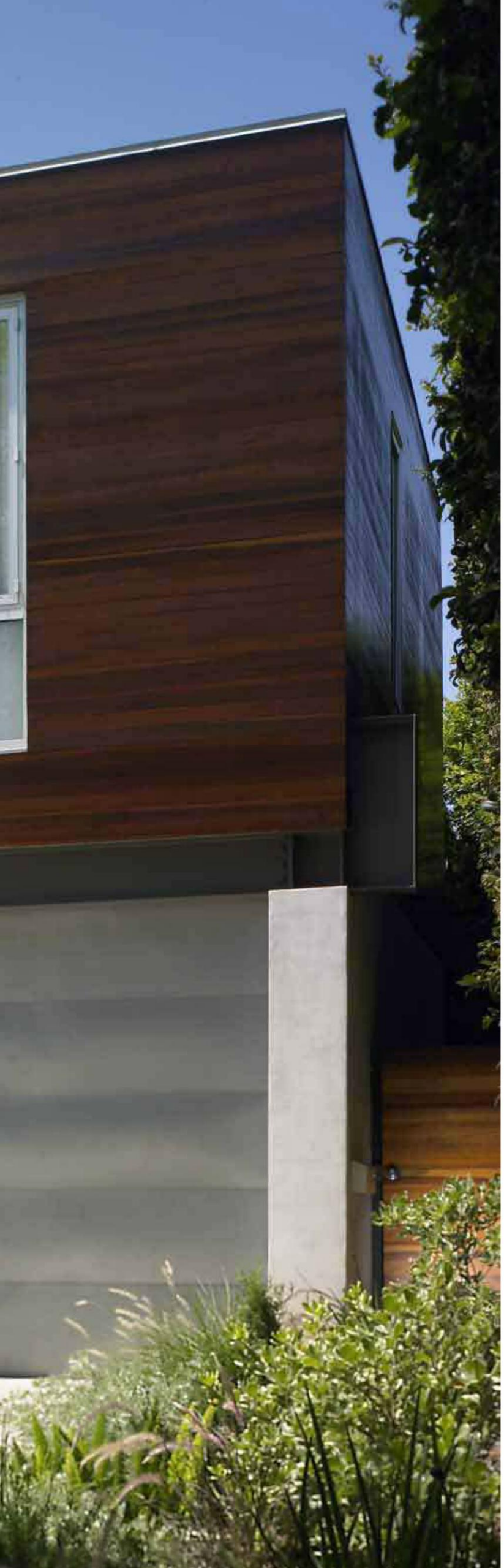
First Floor

1 entry
2 living room
3 pantry
4 powder room
5 kitchen
6 garage
7 family room
8 breakfast room
9 mud room
10 guest bedroom
11 guest bathroom

Right: Exterior materials continue inside the house, blurring the distinction between indoors and out.

Left: Evaporative cooling from a living pond reduces heat gain on a two-story window.





LOS ANGELES, CA 2002

Velkes Residence

Abramson Teiger transformed a nondescript traditional “pyramid” roofed house with a maze of rooms into a modern home with an open plan designed to enhance the relationship with the outdoors.

Massing volumes, articulated as a series of subtle shifts, were added to the house in a way that conceals the old roof and reveals only the new façade. The floor plan was manipulated to create a logical flow and to establish a view axis from the entryway that continues through large butt-glazed windows in the living room to the rear garden and pool beyond.

The central hall is a towering volume, capped with a skylight that visually connects the house’s two stories. The walls curve upward and outward through the skylight, flooding the heart of the house with natural light.

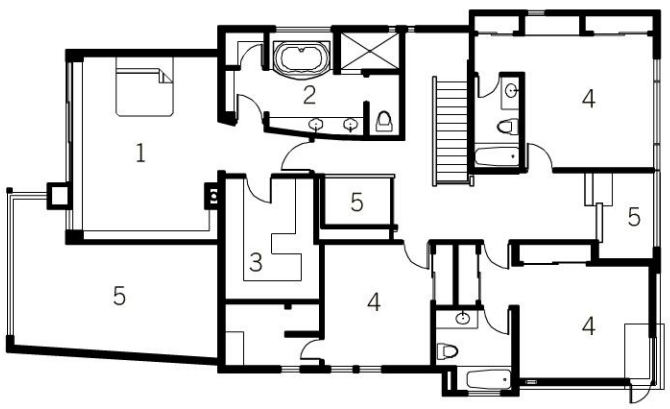
The large living room was expanded to accommodate a dining area. Here, the low ceilings could not be altered, so the horizontal axis was emphasized through the installation of expansive frameless windows. On the south side of the house, a collection of small rooms was demolished to create a one-and-a-half-story volume designed as a contrast to the horizontal living/dining area. A tall wall of glass facing the garden opens up almost completely with large sliding doors. The kitchen also has views to the garden and pool.

On the second floor, which has a newly added master bedroom and child’s room, the architects added galvanized metal roofs. These soar in contrast to the square wood volumes below and are sculpted to flare up and away from the existing roof so as to hide it when viewed from the street and garden.

Right: A vaulted roof was added to the master bedroom to obscure the original pyramid roof, which was left intact.

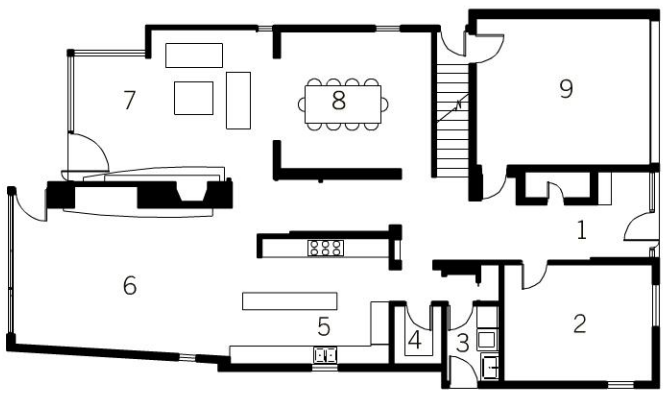
Left: Three interlocking volumes create the primary form.

The living room has a wall of silicon butt-glazed glass. A contrasting door is framed in the same vertical-grain Douglas fir used on the façade.



Second Floor

1 master bedroom
2 master bathroom
3 closet
4 bedroom
5 open to below



First Floor

1 entry
2 study
3 laundry
4 pantry
5 kitchen
6 family room
7 living room
8 dining room
9 garage

LOS ANGELES, CA 1994

Sinnott Residence

This house was designed to address the contextual concerns of an unsightly neighboring house and an existing grove of trees on the site's southwest corner, as well as to take advantage of the strong afternoon light.

