

ÄLVHEM, Centreville, Maryland

Project Category: Residential Architecture

Project Synopsis: “Alvhem” means River Home in Swedish and reflects the owner’s family heritage. The house is located on a partially wooded bluff that overlooks the Corsica River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay on Maryland’s Eastern Shore and is intended as a weekend retreat. The owner had a pretty clear vision: the house should feel like a “modern Swedish farmhouse”, it should have a single slope roof with the high side being mostly glass and facing the river and the river view should be visible from all of the major living spaces.

The house is approximately 4500 square feet of finished area plus a three-car garage, screened-in porch and utility areas. In addition to the owner providing the vision of the basic shape of the house in section, he also had an idea of a stone “moat” that would surround the house and separate it from the more naturalistic site. The plan is an “L” shape with the garage being one leg of the “L” and the house being the other. The garage and parking court are separated from the house by the stone moat. The connection from the garage and parking court to the main part of the house is across two precast concrete bridges, one which is enclosed as an office and the other that is open and leads to the main entry. All the storm water that falls on the house is collected either in the porous pavers of the parking court or the collection system in the stone moat, and directed to a drywell.

Located on the main floor is the two story high great room, a guest bedroom with bath, master bedroom suite, laundry & mudroom, office and powder room. The upper level has another guest bedroom with bath and a guest suite. On the lower level is a media room, powder



room, and mechanical and storage areas.

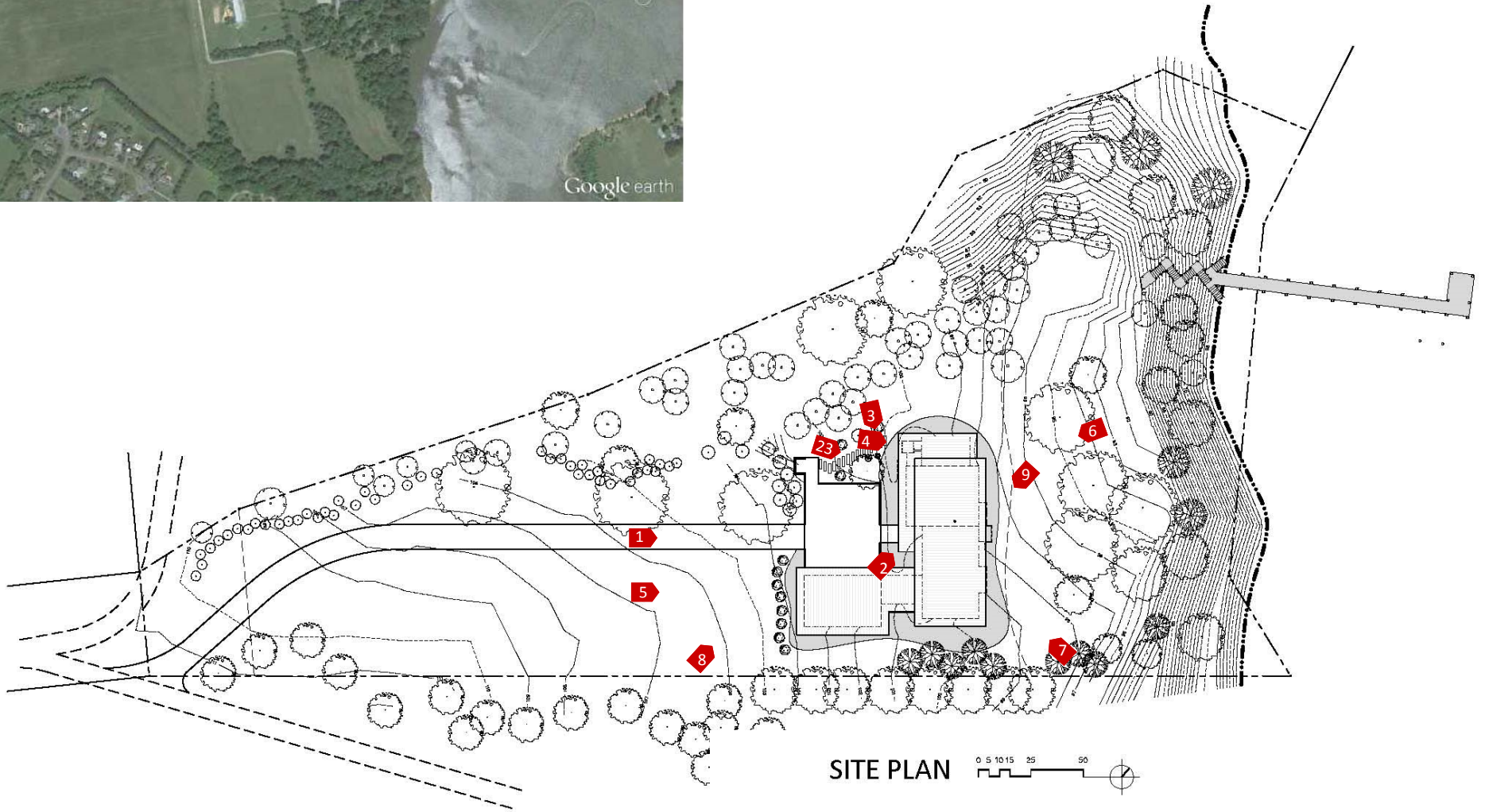
The notion of the modern Swedish farm house inspired the use of a modern timber frame which is made up of southern pine glue laminated timbers and galvanized tension rods and bolts. The structural bay is 12’ wide and is used as an organizing design element. All of the ceilings are also knotty southern pine. The heavy wood frame is contrasted with the wall of glass that frames the view of the river, the stainless steel cable railing around the balcony and stair and the highly polished concrete floors. Both sides of the main body of the house have a 4’ high clerestory of polycarbonate glazing that lets in diffused lighting to most of the living spaces. The clerestory is interrupted by a clear glass window that accentuates the entry access and allows for a view from the upper level balcony.

