A 15 Year Library for 10,000 Books

Potomac, Maryland

This house was designed and intended to be built in two stages, with over a decade between.

The first stage included all the normal spaces for family life — living, dining, kitchen and bedrooms. The second, illustrated here and recently designed and finished, is a library for 10,000 books.

This room occupies the center pavilion of the finished three-pavilion house and was left as a clean dark shell in the first build, while the family lived around it in anticipation of, and during the planning for, the second stage.

Now, a carefully detailed and constructed three-level library opens to views over the Potomac River below.

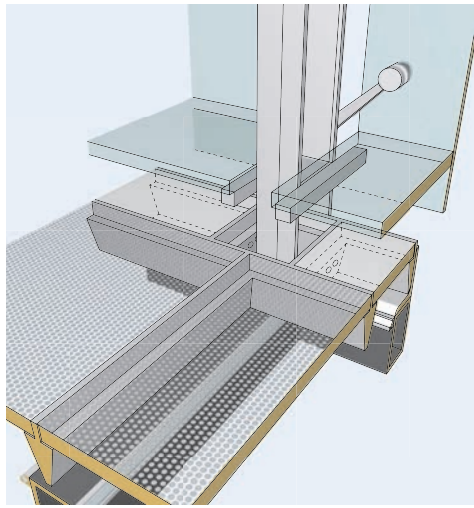
The first two levels of the library open and connect directly to the main spaces of the house, completing the original design and providing formal living and dining spaces .

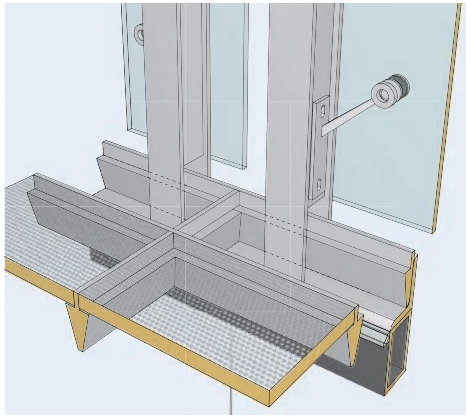
Floating above all this, accessed by a two-story spiral stair, is a glass-floored suspended aerie. Used as a small reading space by the owners, the aerie accesses a small outside balcony, floating 30 feet above the ground.

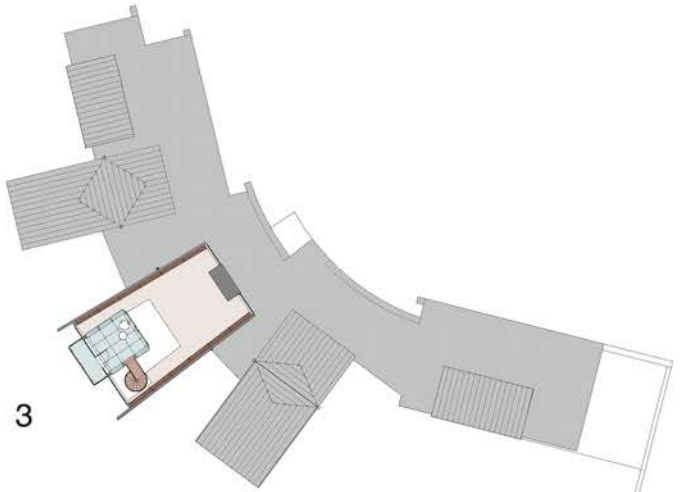
Steel windows and mahogany casework are extended from the original house, with lighting and HVAC integrated into and on the shelving.

After over a decade of design and construction, the centerpiece of the project is complete, and the house finally made whole.

The upcoming final stage is the design and construction of a terraced garden overlooking the Potomac. Patience indeed has its virtues.







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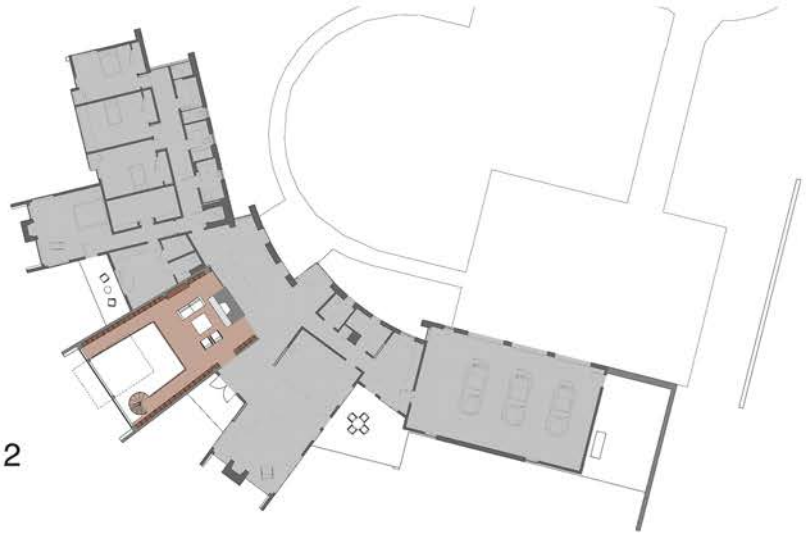

