ROBERT HARVEY OSHATZ ARCHITECT
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MEDIA PACKAGE

CHENEQUA RESIDENCE

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CHENEQUA RESIDENCE MEDIA PACKAGE

Robert Harvey Oshatz Architect has recently completed construction of a single family residence in the outskirts of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This document has been complied as an aid for publication. Please contact Robert Oshatz for further information and for interview opportunities.

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ROBERT HARVEY OSHATZ ARCHITECT

Robert Harvey Oshatz Architect is a small architectural firm headed by Robert Oshatz, operating out of Lake Oswego in Oregon. Since the firm was established by Oshatz in 1971 it has been involved in a wide range of projects with a focus on residential design. The design philosophy of Robert Harvey Oshatz Architect is based around a deep respect for the site, and a thorough understanding of the client.

Oshatz' work has been constructed in Oregon, Washington, California, Colorado and Japan. Each project reflects the varied environments and clients for which they are built. Oshatz' work exhibits an interest in geometric patterns and a love of natural materials. His buildings are designed to enhance the lives of their occupants by providing connections from the interior of the building out to natural environment outside.

Robert Harvey Oshatz Architect has been featured in numerous publications and has been experiencing increased media interest. The Fennell Residence was published as Architectural Record's House of The Month in January 2007 and has since been featured in numerous publications and a number of television articles. The Wilkinson residence constructed in Portland has also received broad interest. The house has featured on television articles, in printed publications and has featured widely on the internet. A google image search of a photograph of the house finds that images of the house appears on some 20,000 individual websites

Robert Harvey Oshatz Architect's website receives around 18,000 page views per month.

http://www.oshatz.com

Robert Oshatz is available for interview.

ABSTRACT

On a heavily wooded site adjacent to a lake in Milwaukee's western fringe, Robert Oshatz was asked to design a home for a growing family.
A thin driveway meanders its way between cornfields and groves of oak trees before presenting itself upon the house. From the approach, the house looks small. The radial floor plan wraps itself around the face of the sloping site and avoids all existing trees; reducing the house's scale and preventing it from ever being visible as a whole. The spiralling green roof that twists itself around the stone elevator core also reduces the visual height of the building.

The main entry to the house is located under the lowest segment of the spiralling roof. Upon walking through the glass door, the compression of the low entry explodes into a celebration of light and form. A large circular opening in the floor exposes a new level below, while the low roof lifts and spins out of view and is followed by a cantilevered staircase. A solid stone core stands at the centre of it all, like a choreographer directing the dance around it.

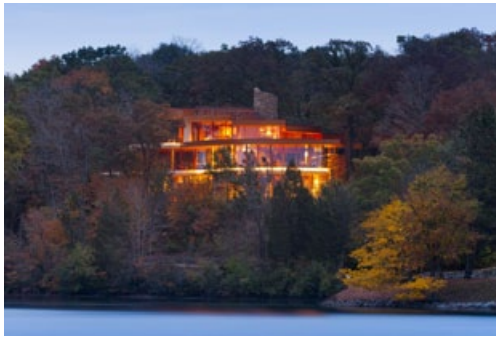
The entry level accommodates the house's public spaces like the kitchen, the lounge and the dining room, while the lower floor is used for the family oriented spaces. The level above the entry hosts the master bedroom, an ensuite and a nursery. A door opens out from the upper floor onto the roof, which is made up of a series of stepping roof terraces that overlook the lake and the surrounding landscape.

Oshatz believes providing connections between the internal spaces and the exterior environment is beneficial to the occupant's wellbeing. Frameless glazing provides unobstructed views throughout the house to the lake beyond. Natural materials are used to tie the house into its environment, as quartz stone walls appear to grow out of the ground and hemlock ceilings blend with the exterior tree canopy. Materials are carried seamlessly through the glazing line to break down the definition between the interior and the exterior, ensuring an uninterrupted flow of space between inside and out.

PHOTOGRAPH CATALOGUE

Large format high quality photographs are available upon request. Please contact Robert Harvey Oshatz Architect. Photographs by Cameron Neilson

CR-001
VIEW FROM LAKE



CR-002
VIEW FROM LAKE

CR-003
VIEW FROM LAKE

CR-004
VIEW FROM DROP OFF

CR-005
VIEW FROM DROP OFF

CR-006
VIEW FROM GRASS TERRACE

CR-007
VIEW FROM GRASS TERRACE

CR-008
VIEW FROM GRASS TERRACE

CR-009
VIEW FROM GRASS TERRACE

CR-010
VIEW FROM GRASSED TERRACE

CR-011
VIEW TERRACE BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-012
VIEW FROM TERRACE BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-013
VIEW FROM TERRACE BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-014
VIEW FROM TERRACE BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-015
VIEW FROM THE DRIVEWAY BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-016
VIEW FROM THE DRIVEWAY BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-017
VIEW FROM THE DRIVEWAY BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-018
VIEW FROM THE DRIVEWAY BELOW THE HOUSE

