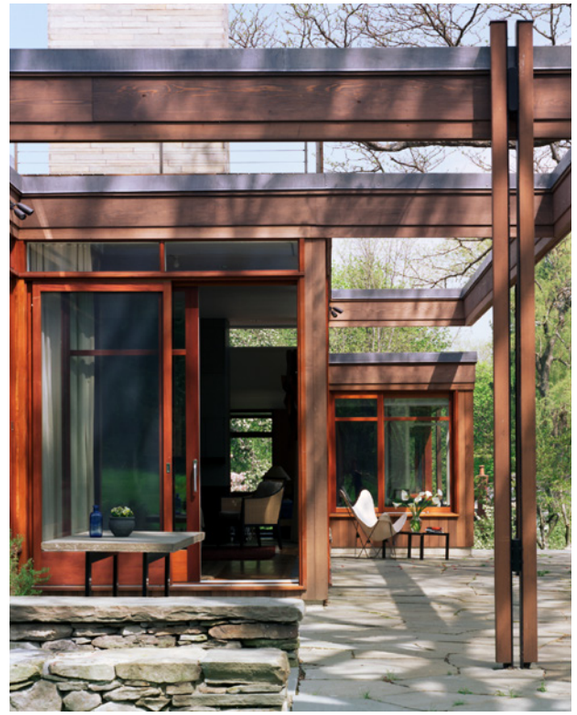




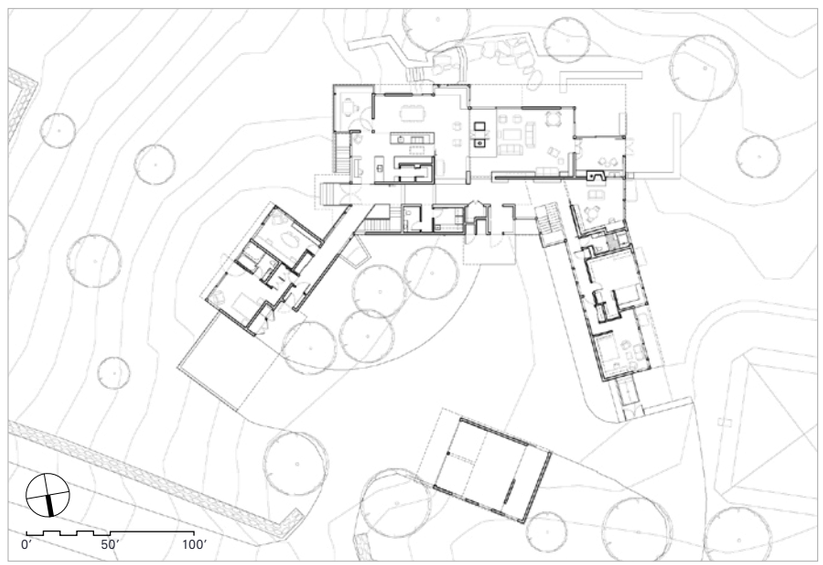
Terraced Views

Belmont, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

Developed the design of an 8,000 sf geothermal residence as part of a two-person team.

The elegant window-walled design required combining a steel structure with wood framing, unusual for a residence but necessary as most of the exterior walls have a continuous band of clerestory windows running along the top.

The minimal aesthetic meant that every material and design detail had to be carefully thought through.





