

Design Analysis for the proposed rear addition to 25 Hernandez Ave, Los Gatos, CA 95030

The 1914 house on 25 Hernandez Ave is a beautiful tribute to the Prairie period architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright designed by Wolfe and Wolfe.

This is part of what will be called the California Prairie Style.

There are over 40 documented Wolfe Prairies still standing in Northern California, many with original interiors. A Wolfe Prairie is special, as any owner can tell you.

The Prairies appeal to both those who like modern houses and those who love old houses.

With their flat roofs, cubic form, classical ornamentation, tilework, and beautiful art glass windows, the Wolfe & Wolfe Prairies are timeless works of art.



25 Hernandez Ave Los Gatos

This striking Wolfe & Wolfe house was built in Los Gatos in 1914.



494 South Cypress Ave, San Jose, CA 95117

SAME SHELL CAPITALS



Col house in San Jose in 1913. This residence built for wholesale grocer Peter Col in Hanchett Park is probably Wolfe's best-known building. It appeared on a postcard advertising Hanchett Park and Wolfe considered it one of his finest accomplishments. The Cols also had Wolfe design a large country home for them in Idyllwild, California.

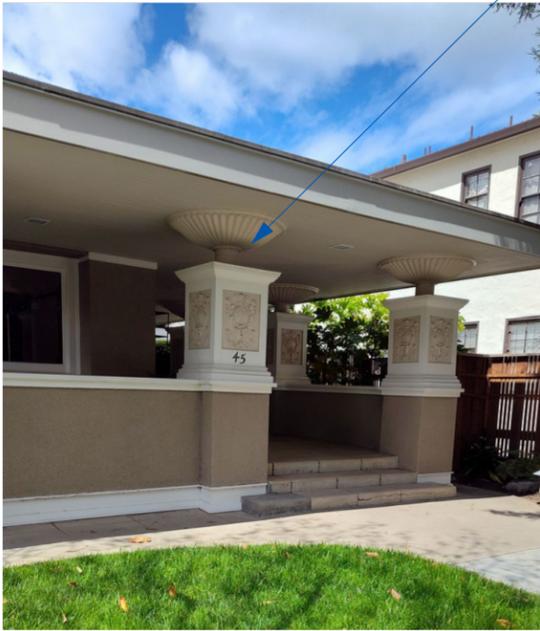


The Col house today. The little palm trees in the front have grown quite a bit!



San Jose house designed for Olga and Augustus.

We can see the earthy tone colors that were adopted by the architect at that time



1917 house designed for Elsie and Harry Preston.



Prairie house built for developer Joseph Hageman in San Jose in 1913.



Prairie house built for real estate developer Roy Atkinson in San Jose in 1913.