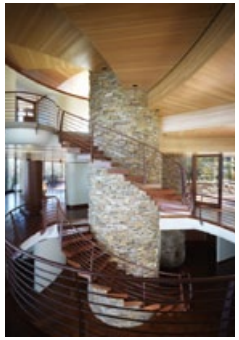
CR-019
VIEW FROM THE DRIVEWAY BELOW THE HOUSE

CR-020
VIEW FROM OUTSIDE THE GARAGE

CR-021
VIEW FROM GRASSED TERRACE

CR-022
VIEW FROM ENTRY

CR-023
POWDER ROOM



CR-024
ATRIUM

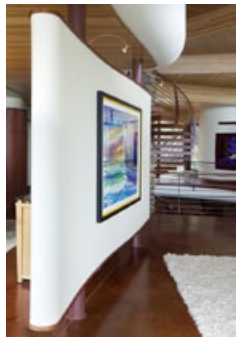
CR-025
ATRIUM

CR-026
VIEW OF ATRIUM FROM THE LOUNGE ROOM

CR-027
LOUNGE ROOM

CR-028
LOUNGE ROOM

CR-029
VIEW FROM THE LOUNGE ROOM



CR-030
VIEW FROM THE
LOUNGE ROOM

CR-031
DINING ROOM

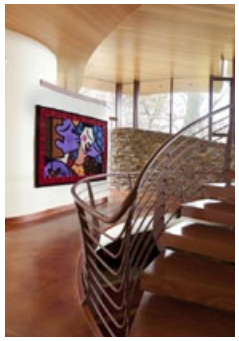
CR-032
KITCHEN

CR-033
VIEW DECK OUTSIDE KITCHEN

CR-034
KITCHEN

CR-035
KITCHEN

CR-036
VIEW OF LOUNGE FROM KITCHEN



CR-037
STAIRS TO THIRD FLOOR

CR-038
VIEW FROM THRID FLOOR TOWARD LOUNGE

CR-039
VIEW FROM THIRD FLOOR TOWARD LOUNGE

CR-040
NURSERY

CR-041
MASTER BEDROOM

CR-042
MASTER BEDROOM CABINETRY

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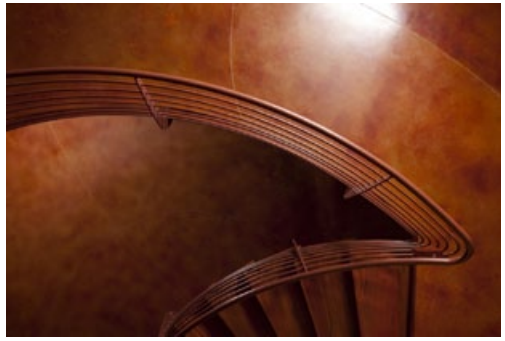
CR-043
MASTER BEDROOM