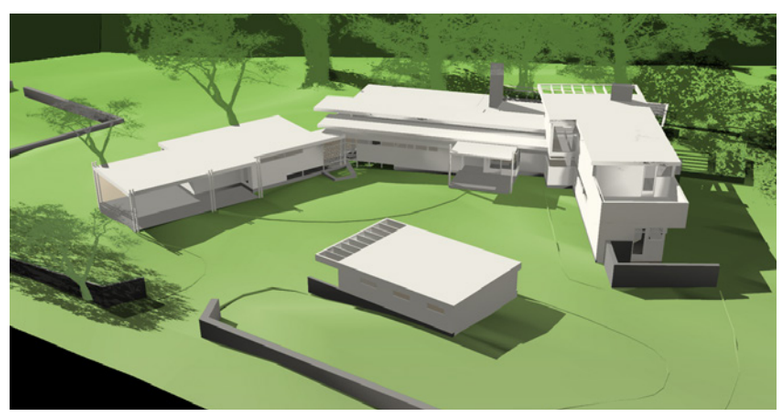


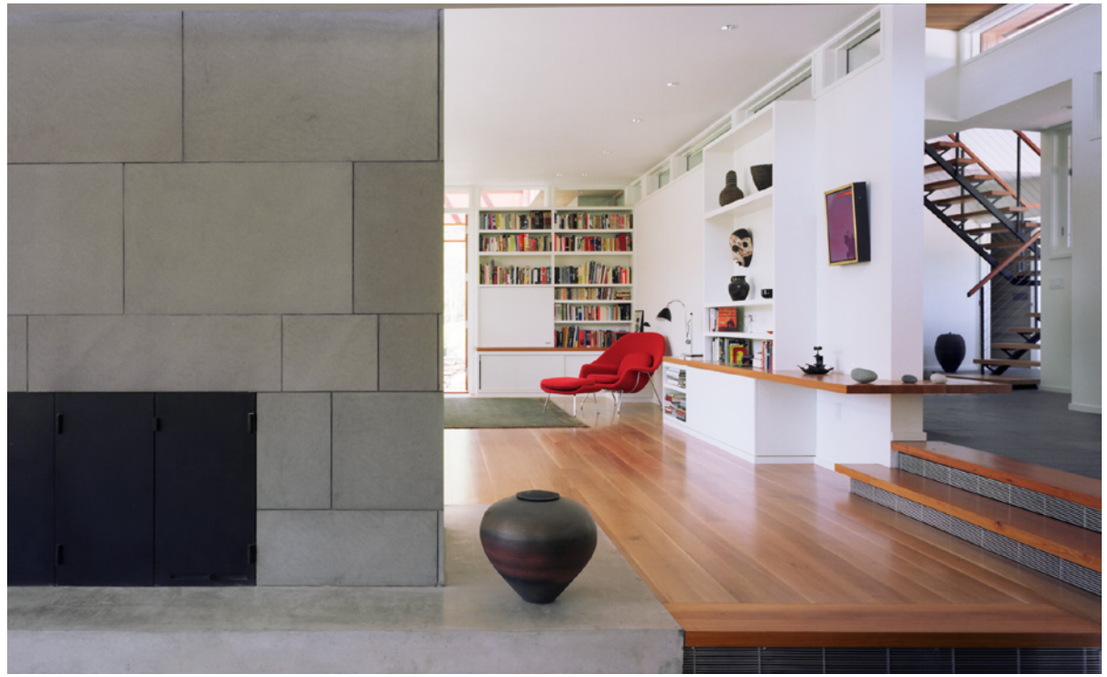


The layout of the residence maximizes views onto the landscape, while defining a very private entry courtyard.

I coordinated the design, function, structural attachment, detailing, and installation of the 180 custom windows, which had to fit across large expanses with very little tolerance.





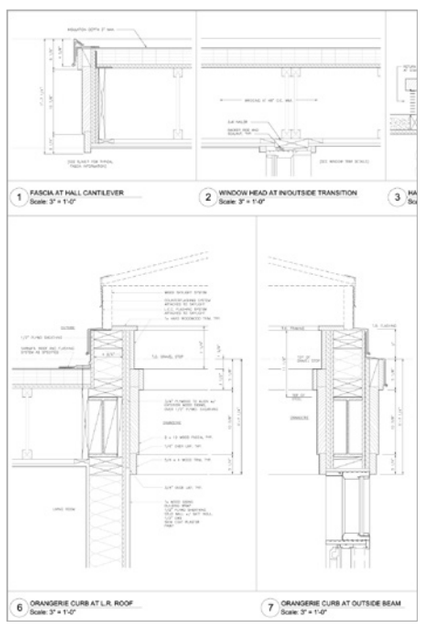




A double-sided fireplace and chimney provides midway structural support for the large flat roofs, letting the interior be column-free.

Other interesting design details are the minimalist central stairs, built with reclaimed old pine, and the board-formed concrete foundation, which required mockups and convincing the builder that it can be done.











Fallen Leaves

Aquinnah, Martha's Vineyard, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

Developed the design of this summer vacation home as part of a two-person team, mainly in charge of structural and detailed design development – chimney, roofs, windows, lighting, finishes – as well as checking and revising the CDs.

The modern, lightweight house aesthetic of organically floating roof planes ("leaves") proved challenging both from the structural and construction/ architectural detail perspectives, and from zoning.









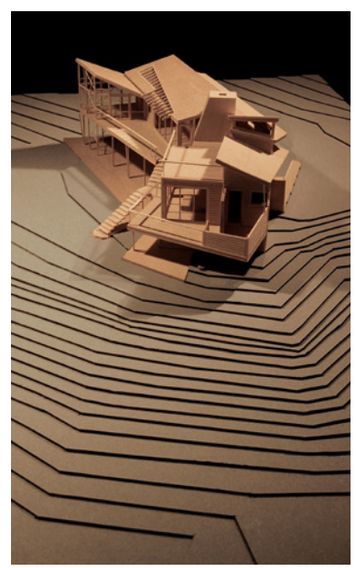
After much back and forth, the project won Martha's Vineyard planning approval by maintaining a minimum 4:12 roof slope and staying wrapped in clear cedar siding (instead of the required shingles).

Responding to its context, the upper decks, as more public social spaces, project out above to views of the Atlantic Ocean beyond.

The lower patios, covered and surrounded by tall vegetation, ensure privacy for the bedrooms below.











Supporting the deck are thin stainless steel columns disguised even more by their leaning stance and irregularity (as something organic, like plants), which make the upper deck itself feel like it is floating.

The movement, projections, and openness of the overall design appropriately give this summer house the carefree characteristic requisite of relaxing vacations by the ocean.









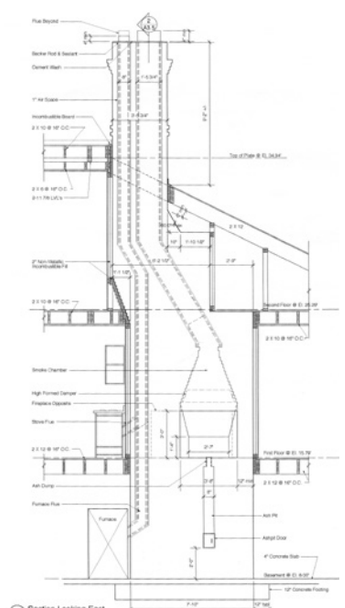
Inventive Reconstruction

Great Island, Cape Cod, MA
at: Imai Keller

Developed the facsimile reconstruction of a historic house, as part of a two-person team.

