



An odd shape used to maximum advantage

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It's clear that the big walnut tree wanted to have a say in the design. So too did Eliel Saarinen.

Oh sure, architect Terence Van Elslander of Van Elslander Carter Architects will get all the credit and the homeowners will get all the enjoyment. But this Islington Village overhaul of a tired 1940s bungalow with a 1970s mansard roof addition turned out as well as it did because of that tree, and because of the example set by the Finnish master (1873-1950) at the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

First, the tree: Mr. Van Elslander's original design saw it reduced to a pile of firewood and replaced by a courtyard containing the home's principle entrance. After losing a two-year battle with the city, however, he and the homeowners (who asked that their names not be used) welcomed the challenge of retaining the tree by radically reconfiguring the plan. Now, what would have been a "walkthrough" room is a "destination" that features a towering seamless glass corner window, a radiant-heated concrete slab floor and a long window with an awesome view of that big walnut.

A little less direct, the connection to Mr. Saarinen is no less significant: Slowly and lovingly over the course of a quarter-century, he designed the campus and some of the buildings at Cranbrook, which had a "profound impact" on Mr. Van Elslander while he was studying for his master's degree in the late 1980s. "Everything just works together," the 50-year-old architect says, "and you can see how the whole thing develops from a romanticism to a very severe modernism and there's no seam, no disjunction there."

In other words, by thinking things through and taking it slow, Mr. Saarinen successfully married new ideas with old and achieve an incredible consistency.

And that's what the Islington Village homeowners were searching for: Someone who could slowly take this 2,000-square-foot house and its unusual trapezoidal corner lot and polish them

both into modern jewels. "You have to think of this as someone you're going to be working with for a very long time," one of the homeowners says.

Make no mistake, despite the battleship-grey exterior, this house is a jewel that shines brighter than those around it. Open the built onsite, ipe wood front door and a large window on the opposite wall enlarges the foyer by stretching visual space all the way into the long corner of the lush, green lot. Step into the foyer and look past the dining room (originally the kitchen) to the back of house and there are many openings - in walls, shelves and traditional windows - that also borrow space by bringing other rooms, or the even the outdoors, in. "I'm really interested in seeing through the building," Mr. Van Elslander says. "Everywhere you stand you can see out in three ways; trying to get diagonal views is important."

It's also important to use the odd-shaped lot to one's advantage. With four yards (rather than two) that narrow and taper at unusual places, allowing them to penetrate into every area of the home creates the illusion that it's much larger.

No illusions of spaciousness are needed in the kitchen, however. Now the "social hub" of the home, what was once two small rooms in the old house is now both a cook's paradise - with a massive Caesarstone island, induction cooktop, wall-mounted exhaust fan and zebrawood-faced cabinets - and the perfect place for gathering guests.

Down a few steps from the long kitchen is the "destination" family room with the seamless glass window. While this room is an addition, Mr. Van Elslander has blurred the transition by slipping the family room ceiling back into the kitchen.

The staircase to the second floor - "spruced up" but still mostly original - now heads in two directions rather than one as it did previously, but looks as if it has always done so. A right turn leads to the original bedrooms, now with walls removed to create larger rooms. A left turn leads to the new master bedroom with its seamless corner windows, which dissolve interior boundaries and, again, create the illusion of space. An ensuite bathroom, outfitted with wooden slats, has the look and feel of a Finnish sauna.

Throughout the home, there is a sense of craftsmanship, of careful blending of old and new, of a Saarinen-like attention to detail. Where ceiling meets wall, edges are as crisp as a freshly made bed; a half-wall of glass between the kitchen and family room anchors to the floor with oversized sculptural stainless steel hardware; shelving for the homeowners' impressive collection of Incan pottery is visually light yet makes a dramatic statement. Mr. Van Elslander gives much of the credit to contractor Divine Homes.

"Small but mighty" is how the architect describes his four-person firm, but he could just as well be describing this project: With the careful addition of just 1,300 square feet and a thorough understanding of the peculiarities of the lot, architectural sleight of hand has been achieved by creating a house that feels twice its size. But, along with the smoke and mirrors, there is much substance and spirit.

The spirit, perhaps, of the modernists of old ... and maybe even an old walnut tree.