CR-043
MASTER BEDROOM TERRACE

CR-043
MASTER BATHROOM

CR-044
ROOF TERRACES

CR-045
VIEW ROOF TERRACES

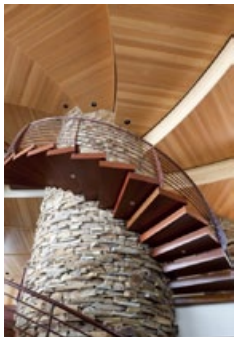


CR-046
ATRIUM STAIR

CR-047
ATRIUM STAIR

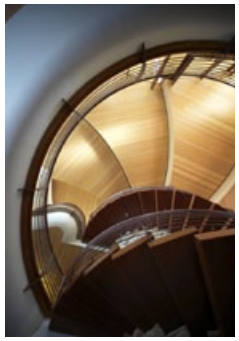
CR-048
ATRIUM STAIR

CR-049
ATRIUM STAIR



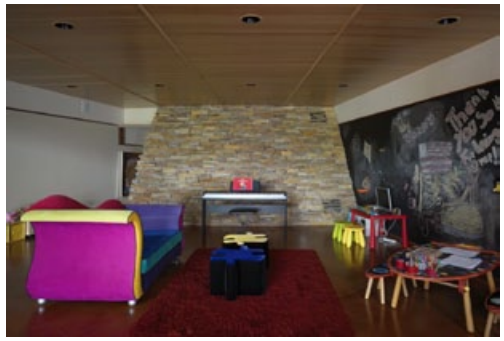
CR-050
ATRIUM STAIR

CR-051
ATRIUM STAIR LANDING ON 1ST FLOOR



CR-052
ATRIUM STAIR

CR-053
ATRIUM STAIR

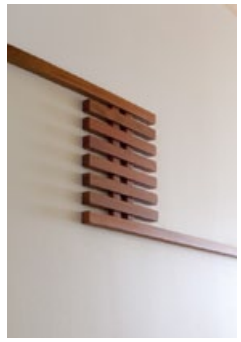


CR-054
GAMES ROOM

CR-055
FAMILY ROOM

CR-056
GIRLS BEDROOM

CR-057
GIRLS BEDROOM



CR-058
TRIM DETAIL

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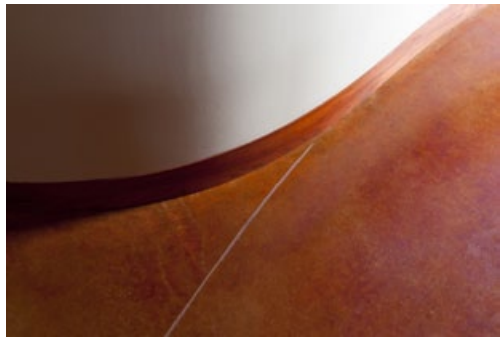
CR-059
GLAZING DETAIL

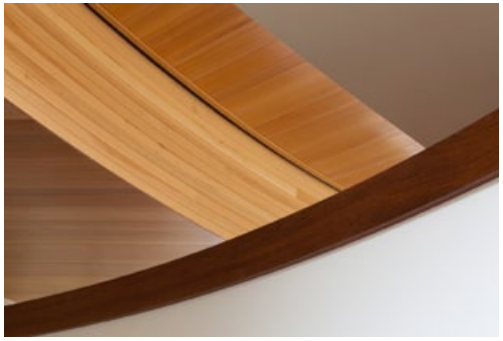
CR-060
STONE VENT DETAIL

CR-061
MASTER BATHROOM CLADDING DETAIL

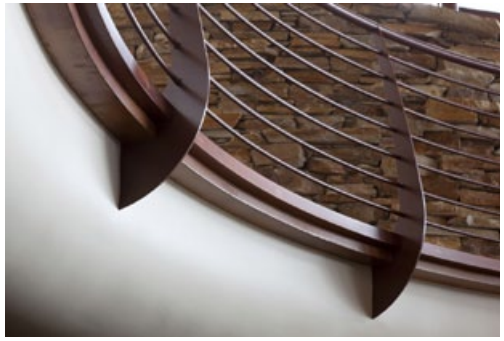


CR-062
SKIRTING DETAIL

CR-063
SOFFIT DETAIL



CR-064
CEILING DETAIL



CR-065
BALUSTRADE DETAIL

CR-066
STAIR DETAIL

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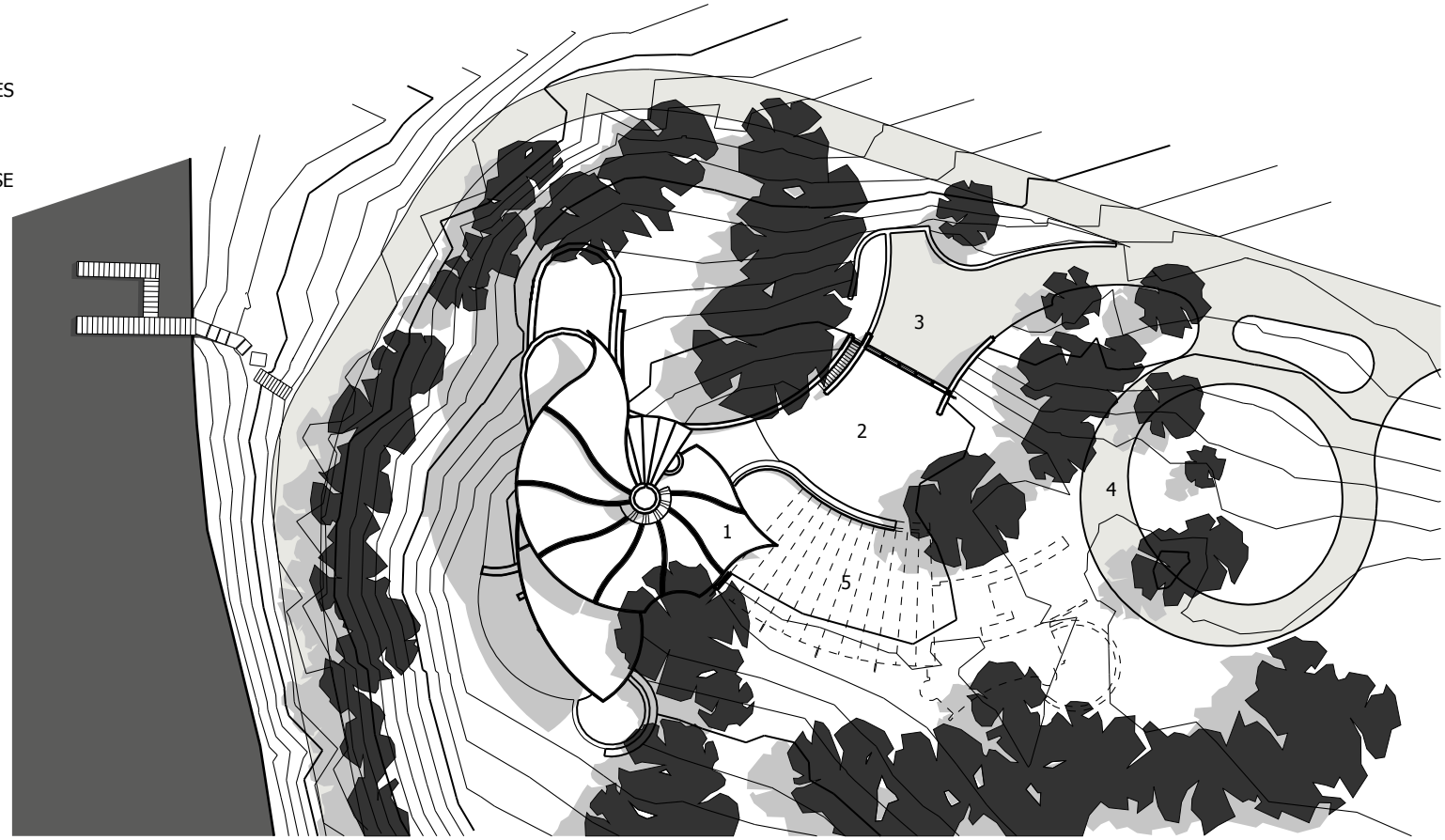
FLOOR PLANS

