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**Record
Houses
2026**



Architectural Record

SEPTEMBER 2026

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THIS PAGE: ORRI MOUNTAIN RETREAT, COLORADO, BY CCY ARCHITECTS. PHOTO © DANIEL JENKINS.

Expanded coverage at architecturalrecord.com.

COVER: THE MEANDER, MARIN COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, BY SCHWARTZ AND ARCHITECTURE. PHOTO © BRUCE DAMONTE

BUILDING TYPE STUDY 1,090

Record Houses 2026



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Morelia, Mexico
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Urzúa Soler Arquitectos

CASA PILAR IN MORELIA, MEXICO,
BY TEN ARQUITECTOS

Peak Drama

An all-season Colorado residence designed by CCY Architects melds with its spectacular mountain setting.

BY DAVID RIFKIND

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL JENKINS



THE ORRI MOUNTAIN RETREAT is both belvedere and refuge, a platform from which to experience a stunning panorama and a shelter embedded in the landscape. The clients—a local couple looking to build a year-round residence on the edge of a historic mountain town in southwest Colorado—asked for a house “in seamless dialogue with nature.” For them, it began with the house’s embrace of vistas across a broad meadow that include waterfalls issuing from steep rock faces. “What made this land stand out were the dramatic views,” the clients told **RECORD**, “the kind that made our knees go weak the first time we saw them.”

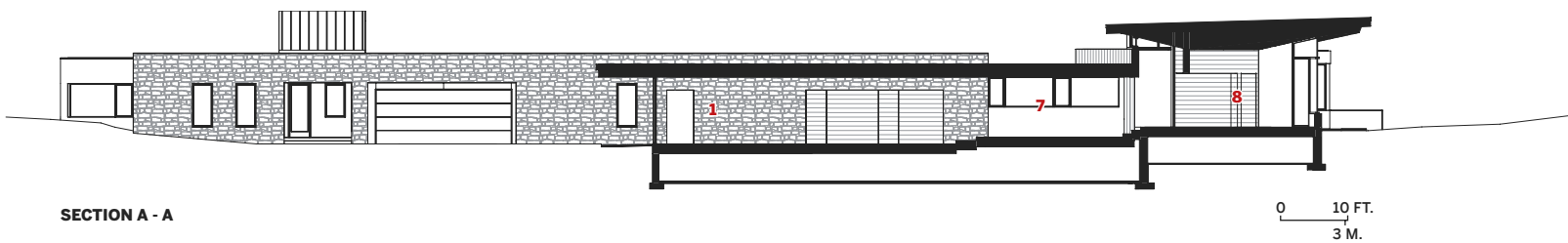
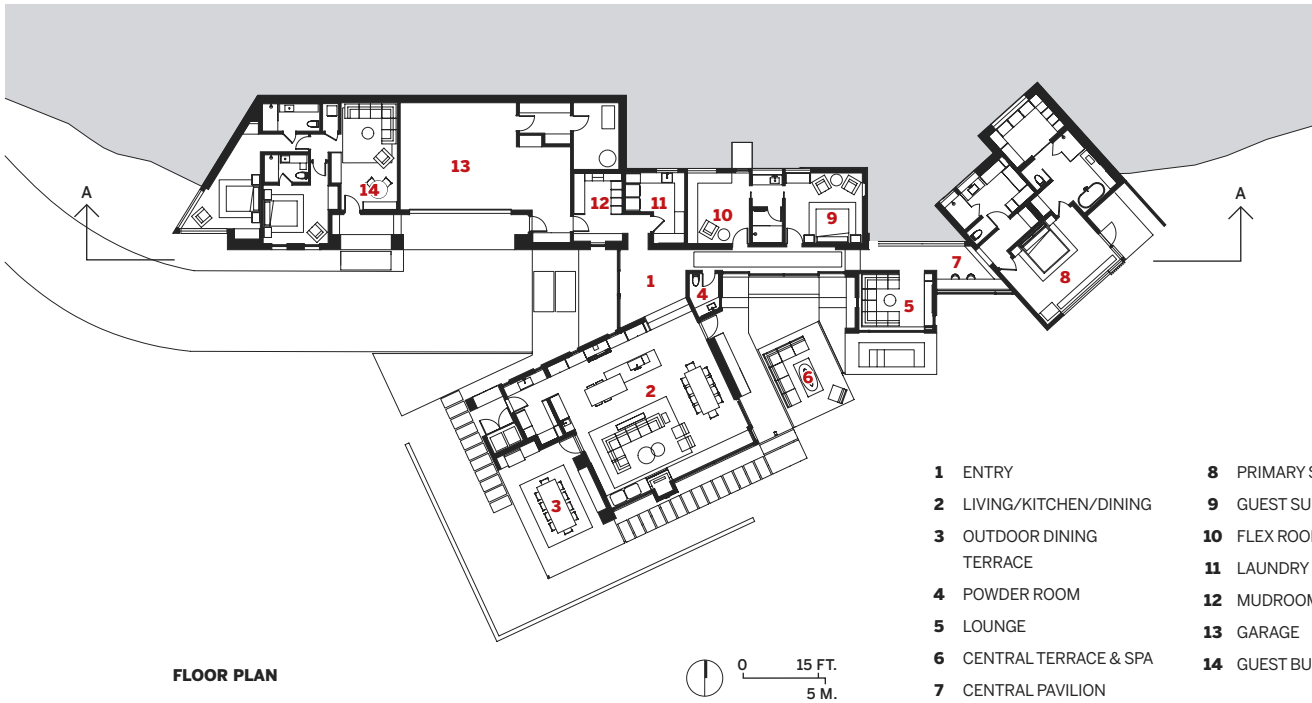
They found enthusiastic partners in CCY Architects. The Basalt, Colorado-based firm roots its commitment to place in the restoration of human connection to nature. They were involved early in the process, assisting with site selection and getting to understand the area through their clients’ eyes. The design took shape over three days, during which architects Alex Klumb, Simon Elliot, and Dan Goldman worked intensely on-site, meeting with the clients twice daily to review and refine the evolving project.