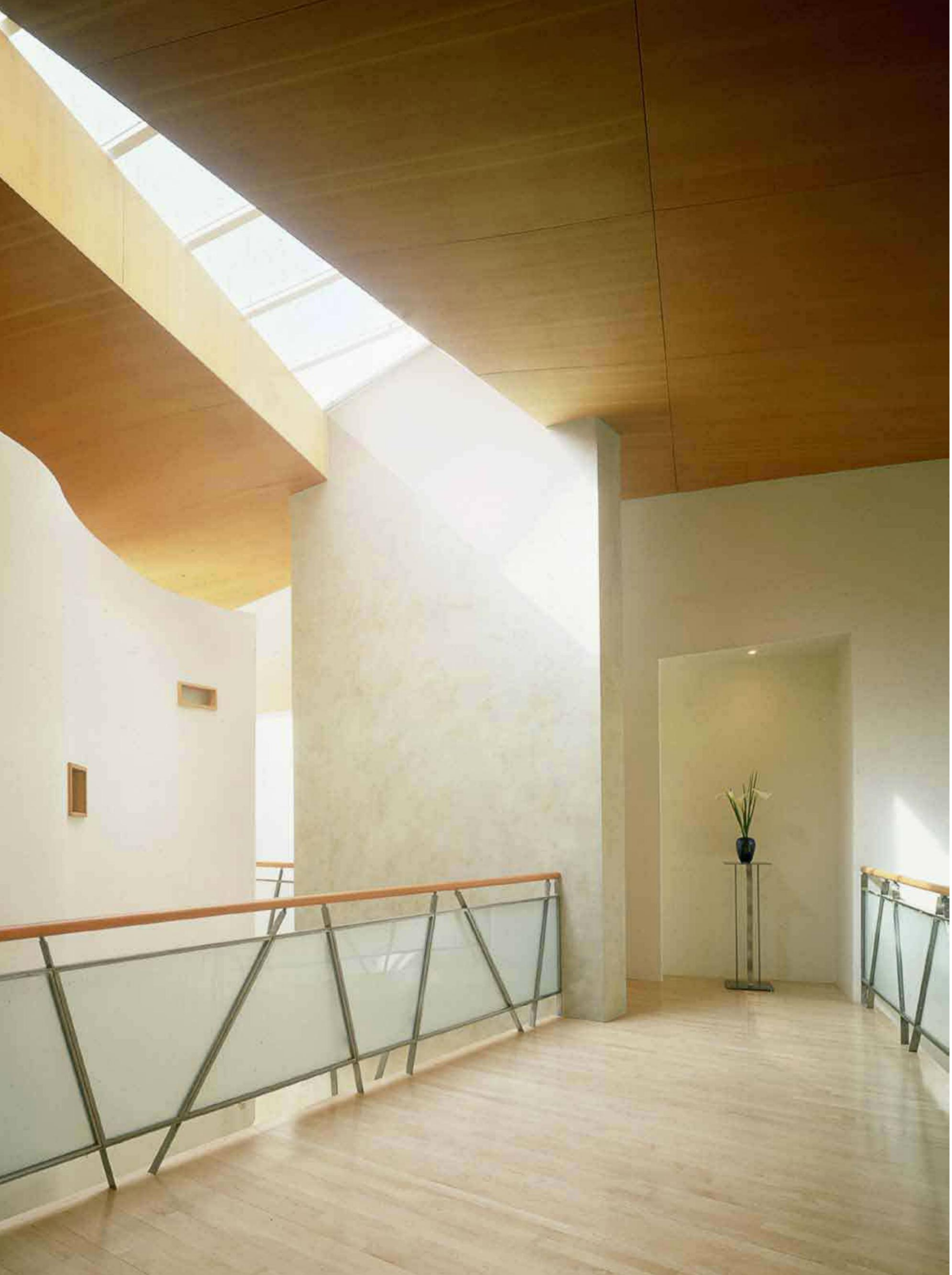
A geometric shift, creating two distinct compositional elements, resolved these issues. By angling the mass of the living room, dining room, and entry to the northwest, off the orthogonal grid of the rest of the house, the architects opened these areas (as well as the garden) to the afternoon sun and screened them from the residence to the north. The shifted mass is articulated with a vaulted copper roof. The collision of orthogonal and oblique reverberates throughout the house, manifested in details such as repeated triangular skylights, a trapezoidal shower/bathtub, and angled step risers.

The swimming pool serves as an essential design element. There are numerous visual links from the interior, and large doors open up literally to the edge of the pool, blurring the line between indoors and out.

Finishes were carefully chosen to unify spaces throughout the house. Interior materials include smooth Venetian walls in the living room, kitchen, and master bedroom, and Syndecrete, a lightweight cast concrete, on the kitchen counters, most of the upper-level floors, and in the master bathroom's shower and tub. The window system and living room ceiling are Douglas fir.

Right: Two volumes, one containing the living room and the other the master bedroom and family room, are connected by the main entrance, which has views through the house to the swimming pool. A theme of cantilevering runs throughout.

Left: When doors are opened, the pool becomes an extension of the living room.

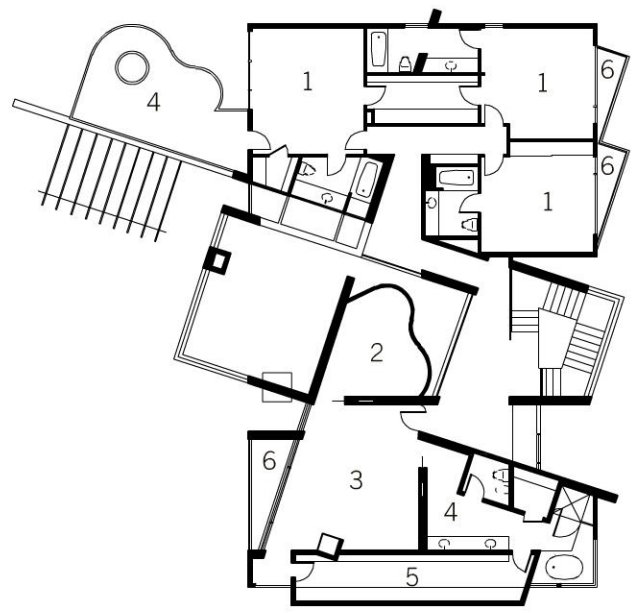


Left: The upstairs landing has three trapezoidal skylights; the piano-shaped curve of the volume containing the gym cantilevers into a double-height space at the center of the house, allowing light from the skylights to reach the dining room below. The handrail design echoes the trapezoidal theme.

Right: A low window in the upstairs hallway offers a glimpse of the kitchen below. The elimination of dead-end visual axes is a theme throughout the house.

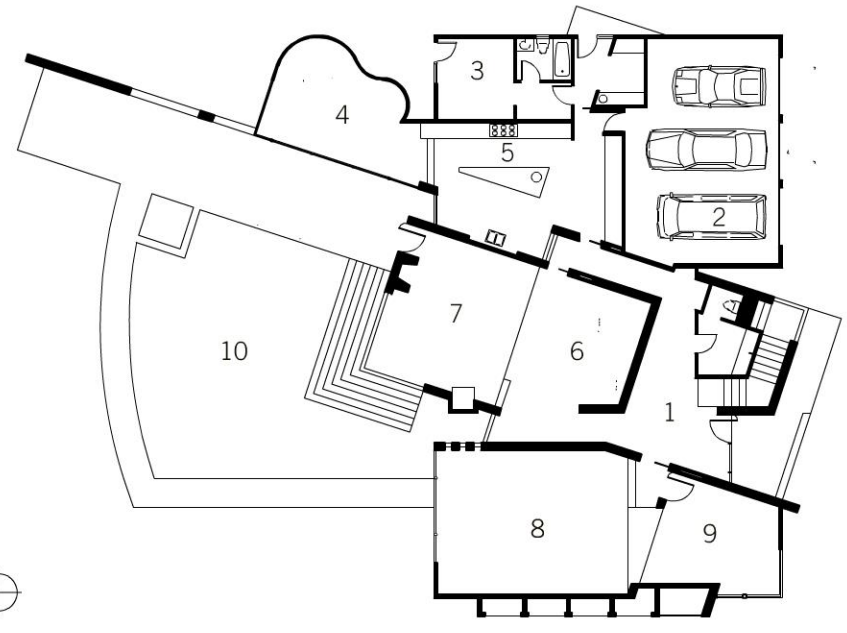
Second Floor

1 bedroom
2 gym
3 master bedroom
4 master bathroom
5 master closet
6 balcony



First Floor

1 entry
2 garage
3 bedroom
4 breakfast room
5 kitchen
6 dining room
7 living room
8 family room
9 study bedroom
10 pool



LOS ANGELES, CA 2002

Teiger Residence

The renovation of the Teiger residence, a 1920s Spanish-style house of 1,300 square feet, involved the addition of a second story that brought the total square footage to 2,500. The resulting structure, which is on the house's original footprint, has a new façade of steel-troweled stucco, weathered zinc, and redwood siding topped by a standing seam metal roof.

The natural flow from the interior to the exterior of the house ends in a tranquil outdoor room formed by a wooden deck, pool, and sculptural trellis.

Upstairs are volumes containing two children's bedrooms, one clad in bonderized metal and the other in cedar; they are unified by a white stucco volume that contains study areas and a Jack-and-Jill bathroom. The cedar deck of the pool is shaded by a trellis comprising 2 x 14 members cut into a trapezoidal shape to play off the angles of the house.

Light

CASPER, WY 2008

Krmpotich Residence

The Krmpotich residence is a long, one-story house nestled into a slowly rising hill on the outskirts of Casper, Wyoming.

The structure is oriented to address strong prevailing winds. Its low profile slopes up and away from the hill behind it to allow the wind to blow over in an aerodynamic manner, while concrete walls protect the southern façade. These walls, which also provide thermal mass to reduce heat load, were left exposed to 10 feet high; above that, horizontal bands of cedar rise to meet the undulating roof.

