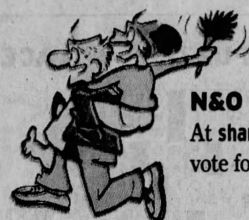


Home&Garden

www.newsobserver.com/home



N&O COMICS POLL

At share.triangle.com/comicsvote,
vote for your favorite comics.

home of
the month

September's profile of a well-designed living space

Take a look at a photo gallery at www.newsobserver.com, search **home&garden**.



the living area

The main living area is punctuated by two elements: a floating stair made from wood and salvaged steel and a solid cedar box that houses the kitchen and bath on the entry level and the master bath above.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEFFREY JACOBS

The Home of the Month series is a collaborative effort with the N.C. State University College of Design through its Home Environments Design Initiative. Featured homes, selected by an expert panel, highlight the benefits of good home design and represent the diversity of homes and home renovations designed by North Carolina architects. The articles, written by faculty, graduate students and alumni of the School of Architecture, bring to light the exemplary attributes of each home. Our goal is to offer inspiration and knowledge that can be applied to your living space.

A treehouse for grown-ups

By DEE BLACKBURN
CORRESPONDENT

When the client requested "something dramatic" and a desire to feel as if she were "living in the trees," architect Frank Harmon of Raleigh knew just how to begin. Harmon and his client and friend of 30 years, Lynda Strickland, began working on the design of her home in 2003. The wooded, steeply sloped site provided rich fodder for the design. The site conditions, along with the wonderful views to Crabtree Creek and Strickland's love of native birds, served as the genesis for the design.

Harmon decided to perch the house above the site, using nine wood trusses and 8x8 wooden braces on concrete columns to allow water to flow across the site unimpeded.

"We knew we had to raise the house off the ground and let the water flow under it," Harmon says. The laminated wood trusses and braces set atop the concrete columns are reminiscent of a treehouse as the ground slopes away sharply below the first floor. The foundation design and siting also allowed the house to be built without taking down any large trees. The site is heavily wooded and is home to some 150-year-old beech and oak trees.

the project

Strickland-Ferris Residence

architect

Frank Harmon

design team

Frank Harmon FAIA and Sarah Glee Queen, project manager, 706 Mountford Ave., Raleigh, (919) 829-9464

