



Whipplewood, Standish Winkelman Architecture

Honor Award for Excellence in Architecture

Architect: Eric Sokol

Project Team Members: Eric Sokol, Will Winkelman

General Contractor: Tom West

Structural Engineer: Albert Putnam Associates

Civil Engineer: Albert Frick Associates

Photography: Jeff Roberts



From the Jury:

"The Whipplewood Residence truly blends the program of an artist's home with the steep, heavily wooded, linear site. You arrive at a concrete fortress, which dissolves toward the landscape. The design includes a variety of quirky details, including a beautifully crafted wooden spiral staircase."

Project At-a-Glance:

Whipplewood is an artist's home that blends into the trees and wooded landscape of a steeply sloping site. The structure was designed to reach up into the treetops but also anchor solidly into the hillside, weathering naturally over time within its surroundings.

Project Summary:

The goal of the project was to replace the owner's old cottage, which had burned down, with a small, low-maintenance structure that would appear to be something of an extension of the natural landscape. Since the old cottage was close to the water, nestled among stands of tall mature trees, integrating the new building into the site and weaving it into the treetops was of critical importance.

The back of the house is a sculpted concrete base nestled into the hillside, and growing out of the ground to be visible to the exterior. This is meant to be durable and maintenance-free and was also a nod to the history of the fire with the old cottage. More importantly, it fits the vision of something emerging from the topography of the site while simultaneously being softened and reclaimed by the surrounding vegetation over time. To the water side of this base are large glass panels set inside a frame of steel and reclaimed timbers, looking out to the views of the treetops and the lake.

The arrival to the house is on the upper level, tethered to the back of the hillside, where guests leave their cars. A three-story plan emerged, with an entry/mudroom and wet bar at the top, accessible from the parking area via a sculpted footbridge. Beyond this entry, the room is an open deck and rooftop garden, cantilevered out into the treetops. Below this is the kitchen and main living area with another cantilevered deck, and under that, burrowed into the hillside, is the owner's suite. All three levels are connected by the central jewel of the house: a continuous helical stair, an element that the owner modeled and fabricated from reclaimed heart pine timbers using a combination of CNC machines and hand tools.