Ample windows and skylights take advantage of the semi-arid region's abundant sunlight, and the primary rooms are positioned to have sweeping views to the hills and the town in the distance. The overall structure fortifies the interior living space from the harsh setting, yet there is an exchange between interior and exterior, seen through the fenestration and the repetition of the façade's concrete and cedar articulation inside the house.

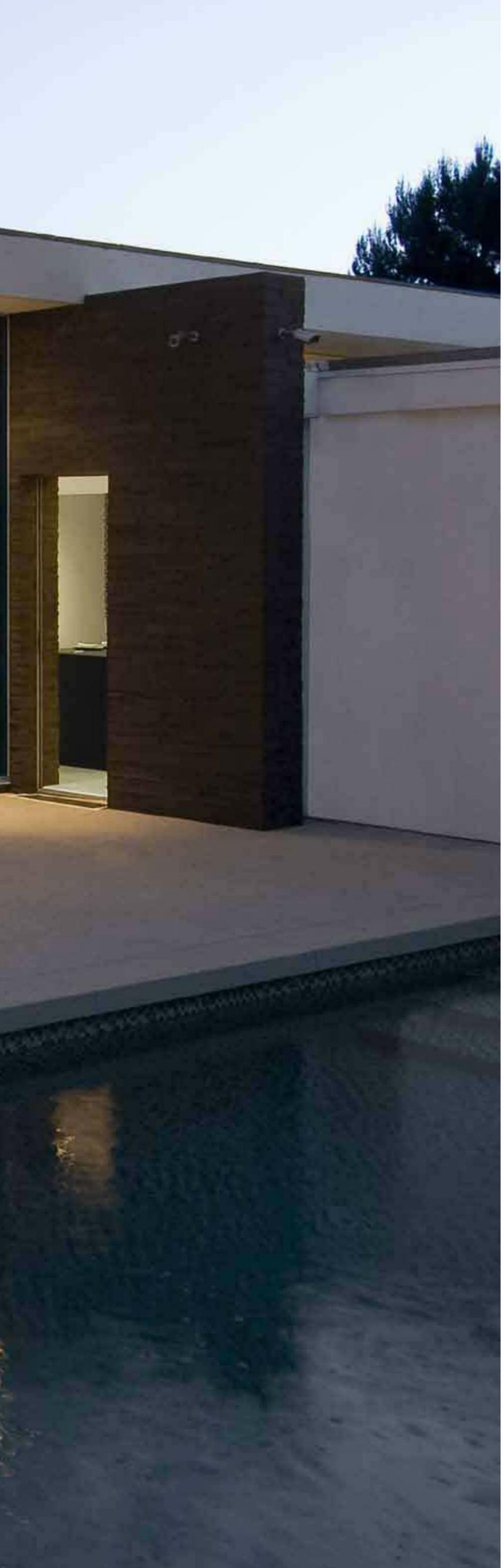
A 10-foot-high datum line winds its way through the entire house, inside and out. In the family room, floor-to-ceiling glass was divided into sections of manageable size for strength against high winds and to allow for operable windows that facilitate cross-ventilation.

1 entry
2 mud room
3 living room
4 dining room
5 kitchen
6 family room
7 breakfast room
8 office
9 laundry room
10 master bedroom
11 bedroom
12 playroom
13 exterior patio
14 spa deck
15 garage

Natural light floods the concrete and cedar of the entry and living room. The front doors feature an abstracted depiction of the house's floor plan.

Right: The master bathroom has a wall of glass-and-stone tile, offset by a field of neutral beige. Counters are Ceasarstone.

Left: Punctured skylights illuminate the entry hall.



Beverly Hills, CA 2010

Pedram Residence

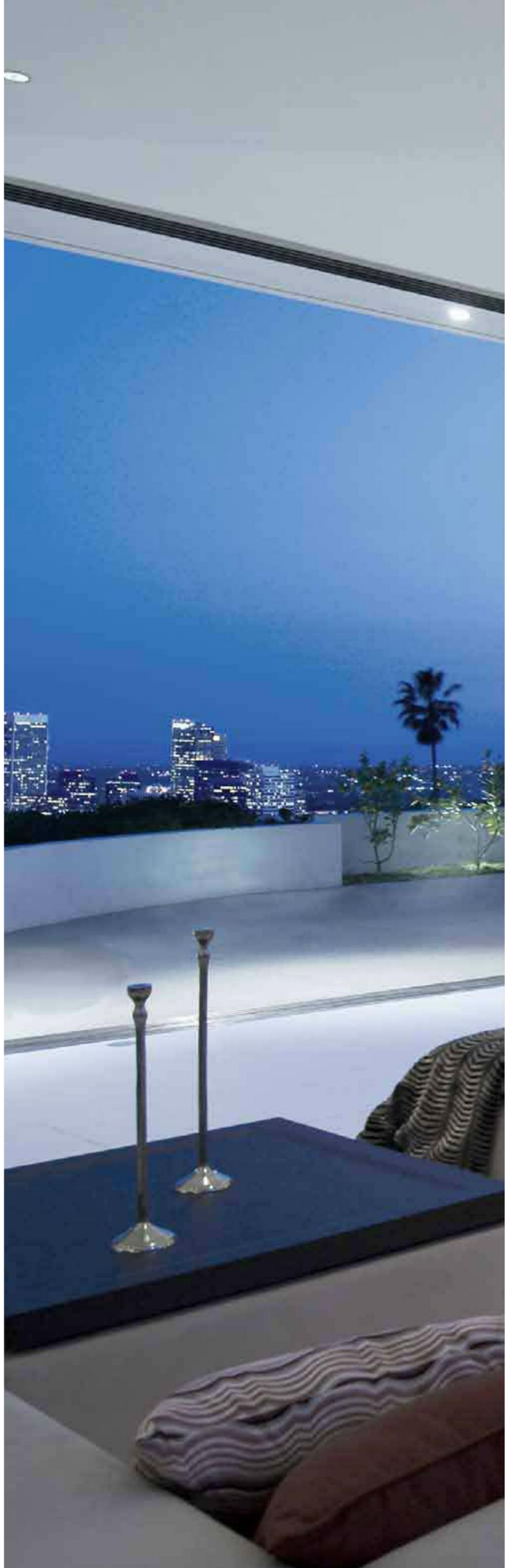
A renovation of an original 1950s home in the Trousdale Estates neighborhood, the Pedram residence is notable for its loft-like interior and windows and doors that frame panoramic views of Los Angeles.

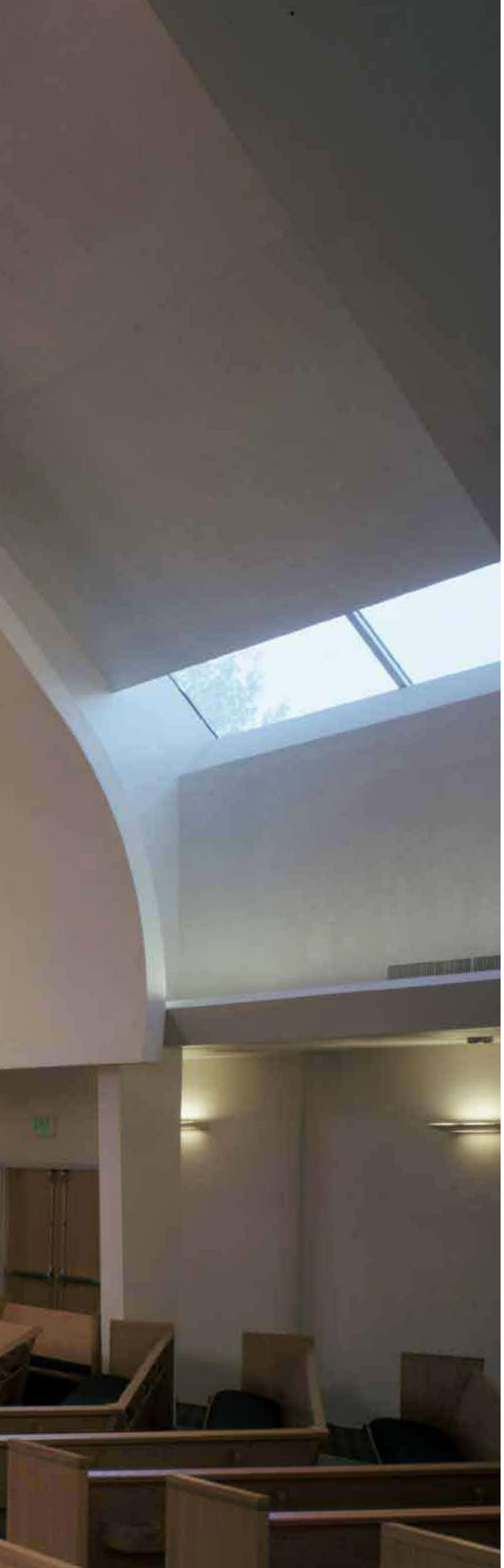
Building heights in Trousdale are limited to fourteen feet. For this project, half of the home was demolished and rebuilt, reaching the maximum interior ceiling height of twelve feet in the main living area. That loft-like space is offset by a lower, more intimate ceiling plan in the kitchen and den.

