



NEW

Tower House

Architect Gluck+ has designed a house for its principal that evokes the feeling of being in a treehouse from the comfort of a rooftop terrace

Above
The four-storey
house has
three
bedrooms

On a plateau in the Catskill Mountains, 100 miles north-west of New York City, is a house surrounded by treetops. The Tower House may be situated like a tree house, but has a glass facade that brings to mind city skyscrapers. It was designed by New York architect Gluck+ as a weekend retreat for one of the principals, Thomas Gluck, and his wife and two children.

Thomas Gluck describes the 250sq m building, an aerie among the trees, as an “inversion of the standard weekend house”. Four storeys high, it was designed to access the panorama of the surrounding mountain range. “We wanted the big view, but also the experience of being up in the trees,” Gluck says. “When you are up there, you see the branches moving around and you get that feeling without having to be literal.”

Three bedrooms are stacked as building blocks in the tower, leaving all the social

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space on the cantilevered level, a reverse of the typical outline of an American home. What would have been the “backyard grill” is now found on the rooftop as an open space that takes advantage of the mountain scenery.

Gluck’s ambition was to create a building that was seamlessly integrated into its environment. The use of spandrel glass on the exterior creates an illusion of the house dissolving into its surroundings; it reflects the trees, the clouds or the mountain range, depending on your viewpoint.

The same idea is carried on through into the interior. The living room floor is painted ∇



IMAGES: PAUL WARCHOL



Above
A yellow staircase leads up like a ladder to a treehouse

Left
The social space is on the building's cantilevered level

white, which adds to the feeling of being up in the air.

The neutral colours and materials that camouflage the house are interrupted by the distinct yellow hue of the staircase – a part of the house Gluck says should be embraced. Just as the ladder is the entrance to the tree house, so the staircase is part of the conceptual experience of being up in the trees.

“There is a playfulness to the thing, that you are going to walk up four or five staircases on your relaxing weekend, so [we painted the stairs yellow] to highlight that sudden exposure,” Gluck says.

The tower is accessed through a footpath from another building on the same site. For Gluck, the Tower House combines the man-made with the natural. “It dissolves in what would be an alien geometry within a natural context and becomes part of its environment.” ❧