



Moving Over

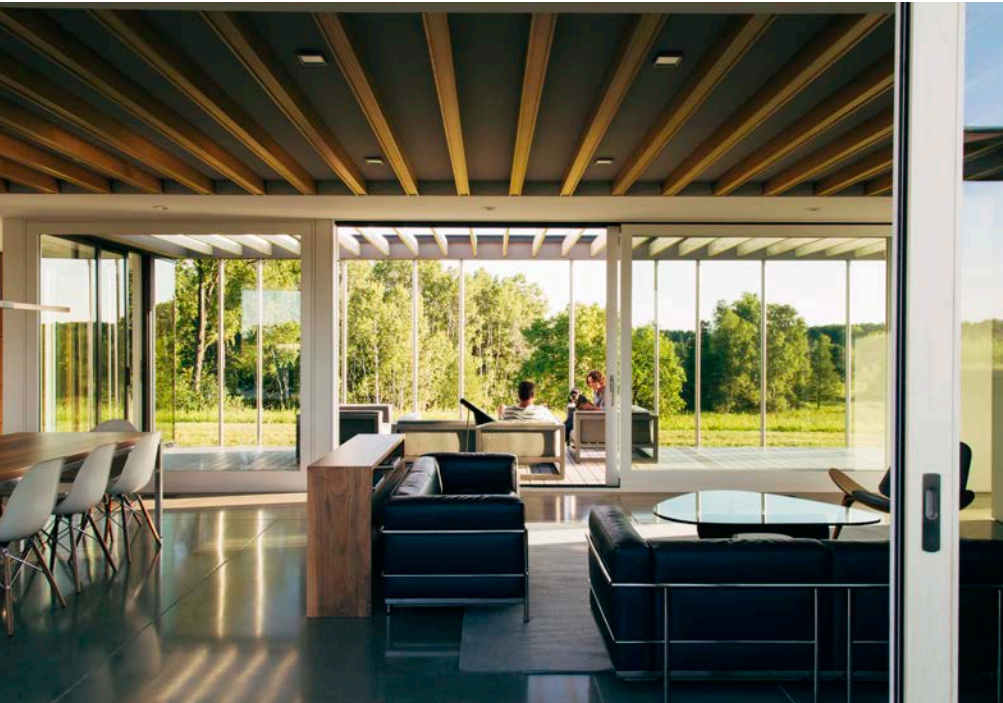
A couple build a new house set deep into the landscape of their Wisconsin homestead, making room for more family.



When massive glaciers made their way across Wisconsin 18,000 years ago, they left behind long, fingery strands of ice that collided, scraping and shaping the earth into the rocky terrain now known as the Kettle Moraine. Architect Sebastian Schmaling reflected on that dramatic geological upheaval as he explored ways to connect the house he was designing for Chris and Sally Candee to its natural history. “What fascinated us all was the dynamic that had shaped and formed this land,” says Schmaling, a founding principal at Milwaukee-based Johnsen Schmaling Architects. “You can imagine these parallel fingers, or tongues, of the glaciers moving next to each other at different speeds as they melted away.” Those spindly shapes became the inspiration for the Candees’ 2,870-square-foot residence, which comprises three long, linear volumes. They’re connected side-by-side but staggered horizontally to suggest they slid together randomly, similar to the long-ago lobes that molded the ground

below. It’s just one way in which the three-bedroom, single-level house “blends with and settles into the land in a really nice way,” as Chris Candee puts it. The couple own 35 acres in the town of Campbellsport, part of a 400-acre parcel held by Chris’s family since the 1950s and where he grew up as one of nine kids. Chris and Sally built their first house on that land 20 years ago and raised their own two children there. Empty nesters now, they recently decided to downsize but stay in the same spot. Making the place an observatory for their surroundings was the main objective. “The house is on a bird path,” says Sally, who loves to talk about the area’s wildlife and the powerful lightning storms that fire up that part of the Midwest. “We’ll see cranes, geese, and herons,” adds Chris, “and there was a huge owl we saw the other day.” They had additional motivation for building a new house on the land. Their older daughter and her husband were returning from three years in Italy, where >

Dozens of slender steel rods (opposite), installed at arbitrary points, echo the grove of birch trees that sits behind Chris and Sally Candee’s secluded home in eastern Wisconsin. “In winter, when there are no leaves on the trees, it’s so incredibly beautiful,” says Sally. A concrete retaining wall runs parallel to the driveway, which leads to a camouflaged garage door (above). Set flush with the walls around it and clad in the same pre-finished cedar siding as the rest of the house, it practically disappears.