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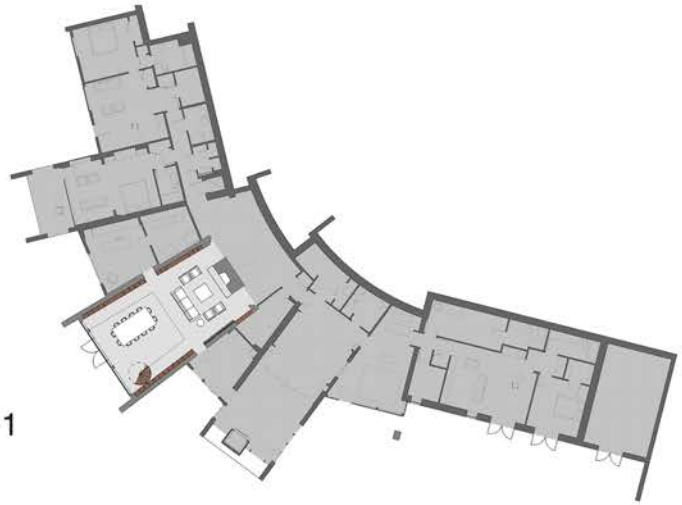

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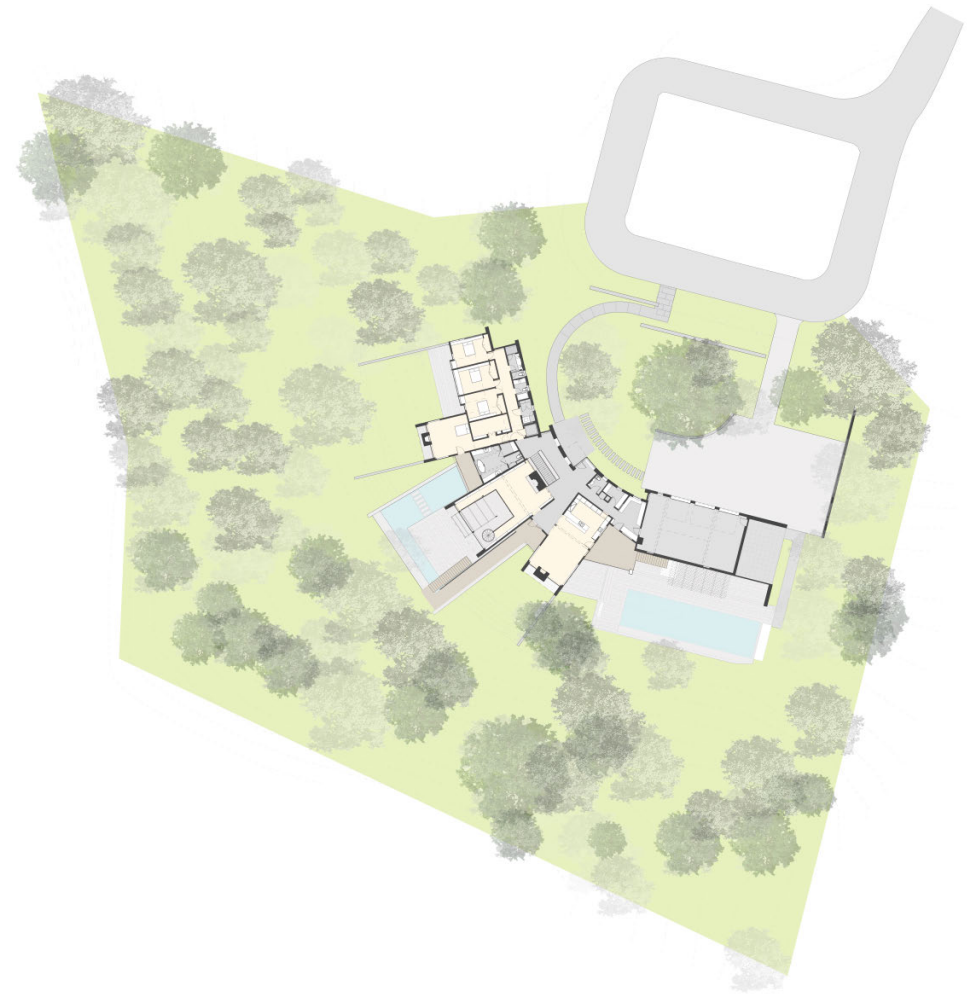

Exterior of house completed in first phase