65 AVONHURST RD. ISLINGTON VILLAGE, ETOBICOKE

PREFACE

In the heart of Islington Village, Etobicoke, yet minutes to Kipling/Islington then onto QEW or Golf Course/Public Transit/Shopping/Hospital/Church/School/Restaurants...i.e. the Works, a magnificent sculpture of straight lines and ultra luxurious appointments (Axor Starck Fixtures, Starck X Toilet, Kohler DTV Electronic Shower System with Pulse Massage, Floating Zebra Wood//CaesarStone Counters, Acid etched Mirror Backsplash, Miele Induction Cook Top, Bosch Fridge/Freezer, Bosch Stainless Steele Oven, Loewen Windows, customized low profile piping, Built-in 5.1 Paradim Signature Series Ceiling Speakers & Wall subwoofer....too many to list) rises up in a leafy neighbourhood.

Flushed with natural lighting plus an added fun take in the Kitchen. Roaring fireplaces, durable IPE hardwood floors, exquisite finishing details meticulously micromanaged by the Architect, sumptuous Personal Spa - a Kohler DTV Electronic Programmable Shower System with Pulse Massage (Ceiling Rainforest Unit + Body Spray), bubbling oversized Whirlpool Bath, heated IPE floors with drainage, commissioned Waterfall cascading down a Rock Sculpture onto a waiting Pond, imported Exotic Plants i) Main Garden with acclimatized trees - Tulip, Apple, Southern Evergreen Magnolia and Sharon Trees, Japanese Maples and Hakone, variegated Ivy Groundcover, 15' Bamboo many varieties of lilies and flowering Echinacea - for cutting, roses and tall grass, ii) Hosta Gardens with an accent concrete wall echoing the lines of the House - Privacy Protected by a Cedar Hedge about 8'tall, magnificently rising above the fence from the road; iii)Japanese Garden Lounge; iv) Waterfall Garden backed by a 15' curtain of Bamboos and Cedar Hedge; and v) A Private Garden for the reflective moments with an Antique Bench, built around a majestic Black Walnut Tree.

A distinct piece-de-resistance functional sculpture by famed architect, Terence van Elslander of Van Elslander and Carter Architects.

Interesting Notes include: i) The Circular Drive is asphalt with a centre piece of Black Indian Limestone which include four Redbud Trees and Evergreen Monkey Grass Groundcover in planter surrounded by loose pebbles; ii) Zoned High Velocity Heating System: Basement/North and South Sides - the entire house will take 15 minutes to heat; iii) Built-in zoned lighting programmable or one-touch on/off switches; and iv) 2x Air Handlers.

Just move in and enjoy!

SITE DOCUMENTATION

MAIN LEVEL 8'4 Ceilings

FOYER: 12'3(3.73) x 6'4(1.93)

4 x pot lights

Large LOEWEN Douglas Fir framed window overlooking Gardens

Built-in Zebra wood Hall Closet

Heated Ceramic Hardwood IPE floors

LIVING ROOM: 21'4(6.50) x 11'2(3.42)

IPE Hardwood Floors

Open face Gas Fireplace

7x Halogen Pot Lights

Large LOEWEN Douglas Fir framed Window (Relieved w/Groove for a Floating Effect) overlooking Front

Medium LOEWEN Douglas Fir framed window (Relieved w/Groove for a Floating Effect) overlooking Front

DINING ROOM: 21'10(6.65) x 10'7(3.23)

IPE Hardwood Floors

6x Halogen pot Lights

2 x Large LOEWEN Picture Windows overlooking Patio

Built-in Display Glass Shelving 6x Pot Lights Open to Stairs

Chandelier

POWDER ROOM: 6'3(1.9) x 4'11(1.51)

Zebra Wood Floating Counter with Lower Light Effect

Ceramic Walls and Floors

4 x Halogen Pot Lights

STARCK X toilet by DURIVIT

AXON STARCK fixtures faucet t by HANSGROHE

KITCHEN: 13'9(4.21) x 21'5(6.53)

Open Concept - Step Down to Loff

Glowing Acid Etched Mirror Backsplash

MIELE Induction cook Top tove

Garburator

MIELE OPTIMA SERIES Stainless Steel with Zebra Wood Veneer Dishwasher

Appliance Garage

BOSCH Zebra wood flushed fridge

Built in BOSCH freezer

Custom Zebra Wood Upper and Lower Cabinets

Deep-set drawers

CAESARSTONE Counters

Centre Island 10'x4' - Built-in Drawers for Garbage (1x) + Recycling (1x) + Compost (2x)

LED lighting - Fixed Colour or Timed Rotation by Remote

GE Stainless Steel Microwave

BOSCH built-in Stainless Steel Oven

FABER flush mount Stainless Steel Ventilation

2x Large LOEWEN Douglas Fir Framed Windows(Relieved w/Groove for a Floating Effect) overlooking yard