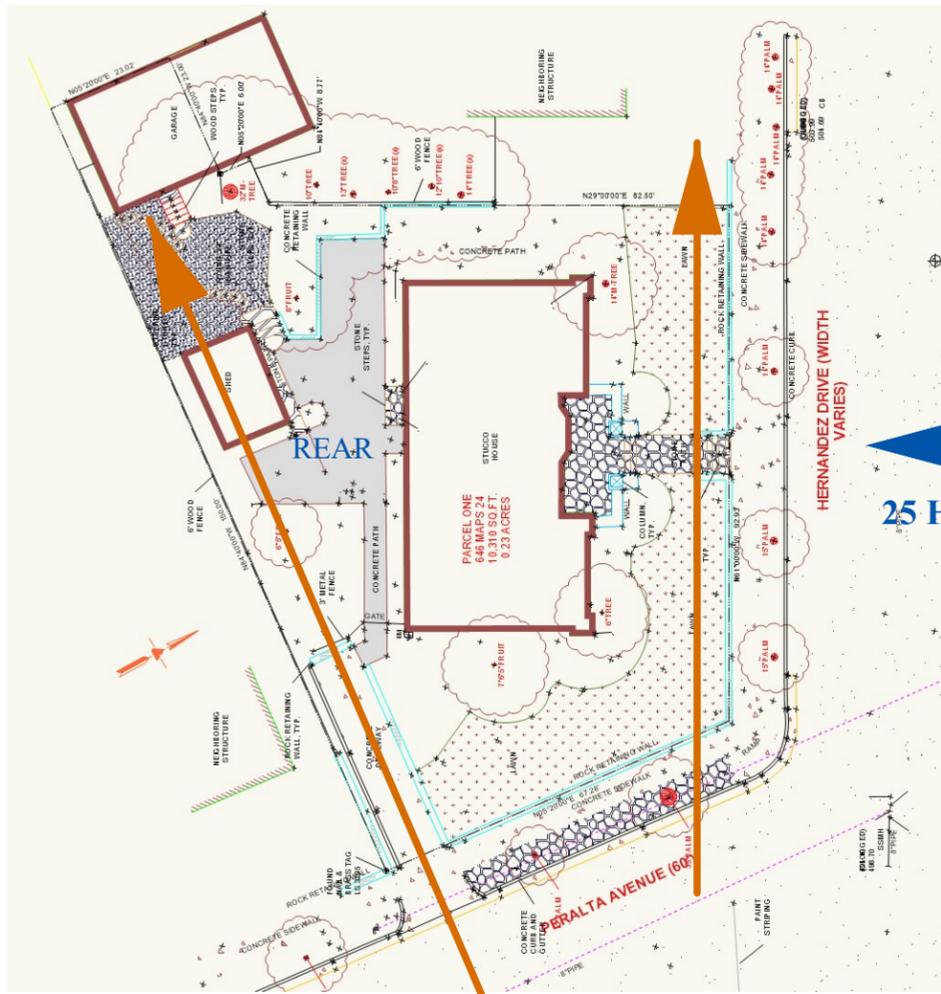
The style is a natural result of a growing tendency to use asphalt materials for roof coverings. The well-known work of Frank Lloyd Wright is along these same low, broad lines. In 1912, he presented the first of his Prairie designs influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright.

The Wolfe & Wolfe buildings would not be as striking without the beautiful art glass that adds so much to their character. The stained glass clerestory windows with their Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired geometric designs, the stained glass insets in the dining room and living room built-in cabinets, and the leaded glass panes were designed and created by the Le Deit Glass Company of San Jose.