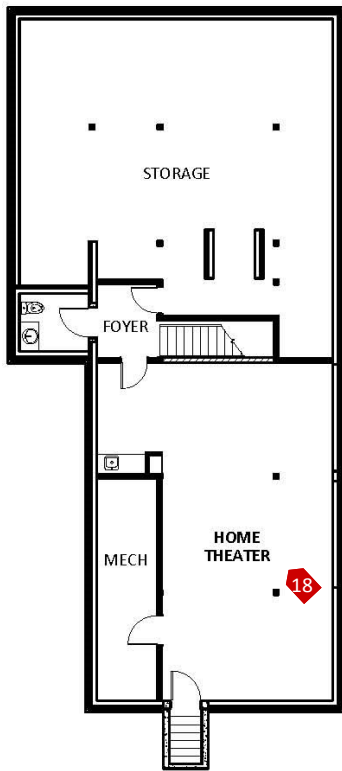
The contrast of natural and modern materials is also evident on the exterior. The pine beams and pine soffit overhang four feet beyond the exterior walls. The main door and the screened porch framing are also pine. This contrasts with the grays and blacks of the zinc standing seam roofing, corrugated aluminum siding, fiber cement siding and sandblasted concrete block.



CONTEXT

The site is a 2 acre parcel that is situated on the Corsica River and adjacent to a private high school campus on one side and a private residence on the other. A 25' elevation change and a wooded shoreline separate the house from the river. The lateral edges of the property are defined by ravines leading to the river.

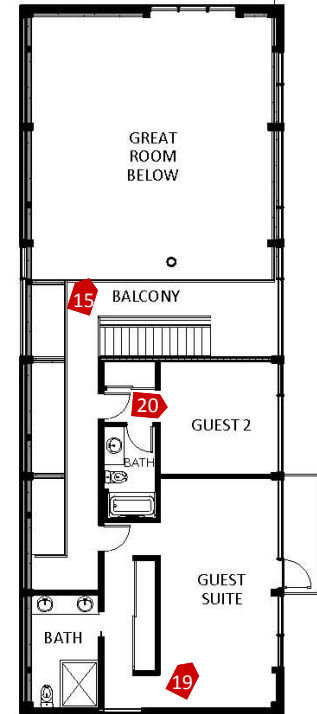




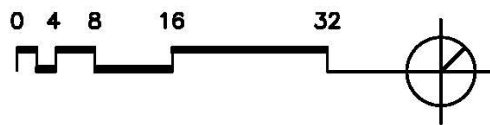
LOWER LEVEL



GROUND LEVEL



UPPER LEVEL





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