11x Halogen Pot Lights

Built-in MONOGRAM Stainless Steel Wine Fridge

Beveled Glass French Door - Walk out to Side Deck

THE LOFT: 15'8(4.78) x 16'5(5) 9'11 ceiling height

Steps to family room are reinforced to hold up massive weight

Brackets on glass are used to hold up windows on skyscrapers

Heated concrete floors polished to reveal red granite

5x Built-in 5.1 PARADIGM SIGNATURE SERIES Speakers

Built-in PARADIGM SIGNATURE SERIES Subwoofer

Gas fireplace

Built in zebra wood

Floor to ceiling French beveled glass door - Walk out to yard

Overlooks Waterfall

Glass exterior walls overlooking Japanese garden and fountain

3x LOEWEN Douglas Fir framed windows overlooking Japanese garden

12x halogen potlights

SECOND LEVEL 8' Ceilings

Carpeted stairs

Skylight

2x Display Alcoves

Chandelier

Stairs divides South (Master Sanctum Santorum) and North (Guest) Wings

MASTER SANCTUM SANTORUM

ANTEROOM: 3'5(1.06) x 6'2(1.88)

Heated IPE hardwood floors

Floor-to-Ceiling LOEWEN Window overlooking Front (SunShades)

WALK IN/THROUGH CLOSET: 11'7(3.54) x 7'4(2.25)

8x halogen pot lights

2x Pocket Douglas Fir doors

Custom Built in shelving

Heated IPE hardwood floors

MASTER BEDROOM: 12'9(3.88) x 24'7(7.51)

Heated IPE Hardwood Floors

2x Large LOEWEN Douglas Fir framed Seamless Corner Glass Window overlooking Private Garden and Front

12x Halogen Pot Lights

5x BOSE angled Built-in Speakers

2x Swinging Floor-to-Ceiling Douglas Fir Pivot Doors

MASTER ENSUITE BATHROOM: 16'2(4.94) x 8'1(2.47)

6 piece

Heated IPE Hardwood Floors

Water closet – STARCK X Toilet by DURIVIT

Double Sinks with TOTO Faucets

LOEWEN Douglas Fir framed bottom frosted Corner Window

KOHLER DTV Electronic Shower System

- Four head ceiling Rain Shower
- One body spray
- Customizable individual control settings and pulse massage

- IPE Hardwood Planked Floor Drainage System

NEPTUNE Jacuzzi

9x Halogen Pot Lights

NORTH WING LANDING: 4'7(1.41) x 14'11(4.55)

Wall-to-Wall Carpet

SECOND BEDROOM: 21'1(6.43) x 12'2(3.72)

Wall-to-Wall Carpet

2x Lights

3x Large LOEWEN Douglas Fir Framed Windows

Double Door Closet

ENSUITE BATHROOM: 5'6(1.69) x 8'1(2.48)

Frost Glass Door

3x piece full bathroom

DURAVIT Floating Sink

STARCK Toilet by DURIVIT

LOEWEN Picture Window

Stand-up Shower

2x Wall Sconces

1 x Ceiling Lights

Ceramic Floors

THIRD BEDROOM: 10'1(3.08) x 19'4(5.91)

Wall-to-wall Carpet

2x Double Door Closet

2x Light

2x Large LOEWEN Douglas Fir framed Picture Windows

BATHROOM + LAUNDRY ROOM: 6'6(2) x 11'8(3.55)

4 Piece

SAMSUNG Silver Washer

SAMSUNG Dryer

1x LOEWEN Window overlooking Gardens

6x Pot Lights

Tub

Shower head

STARCK toilet by DURIVIT

Sink

Built-in translucent Linen Closet

Ceramic Floors

LOWER LEVEL - 6'3 Ceilings

Stairs - IPE Hardwood and Broadloom

Access to garage - Garage: 2 car

LOWER LEVEL LANDING: 3'9(1.14) x 14'7(4.45)

2x Potlights

6'3 Ceilings

FAMILY ROOM: 10'9(3.29) x 27'9(8.47)

10x Pot Lights

Oversized window overlooking Gardens

Fireplace (wood) Floor-to-Ceiling Red Brick

Wall-to-wall Carpet

FOURTH BEDROOM: 14'5(4.41) x 9'11(3.02)

Wall-to-wall Carpet

Window overlooking Patio

2x Pot Lights

SEPARATED BY CLOSED DOOR TO -

EXTRA ROOM : 11'1(3.39) x 11'8(3.56)