25 Hernandez Ave Los Gatos

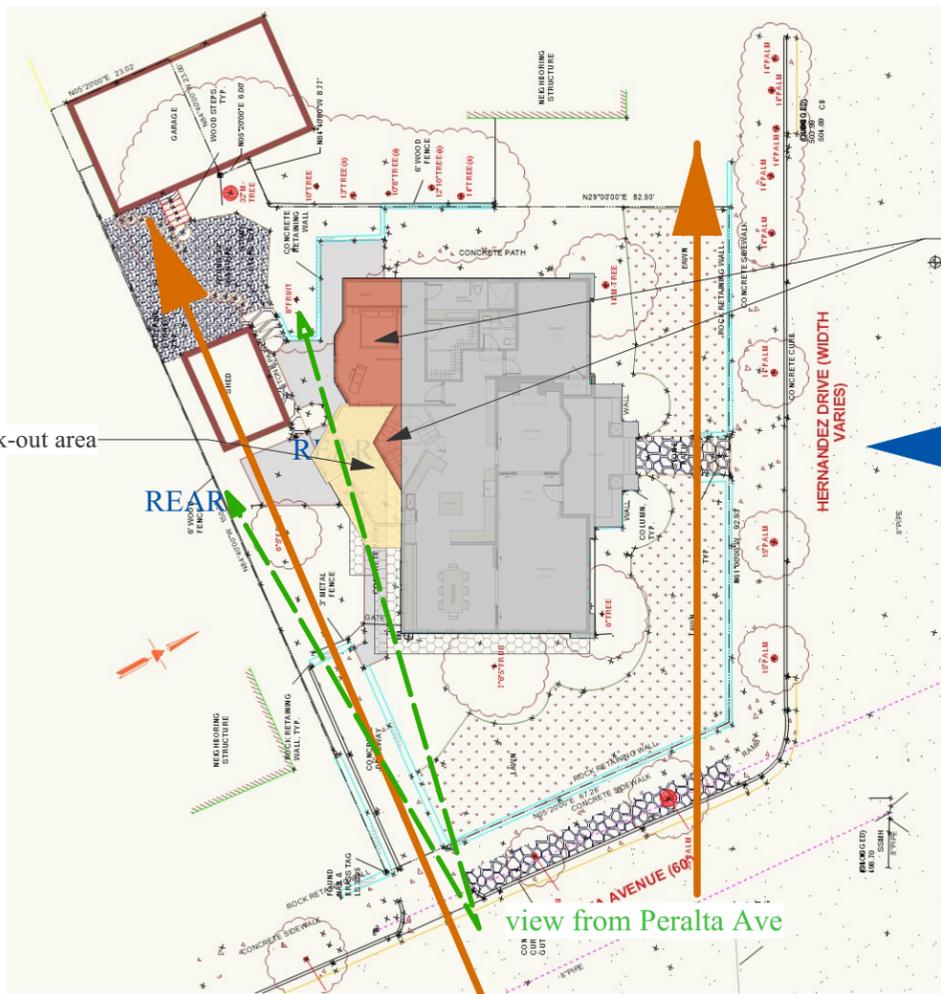
Proposed Design Geometric Approach



FRONT
25 Hernandez Ave, Los Gatos

Existing Site Plan

Two axes site layout



Lower court/ Walk-out area

Proposed addition at rear, conforming to site angles and placed in a location that will not stand out or be visible from Peralta Avenue

FRONT

Proposed Site Plan

Two axes site layout

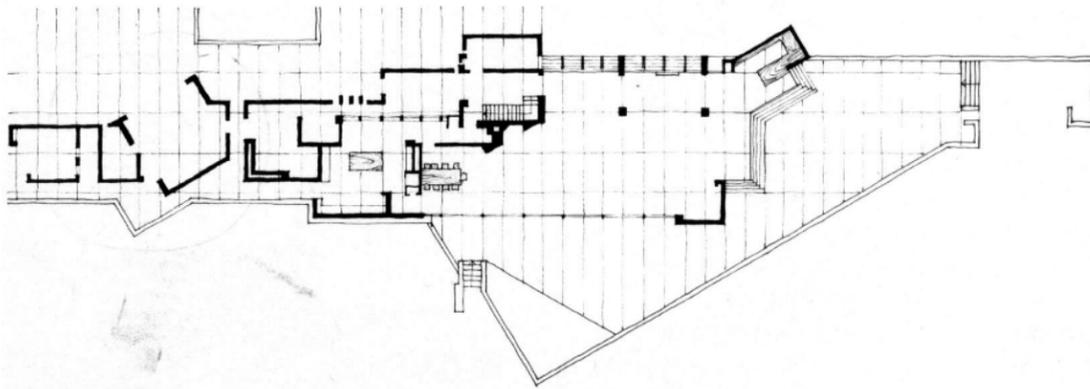
Frank Lloyd Wright would often introduce angles other than the standard 90°, such as 30°, 60° and 45° within an otherwise linear floor plan composition. This is seen in fact in several Prairie and Usonian homes and not only.

Wright developed a system using triangular grids to create, optimize, and adapt home designs to specific sites. His organic architectural design approach would analyze the site topology and major views.

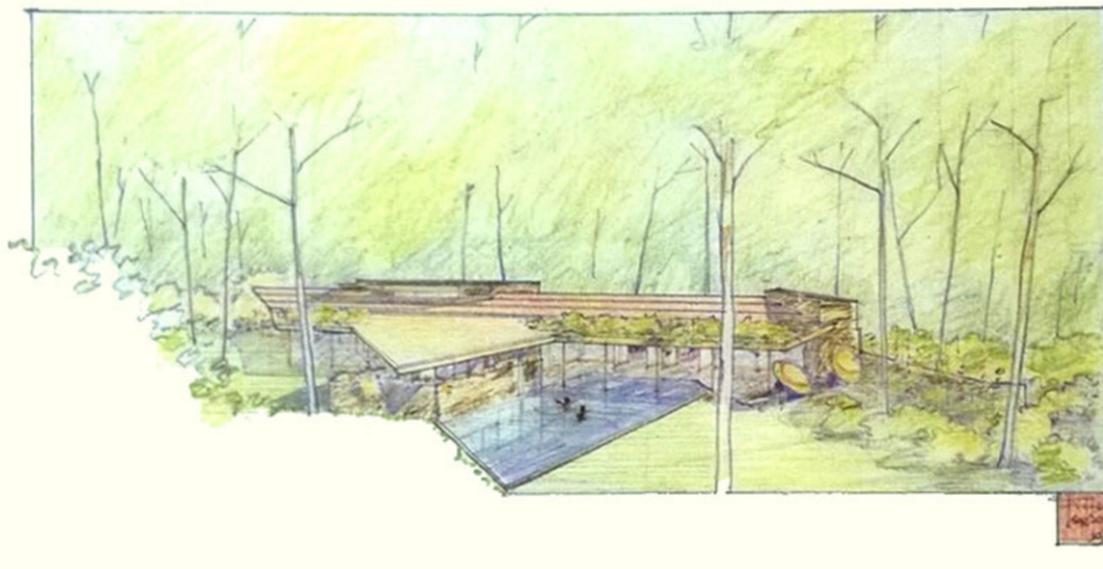
Our site, with its two axes lends itself to the introduction of a rotated small addition that will not appear as a boxy extension of the main house.

