



Finding flow

When a downtown Toronto homeowner contacts an architect for consultation on a renovation, there are always two key complaints: the homeowner is starved for light and keen for connection to the “outdoors”—that little patch of green beyond the back door. They just didn’t build them to serve those needs back in the day, when Toronto was filling up with the row houses, semis and tall Victorians that are typical of urban housing stock of a century ago.

Innovative solutions to those challenges are on display in this 128-year-old home that was renovated by Toronto-based Dubbeldam Architecture + Design. The narrow main level was opened up from front to back, allowing maximum flow of natural light through the formerly cramped spaces and creating a sightline through the house to the courtyard, visible through a generous expanse of floor-to-ceiling windows. This glass boundary draws the attention beyond the interior to an outdoor dining area and four-seasons garden, creating the impression that the main floor is larger than its actual footprint, which hasn’t increased.



Above, left: The back of Dubbeldam’s OAA-award-winning Through House is lined with windows. A wood-and-steel screen and trellis, along with the extension of the indoor porcelain flooring to the outdoor spaces closest to the house, create the visual effect of an expanded living space. **Above, right:** Opaque panels on the banister assist light flow through the space. **Left:** The fireplace is sited so it is visible throughout the main floor. The surround is clad uniquely in strips of industrial felt.

Below: A large work island, a dining area and additional counter and cabinetry space make use of the length of the house and fulfill the modern need for a kitchen where all can congregate.
Right: Warm colours, natural materials and streamlined yet eclectic furnishing choices help maintain the character of the old structure.



Natural mastery

The third residential winner of a Design Excellence Award from the OAA this year is an updated take on the Modernist glass house, built on an infill lot on Toronto's ravine system. Designed by Drew Mandel Architects, the home neatly bridges the boundary with the outdoors via a glass back wall, an interior courtyard and an exciting master suite that cantilevers over the backyard pool. For the complete story on this award-winning home, see the Winter 2014 issue of *International Architecture & Design*, or go to iadmagazine.com.



BOTTOM RIGHT: SHAI GIL