The living area (above) features a pair of LC3 Divano sofas from Cassina and a walnut console made by Chris. In the bedroom (below left), an AJ table lamp by Arne Jacobsen for Louis Poulsen joins a Nelson Thin Edge Bed by George Nelson from Design Within Reach.

Tiered plantings embellish the sunken courtyard (below right). Chris and Sally sit at a Portica dining table from Room & Board (opposite, bottom). A Stickbulb pendant hangs above. The floor-to-ceiling windows and sliders in the kitchen (opposite, top) are by Marvin.

he was stationed in the U.S. Navy. The Candees were hoping the couple and their two children might be interested in taking over the older residence. “They liked the idea, as they have two kids, and being able to raise them in the community, and connected to our family’s land, was a special thing,” says Chris.

The new house, about 500 yards away, is sited on a slope that drops roughly six feet from the front to the back. In the foreground, there’s a long, flat stretch of prairie that still holds an old abandoned barn, a remnant from the land’s farming past. Behind it, the lot descends to a narrow creek and, on the other side, a small grove of birch trees.

The trees guided the structure’s placement and design. As visitors approach the residence, they can look through the glass entry door down an interior hallway and then out the glass rear wall for a carefully framed view of the grove beyond.

A 150-foot-long concrete retaining wall runs perpendicular to the house, right about at its midpoint. On one side of the wall are the driveway and garage; on the other, a rise of land that submerges half the building’s facade, so that only a set of clerestory windows is visible above ground.

Inside and out, Schmaling’s goal was to reduce every plane to its bare minimum. On the interior, the house has little trim and no baseboards. In the living room, a flat black metal panel contains a

modest wood-burning fireplace that sits flush with, and adjacent to, a wood media cabinet with pocketing doors.

