

a roof over SPACE

by gerald moorhead, FAIA

IN A CENTER-CITY NEIGHBORHOOD OF LOW-slung 1940s ranchettes now quickly filling with overblown synthetic stucco palazzi, one new house is more modest, quiet. This is not the traditional house with a front door and windows. Instead, architects Carrie Glassman Shoemake and Ernesto Maldonado designed a composition of basic geometric forms united beneath a simple gable roof—two rectangular volumes and a curved plane that actually turns out to be a spiral.

One volume contains the living room with two bedrooms above. The other encloses the kitchen and study with the master bedroom suite on the second floor. The space in between, cupped by the spiraling curve that forms the stairs and bar, is a two-story-high dining room. Narrow slots of glass, likened to zippers by Shoemake and Maldonado, separate the forms and admit washes of indirect natural light on interior walls.

Despite the appearance from the street of closed forms, the house feels very open, combining interior vistas through flowing spaces with large glass areas that create ambiguous separation between inside and out: the indoor living areas visually extend outside to the garden fences. The owner notes

that visitors are immediately drawn toward these windows where the glass starts at the floor.

Controlled daylight enters from all directions, through windows frosted for privacy and through skylights. Natural light, reflecting the owners' artistic bent, provides soft illumination for the display of art.

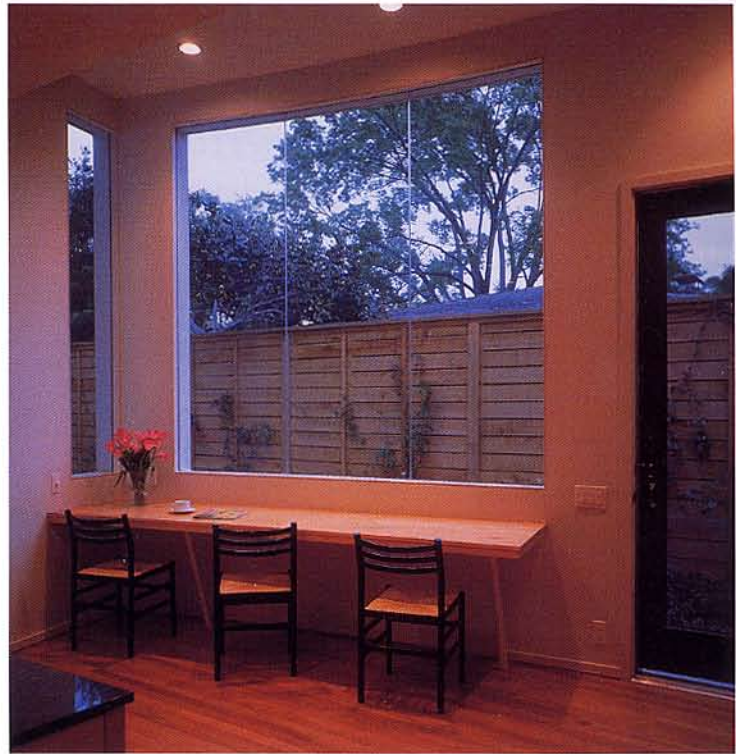
The overall character of the house is one of quiet order based, according to the architects, on the clients' interest in mathematics and the use of golden-mean proportions in plan and section. Subtle colors reinforce the feeling of calm. Pale blue and earth tones of sienna and ochre distinguish each geometric form. Special care was taken in the selection of whites for the interior, using blue or pink tints depending on the quality of light received on the surfaces.

While certainly not a traditional house in outward appearance, the interior has a very conventional order of rooms—living room, dining room, kitchen, bedrooms, etc. The distinction here is the way these spaces visually interrelate, with each other and with the outside spaces, through light and transparency. ■

Gerald Moorhead, FAIA, is a contributing editor to *Texas Architect*.

PROJECT Johnson Residence, Houston
CLIENT Pam and Carl Johnson
ARCHITECT Glassman Shoemake Maldonado Architect
CONTRACTOR Thomsen Company, Inc.
CONSULTANTS Robert Wright & Associates (structural engineering); Bill Hartman (landscape architecture); Will Fleming (horticulture)
PHOTOGRAPHER Hester + Hardaway

RESOURCES BLINDS, SHUTTERS, AND SHADES: Hunter Douglas; TUB AND SHOWER DOORS AND ENCLOSURES: Dauphin Glass; PAINTS: Benjamin Moore; GYPSUM BOARD FRAMING AND ACCESSORIES: U.S. Gypsum; SLIDING DOOR: Kawneer; METAL WINDOWS: Wausau Window & Wall Systems; NAUTILUS SHAPED SANI-BLASTED GLASS: Dauphin Glass; WATERPROOFING AND DAMPPROOFING: Grace Construction Products; BUILDING INSULATION: International Cellulose Corporation; VAPOR RETARDERS: Tyvek; STANDING SEAM METAL ROOF: Berridge Manufacturing; PRE-FABRICATED WOOD JOINTS AND TRUSSES: All Truss; GLUED-LAMINATE TIMBER: Anthony Power Beams



(opposite page) The curved plane spirals to form the staircase. Nontraditional on the outside, yet the interior is conventionally organized and includes (top left and top right) a kitchen, an adjacent breakfast nook, and (bottom left) a double-height dining room.