The living area is enclosed by two sliding glass walls that are twelve feet tall and twenty feet wide. These open to patios on both sides, creating an outdoor-indoor-outdoor flow.

Right: Clerestory windows give the appearance of a floating roof. A wall of textured basalt intersects one of the living room's glass exterior walls, enhancing the indoor/outdoor connection.

Left: Ceasarstone floor tiles set in a running bond pattern create a consistent flow throughout the public areas of the house.





ENCINO, CA 2002

First Presbyterian Church

For the renovation of the First Presbyterian Church of Encino, a 1954 A-frame with tapering glue-lam columns and a stone exterior, Abramson Teiger sought to improve illumination and develop a form that would create a sense of closeness and reverie.

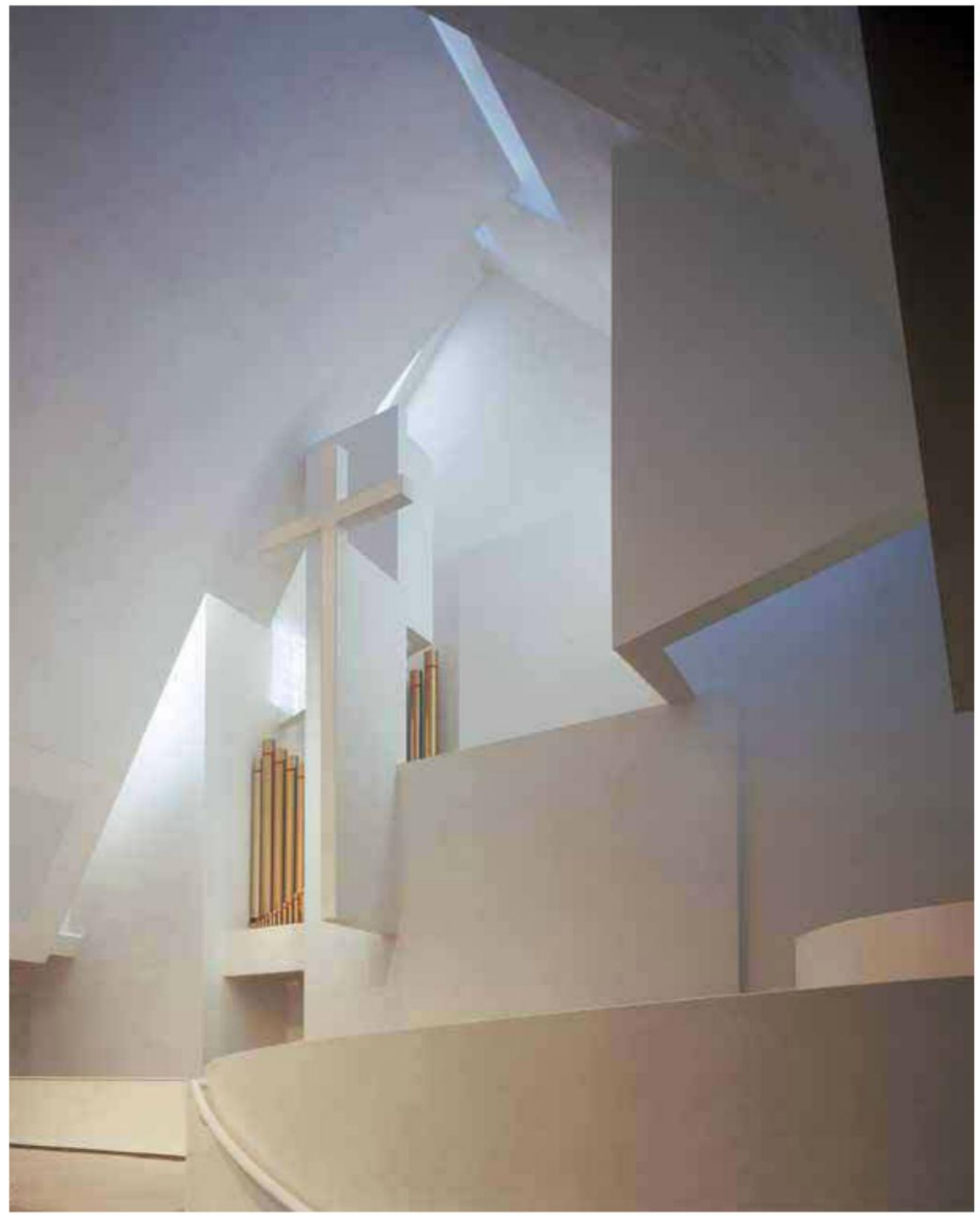
The primary theme for the project is light, shaped in three movements. The progression begins in the narthex, where light filters in from above, its source not evident. The second movement corresponds to the main worship space, which is illuminated by large openings to the north and low light sources to the south. The third movement is the continually changing illumination of the cross and place of communion, with light from a variety of openings flowing down the sanctuary's curved surfaces.

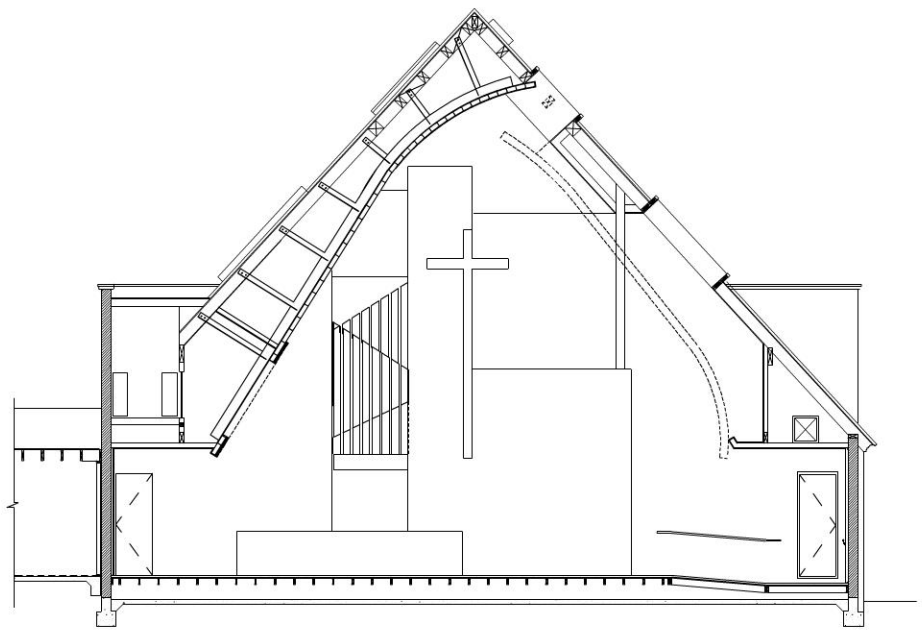
In the chancel, the focal point—the cross—is elongated to represent a connection between heaven and earth. This literal presentation of the cross projects from an abstracted version of reflected light from pre-existing stained glass windows and new openings.