Total Living Area: **7500ft² / 697m²**
Garage Area: **1806ft² / 167m²**

LEGEND

1. GREEN ROOF TERRACES
2. GRASS TERRACE
3. GARAGE DRIVEWAY
4. DROP-OFF DRIVEWAY
5. FUTURE SECOND PHASE



0 5 10 20 METERS
0 20 40 60 80 FEET

SITE PLAN

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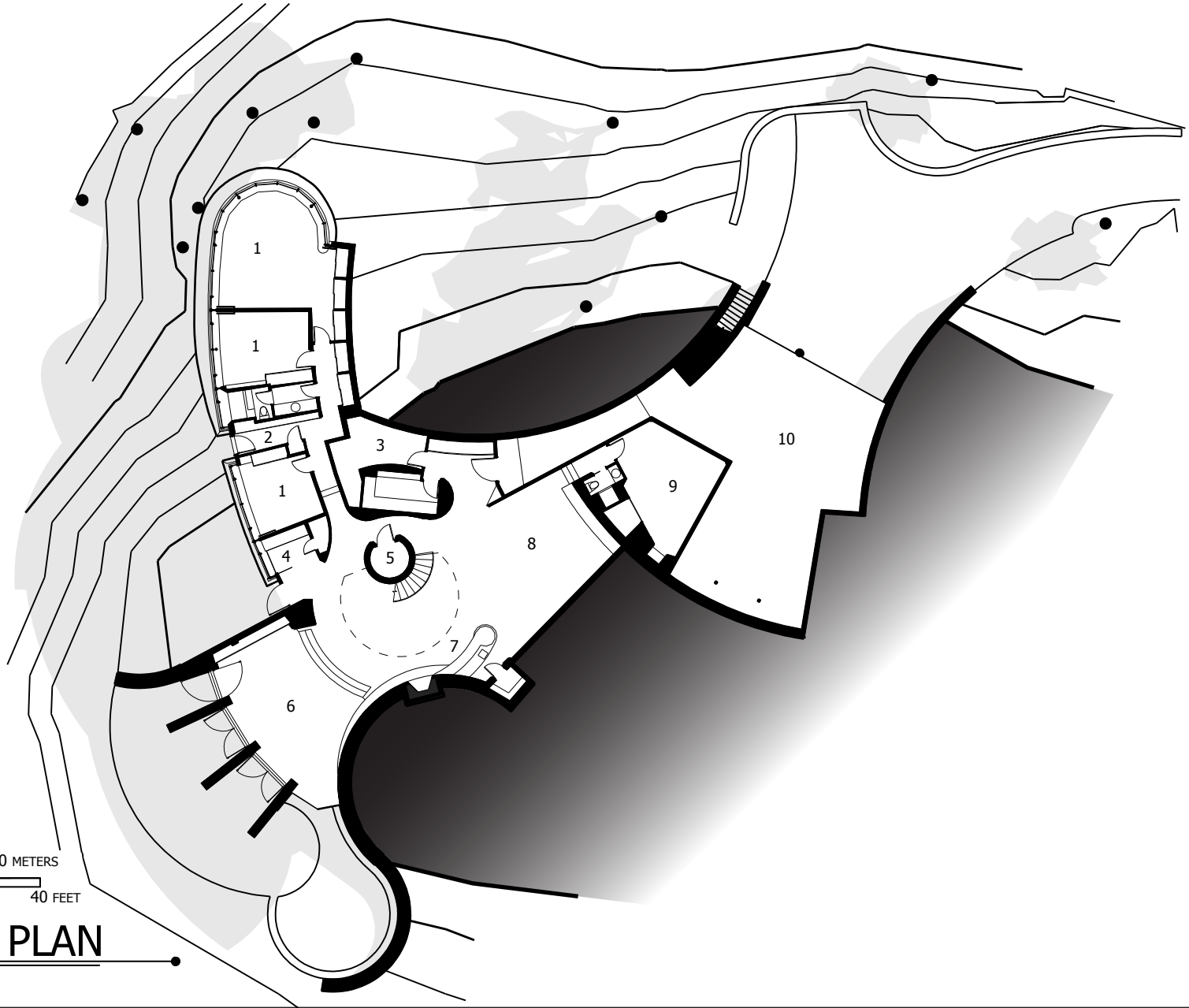
LEGEND