Learned about the elegant simplicity of early American architecture and its construction techniques, while struggling to bring the building up to all modern codes – architectural, structural, electrical – and not change its original design. The most difficult task was making functional the big, angled, double-sided fireplace and chimney.







Three Brothers

Great Island, Cape Cod, MA
at: Imai Keller

Developed the design of a summer residential compound and the conversion of a historic lighthouse as part of a two-person team.

The design and placement of the new structures mimics the quirkiness of old New England buildings which have been altered asymmetrically over time. They are historically contextual, human-scale friendly, create interactive social spaces between them, and also do no overwhelm the historic lighthouse in proportion.

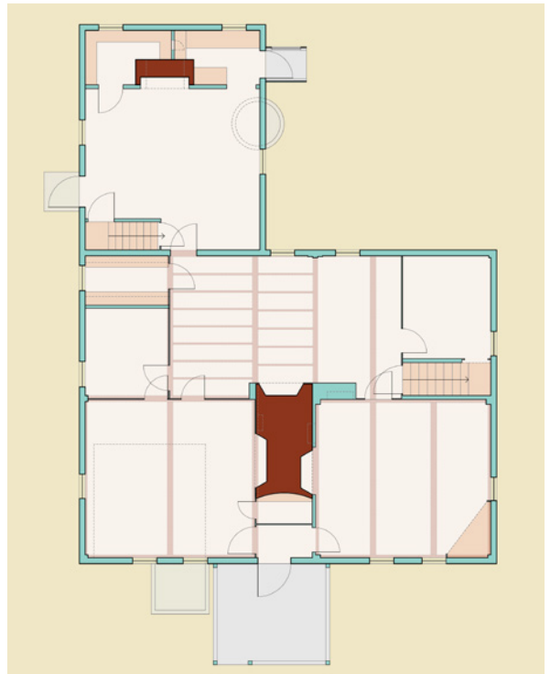












Quansoo Historic

Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

Analyzed the condition of one of the oldest houses on Martha's Vineyard and in New England / America – the Hancock-Mitchell House from the mid-1600s – together with a building inspector, and proposed adaptive reuse concepts.

Learned about early American "Cape-Type" additive house design and construction – a "half-house" growing into a "five window house" growing into an "ell" – as well as about building deterioration and termite damage.









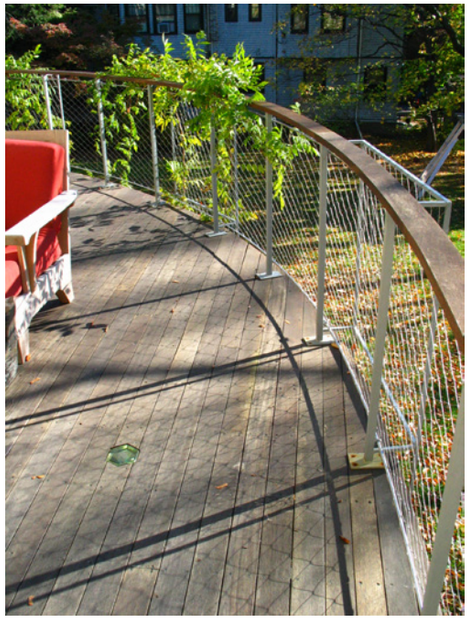


Floating Wisteria Deck

Cambridge, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

The one and only time I drew construction drawings by hand, to make the project look historically fitting and receive a variance from the city and the historic commission. For a small project, it was also faster.

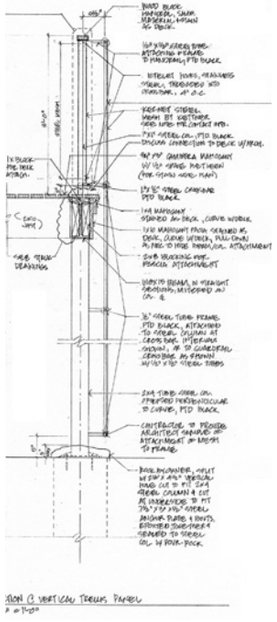
This wood and steel curved deck was shaped to elegantly hug the complicated building massing and to fit up very close to, but not injure, the roots of the existing trees. Steel framing was required to keep the structure looking light and to support the strong wisteria growing on it.















Modern Inserts

Cambridge, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

One of many additions and renovations in the Greater Boston area which I designed and managed.

This 4,000 sf house was converted from a 2-unit structure back into a single residence, removing internal exit stairs, and conducting major renovations to and enlargement of key spaces, such as the kitchen, playroom, and bathrooms. A mudroom matching the historic design of the house was also added in front.











Lakeview Remodel

Winchester, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

One of many additions and renovations in the Greater Boston area which I designed and managed.

This post-war 3-level lakeview home was gutted and renovated throughout – opening it up inside for better spatial flow and toward the exterior for large framed views of the lake – and bringing it up to current energy codes (it had been uninsulated). The front yard, enclosed with a new privacy fence, was turned into a much needed safe space for the kids to play, as the back yard is too steep.



