

INTEGRAL HOUSE

LOCATION: ROSEDALE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF TORONTO
ARCHITECT TEAM: SHIM-SUTCLIFFE ARCHITECTS
AREA: 18,000 FT²
BUDGET: WITHHELD
COMPLETION: FALL 2008

LOCATED ON A RAVINE IN TORONTO'S PRESTIGIOUS ROSEDALE NEIGHBOURHOOD, SHIM SUTCLIFFE'S INTEGRAL HOUSE IS A TRUE LANDMARK IN CANADIAN ARCHITECTURE. THE INTEGRAL HOUSE WAS COMMISSIONED BY, MATHEMATICIAN, MUSICIAN AND TEXTBOOK AUTHOR, JAMES STEWART (ARCHITONIC.COM). STEWART WAS SAID TO HAVE GIVEN COMPLETE FREEDOM TO THE SMALL ARCHITECTURAL FIRM, NO SCHEDULE AND NO RESTRICTIONS. STEWART WAS IN NO RUSH AS IT TOOK OVER 10 YEARS FROM CONCEPTION TO COMPLETION BUT THE END RESULT WAS WELL WORTH THE WAIT.

FROM THE EXTERIOR, THE TRANSLUCENT ETCHED GLASS UPPER LEVEL FLOATS ATOP THE OAK CLAD BASE SIMULATING THE SKY HOVERING ABOVE THE SURROUNDING FOREST. THE CURVACEOUS FORM OF THE INTEGRAL HOUSE BEAUTIFULLY MIMICS THE RAVINE THAT FLOWS BELOW, REVEALING ITS CONNECTION TO NATURE. FROM THE INTERIOR, THE VERTICALLY SLOTTED OAK STRUCTURAL COLUMNS SIMULATE THE SURROUNDING FOREST. WITH OVER 18,000 SQUARE FEET OF INNOVATIVELY DESIGNED SPACE CASCADING OVER FIVE LEVELS, THE INTEGRAL HOUSE IS BOTH FUNCTIONAL AND WHIMSICAL.

THE RESIDENCE IS A MIXTURE OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SPACES INCLUDING A DOUBLE VOLUME MUSICAL PERFORMANCE SPACE WITH A CAPACITY TO HOLD OVER 150 VIEWERS (COOLHUNTER.COM). EACH LEVEL OF THE PROJECT DIFFERS IN MATERIALITY TO COMPLEMENT THE VIEWS OF THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE. THIS ALLOWS THE VISITOR TO EXPERIENCE THE SPACE IN AN INNOVATIVE WAY. FROM THE LOWER LEVELS, THE RAVINE VIEWS GIVE THE SENSE OF A REMOTE ENVIRONMENT BUT AS ONE MOVES THROUGH THE SPACE TO THE UPPER LEVELS, THE CITYSCAPE IS STILL IN CLOSE PROXIMITY. THE CONCEPTUAL ATTENTION TO DETAIL IS REMARKABLE AS EACH DESIGN DECISION HAS BEEN PRECISELY PLANNED AND THOUGHT THROUGH.

THE WARM OAK CLADDING HELPS TO OFFSET THE CONCRETE FINISHES THAT CAN OTHERWISE APPEAR SOMEWHAT COLD. THE MINIMALIST INTERIOR FINISHES FURTHER EMPHASIZE NATURAL SETTING, ALLOWING THE FOCUS TO BE ON THE EXTERIOR RATHER THAN THE INTERIOR OF THE RESIDENCE. INCORPORATING SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES SUCH AS GEOTHERMAL HEATING, A LAVISH GREEN ROOF AND SUN SHADING, THE INTEGRAL HOUSE HAS STAYED TRUE TO ITS HOMAGE TO NATURE.

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