1. BEDROOM
2. LAUNDRY
3. MECHANICAL ROOM
4. STUDY
5. ELEVATOR
6. LOUNGE
7. BAR
8. GAMES ROOM
9. GYMNASIUM
10. GARAGE



0 5 10 METERS

0 5 10 20 30 40 FEET

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

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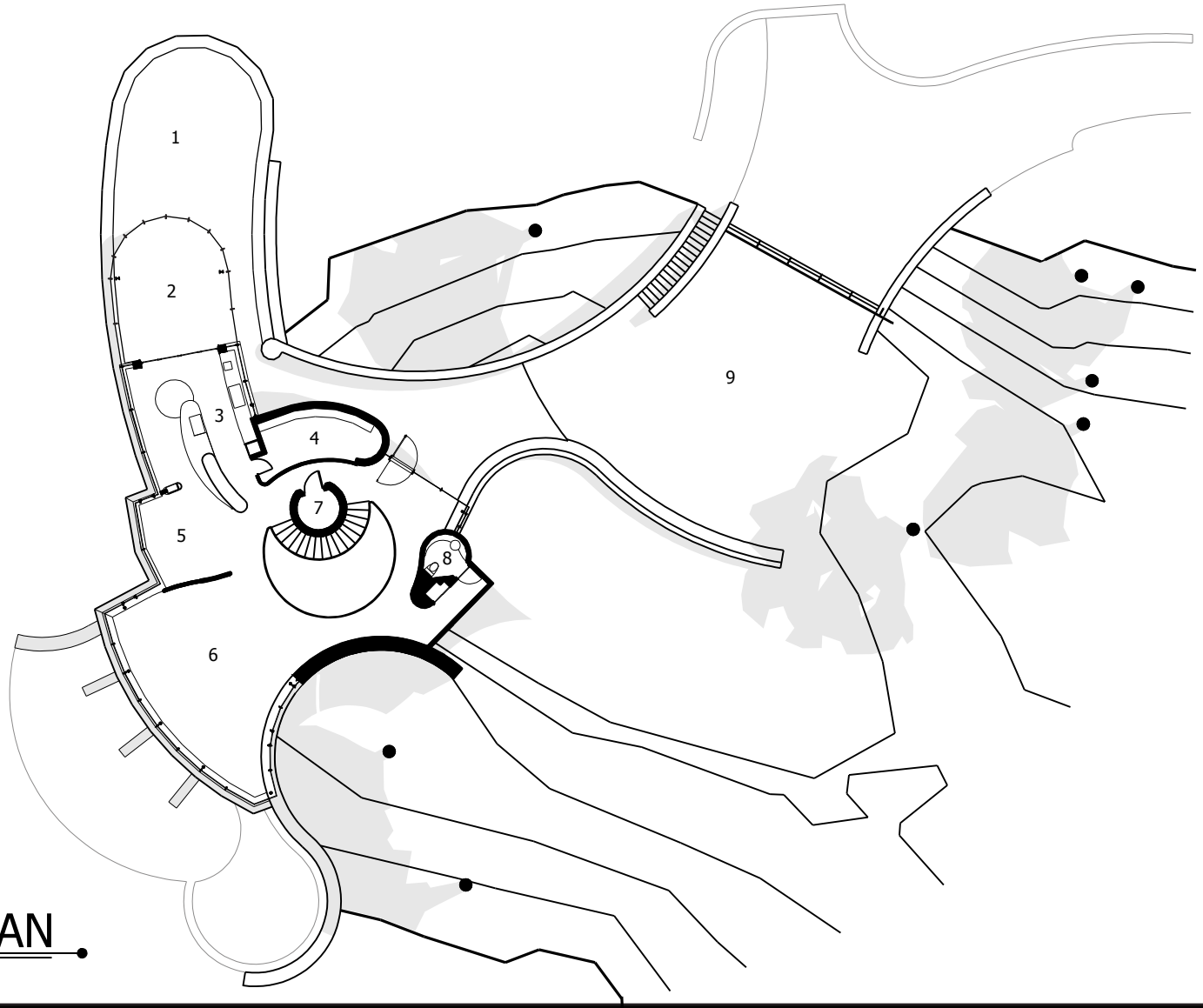
LEGEND