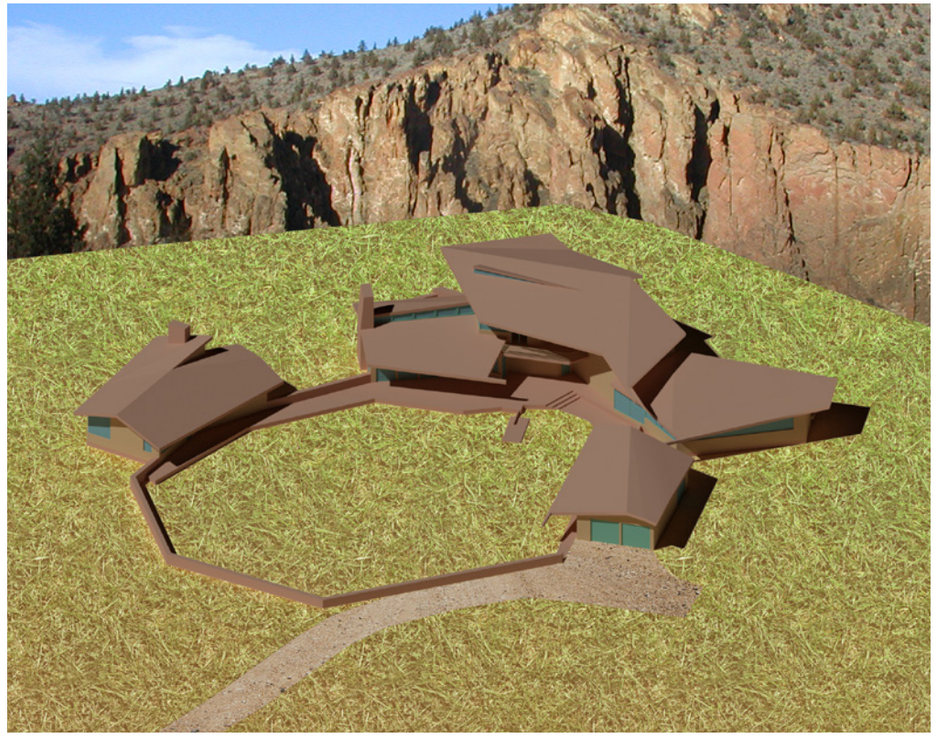


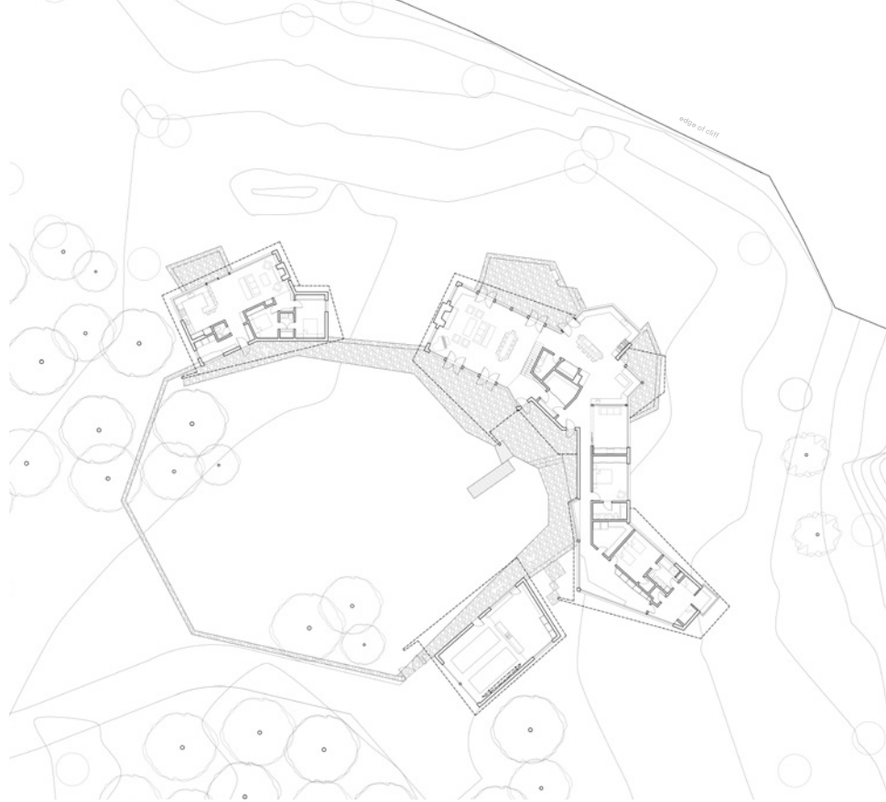




Site-Inspired Massing

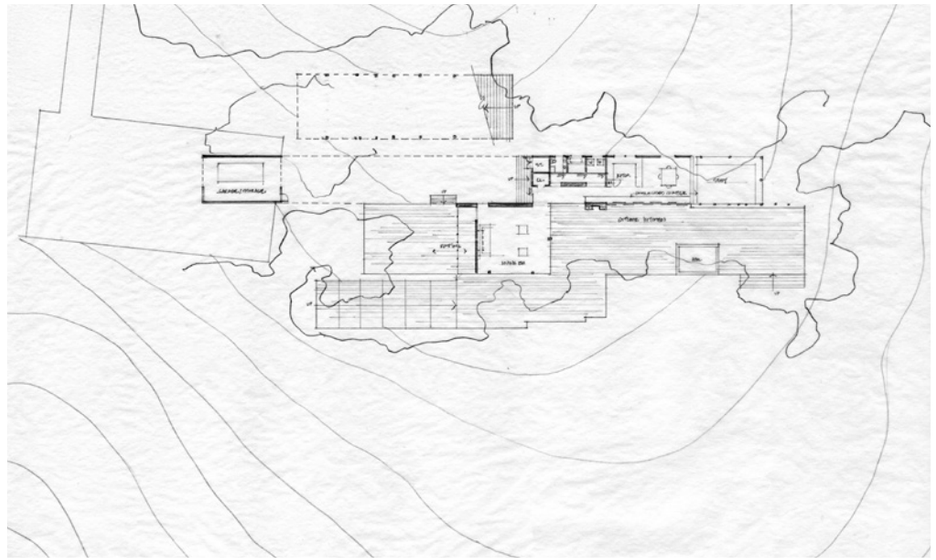
Bend, OR & Westport, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