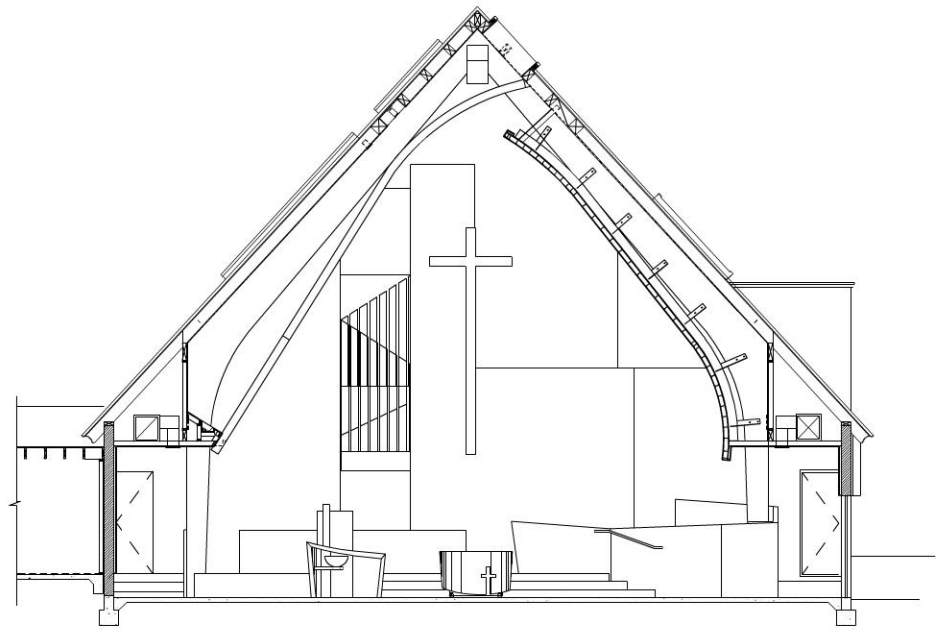
The sanctuary is rich in symbolism. The two facing curved surfaces that give the space its primary shape are an interpretation of hands in prayer. The choir and communion table are an interpretation of the dove of Christ. The sanctuary's upper balcony is flanked by two symmetrical pieces that, when joined together, take the form of Saint Francis' garment, with which he fashioned himself into a living symbol of the cross.

Left: Curved roof panels symbolize hands cupped in prayer. Multiple skylights illuminate the sanctuary.

Right: The play of light on white-on-white sculpted planes heightens the effect of depth and shadow and gives the illusion of subtle color.







Left: The combination of natural and artificial light sources offers ever-changing illumination of the central cross.

Right: The original 1954 façade remains intact.

LOS ANGELES, CA 2005

Porter Residence

Located high in the Hollywood Hills, this residence was designed as a progression of spaces that open gradually to reveal magnificent views at the rear of the house.

The first stage in the sequence is the motor court, where solid concrete walls shield the house from the street. The front door, which is sculpted from wood and stainless steel, is cut into the concrete. To the left of the door upon entering is a room of translucent glass, which allows soft light to enter the house while maintaining privacy.

From the entry, the view at the back of the house is partially exposed. Moving forward, high wood ceilings thrust outward, and tall sliding doors open to the outdoors. Upon entering the living spaces, the views of west Los Angeles begin to emerge, but the full panorama is not revealed until one proceeds further to the terrace.

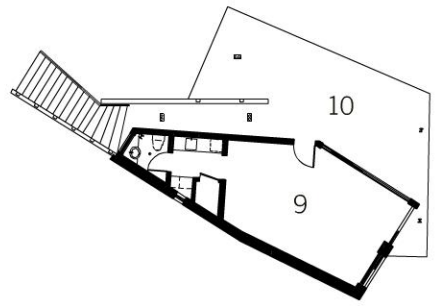
The house forms a U-shaped enclosure around a rectangular stretch of lawn that flanks an infinity pool. Patios hug the edge of the hill and the pool. A pool house on the west side of the lawn was designed as a series of rotated forms, meant to address the dynamic 360-degree views while maintaining the themes apparent in the main house.

The pool house is sited at an angle
to the main house's orthogonal grid.

Second Floor

Main House
1 master bedroom
2 master bathroom
3 closet
4 bedroom
5 study
6 playroom
7 gallery
8 balcony

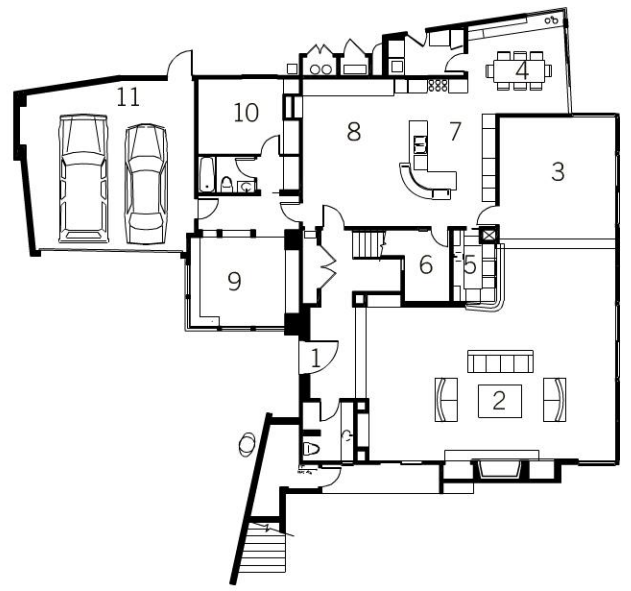
Pool House
9 recreation room
10 roof deck

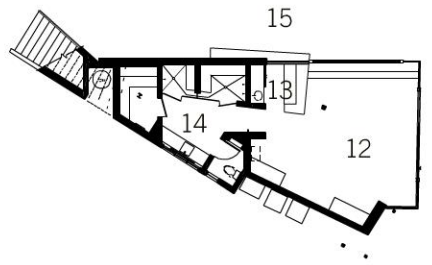


First Floor

Main House
1 entry
2 living room
3 dining room
4 breakfast room
5 bar
6 laundry
7 kitchen
8 media room
9 gallery
10 bedroom
11 garage

Pool House
12 recreation room
13 bar
14 spa
15 patio





Left: The infinity pool overlooks the Los Angeles basin.

Right: The oak ceiling of the breakfast room continues outdoors to form the overhang by the pool. Floor-to-ceiling glass doors open completely to enhance the indoor/outdoor interaction.