1. DECK
2. SCREEN PORCH
3. KITCHEN
4. PANTRY
5. DINING
6. LOUNGE
7. ELEVATOR
8. POWDER ROOM
9. GRASS TERRACE



0 5 10 METERS

0 5 10 20 30 40 FEET

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

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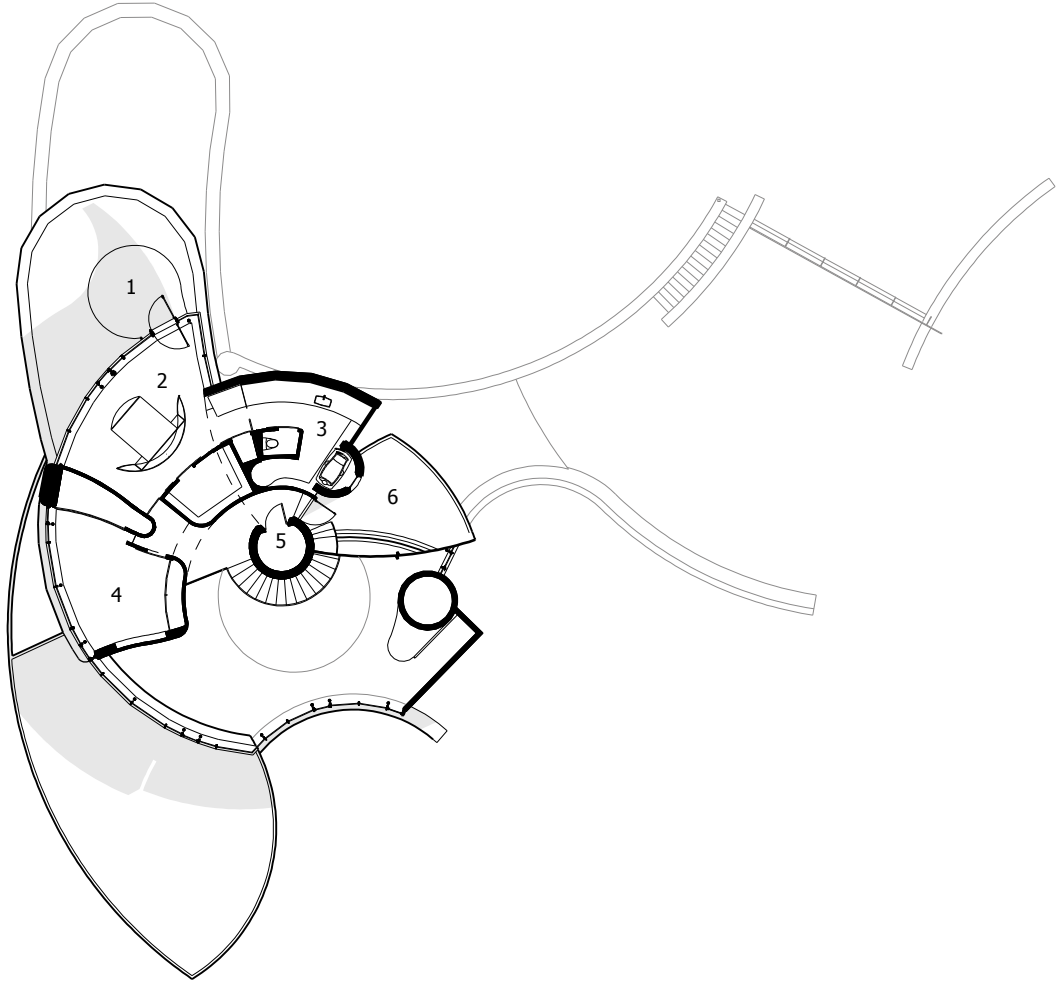
LEGEND

1. DECK
2. MASTER BEDROOM
3. ENSUITE
4. NURSERY
5. ELEVATOR
6. GREEN ROOF TERRACE



0 5 10 METERS

0 5 10 20 30 40 FEET

THIRD FLOOR PLAN

CHENEQUA RESIDENCE

On a heavily wooded site adjacent to a lake in Milwaukee's western fringe, Robert Oshatz was asked to design a home for a growing family. The site originally contained a house that was unsuitable for the family's needs and was demolished. The owners recognized the site's natural beauty, however, and stressed the importance of retaining all of the trees that existed on the site. The clients wanted a building, constructed from natural materials, which acted as one with its environment and provided unobstructed views and connections to the surrounding landscape.