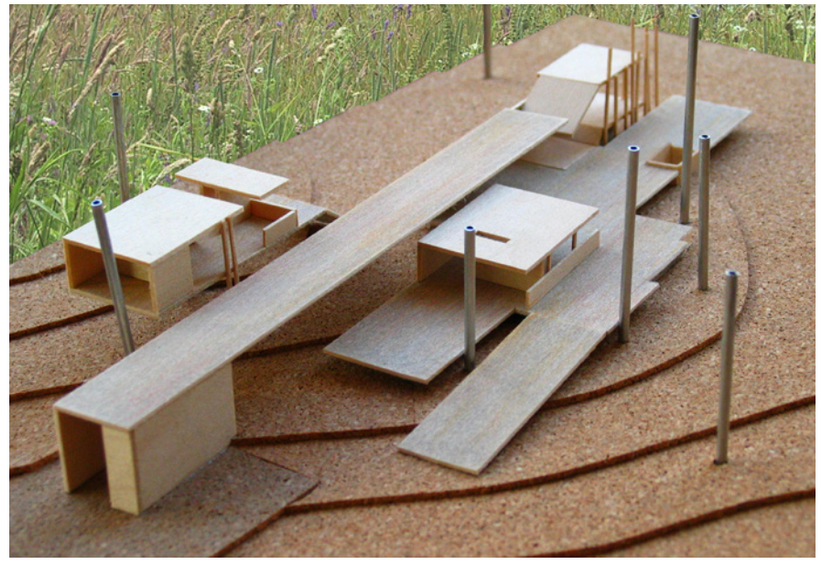




Bend, OR (above)
Conceptual design for a residential compound that, camouflaged into its sculptural site, defines a safe place to play away from the dangerous cliff edge.

Westport, MA (right)
In a vacation residence for landscape architects, the program is broken up into separate “rooms” connected by long outdoor decks which run parallel to the Westport River, to increase engagement with the outdoors.









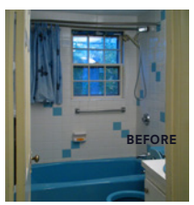
Design-Build Flip

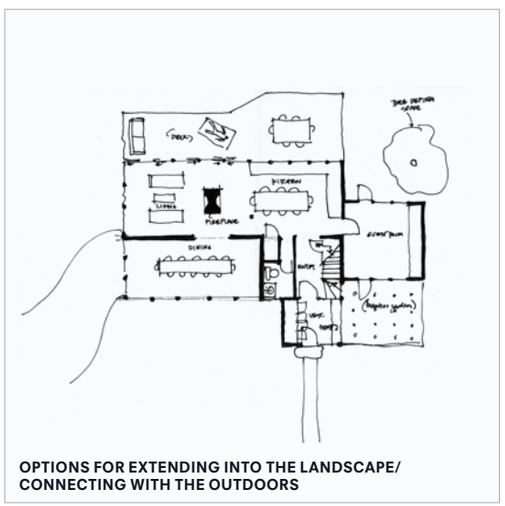
Newton, MA
for: Zeb Arruda of Brite Builders

Worked directly with the contractor in a design-build format through conversations, simple sketches, and detailed plans to remodel a house and render it livable, comparing many options for cost along the way.