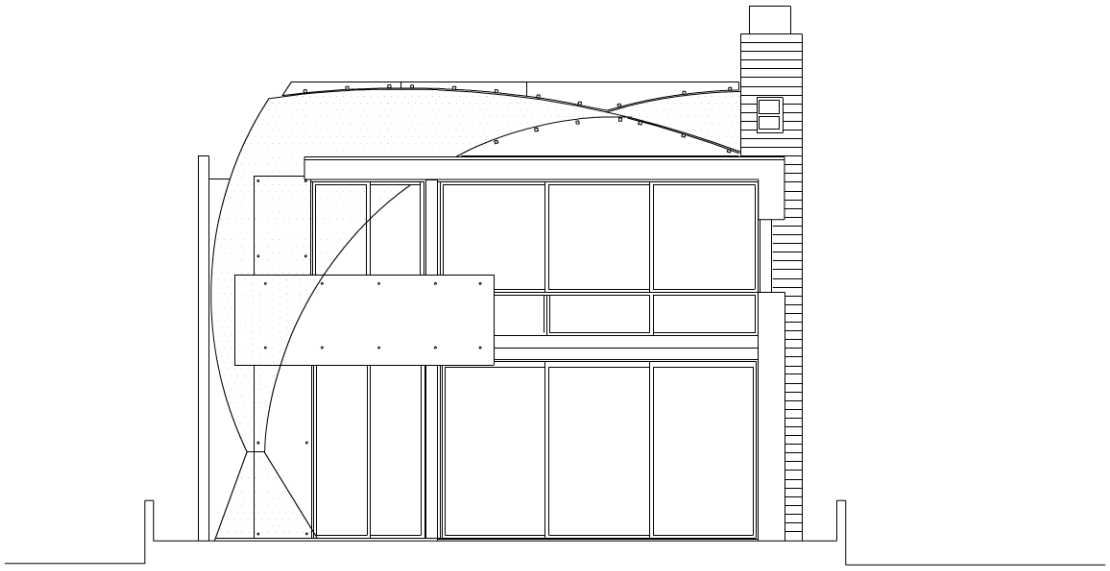
NEWPORT BEACH, CA 2001

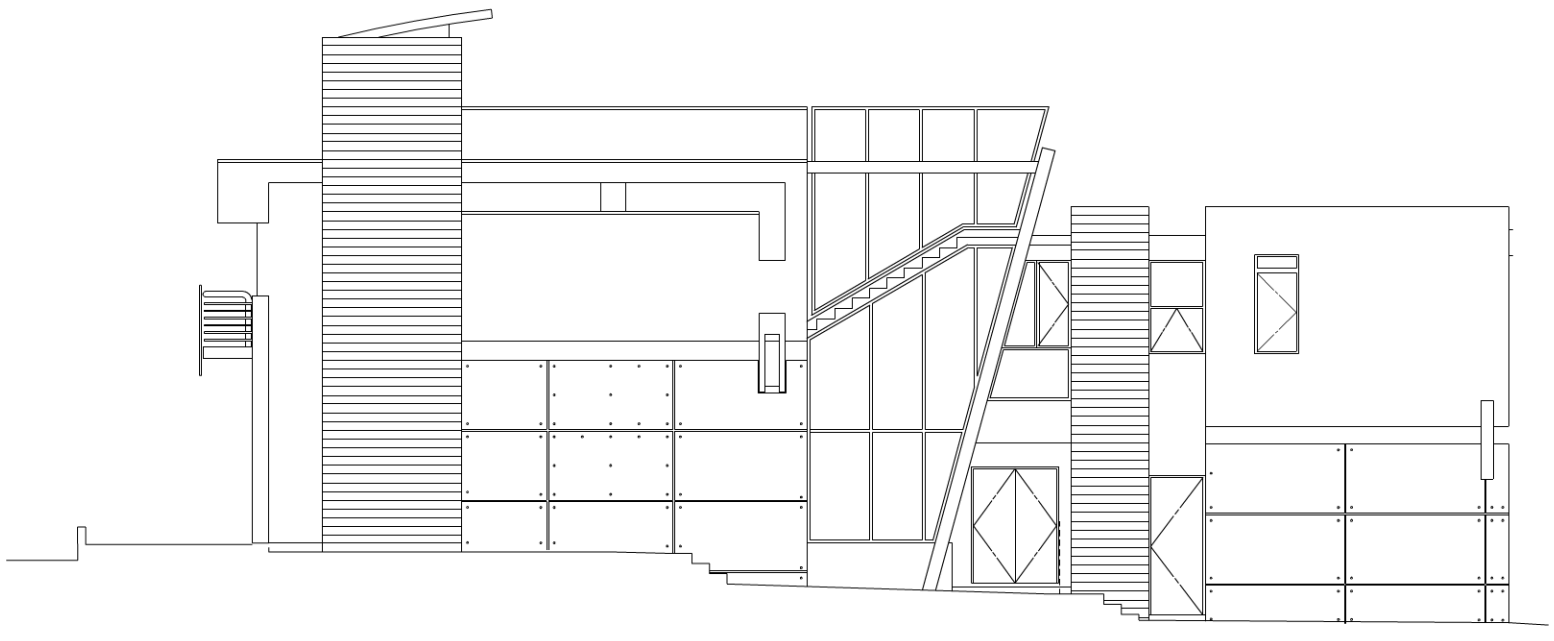
Knight Residence

The Knight residence, located at the harbor entrance to the Balboa Peninsula, was inspired by the sea to the south and the sailboats of the Newport Beach Marina to the east. The beach façade is large sliding panels of glass, with a sail form that rises to cradle the roof terrace. A central skylight volume, which brings light into the heart of the 30-foot wide house, has a wall that slopes outward, literally opening up to the sky. The wall supports an open steel staircase that leads to the roof deck.

For ease of entertaining, the architects created spaces appropriate for various times of day and weather conditions. The beach façade's sliding panels extend the living area to the outdoors during the day. On the sides of the house, tall planes of glass offer shelter from the afternoon winds. The roof space offers clear 360-degree views.

The white mosaic tile used on the façade gives the illusion of rippling light and water. Other materials include poured-in-place-concrete, smooth cement plaster, and stained wood.

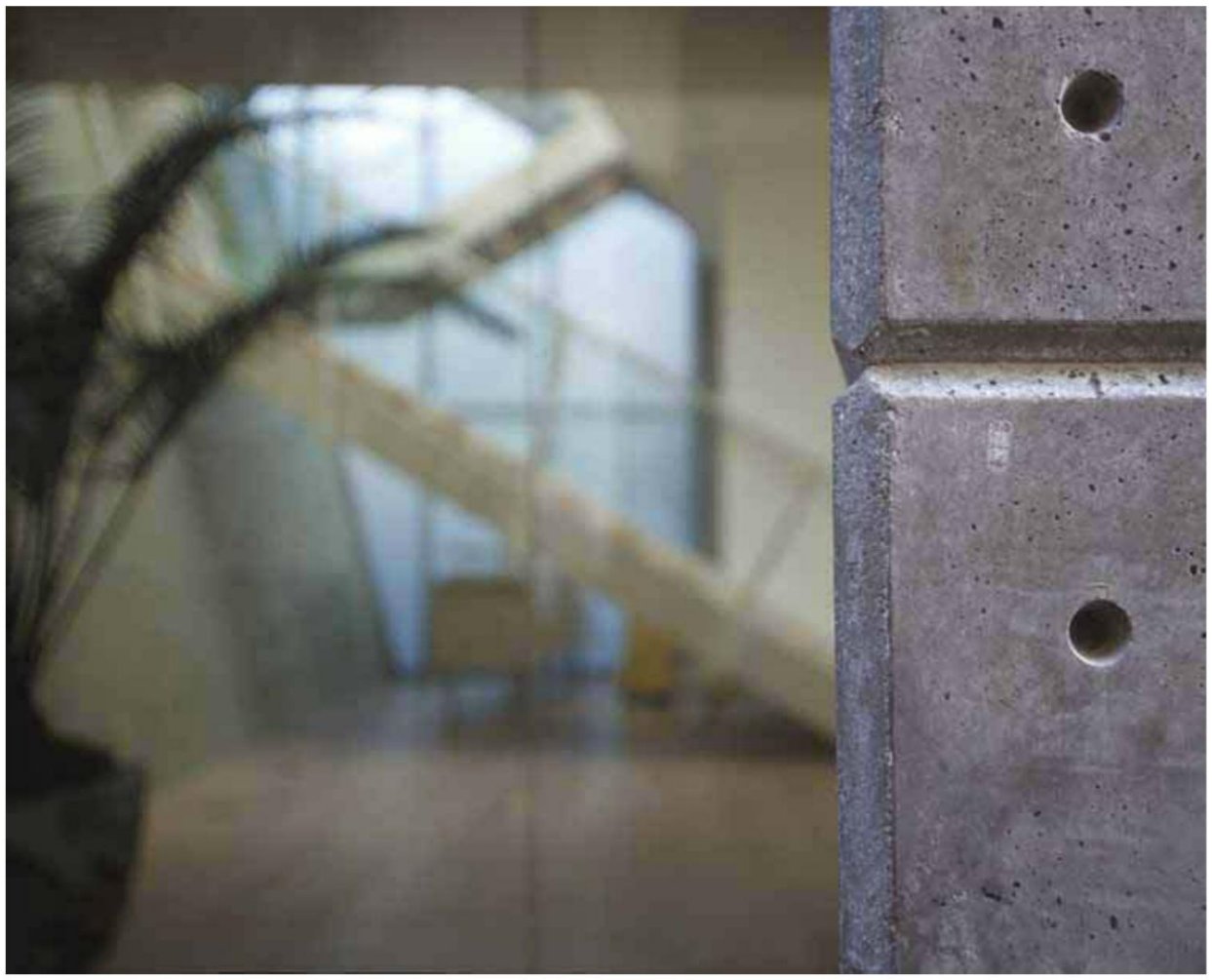




The sail-shaped volume is clad in mosaic tile that glimmers like light on water.

Right: The entry has walls of poured-in-place concrete to withstand the sea air.

Left: The glass front door offers glimpses of the central staircase.

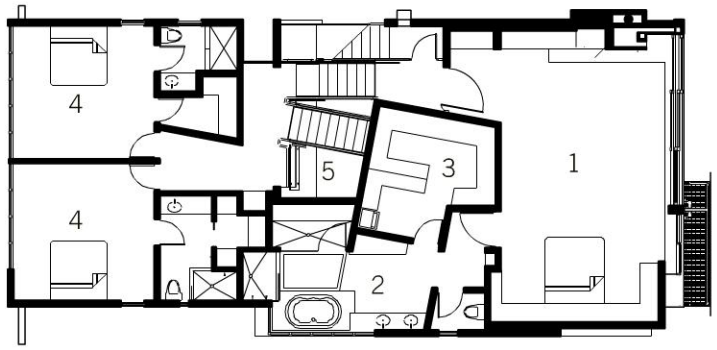


Left: Opaque glass at the side of the house allows light to filter in while obscuring the neighboring house six feet away.