Oshatz has developed a reputation for creating architecture that is inspired by its environment. His projects, built across five US states and Japan, are each unique responses to their sites and the requirements of the clients. When asked about his approach to architecture, Oshatz states he believes that "architecture should be at peace with its environment while the occupants are at peace within". The clients were drawn to Oshatz's exciting and dynamic forms and to his integration and respect for the surrounding environment.

The Chenqeua Residence has been designed to be constructed in two phases. The extant building constitutes the first phase of construction and includes the primary living areas for the family. The second phase of construction to be undertaken at a later point will consist of a glass roofed swimming pool area and a suite for visiting grandparents.

From the street there is little to suggest the Chenequa Residence exists. A single lane drive surrounded by trees turns off the street and runs through cornfields on either side. As the drive continues, it becomes increasingly wooded with stands of oak trees. In the early hours of the morning, it is not uncommon to encounter deer or wild turkeys while following the road. The approach to the house leads up a small hill and onto a circular driveway that was retained from the previous house. Upon ascending the hill, the Chenequa residence emerges from across a grassed yard.

From first encounter, the house appears to be small; its stepping roof and spiralling stone columns help to reduce its height and obscure its size. Oshatz uses the geometry of the house to continually hide and expose new parts of the building, simultaneously creating interest while concealing its scale. From no single angle is it possible to comprehend the building as a whole.

After parking on the circular driveway, the approach to the house is by foot and follows a small stone wall which continues underneath a low hemlock clad roof. Upon walking through the glass door, the compression of the low entry explodes into a celebration of light and form. A large circular opening in the floor exposes a new level below and the low roof lifts and spins out of view, followed by a cantilevered staircase. A solid stone core stands at the centre of it all, like a choreographer directing the dance around it.

The entry into the house also allows for an interesting juxtaposition of environments. The approach to the house is down a driveway surrounded by trees and across a lawn that feels like a meadow amongst a forest. When entering the house, the lake finally becomes visible and dominates the view. Endless floor to ceiling glass displays the lake while the roof and floor planes appear to career outwards toward it. Even though the house explores these two separate environments, it never feels stuck between them. The removal of structure from the glazing line, the careful continuation of materials through the glazing, and the spiral shape of the house creates a space that has no directional emphasis and ensures that connections to the exterior are provided in all directions.

By building into the site, entrance to the house is made on the second of three floors. The entry level is provided with unobstructed views to the lake and accommodates the public spaces of the building including the lounge room, dining room and kitchen. These spaces are separated from the main atrium by low ceilings that help to provide an intimate environment. The plan of the house wraps itself around the convex topography of the site which, when combined with the use of floor to ceiling glass, ensures that magnificent lake views are seen from all the internal spaces. The floor plan is continued out through the kitchen and onto a cantilevered deck that extends out amongst the trees. A ribbon of curved steel balustrades bends itself around the balcony and returns into a heavy stone garden wall, effectively tying the floating floor plain back to the earth. On the other side of the house, the helical stone wall that defines the lounge room twists around a tall oak tree and ties the floor back to the ground in a similar fashion.

The floor below the entry level is designed for family-based functions. Below the main atrium space is a games room, a small bar, a theatre room and a small study. In the wing that follows under the kitchen are the children's bedrooms and a guest room. The communal family spaces are dug below the ground and the view is always filtered by heavy stone walls where they open up to the exterior. The children's bedrooms are afforded elevation and views by virtue of the sloping site but are bound by stone and anchored to the ground. The circulation on the bottom floor is also much more guarded than that provided to the public spaces above. The bedrooms are accessed via a tall but thin corridor adorned only with highlight windows. As one of the few spaces in the house without commanding views, the corridor provides a sense of security and warmth.

Unlike the main atrium space, the bedrooms are more conventionally scaled and shaped. They provide views to the lake, but only in one direction. The bedroom at the end of the corridor is ensured privacy by its height and an oversized expanse of ceiling to the underside of the deck which extends out from the kitchen. Where the entry level is dedicated to public functions and provided with views and open space, the family oriented rooms on the floor below are provided with a sense of warmth and security.

The floor above the entry level is dedicated to the master suite and includes a master bedroom, ensuite and a nursery. From the atrium, the upper floor appears as a floating volume which wraps around the stone elevator column. The carpeted floor, which differs from the stained concrete on the lower floors, helps to isolate the upper floor from the lower levels. A planted balcony extends out from the master bedroom, helping to enhance the floating feeling. The bedroom and nursery are both provided with frameless

glass, which gives uninterrupted views to the lake and the tree canopy. The stepping spiral room sweeps up over the main atrium it passes over the rooms at a low level, ensuring that they maintain a sense of warmth and protection. The master ensuite is built into a tubular shape that radiates out from the elevator core. The enclosed feeling of the ensuite provides a counterpoint to the openness of the master bedroom.