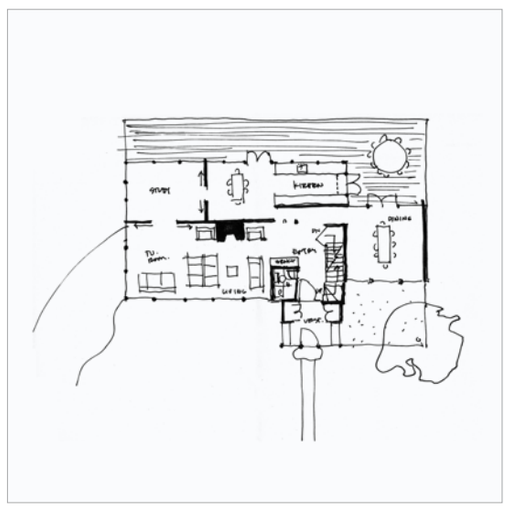


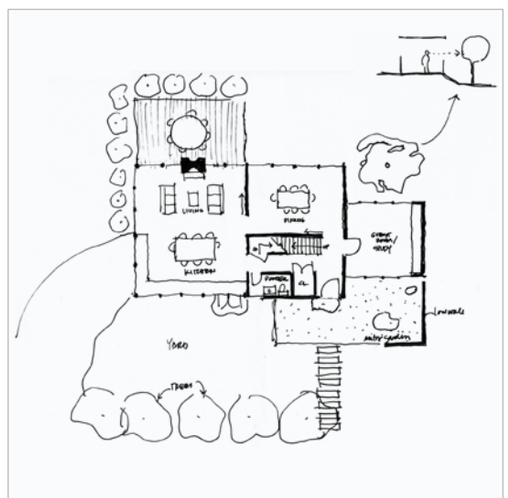






OPTIONS FOR EXTENDING INTO THE LANDSCAPE/
CONNECTING WITH THE OUTDOORS



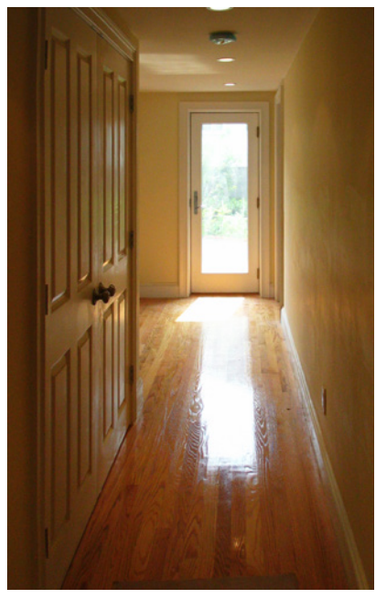


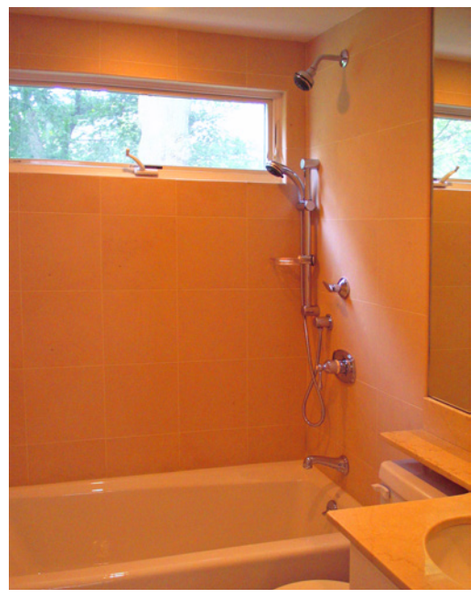


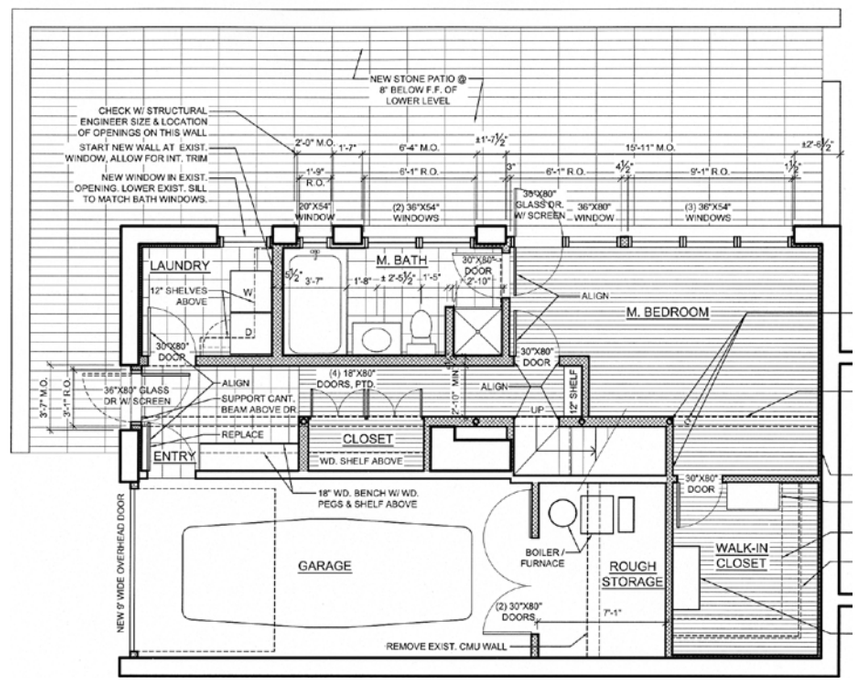




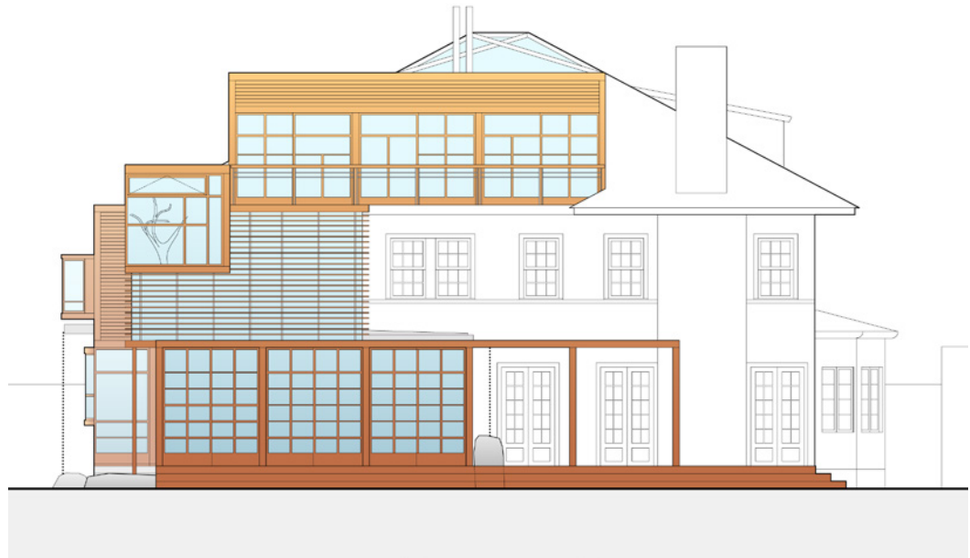
Completely gutted the upstairs and the unfinished basement, converting the lower space into a master bedroom suite, and enlarging the crowded living spaces upstairs. Added skylights, changed finishes from cold to warm, and extended the house into the landscape through ample windows, glass doors, a patio, retaining walls, and paving.