project location

Raleigh

square footage

1,800 heated, 450 unheated

key attribute

Living in the trees with a view to Crabtree Creek

interior designer

Lynda Strickland

engineer

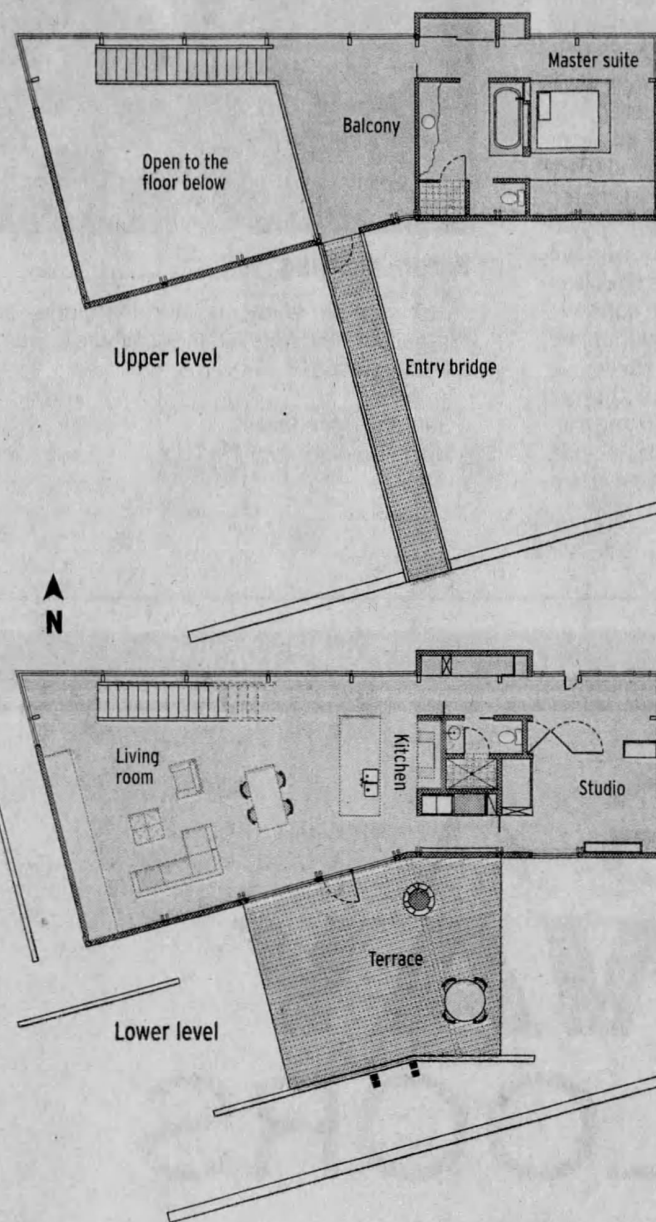
Richard Kaydos-Daniels



A bridge provides entry to the house, with its butterfly roof – a feature Harmon refers to as the 'Wright Flyer.'



The upper floor houses the master suite, and a balcony looks down onto the living space.



TREEHOUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1D

Visitors approaching from the south enter on a bridge. The entry view of the house accentuates the butterfly roof, a feature Harmon refers to as the "Wright Flyer." The gutter that runs along the valley of this bold roof returns water to a collection system on the south side.

The south side of the house is relatively closed, with only a few carefully placed windows and a clerestory running below the entire roof, allowing light to enter and creating the sense that the roof is floating. Opaque walls wrap the east and west façades, cradling the interior spaces much



Architect
Frank
Harmon

as the forest cradles the house itself. Harmon placed the window openings carefully to enhance natural ventilation by capturing the southwesterly breezes. Deep overhangs help shade the interior and shelter the windows where necessary.

In contrast to the more closed elevations, the house opens generously to the north, using horizontal steel members and glass that stretches from floor to ceiling and is 27 feet tall at its highest point. The delineation between inside and outside is blurred as the house opens onto a stunning view of the forest and creek in the distance. Natural light floods the interior, so very little artificial lighting is needed.

The open floor plan of the main living area is punctuated by two elements: a floating stair made from wood and salvaged steel and a more solid cedar "box." This box houses the kitchen and bath on the entry level and the master bath above and is positioned to allow circulation to either side. The vertical application of cedar siding on this piece strengthens the over-



The delineation between inside and outside is blurred as the house opens onto a stunning view to the forest and creek in the distance. The house opens generously to the north, using horizontal steel members and glass that stretches from floor to ceiling; the glass is 27 feet at its highest point.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEFFREY JACOBS

all verticality of the interior of the house and plays against the views that expand horizontally into the landscape.

The upper floor houses the master suite, and a balcony looks down onto the living space. Many of the structural steel columns are revealed, mimicking the pattern of the trees just beyond the glass façade. Cherry wood floors and laminated wood beams soften the interior where the steel structure of the house

is exposed.

The client served as the interior designer on the project. Harmon notes, "Lynda has exquisite taste; there are few houses that get better with time. Every architect should have that blessing."

In every way, the house shows deference to its site. It also draws its power from the site through the strong form of the roof and the lifting of the house above the landscape. The interi-

or materials and spaces give the sense that the house both cradles the occupants and thrusts them out into the forest. The house clearly embodies the client's desires and meets the time-tested standards of firmness, commodity and, most of all, delight.

Dee Blackburn has a bachelor of architecture degree from N.C. State University. She designs custom homes and small commercial projects from her firm in Charlotte.