

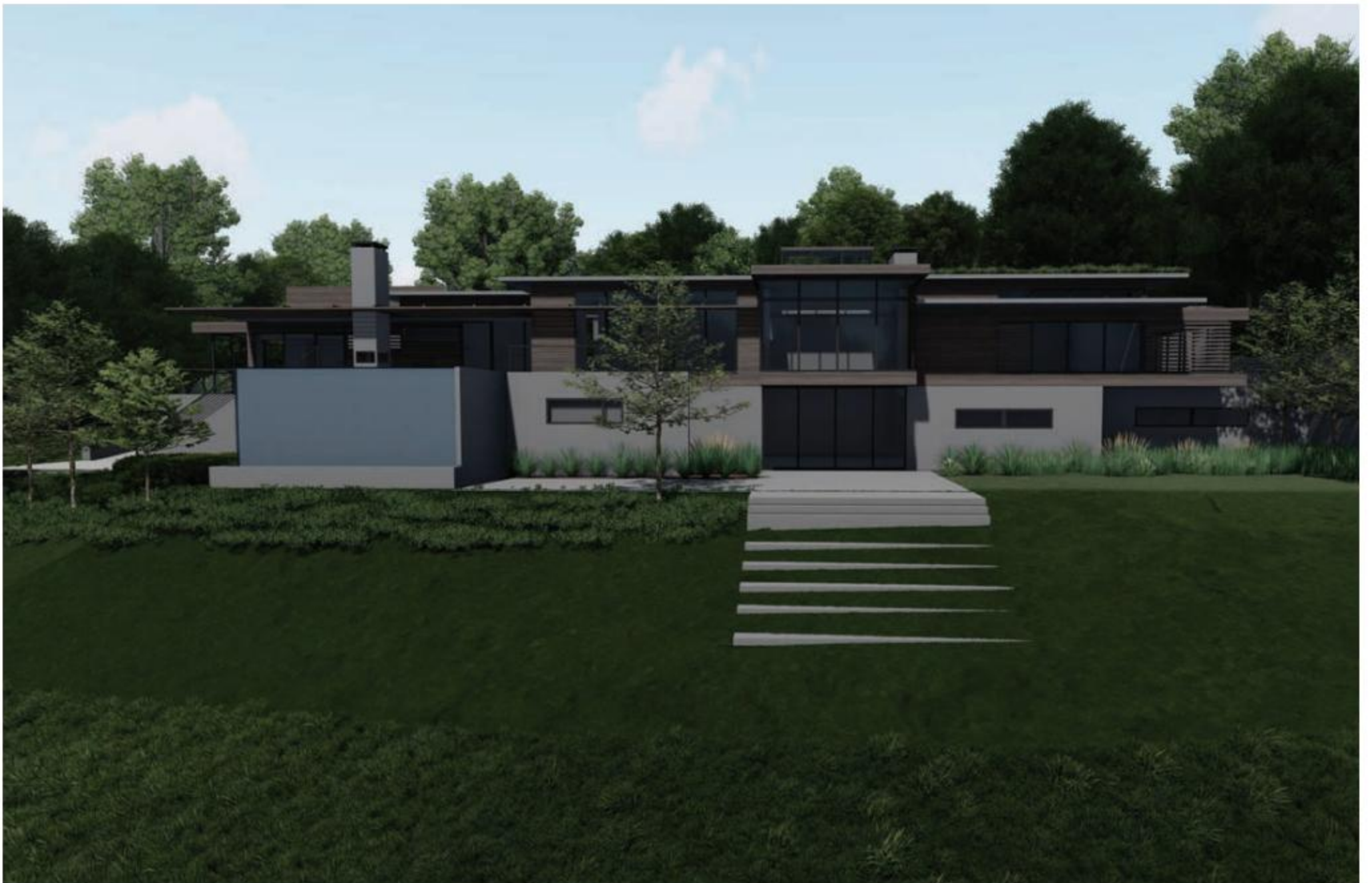
DESIGN + DECOR

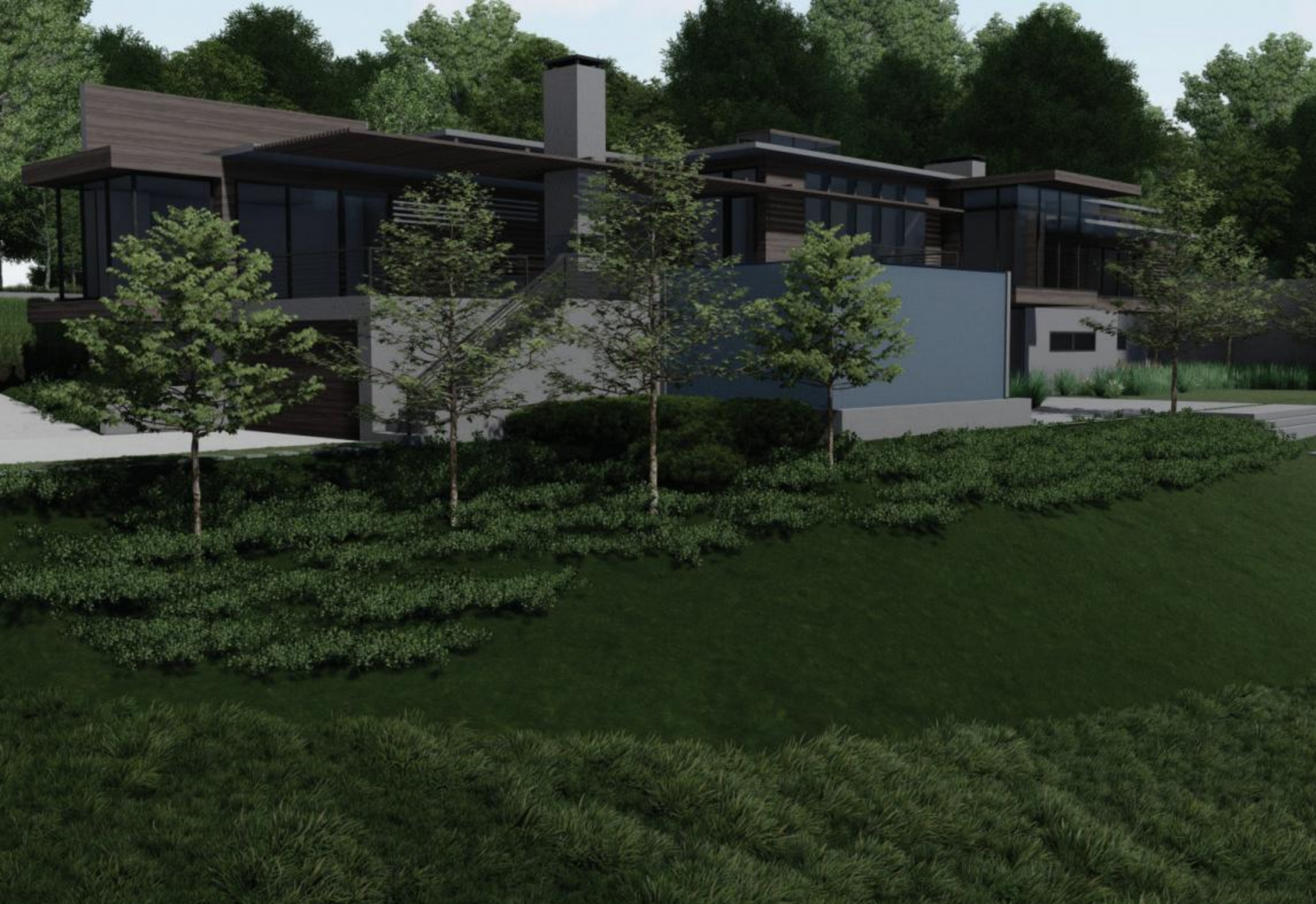
CONNECTICUT
NEW JERSEY
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THE *ARCHITECTS* ISSUE



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A New Jersey home tucked into the hillside about 45 minutes south of New York City encapsulates all that is biophilic design. Michael Moritz, principal of Stonewater Architecture, masterfully designed this home for his clients, taking into consideration their desire to embrace the spectacular view. “My understanding of biophilic design as an architect is connecting the inside and outside nature,” says Michael, “but also using the design to not impact the environment.”

“We approached the project with the idea of not disturbing the hillside,” he continues. “It was a lot that hadn’t been built on before, and the owner didn’t want to be the person who came in and plopped a house right on top of the hill.” Instead, the client wanted to follow a Frank Lloyd Wright philosophy where the structure is built into the hillside. It was also the owner’s desire that the home not be visible from the street—in fact, all you can see as you approach the home is a wall with several glass panels that serve as the front entrance. “The hill rolls up and on top of the roof, so when you see it from the street, all you see are trees and the roof garden; you see very little of the home,” says Michael, explaining the approach.

The hillside home is all about embracing the New Jersey change of seasons as well. With the residence overlooking a

meadow, the owners can enjoy the flowers from spring through fall, and then take in the gray and snow that rolls in during the winter. The south-facing home looks toward hundreds of acres that make up a land trust, so it won’t be developed. The windows in the back are designed so that every room has a view that takes in the surrounding nature.

One unique challenge of the home that fought against a biophilic design was the fact that the owner is a car collector and needs a lot of garage space. To overcome this, Michael designed a lower-level garage with a car turntable, so what looks like a one-car garage actually houses six cars. This not only cuts down on the number of garage doors, but also on the amount of pavement and asphalt necessary for the garage. Other design elements of the home that embrace nature are the first-floor infinity-edge pool and skylights throughout the home that provide light in the areas built into the hillside. Blending seamlessly into its surroundings, this home is a perfect example of combining nature and architecture.

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