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LUXURY  
HOME  
CANADA

## *Cultural Continuum*

Shim-Sutcliffe's Integral House



# THE PLANS

A showcase of sleek, modern architecture  
—and the blueprints that started it all

(A) HURTEAU MILLER

(B) THE ECHO HOUSE

## KARIOUK ASSOCIATES

WHERE SOME SEE LIMITATIONS, THIS OTTAWA-BASED ARCHITECTURE FIRM SEES CATALYSTS FOR SPECTACULAR DESIGNS

by Frederick Jerant

Paul duBellet Kariouk came to Ottawa in rather a roundabout way. “My family emigrated to New York City from France in the late 50’s, and many of their friends settled in Montréal. For that reason, I traveled to Canada frequently and loved it.”

The founder and principal of Kariouk Associates, based in Ottawa, goes on to explain, “I was working as an architect in Manhattan when I secured a teaching position at Carleton University—so I moved to Ottawa and opened my own practice there in 2001.” The firm offers residential and commercial new construction, interior renovations, additions, landscapes and museum installations, but its niche is custom residential design.

Kariouk Associates often attracts a certain type of client: highly professional and discerning. “Typically, they’re in their 50s,” Kariouk says, “and they want a home that will serve their needs for their entire lives. They’re the exact opposite of people who buy and flip houses.”

Stylistically, Kariouk uses a modern vocabulary tempered by specificity and pragmatism. “Every project has limitations and challenges, ranging from the site itself to zoning restrictions to the budget...those challenges actually serve as catalysts for my designs.”

Because of Kariouk Associates’ painstaking design process, it’s not uncommon for three years to pass between penciling the first sketches and hanging the last picture.



### EXTERIOR IMPRESSIONS

Although the Hurteau-Miller Residence is quite sizeable at 3,500 square feet, a concerted effort was made by Kariouk Associates to minimize the home’s visual impact. By creating areas of transparency through which the surrounding landscape can be viewed and choosing exterior finishes which reflect the natural setting, the structure and environment exist in harmony.



## *Hurteau-Miller Residence*

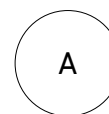
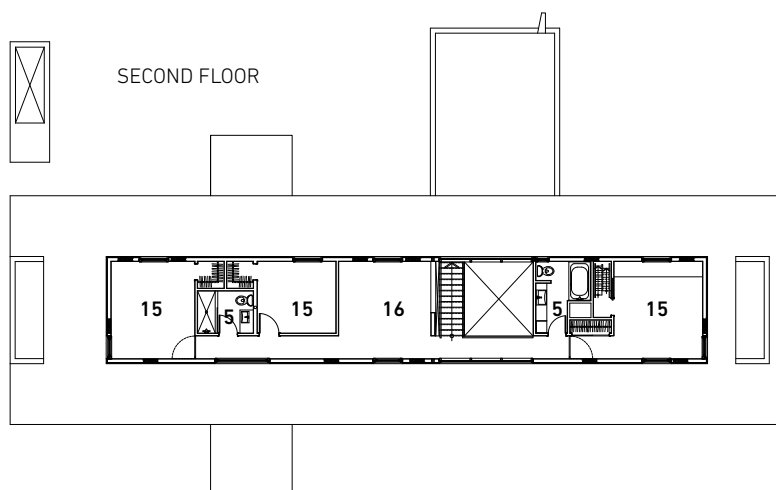
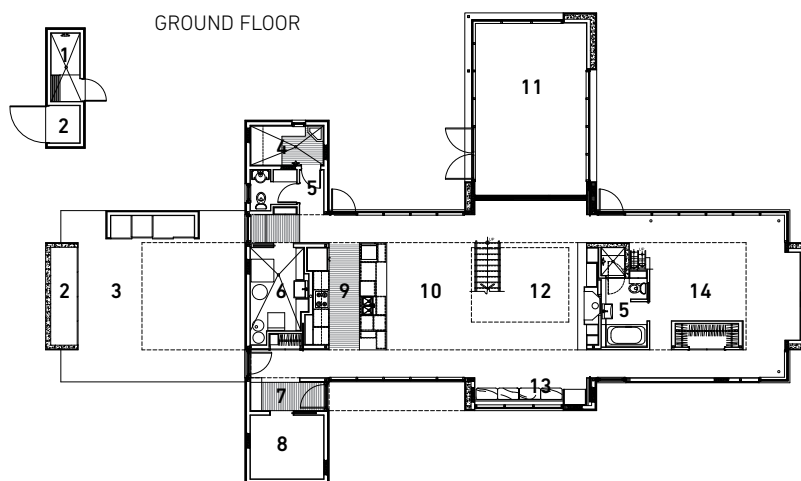
This 3,500-square-foot home abuts the shore of Lac Bataille and offers a spectacular view.

