

Data Sheet

Project name: house Z

Architect' Firm: closer architects

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Lead Architects: Martin Cermak, Matej Beranek

Project location: Prague

Completion Year: 2016

Gross Built Area (square meters or square foot): 170m²

Photo credits (if there's more than one photographer please specify which image is from each photographer):

Photographer's website: www.aiphotography.eu

Other participants (eg. collaborators, clients, consultants, etc):

Project Description

The Villa "Z" was designed on a south sloping plot in a residential part of Prague, Czech Republic. The property is quite small--about 650 square meters. There are walls of the neighbor's houses on the south and east borders. On the west side there is a house just 2,5 meters from the property line. Its windows are right on the facade facing the client's house. On the positive side there is 10 meters of space from the road on the north, which makes the plot optically bigger. A major requirement of the client was to design the best house with a maximum of 350 m² of living area which included four bedrooms, a garage, living rooms, spa etc.

These limitations were the most significant in designing the concept for the house. There are neighbors on the east and west sides close to the property, who can watch what is happening on the site what we wanted to get rid of. This inspired us to design the house to be open to south and within itself using a central patio in the second floor. This takes advantage of the nice south view to the hills and a scenic forest on the horizon. On the south sides, we made all the living areas with private terraces which are always hidden or somehow covered from the view of neighbors. Other facades are using just wide narrow windows on the top of the rooms to bring light into utility rooms like bathrooms and the staircase, but keep privacy.

The house is vertically divided into three levels. The first level is partly underground and it opens to the terrace and the garden on the south side. On this floor there is a utility room with all technical equipment, the main staircase and the spa zone (with sauna and bathroom). On the side facing the garden, there is a bedroom for guests and a party room or fitness room which is focused to the outside terrace. This area is mostly covered by the middle floor. This is useful when you want to use the terrace, even in rainy weather. The facade of this level is covered by a special black plaster so this basement is a hidden foundation for the white house above which optically lets it levitate above the ground.

The middle floor is accessible at the same elevation as the road on the north side. On this level there is a garage for two cars, an entrance hall, main staircase, restroom, two kitchens (open and closed/caterer's), a dining area and a living room. Along the south facade, especially in front of the kitchen, there is a big terrace which is cantilevered above the garden. This is also partly covered by the construction of the top floor. This is used mostly as a dining terrace and is accessible through the sliding windows from the kitchen. The living room is covered by a sloping roof which allows the direct vertical connection through the master staircase with the gallery and master bedroom on the top floor. The sloping roof brings the feeling of continual super elevated space. This idea is also supported by placing a triangular window on the facade heading to the private master terrace in front of the master bedroom and the gallery. This window brings light to the interior, even if the main windows on the south are covered. The triangular window also allows the visual connection between the private master terrace and the living room or gallery. The master staircase railing brings a dynamic shape into the interior as does the other furniture like the kitchen made of white tri-stone and the black painted oak book case. To the east, behind the master staircase there is a sloped window with a nice view to the Zen garden with a proposed stone statue, which would be illuminated from below. Next to the window, there is a built in couch, where you can have a nap with a book while looking at the statue.

The top floor is accessible either by the main staircase on the west side of the house - this is primarily used by two children, who have their bedrooms and restroom in the west wing, or by the master staircase from the living room. This is mostly used by the parents going to their bedroom (which has a private en-suite bathroom as well). There is a private, almost triangular master terrace, in front of the bedroom, which is also accessible from the gallery. It is bordered on three sides by a facade on the west, by windows on the north and east. A scenic view opens to the south through a small gap. This shape allows the owners to use the terrace with 100% privacy and still have a nice view to the forest on the opposite side of the valley and the distant horizon.

The middle and the top floor exteriors create dynamic black and white sloped spiral blocks which are twisted together. The black part - made of high glossy black painted glass panels and windows - divides the white cantilevered volumes which helps them appear like they are floating in the air. Additionally, the volume of the middle and top floor floating above the black basement--increases the sense of the Villa's overall interlocking three dimensional volume. Together these high contrast components, allow the house to embody the dynamic energy of a statue while optically decreasing its apparent volume (more than if it were monochrome).

The interior design elements flow continuously from the exterior to the interior. The same dynamic shapes and colors are used for the furniture's angles, staircase railings and even ceilings, all reinforced by LED light stripes.

We took extensive care to create and design the architectural details to support the client needs through the *Closer Architects* vision. We give many thanks to the talented sub-contractors who were really partners and helped to finish such a complex building within a reasonable budget.