Right: The staircase's supporting wall slopes outward, opening the house up to the sky.

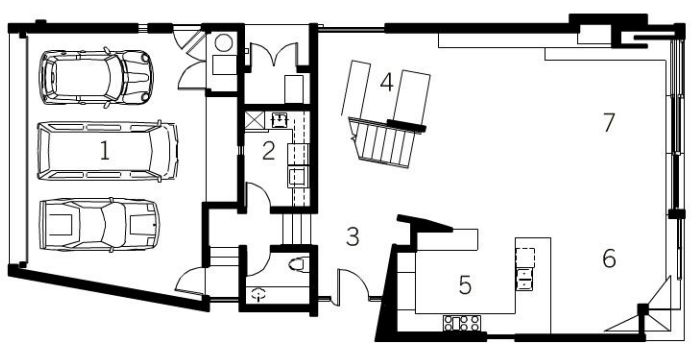
Second Floor

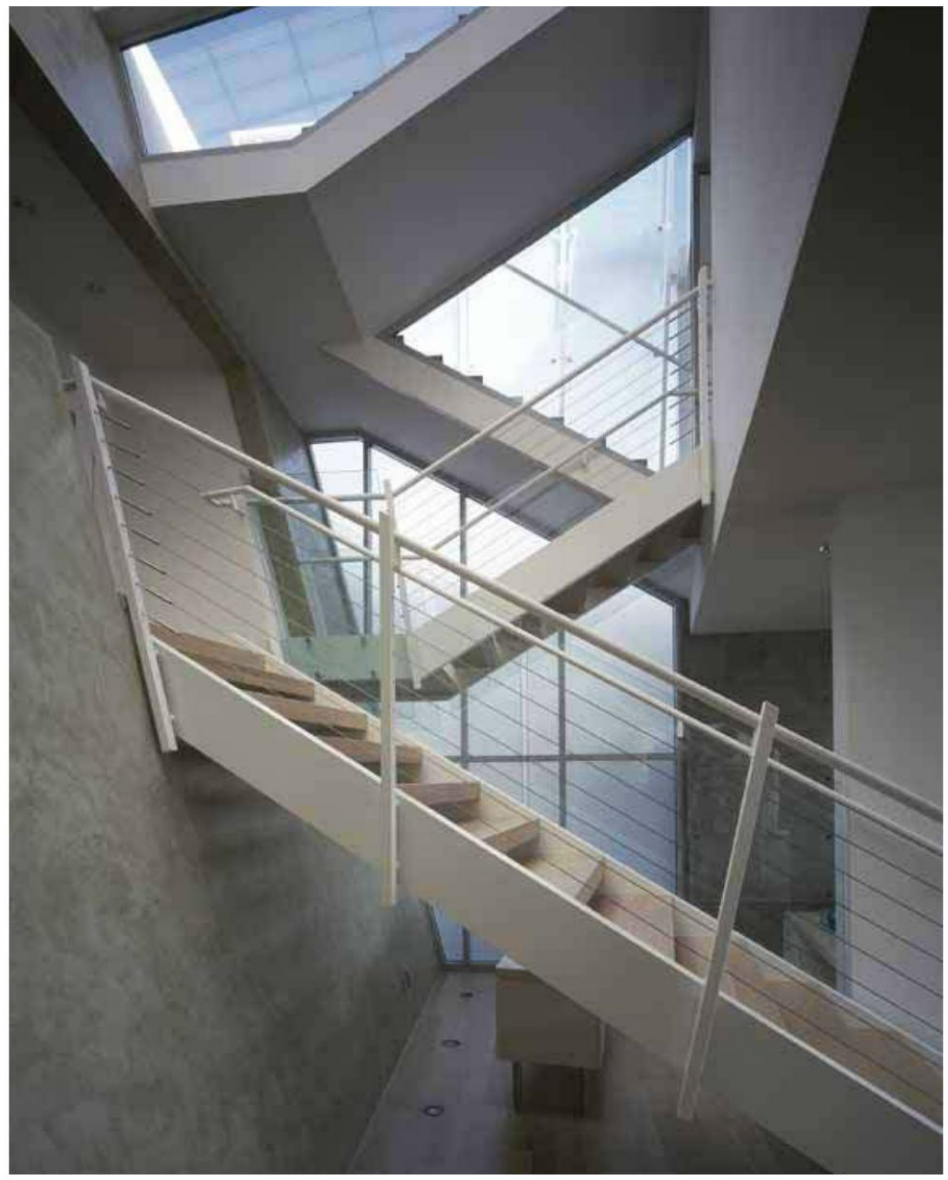
1 master bedroom
2 master bathroom
3 closet
4 bedroom
5 open to below



First Floor

1 garage
2 laundry
3 entry
4 den
5 kitchen
6 dining room
7 living room






1055

CALABASAS, CA 2008

Lima Residence

Situated on the edge of a nature preserve, this house takes full advantage of the uninterrupted views and light. The compound consists of the main house and a garage/ guest room, separated by a courtyard. At the main house, the metal-clad roof folds up and down, creating wall planes strategically positioned to frame the views of the canyon below and mountains beyond. At several points, the poured-in-place concrete that encloses much of the first floor is revealed.

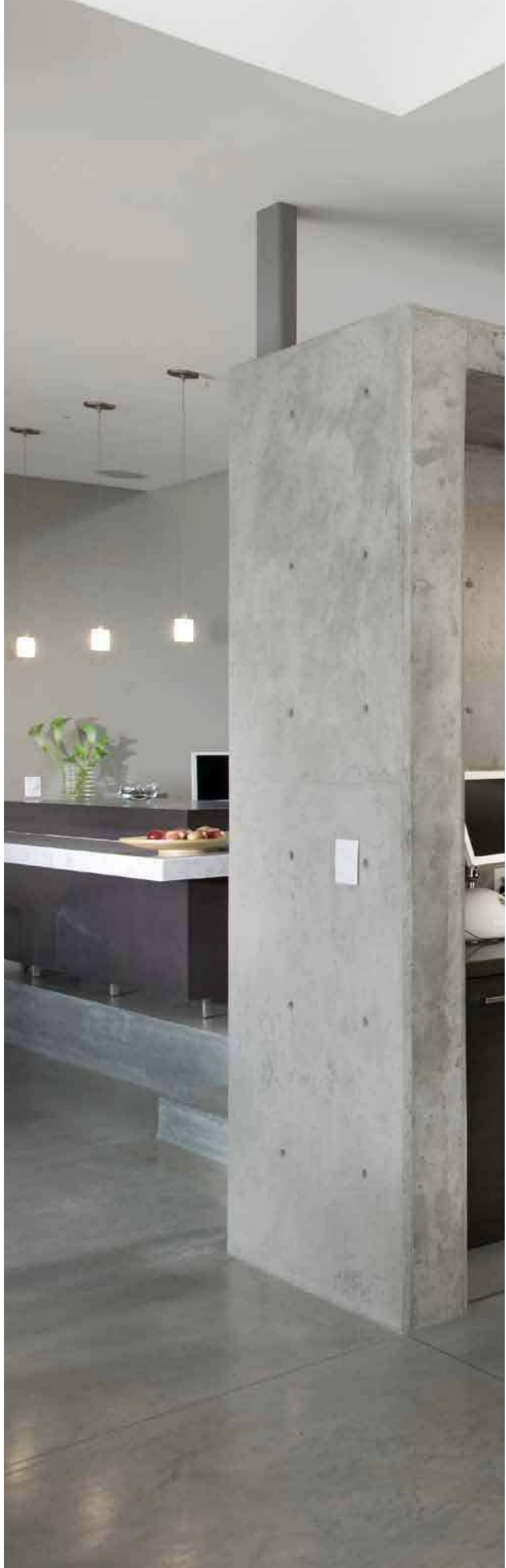
The house is a rectangle in plan, with the long side composed of large glass doors and windows. Inside, the open plan features living spaces with high ceilings and clerestory windows that allow for the entry of soft filtered light. The primary axis of the rectangular living space is intercepted by a minor axis formed by two solid linear forms, a warm wood box and contrasting cool concrete wall. These elements frame a patio, form the kitchen, and terminate with the formal dining room.

Right: The roof folds up and down to become wall planes. Powder-coated metal was selected for its suitability for both roof and walls. The façade also features poured-in-place concrete, orange stucco, and Trespa paneling.