Examples of FLW houses with several rotated elements to improve circulation flow, linking the house naturally to the site and welcoming in optimal views.

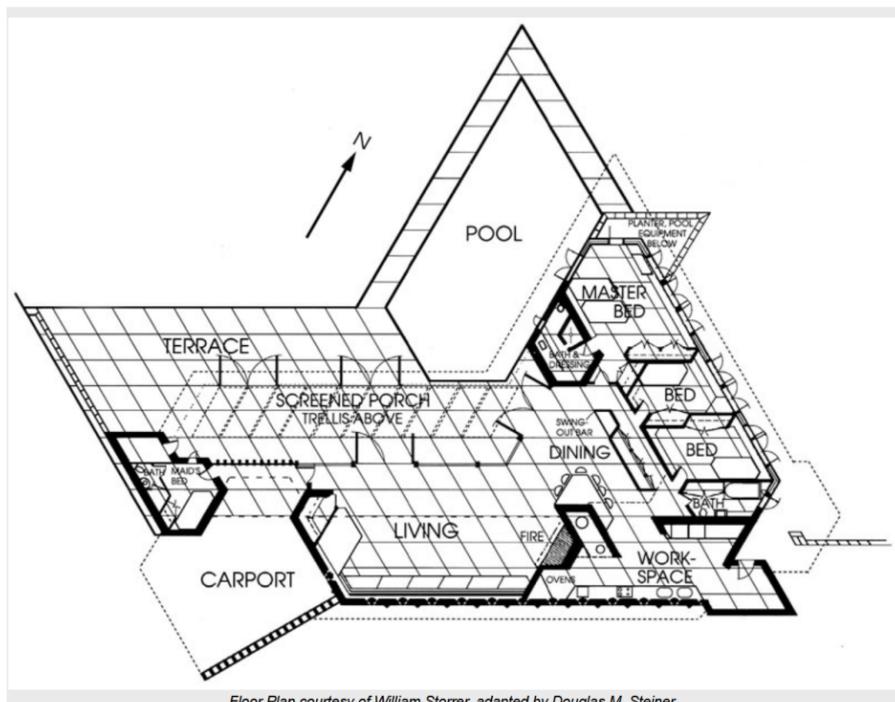
The car entry pattern was set up at a 45-degree angle to the house. This was due in part to the site's angle of entry from the street. This angle was then picked up by the living elements. The study and terrace as well as the line of the fireplace wall that is always a noticeable element in Frank Lloyd Wright designs all touched upon this 45-degree angle, setting these spaces apart from the purely orthogonal.



William Thaxton Residence Perspective



William L. Thaxton Residence Perspective. Courtesy of The Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation.



Floor Plan courtesy of William Storror, adapted by Douglas M. Steiner.

PROPOSED FLOOR PLAN

The current house has only two bedrooms and a partial basement, mostly dedicated to mechanical and utilitarian spaces.

The intent was to minimize changes to the main level, thus we didn't add bedrooms to the upper level, but proposed to enlarge the master bedroom, bathroom and closet.