Vinyl floor

Built in Cabinets

FRIDGEAIRE White Fridge

GIBSON electric stove 4 elements

1x window overlooking yard

Fluorescent lighting

6'3 ceiling height

BATHROOM: 11'8(3.57) x 7'7(2.32) irregular

3 Piece

Wall Sconce

Stand up Shower

Vinyl Floors

Overlooks Yard

COLD STORAGE ROOM/WINE CELLAR

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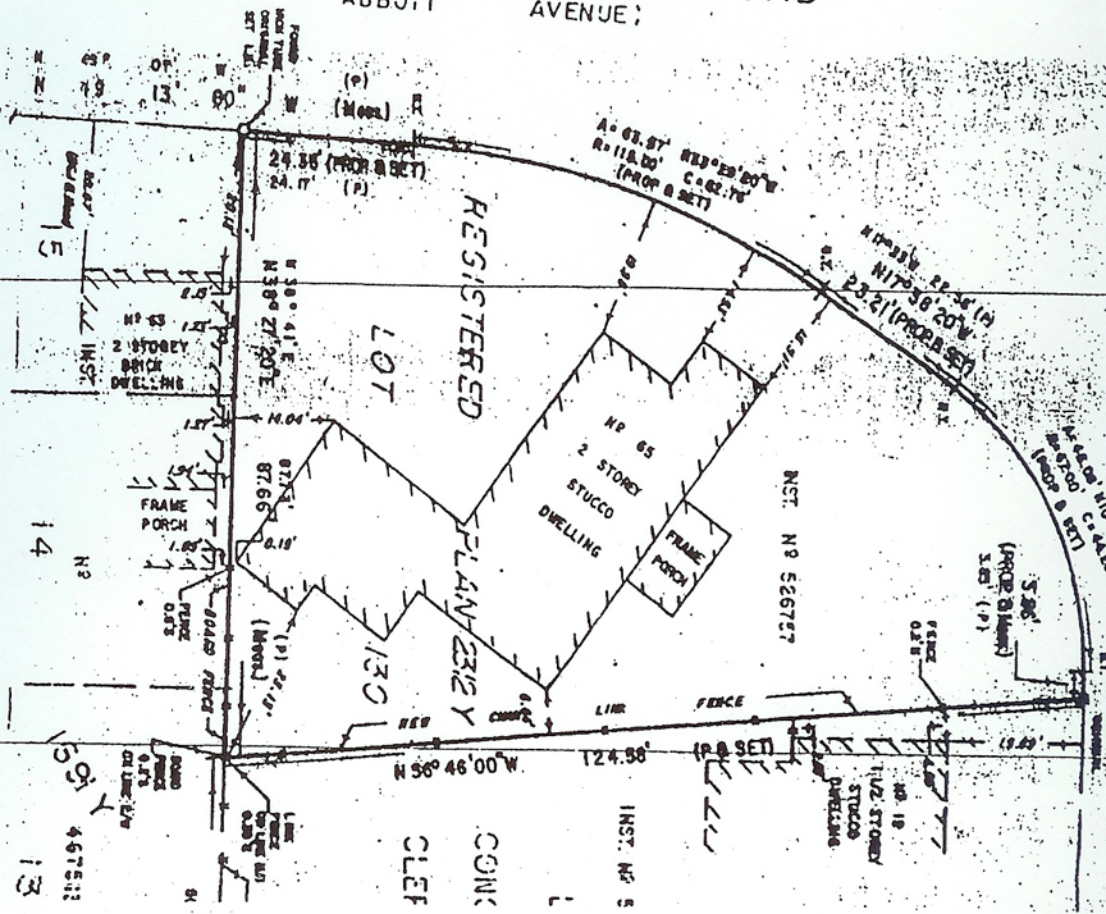
URST

(FORMERLY

ABBOTT

AVENUE;

ROAD



Formed
from
TOWN
OVERLAP
ST. L.

(P)
(Moss)

24.58' (PROB SET)
24.7' (P)

A = 67.97' BEYOND 20' W
R = 118.00' C = 62.70'
(PROB SET)

N 17° 58' 20" W
23.21' (PROB SET)

REGISTERED

LOT

PLAN 2312 Y

NO 65
2 STOREY
STUCCO
DWELLING

FRAME
PORCH

NST. N8 56727

(PROB SET)
S 28'
3rd (P)

FRAME
PORCH

RAILS
OFFS

(P) 22.11'

N 56° 46' 00" W 124.58'

LIME

FENCE

(PROB SET)

NO 18
1 1/2 STOREY
STUCCO
DWELLING

19.60'

INST. NO 5

CONC
CLEFT

ROAD
PANEL
0.75'
DISTANCE

LIME
FENCE
0.75'
DISTANCE

14

N8

13

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