Left: The roof of the carport frames views of the nature preserve, for a welcoming arrival to the house.

The folded planes of the roof and walls extend beyond the mass of the building to create large overhangs that protect the interior from the afternoon sun. The shape of the pool and strip of grass play off the horizontal banding of the façade.

The poured-in-place concrete of the exterior wall continues indoors to cradle a kitchen work surface. Inside, the concrete mass stops short of the ceiling to maximize light and views. The palette of earth tones is accented with an orange Ceasarstone countertop, which echoes the orange stucco outside.



Window-capped low walls in the shower allow for sunlight and views in the master bathroom. Floor-to-ceiling sliding doors open to a private balcony overlooking the nature preserve.

CREDITS

ABRAMSON RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
1994

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Project Team: Robert Cadeaux
Structural Engineer: Gary Davis
Builder: Trevor Abramson
Landscape: Sean Knibb
Photographer: John Linden
Client: Trevor and Adele Abramson

BENNETT RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
2007

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Architects: Jennifer Lau, Bjorn Schrader
Project Team: Andrew Sribyatta, Joshua Amsellem, Virna Abraham
Structural Engineer: Hovik Khanjian, Sigma Design
Mechanical Engineer: Mehdi Nasrollahnia, Mirahmadi & Associates
General Contractor: Andrew Jagoda and Isaac Zachary, AJ Engineering & Construction
Landscape: Stout Landscape Design
Photographer: Jim Bartsch
Client: Bruce and Paula Bennett

BERGER RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
2004

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Team: Michael Cranfill, Warren Tamashiro, Joshua Amsellem
Structural Engineer: Hovik Khanjian, Sigma Design
General Contractor: Bill Rosenberg, Triumph Construction Inc.
Landscape: John Tikotsky, Tikotsky & Associates
Photographer: Kevin W. Smith
Client: Adam and Susan Berger

DAVIS RESIDENCE
TORONTO, CANADA
2007

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Architects: Andrew Sribyatta, Bjorn Schrader
Project Team: Adam Levine, Patricia Rojo
Structural Engineer: Dave Bowick, Blackwell Engineering
Mechanical Engineer: Frank Toews, Toews Engineering Inc.
Interior Design and Custom Millwork: Arriz Hassam and Mazen El-Abdallah, 3rd Uncle Design, Inc.
General Contractor: Ross Gilmore, SCE
Landscape: Mark Hartley Landscape Architects
Photographer: Tom Arban
Client: Tony and Lee Davis

ELK RUN RESIDENCE
TELLURIDE, CO
2000

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Project Team: Ryan Miller
Structural Engineer: Ken Herman
General Contractor: James Hughes Construction
Landscape: Stephan Barbour
Photographer: John Linden, except page 42, courtesy of Hope Windows
Client: Alan and Brenda Abramson

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ENCINO, CA
2002

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Team: Michael Cranfill, Patrick LeMaster, Warren Tamashiro
Structural Engineer: Soly Yamini & Associates
Mechanical Engineer: Bill Comeau, Comeau Engineers Inc.
General Contractor: Andrew Jagoda and Isaac Zachary, AJ Engineering & Construction
Lighting Design: Bridget Williams
Photographer: Richard Barnes
Client: First Presbyterian Church of Encino

KELLY RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
2006

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Team: Andrew Sribyatta, Jennifer Lau
Structural Engineer: Hovik Khanjian, Sigma Design
General Contractor: Eric Engheben, 44 West Construction Inc.
Landscape: Steve Silva Landscape Architects
Photographer: Richard Barnes, except David Lena, page 78
Client: Caroline and Kevin Kelly

KNIGHT RESIDENCE
NEWPORT BEACH, CA
2001

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Project Team: Matias Creimer, Andrew Ratzsch
Structural Engineer: Soly Yamini & Associates
Mechanical Engineer: Bill Comeau, Comeau Engineers Inc.
Interior Design: David Michael Miller Associates
General Contractor: Gallo Corp.
Photographer: Bill Timmerman
Client: Randy Knight

KRMPOTICH RESIDENCE
CASPER, WY
2008

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Architect: Bjorn Schrader
Project Team: Joshua Amsellem, Andrew Sribyatta
Structural Engineer: Art Volk
Mechanical Engineer: Jak Hollinger, Engineering Design Associates
Interior Design: Nina Seirafi
General Contractor: Jim Badger, Cougar Construction
Photographer: Jim Bartsch
Client: Phillip and Jamie Krmpotich

LIMA RESIDENCE
CALABASAS, CA
2008

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Team: Bjorn Schrader, Deborah Fogel, Greg Loruso
Structural Engineer: Hovik Khanjian, Sigma Design
General Contractor: Andrew Jagoda and Isaac Zachary, AJ Engineering & Construction
Landscape: Monika Valtchev Landscape Design
Photographer: Jim Bartsch
Client: Caesar and Cordelia Lima

PEDRAM RESIDENCE
BEVERLY HILLS, CA
2010

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Architect: David Pascu
Project Team: Mihai Ivan, Stephen Goh
Photographer: William MacCollum
Client: Payam Pedram

PORTER RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
2005

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Team: Warren Tamashiro, Joshua Amsellem
Structural Engineer: Hovik Khanjian, Sigma Design
General Contractor: Michael Chipko, Emcee General Contracting
Landscape: Sean Knibb
Photographer: David Lena

SINNOTT RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
1994

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Project Team: Daniel Vergara
Structural Engineer: Gary Davis
Landscape: Bob Marcum & Associates
Photographer: Derek Rath, except Adam Levine, pages 8, 96, and 97
Client: Bob and Rosa Sinnott

TEIGER RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
2002

Design Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Team: Michael Anonuevo
Structural Engineer: Andrew Chan
General Contractor: Matt Eskan
Landscape: Sean Knibb
Photographer: John Linden, except John Ellis, page 100
Client: Douglas and Sabrina Teiger

VELKES RESIDENCE
LOS ANGELES, CA
2002

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Project Team: Matias Creimer, Mikaela Nagler
Structural Engineer: Soly Yamini & Associates
General Contractor: Todd Nagler, Nagler Construction Inc.
Landscape: Judy Kameon, Elysian Landscapes
Photographer: David Lena
Client: Matthew and Liza Velkes

YULA GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL
LOS ANGELES, CA
2005

Design Principal: Trevor Abramson, FAIA
Managing Principal: Douglas Teiger, AIA
Project Architects: Alex Elias, Thomas Johnson
Project Team: Sharon Saks, Joshua Amsellem, Michael Anonuevo, Patrick LeMaster, Philip Little, Danny Heifetz, Patricia Rojo
Structural Engineer: Ismail Germiyanoglu, Ismail Associates Inc.
Mechanical Engineer: Vladimir Lubomirsky, VLA Engineering, Inc.
Interior Design: Peter Bena, Bena Design Partnership
General Contractor: Harry Donahue and Steve Donahue, Del Amo Construction
Landscape: Jim DiBiase, JRD Landscape
Photographer: David Lena
Client: Yeshiva University of Los Angeles Girls' High School

Additional photography by David Lena, page 11, and John Linden, page 12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Looking back over the years and selecting the projects that represent the best of Abramson Teiger Architects allowed us to reflect also on the hundreds, possibly thousands, of people who contributed along this journey. It is because of the dedication of these people that this body of work exists. We are grateful that these individuals reached for excellence and took a personal interest in contributing to our projects.

Thank you to our wives, Adele Abramson and Sabrina Teiger, who provide constant encouragement and support. We are thankful to our family and friends who have been there for us at each step in the growth of the firm, during the long hours, weekend meetings, and nighttime events required to meet our deadlines and produce our work.

We are greatly indebted to our clients, who have trusted us to turn their dreams into reality. Their openness to the design process and eager participation along the way has enabled us to produce some of our best work.

We acknowledge our dedicated staff members, who contribute tremendous effort, long hours, and inspirational ideas and solutions for each of our projects. We are appreciative of our staff of architects and the designers who have worked with us on these projects. The sense of family established within our office makes our studio a special place for us to work.

We are grateful to the meticulous attention to detail given by our contractors, subcontractors, craftsmen, vendors, and consultants. Each of these people has taken a personal interest in crafting our projects.

This book would not have been possible without the guidance and direction of our publisher, Anthony Iannacci, and our editor, Carolyn Horwitz.

— Trevor Abramson, FAIA, and Douglas Teiger, AIA