The completed house reflects that sustained engagement with both place and patron. The principal spaces are oriented carefully toward the views, with large windows framing the falls and cliffs in every room, while clerestories capture glimpses of the reddish rock formations in the opposite direction. To integrate the 5,755-square-foot dwelling more intimately with the site, its mass is broken into a collection of discrete single-story volumes, one of which (the guest wing) is topped with a roof planted in local prairie grasses that echo the meadow. The goal was to minimize the house’s visual impact on the site through an architecture that Klumb describes as “an organic extension of the topography.” The results are convincing. From the nearby road and hiking trails, the building appears as a group of modest pavilions embedded in the earth.

In addition to views and massing, CCY Architects used materials to engage the natural



The house unfolds as a series of low-slung, cedar-clad pavilions nestled within the landscape (this image and opposite).





context. Inspired by the textures and colors of the surrounding cliff faces and forests, they selected stone, wood, and stucco finishes, the use of which on both exterior and interior surfaces helps effect the dissolution of the boundary between the building and its site. Kansas limestone clads the thick wall that acts as a datum running through the house, announcing the entrance from the exterior, defining the main circulation through the interior, and separating secondary spaces—the guest suite, garage, and other support spaces—from the principal living areas. The latter are clad in custom-stained cedar, which will slowly weather to reflect the silvery sheen of the cliff faces in the distance.

The connection to place extends beyond the landscape to include references to the area's history of human settlement. The living room's exposed steel-and-wood roof structure, for example, alludes to the decaying mining structures in the nearby mountains that serve as the visible remains of Colorado industrial history. Engaging both natural and cultural landscapes simultaneously was always present in the clients' thinking about their home, starting with the choice of site. "Even though it's within walking distance to town," they said, "it feels like we have our own private national park right outside our door."

Klumb and Elliot credit the project's success to their close collaboration with both clients and consultants. CCY has completed several buildings with two of them before, the interior





The primary suite (above) and adjacent intermediate space (left) look out to a sprawling meadow with cliff faces and waterfalls beyond (opposite).

designer, Studio Frank, and the landscape architect, Lift Studio. The design team carefully choreographed the siting of art throughout the house, juxtaposing two- and three-dimensional works against the dramatic views. The remarkably subtle design of the landscape reinforces the architects' intent to embed the house in the ground while also erasing any clear distinction between the property and the vast meadow on which it fronts.

The ultimate measure of the house's success is the poetic reflection it inspires in the clients after having spent their first year there. "What has surprised us is how much the setting itself has become part of daily life," they observed. "We imagined the views would be dramatic backdrops, but they've turned into living, changing companions. The house reveals the wildness of this place—avalanches in winter so close we feel we might be engulfed, ice falls shimmering on the cliffs, and rock falls tumbling in summer. It functions exactly as we hoped, but the way it immerses us in the raw drama of nature has been even more powerful than we imagined."

The architecture's quietness—its simple gestures and restrained formal language—enables this depth of experience. The building makes profound engagement with the natural world possible by remaining secondary to its context. The clients add, "It's a kind of design magic that only becomes fully apparent once you've lived within it." ■

Credits

ARCHITECT: CCY Architects

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Studio Frank

ENGINEERS: Resource Engineering Group (structural, MEP), Uncompahgre Engineering (civil)

CONSULTANTS: Lift Studio (landscape architecture), Luminosity (architectural lighting design)

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Fortenberry & Ricks

CLIENT: withheld

SIZE: 5,755 square feet

COST: withheld

COMPLETION: May 2024

Sources

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: Summit Metal Works

GREEN ROOF: American Hydrotech

WINDOWS: Ital Windows, Secco Sistemi (metal frame); Marvin (fiberglass frame)

INTERIOR FINISHES: Shavano Woodworking (cabinetwork and custom woodwork); Benjamin Moore (paints and stains); Tadelakt (waterproof plaster in bathrooms)

PLUMBING: Brizo, Kohler (bath and kitchen faucets); Integral Stone (kitchen sink); Native Trails (soaking tub); Toto (toilets)

