



ARCHITECT: ULRICH FRANZEN

Associate In Charge: *Robert L. Thorson*

Job Captain: *Samuel E. Nylén*

Residence for Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm K. Fleschner

Westport, Connecticut

Structural Engineer: *Vladimir Busch*

Contractor: *Ernest R. Rau*

The design for this handsome house bears an unusually close relationship to its site: a small, wooded and rocky outcropping overlooking Long Island Sound. The plan is divided into a series of levels with the lower ones fitted into the terrain and designed with heavy masonry walls for a sense of shelter. This area generally contains service areas and guest bedrooms. The upper, and main, level rests lightly above this in a series of "penthouse gardens and levels" to take full advantage of the views.

On the evolution of the design, Ulrich Franzen comments: "The owners initially intended to build a weekend house with easy commuting to New York, and ready access to an anchorage in Long Island Sound. The program called for a single master bedroom, and a couple of small and unobtrusive bedrooms for their grown children when they visit, plus the general requirements of all houses in the country. Somewhere along the line, we all fell more and more in love with the site and proposed designs—and the outcome was a year-round 'weekend house' where nature is to be viewed and enjoyed."

The plan is essentially a compact square, surrounded by a series of retaining walls and terraces, which extend out in pinwheel fashion into the landscape. The entrance to the house was planned with a great sense of drama. The approach to the building is from a lower level, away from the water, and the view is not apparent. From this angle, the sculptural forms of the house itself are dominant; it is not until one begins climbing the interior ramp to the upper level that the main view can be seen through the deeply shaded glass walls.

The house has a concrete block frame, surfaced with brick; piers carry up past the glassed-in upper level, to lightly support the roof on steel pins (above left). The roof itself is framed with steel open-web joists, topped with built-up roofing, and finished beneath with hemlock boarding. All interior partitions are painted gypsum board; floors in living areas are carpeted.

MULTI-LEVEL HOUSE FOR A ROCKY HILLTOP



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THE INTERIORS OF THIS HOUSE
CONTAIN MANY SPATIAL SURPRISES

In addition to the surprise treatment of the view, as noted on the previous page, Ulrich Franzen has handled the interior spaces of the house in a somewhat unorthodox, very interesting manner. While the house appears from the front facade (above left) to be a simple two-story structure, the house actually has five levels. A utility level lies a few steps below the entry level which contains the kitchen and dining spaces; above that the guest bedrooms, living areas, and the master bedroom suite are each placed on successively higher levels connected by a ramp. The dining area (above right) is a tall space the full height of the building, which opens on the library and the master bedroom balcony. In the living room, steps up to the master bedroom are extended to form seating to flank the fireplace (right). These differences in heights and levels, together with the extension of spaces outdoors to decks and terraces, combine to give a great deal of variety and spaciousness to a moderate-sized house.

The interiors are finished in a very simple manner, with a minimum of furniture, to create the air of spaciousness. Ample seating is provided in the living area by a long curving built-in sofa and the step "seating." Service rooms, below grade areas, kitchen and baths have floors of vinyl tile, quartz tile or ceramic tile. The interior bathroom and dressing room on the top level are daylighted by plastic, domed skylights. The house has a warm air furnace and air conditioning. The big windows of the upper levels have double glazing for insulation, and all sliding glass is fitted with sliding glass fiber screen.

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