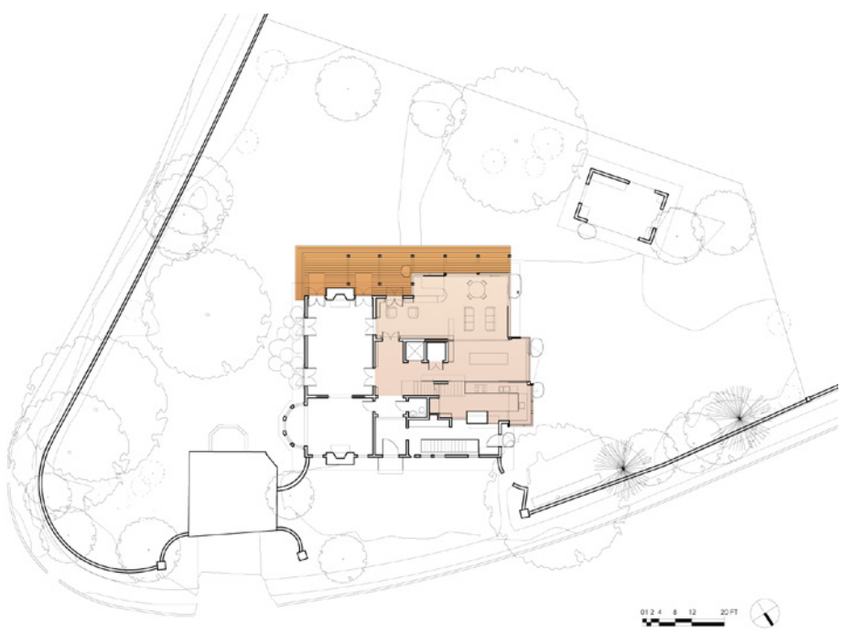
Multi-Layered Pop-Out

Cambridge, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

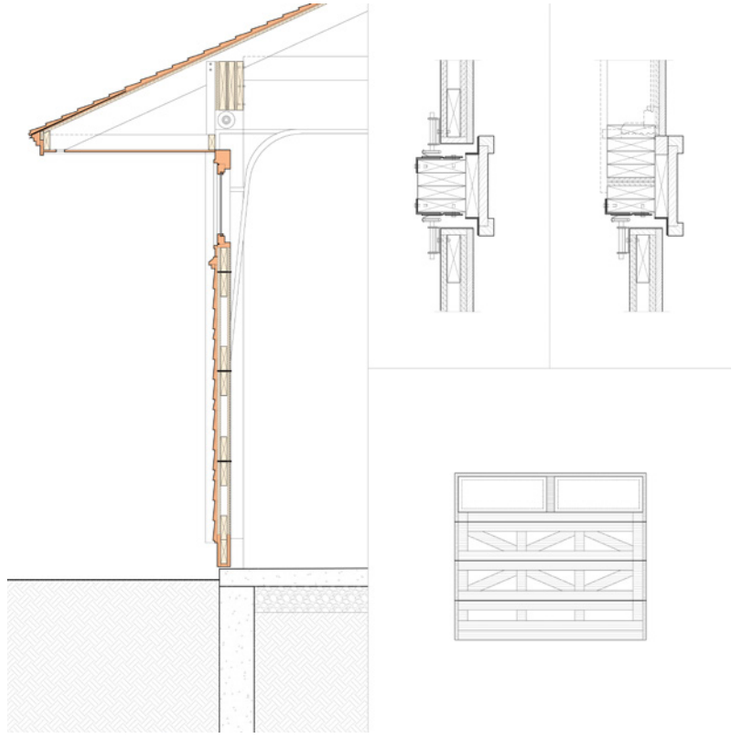
Renovation of a historic house which extends playfully into the backyard through a series of multi-layered wood decks and screens.

