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KNOCK, KNOCK

The Strickland House, Raleigh

**ARTICLE CONTRIBUTED
BY KIM WEISS**

When homeowner Lynda Strickland approached Raleigh architect Frank Harmon about designing her home, she had three specific requirements: (1) she wanted a very dramatic Modern house; (2) she wanted to feel “as if I’m living in the trees,” and (3) she wanted the house to be utterly devoid of ornamentation to the point that she



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEFFREY JACOBS
Roof beams reach out to the sky like tree limbs. Careful arrangement of glass, even on the more private, street-facing elevation, maintains a sense of transparency and delicacy.

could see the marks of construction, from exposed bolts to the “unfinished” ceiling structure.

Strickland’s property is a steep, north-facing escarpment 80 feet above Crabtree Creek in Raleigh, shaded by a beech and oak forest. Harmon and his team knew they had to build upon it carefully.

To give the owner a shelter that treads lightly on the sensitive site, Harmon perched the house on nine, broad-shouldered wood trusses without cutting a single major tree. The trusses permit air and water to flow under the house, preserving the hydrology of the escarpment. The very large, metal-clad, butterfly-shaped roof opens the northern view to the creek and funnels rainwater into a collection system on the south side.

The entrance to the 1800-square-foot house is a progression from the top of the hill, across a bridge, and into the balcony/foyer, at which point the drama of the scenery outside immediately fills the interior through two-story, floor-to-ceiling, north-facing glass walls. The master bedroom suite is located on the balcony level, where Strickland used sheets of scrap metal to clad low partitions around the master bath.

From the balcony, a graceful salvaged-steel staircase with wooden treads descends past the glass (in essence, through the trees) to the dramatic, two-story-clear main living floor, which, in turn, opens onto a sunny and partially secluded south-facing terrace below the bridge. The main floor includes the living/dining/kitchen space (open to each other), another full bathroom, and an additional room that the owner uses as a media room and guest bedroom when necessary.

At all times of the day, the house is filled with a view of nature and, by day, dappled light. Deep roof overhangs shade the glass and extend a visual link to the outdoors. Laminated wood columns and beams, plainly bracketed, strengthen the presence of nature and echo the trees beyond. The roof beams reach out to the sky like tree limbs.

Careful arrangement of glass, even on the more private, street-facing elevation, maintains a sense of transparency and delicacy. This is consistent

throughout the interior: Partition walls between rooms stop short of reaching the exposed-wood ceiling.

Cherry wood floors, high-end Modern furnishings, and Strickland’s impressive collection of artwork by Gerry Lynch and Jason Craighead, among others, add warmth and elegance to the minimalist interior.

The owner has recently enhanced the front of her home with professionally landscaped Japanese-style gardens on both the upper and lower levels.

Knock Knock visits some of the Triangle’s most unique residential architecture, powered by the archives of preservation nonprofit North Carolina Modernist Houses, www.ncmodernist.org.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEFFREY JACOBS
At all times of the day, the house is filled with a view of nature.



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