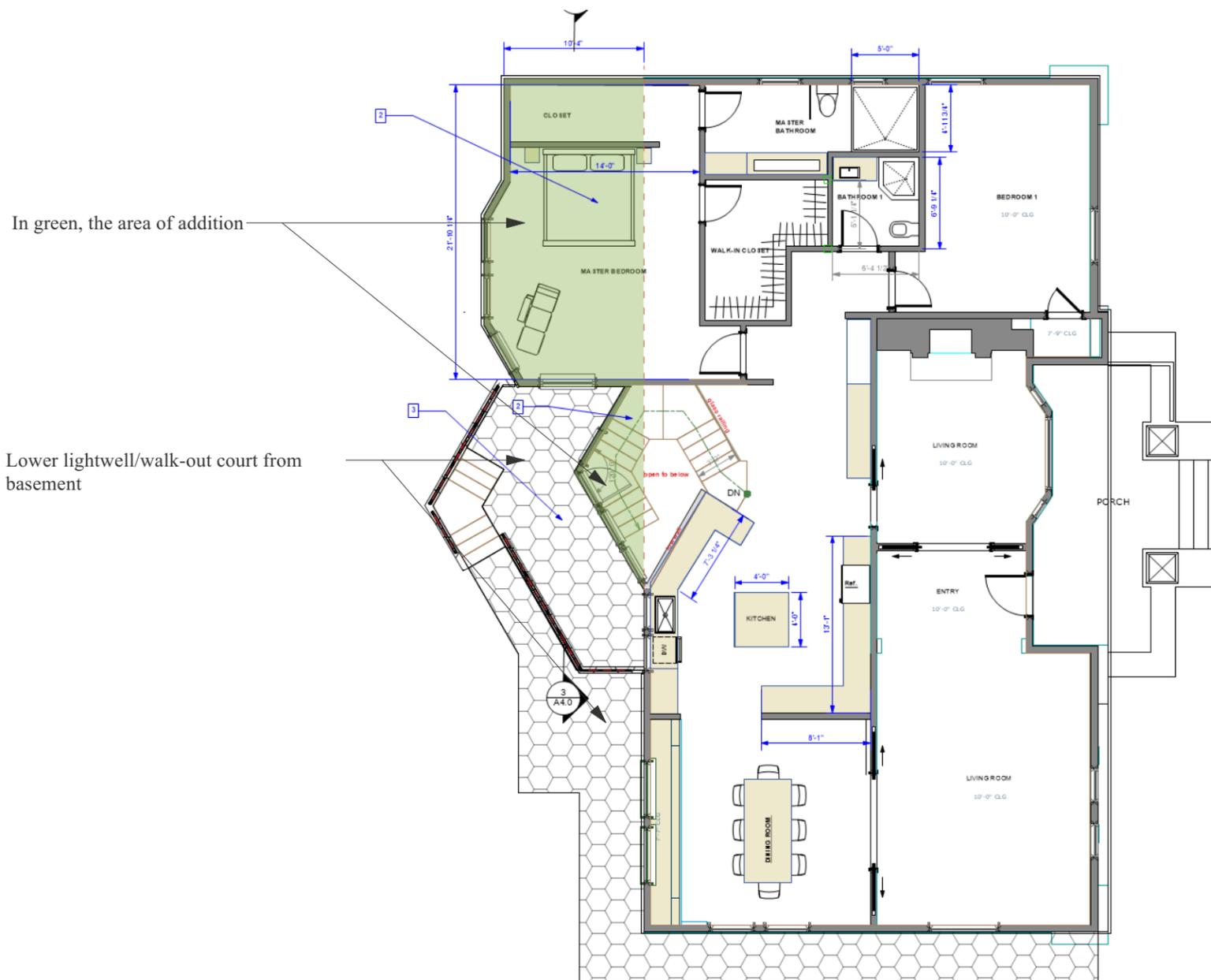
We would rely on enlarging the basement for an additional bedroom and social spaces.

A key factor was the desire to not make the basement completely independent and disconnected from the upper floor and from the rear yard nature.

As such, we devised new staircase shape, one borrowed from the more "snowflake crystals" FLW type of geometry, that allowed for natural light to cascade from the upper level (and a similarly shaped skylight) all the way to the core of the basement entry below.

This shape would then "ripple" outside to form the lightwell and walk-out lower area. Around it some landscape stairs would connect to the rear garden, doubling as a seating area.

The new windows would reflect the stained glass design of the current house.