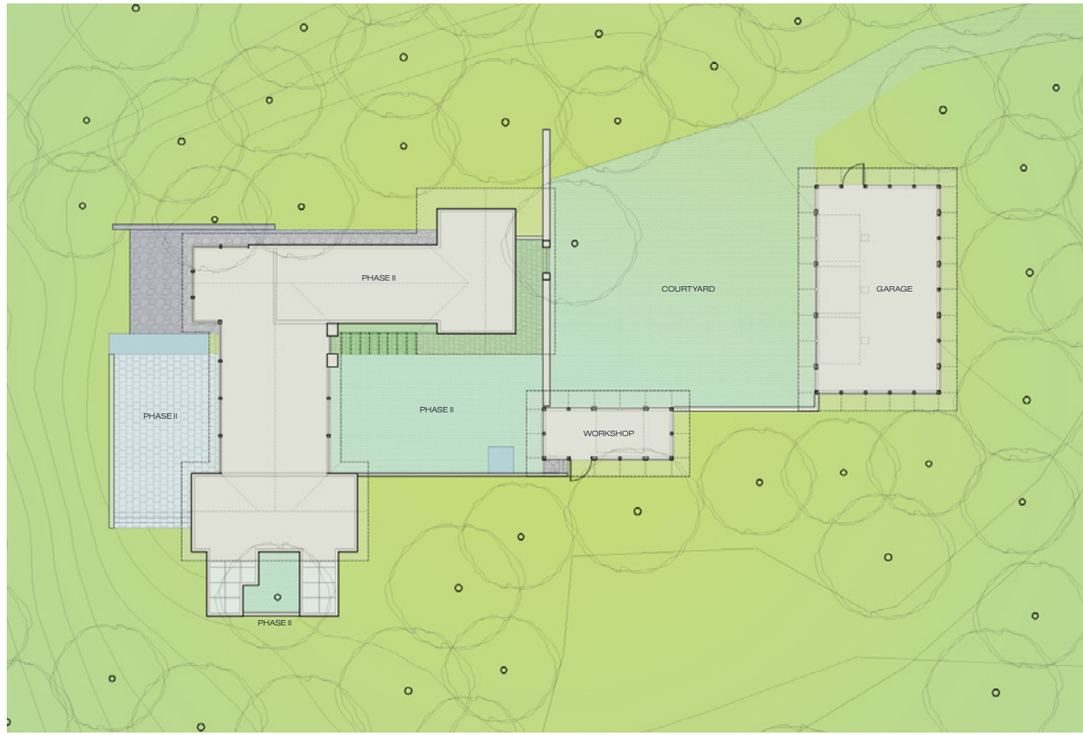
I inherited this complex project and worked to make it rational, buildable, and – with the structural engineer – structurally feasible. This was quite challenging because most of the solid back wall was replaced by sculpturally interwoven wood and glass screens.

Unfortunately, the clients divorced before it could be completed.









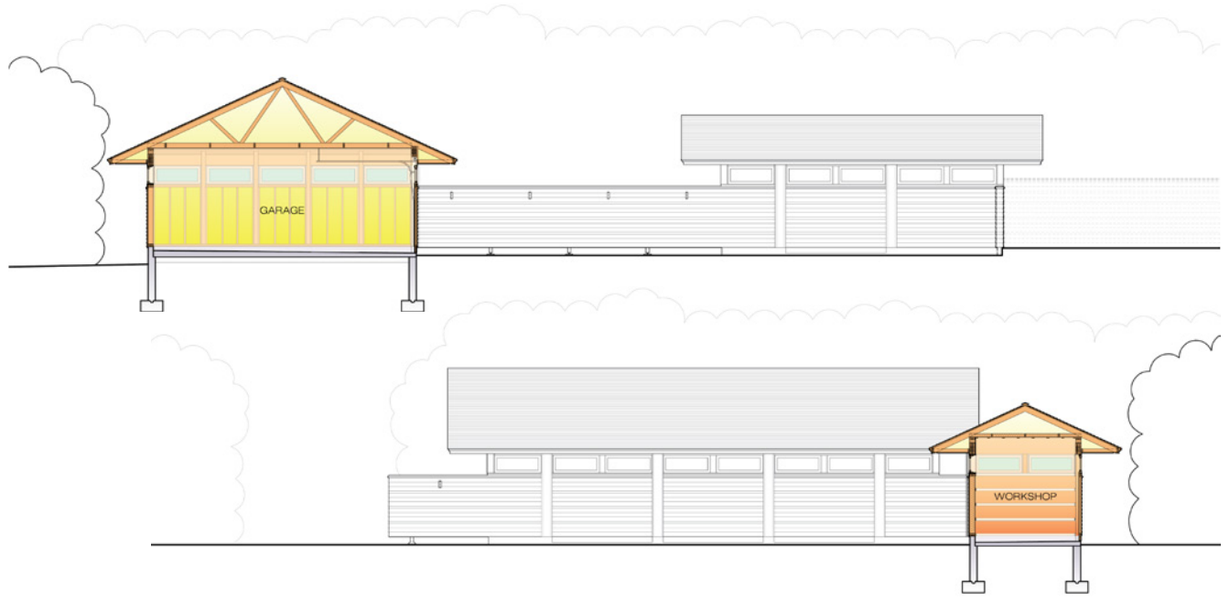
Courtyard Complex

Duxbury, MA
at: Maryann Thompson Architects

Phased addition to existing house to transform a single bar house into a residential complex with a series of interactive outdoor spaces which hierarchically unravel into the surrounding landscape.

Worked in Phase I with garage door manufacturers and through details to hide the shingle-faced overhead doors, so that the wall defining the courtyard appear continuous.

The project was put on hold following client financial troubles.



CREDITS

These projects have been designed, developed, and/or managed by Ioana Urma alone or in a two-person team, as noted.

For work in other offices, the design principals have been Maryann Thompson for Maryann Thompson Architects, and Randall Imai for Imai Keller.

All 2D drawings – plans, sections, and details – are by Ioana Urma.

The 3D rendering on “Site-Inspired Massing” is by Ioana Urma. The 3D rendering on “Terraced Views” is by Tom Murdough.

All wood models are by Ioana Urma.

Photographs on Maryann Thompson projects are by Ioana Urma, except for on “Terraced Views” and “Fallen Leaves,” which are by Chuck Choi, and a few on “Lakeview Remodel” by Coldwell Banker. Photographs on Imai Keller Projects are by Elton Pope Lance. All other photographs are by Ioana Urma.