"The house is long," Kariouk explains, "and I didn't want it to block that view from approaching guests." His solution was to use massive windows, strategically placed to provide a clear sightline through the house to the lake. The first floor of the western red cedar-clad house includes "public" areas —indoor and outdoor living rooms, kitchen/eating areas and sauna, —as well as the master bedroom suite, which addresses future accessibility issues. The space's amorphous arrangement makes it ideal for easily moving from one area to another.

One design goal was to minimize the exterior visual impact of the home's size. This was achieved by partially nesting the second floor within the first, thus lowering the home's profile. The boxy structure is cradled by an armature and holds numerous bedrooms that can accommodate the owners' extended families when they visit.







HURTEAU MILLER

- 1 Outdoor Shower
- 2 Storage
- 3 Carport
- 4 Sauna
- 5 Bathroom
- 6 Mechanical
- 7 Entry
- 8 Walk-In Closet
- 9 Kitchen
- 10 Dining Room
- 11 Exterior Living Area
- 12 Living Room
- 13 Alcove
- 14 Master Bedroom
- 15 Guest Bedroom
- 16 Study



## *Echo House*

Echo House was a run-down Victorian home with small windows and dark interiors. The new owners wanted a loft-like ambience, even though the building's footprint is a scant 750 square feet. Kariouk's solution was to create a four-storey vertical loft. Four segregated rooms were transformed into a single, airy and spacious area. Large windows at the front and rear of the parlour visually extend the space and offer clear views of the historic Rideau Canal. But the professional couple also wanted distinctly private areas, such as a study, book vault, a master bedroom suite and a den. Kariouk responded by designing suspended interior modules. Their expanded window areas provide visual contact with other areas of the home yet provide privacy from the parlour and the street. The master bedroom suite, supported by a cantilever, appears to float over the front entry and yard. Floor-to-ceiling glass admits plenty of light, and serves to bring the canal practically to the home's doorstep.

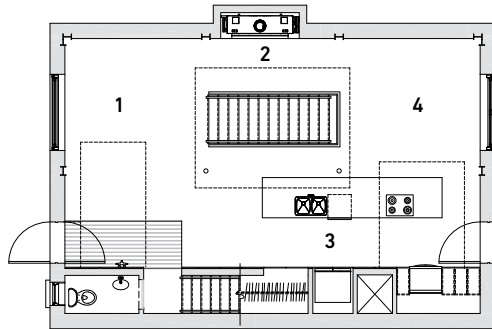


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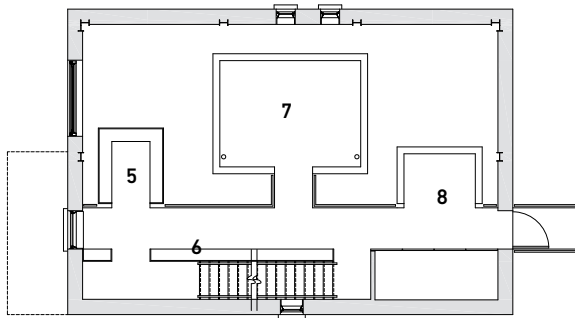
THE ECHO HOUSE

- |              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1 Parlour    | 7 Den              |
| 2 Fireplace  | 8 Study            |
| 3 Kitchen    | 9 Exterior Terrace |
| 4 Dining     | 10 Master Bedroom  |
| 5 Book Vault | 11 Ensuite         |
| 6 Shelving   | 12 Sitting Area    |