From the upper floor, a door opens out onto the roof segment which hangs over the main entry to the house. As the roof spirals around the stone elevator core, steps follow the roofs, turning each roof into a terraced garden. Some roofs are fully planted, while others have paved areas for a deck chair and umbrella. The highest roof section is about 80ft above the lake and provides commanding views.

The clients had expressed at an early stage that they did not care for symmetry. Oshatz removed any need for symmetry by utilizing a radial plan for the house. The plan consists of a series of radiuses, with a number of different centre points. To achieve a logical and harmonious plan throughout the house, each radius is related. The primary radius wraps itself around the contours of the site, following a path that avoids the need to remove any trees. This radius also maintains a convex aspect to the lake, which helps to make the house feel as if it is opening up to the views and the landscape around it. The main axis is centred on a large oak tree that dominates the site. Each subsequent radius responds to the geometry of the others, resulting is spaces that feel at the same time free flowing, and harmonious.

The house was designed to be visually small from the entry way, but to utilize the steep slope of the site to provide maximum views and connections to the lake. The resultant structure emerges from the earth as a series of planes that glide horizontally along face of the hill side. Each plane is unique, and no plane exactly follows any other; they appear to be light weight and are separated only by glass. The roof planes, with a different materiality to the floor planes, spin in their own unique pattern; helping to provide intrigue and complexity to the design. The lightweight and energetic horizontal planes are countered by the vertical stone volumes that

appear to grow from the earth and help to anchor the building.

Constructing the various radiuses that make up the house would have proven difficult with traditional construction techniques. To ensure the maintenance of the design's interrelated geometries and to aid in the construction of the residence, the house was set out using survey points taken directly from CAD drawings and all wall and roof plates were cut using a digital CNC router. The ability to cut and locate components directly from CAD drawings ensured a level of accuracy and speed that could not otherwise have been achieved.

The pallet of materials is limited to a few that were chosen for their natural beauty and their ability to tie the building into the natural environment. The three primary materials used in the house are hemlock for the ceilings, Idaho quartz chosen for its unique colour and shimmer, and concrete floors which have been stained a rusty earth colour. Additionally, plasterboard is used as a secondary material to contrast the heavy, anchoring, stone clad walls, as its lightweight appearance maintains the independent feeling of the horizontal floor planes and provides the necessary privacy between rooms. Stucco is also used to highlight the edges of the floor planes and to define the upper floor volume. Finally, painted metal is used to clad the tubular form of the master ensuite, making it appear as an independent volume.

The flow of space between the interior and the exterior of the building was of primary concern during the design of the Chenequa Residence. It is widely understood that connections with natural environments have very positive outcomes for residents, and given the idyllic setting that the house is sited, it became even more important that occupants felt connected with their surrounding environment and not isolated within the structure. Floor to ceiling glass is used extensively throughout the house and helps to provide views, but it is the continuation of materials through the glazing lines that helps to break down the boundaries between interior and exterior. Traditional window framing details have been replaced by frames that are concealed within the structure and behind the finish material, allowing the material to run unaffected from the interior to the exterior. This helps to dissolve the boundaries of the space. The removal of the structure from the building skin is also helpful, as columns are brought within the glazing line and can no longer reinforce the interior/exterior boundary. The horizontal planes that appear as independent volumes also help to confuse the boundary of the building. In some circumstances, it is even difficult to identify exactly where the window glass is located.

The extent of glazing and the size of the house required a comprehensive approach to sustainability. All windows are glazed with argon filled, triple paned units. The glazing is also complimented by a thorough insulation approach. The primary heating system utilises radiant floor heating, which is used throughout the house and is assisted by a ground source geothermal system. The design also incorporates an advanced central heating and cooling system which is able to use the latent temperature of unused spaces to heat and cool areas that are occupied. The house has also been designed to make the most of passive solar energy.

The Chenequa Residence is a result of an amalgamation between the site, the building program, and the client. The building twists between the exiting trees and appears to grow out of the hill, yet it has been designed to perfectly suit the clients' lives, values and tastes. With its generous use of natural materials, the Chenequa Residence does not fit the white box language that appears to be synonymous with contemporary residential architecture. Yet, the building is undoubtedly contemporary. Its wonderful geometry, its nearly complete transparency and its lightweight structure are a product of contemporary design and construction methods. Its clean lines and uncluttered spaces speak of a contemporary lifestyle. Yet at its heart, the Chenequa Residence is a home for a family. A family who now can live in a house that celebrates and connects to the magnificent environment which surrounds it. The house provides connections to the exterior, but is warm, comfortable and inviting. In an increasingly urbanised world that celebrates an increasingly urbanised approach to architecture, the Chenequa Residence reminds us that human beings are innately tied to the natural world, and that providing access and connections to that world can ensure a rich and rewarding place for people to live.

CREDITS

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