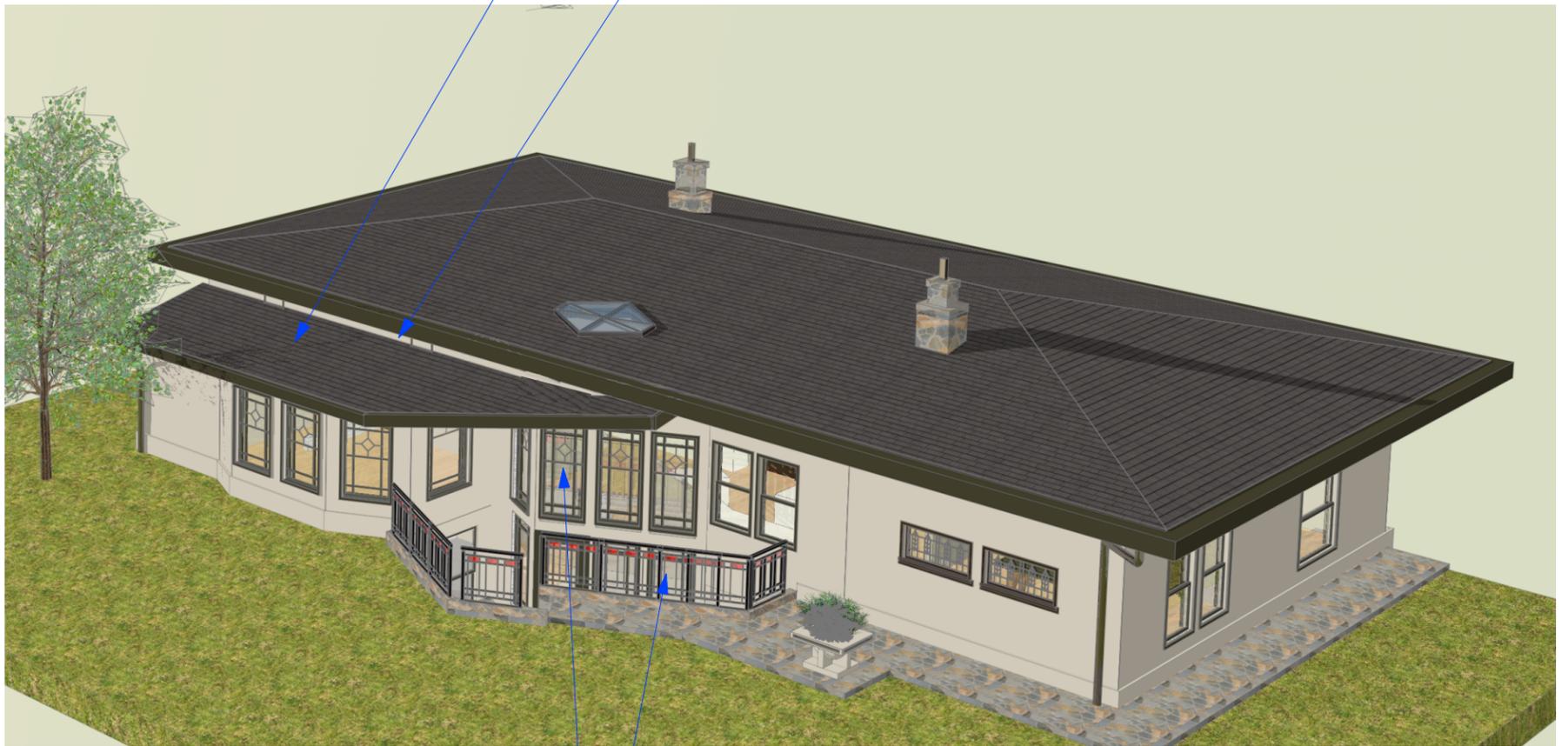




The windows detailing with its angled detailing are also a source of inspiration for the introduction of a rhombus stairwell shape

The proposed area of addition is subordinate to the main house's overall roof line and fascia below it. It is both visually and dimensionally secondary to it and tucked in a corner that prevents its visibility from both roads.

Uninterrupted fascia



The new windows and guardrails employ patterns that mimic the typical ones adopted by the California Prairie period style.

Scope of work:

Rear addition to the first floor for a new master bedroom suite and a larger staircase (251 sf)

Enlargement of basement area with new stairwell (1,060.73 sf of which 44 sf daylight) also facing the rear.

New lightwell-walk-out area from basement at the rear.

No changes to the front or sides of the house.

No trees are being removed.

Proposed new color scheme for the exteriors.

Thank you,

Davide Giannella

Acadia-Architecture

Dg@acadia-architecture.com
408 -219-0601