Terry & Terry Architecture
Diamond Project

San Francisco, California

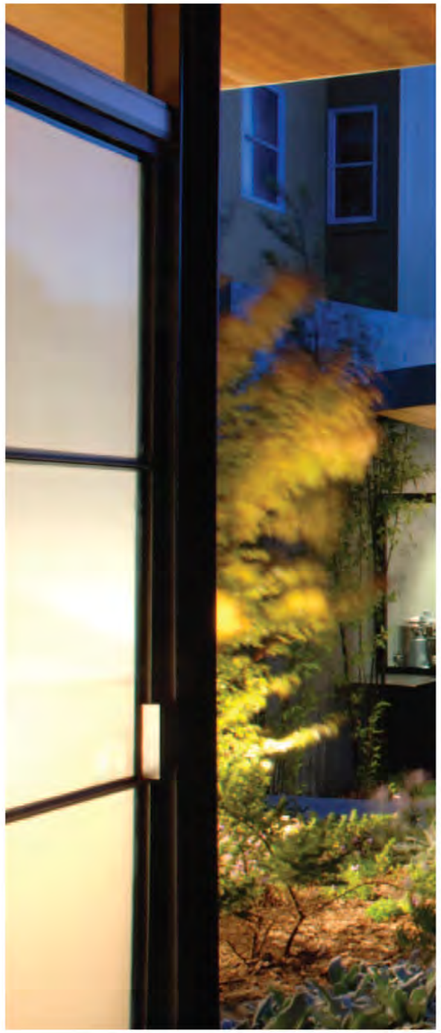
The Diamond Project is a dwelling that responds to the character of its site and environment while accommodating the needs of a family. The main floor sits at garden level, and contains the common spaces. The kitchen spills through a wall of glass into a backyard patio, which leads through a garden to a small satellite structure, which serves as a home office. Stairs from the living room lead to a roof deck which functions as a continuation of the garden living space. The roof deck also provides a unique connection to the surrounding hills speckled with dwellings of the San Francisco neighborhoods. The lower portion of the dwelling holds the less public spaces—guest room, children's playroom, and utilities. An ample, yet thoughtful selection of glazed openings gently brings daylight into the home, and makes the best of views allowed by the site. Concrete walls form the sides of the house, and continue to the rear to enclose the backyard. This use of concrete provides thermal mass, which buffers the house from temperature swings, which increases energy efficiency.

The structure uses sloping roof planes that hover above the main floor, and are contained between the longitudinal concrete walls, evoking the hills and valleys of the surrounding area. Strategic gaps or fissures were formed between roof and walls to illuminate the walls with natural light. Large glazed openings in the front and rear of the house create transparency between indoor and outdoor spaces that share the language of simple materials and clean detailing throughout the dwelling. This aesthetic creates the warmth and calmness essential for a family in an urban setting, without distracting from the simple beauty of well-juxtaposed spaces.

The sides of the house are formed by concrete walls, which also enclose the backyard. A third concrete wall extends vertically from the garage structure below to form the fireplace and chimney. This use of concrete provides thermal mass for energy efficiency. The concrete absorbs heat energy during the day, keeping the interior comfortable, and helping to maintain a moderate, baseline temperature for the cooler evenings. Since the house is located in a relatively dense urban area, the concrete walls also add protection against fire.

Between the perimeter concrete walls, the architect used a combination of transparent glass and wood-skinned wall. The ipe wood skin is devised as a double wall system, in which horizontal ipe strips are placed over vertical, furring strips. This allows ventilation between the skin and the underlying wall, thus avoiding heat build up in the wall and interior spaces.

The architect used extensive glazing to allow natural light in, capture views, and provide connection to the outdoors. To accomplish this, they used a reinforced concrete column formed from the window seat in the rear to provide lateral support for the structure.



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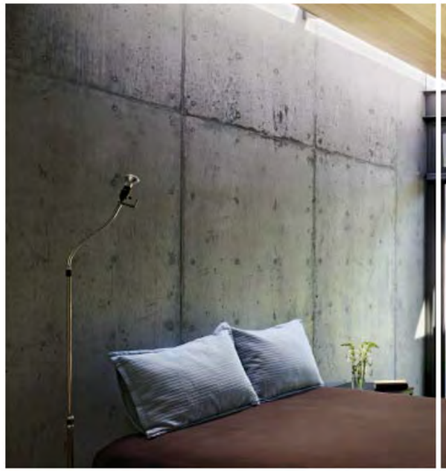

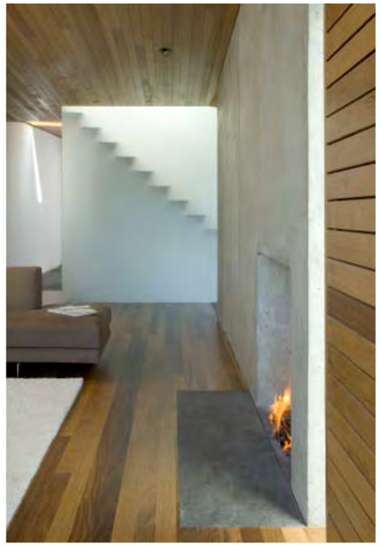


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