

SUMMITRIDGE RESIDENCE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

LOCATION

Beverly Hills, California

PURPOSE OF PROJECT/ ROLE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Located on a ridge atop the City of Beverly Hills, the project site affords spectacular views of the skyline. Our firm's landscape architects and architects worked together to develop a scheme that integrates the home and landscape into the existing steep hillside while maximizing the amount of useable interior and exterior space. The client desired a modern home with strong architectural lines and a contemporary landscape of formal plantings with a sculptural quality. The final design scheme consists of a series of box-like volumes that cascade down the hill. The two lowest volumes are nestled into the hill itself. The upper volumes, which create a vertical courtyard for the rooftop pool, provide privacy while preserving views outward. Outdoor gathering spaces occupy the rooftops of the various volumes, and wide bands of green roofs planted with agave provide a safety barrier. This arrangement preserves the strong architectural lines while eliminating the need for railings. At the ground floor, lush native plantings in hues of green and grey with bold blooms anchor and blend the architecture into the surroundings.

The architectural facade is composed of materials in a neutral palette, including stone, stucco, and metal panels. The material and color combinations on the facade, together with the terraced volumes and planted roofs, allow the structure to recede into the hillside. In the landscape, local boulders and decomposed granite complement the palette of the home, and native trees and plantings provide privacy, frame views, and stabilize the hillside.

At the property entrance, site walls enclose the auto court and provide a secluded garden courtyard at the home's entry. Each terraced architectural volume opens directly to the outdoor spaces at the back of the home, towards the vista over the city. These outdoor spaces include outdoor dining, a lounge with a stone fireplace, and the pool terrace with chaise lounges. The ground floor terrace leads to a vantage point at the crest of the hill.

SIGNIFICANCE

Creative solutions, conceived collaboratively by the architecture and landscape architecture teams, provided the client with the desired program, while successfully integrating the structure and gardens into the site. Inventive use of architectural volumes provides privacy and creates expanded opportunities for useable outdoor space on occupiable green roofs. Remaining rooftops are utilized for photovoltaic and thermal cells, which provide the home and garden with renewable energy. The client's desire for a low-maintenance, low-water-use garden with sculptural plant forms was achieved through a combination of succulents and native plants. The result softens the architecture on all levels and further blends the structure into the site.

SPECIAL FACTORS

The project utilizes a number of environmentally sensitive and sustainable design elements, including the following:

- Exterior spaces and gardens are terraced, to work with the natural topography of the site.
- Garden paths are composed of permeable materials such as decomposed granite and mulch. Boulders and decomposed granite are locally sourced.
- Green roofs naturally insulate the interior of the house, while increasing the permeable area of the site.
- Plant palette is a combination of native plants and succulents, both of which are low-maintenance and low-water use. Native hillside plantings provide natural erosion control.
- Drip irrigation ensures efficient water use.
- Photovoltaic panels on the upper roof work to heat the pool, while thermal panels on the adjacent roof provide interior climate control.