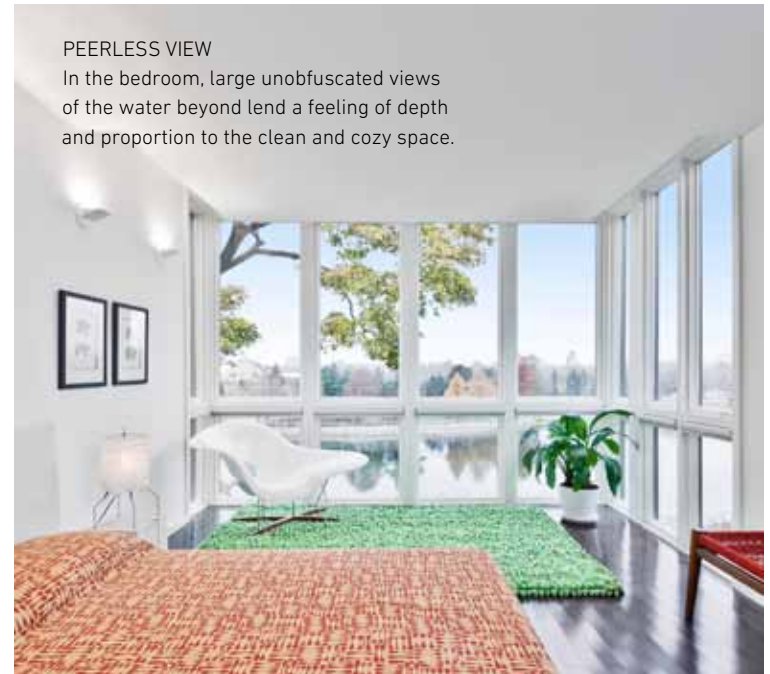
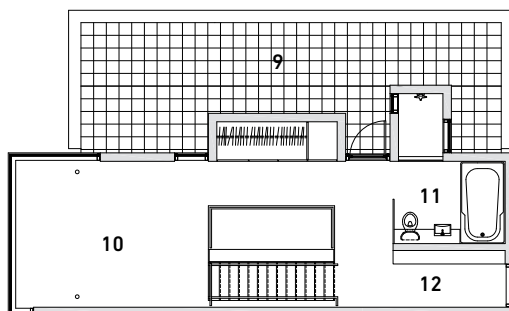
GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