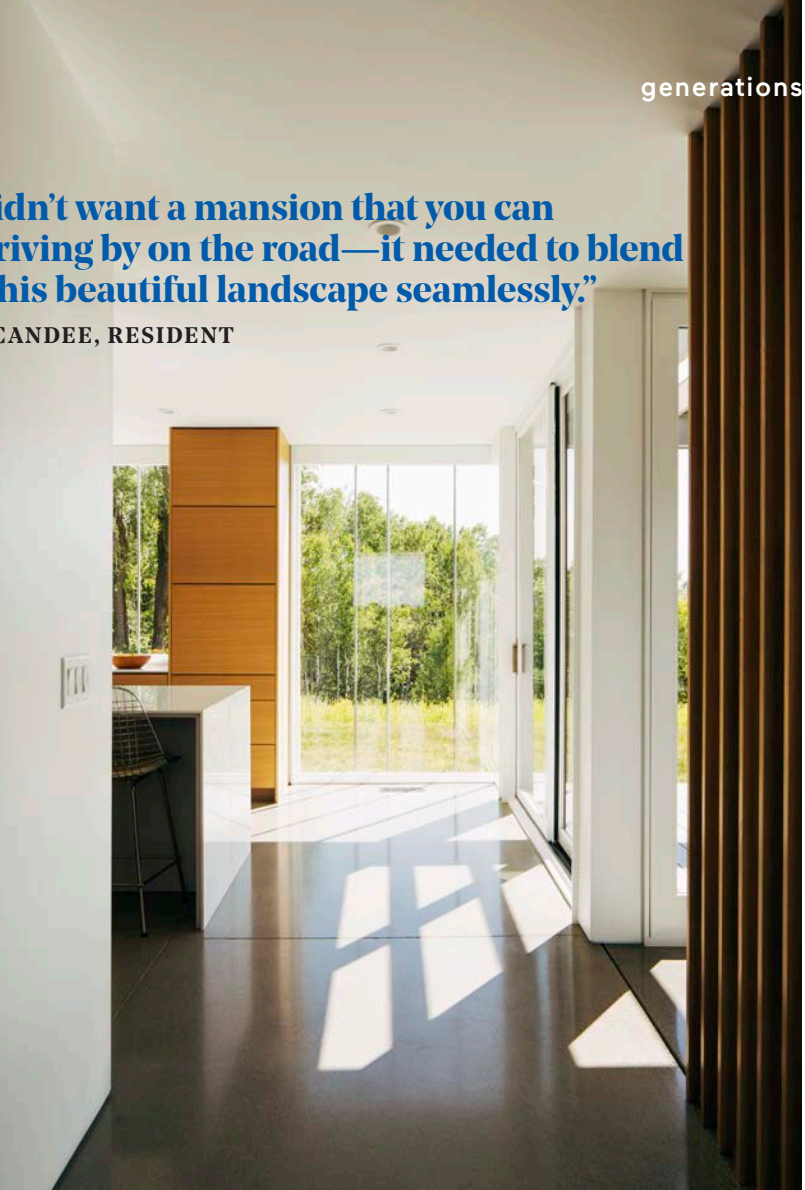
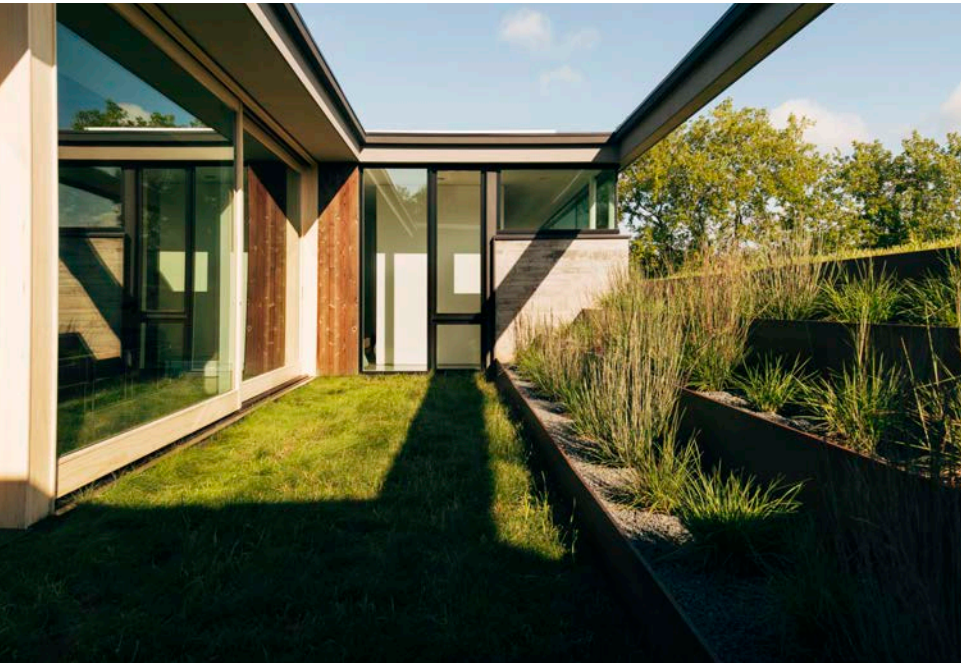
The Candees wanted an open flow between the living room, kitchen, and dining area, but they asked Schmaling to keep those elements visually distinct so they could separate food prep duties from their relaxation space. His solution: combine the living and dining areas into one room but set the cooking area slightly off-axis and separate the two with a wooden screen.

Chris, who enjoys working in his wood shop after retiring from a 34-year career in retail merchandising, built a number of pieces of furniture. Sally, a formidable knitter, partnered with the designer on a “yarn room” whose main feature is an entire wall of built-in cubby shelving for hundreds of colorful skeins.

They embraced Schmaling’s concept of keeping things simple, and they’ve occupied the house in the same spirit. They avoid clutter, going so far as to resist installing window treatments, except in their bedroom, where they need to mitigate heat from the morning sunlight.

It helps that the residence is a quarter-mile off the nearest road and the only close neighbors they have are their daughter and her family, who recently made the move into the old place. “They’re loving their new home in Wisconsin,” says Chris, “and we love having them there.” ■

ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES + WRIGHT



“We didn’t want a mansion that you can see driving by on the road—it needed to blend into this beautiful landscape seamlessly.”

SALLY CANDEE, RESIDENT