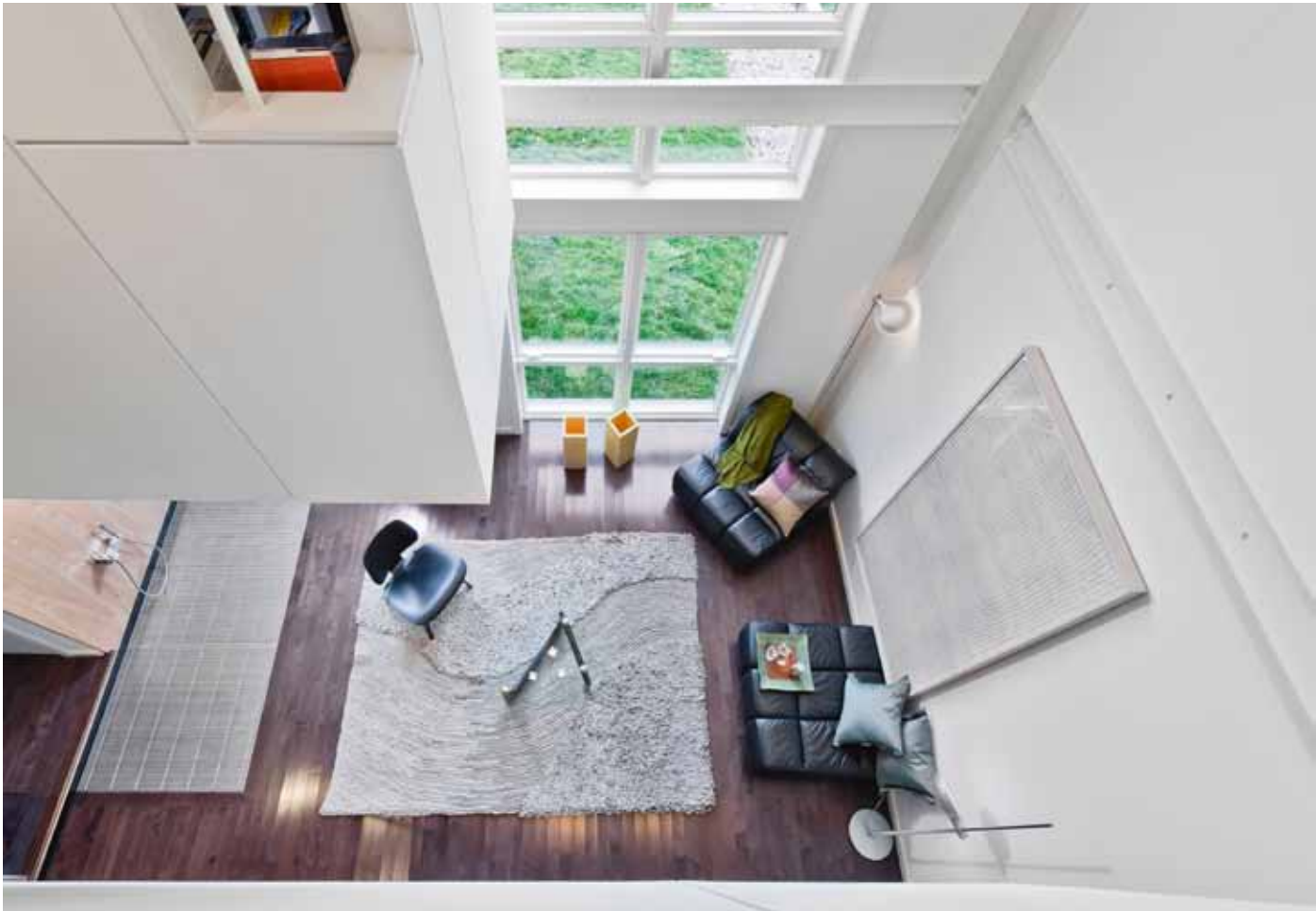
THIRD FLOOR



PEERLESS VIEW

In the bedroom, large unobscured views of the water beyond lend a feeling of depth and proportion to the clean and cozy space.





“DESIGN THAT DOES NOT YIELD A QUALITY, UNIQUE PROJECT IS, BY DEFINITION, NOT DESIGN.” PAUL DUBELLET KARIOUK, PRINCIPAL

While three years may seem like a lengthy stretch, Kariouk insists, “My clients are thoughtful and not extravagant. There’s an incredible amount of soul searching and many decisions made as the design evolves. It can take a year just to work through the various construction and design iterations.”

The process begins with a series of client meetings in which Kariouk strives to be upfront regarding what is realistic in terms of budget and amenities. He then walks with them through a study of their daily and weekly habits, exploring how they live today, and how things might be different in twenty years or when grandchildren come to visit.

Kariouk uses the Hurteau-Miller Residence, in Val-des-Monts, Québec, as an example. “This getaway cottage was designed for a couple with a young son, but it will someday be their primary residence. By situating the master bedroom suite on the ground floor, we’ve addressed future accessibility issues.”

Client interaction is essential to a successful design, and Kariouk says that quite often his clients, “... have never worked with a designer or architect before and are a bit timid to get involved in the process. But as months go by, we become an effective team.”

The main bedroom of the Echo House, in Ottawa, overlooks the historic Rideau Canal, but “the windows were too small to permit enjoyment of the view,” Kariouk explains. His plan was to increase the windows’ size and remount them using cantilevers. “If I had suggested that at the outset, I’m not sure they would have accepted it, but as the project and our working relationship developed, they agreed it would be the best method to achieve the intended results regarding views and light.” This illustrates Kariouk’s philosophy that strong partnerships are built through time and trust.

The firm uses hand sketches, computer animation, physical and computer modeling and other user-friendly techniques to help clients fully understand

their proposals and ideas. The various iterations are incredibly detailed, right down to the specific placement of light switches.

“We often go through a dozen models, and just as many estimates,” Kariouk reveals. “Every aspect of the home is an opportunity to do things from scratch.” He compares the process to buying a dress off the rack, versus having the fabric woven and then perfectly tailored to custom specifications.

At the end of the process Kariouk says that his clients are confident that the money they’re spending will result in great value for them and not merely as a financial investment but as a lifetime quality-of-life investment.

“Responsible design isn’t about imposing pre-determined solutions,” Kariouk concludes. “I could design a house in a week and have it engineered in another week, but the result would not be an incredibly special, intensely personal home. Design that does not yield a quality, unique project is, by definition, not design.” ■

PHOTO: PHOTOLUX STUDIOS; CHRISTIAN LALONDE