

FLOW HOUSE



FLOW HOUSE



02

Sinuous curves unite the interior spaces of a Victorian-era home, encouraging flow and discovery.

This semi-detached Victorian house in midtown Toronto was reconfigured for a ceramic artist and her family. The transformation of the 130-year-old home by Dubbeldam Architecture + Design included adding additional living space on the back and top of the home, improving connections to the outdoors, and updating the interior and rear yard for contemporary living. The traditional front façade remains, while the interior is now a meaningful reflection of the family's unique personalities, vocations, and shared experiences.

Though less than five meters wide and only 230 square meters, the home now seems much larger through a strategy of compression and expansion. Narrowed interstitial spaces enclose, creating a feeling of compression, then open to larger spaces with lofty ceilings. And throughout there are moments of surprise and delight – the merging of interior and exterior spaces, the introduction of natural light in unexpected places, and the playful sculpting of elements that establish an organic quality to the home.

Inspired by the homeowner's practice as a ceramicist, the notion of tactility and craft permeates the home through materials, forms, patterns, and textures. Suggesting a complementary hybrid of Scandinavian and Mediterranean influences, the wood cabinetry, screens, and flooring in warm white oak are accented by concrete and Carrara marble sinks, antiqued brass fixtures, and hand-molded clay pendants.

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A clean backdrop of white walls and shelving provides a blank canvas to showcase the family's collection of art, tapestries, and sculpture from local artists, along with artifacts gathered during travels abroad and the owner's own ceramics. Colour animates the interstitial spaces of the home – terra cotta tiles are laid in a herringbone pattern in the entry foyer, and a wall of geometric cerulean blue tiles defines the bar between the kitchen and dining room.

Underpinned by an aesthetic of fluid contours – a deliberate contrast to the rectilinear floorplan – the house's interior elements appear sculpted rather than built. The helical staircase connecting all four floors is a focal point that expresses the home's sense of flow. Awash in natural light from the skylight above, the winding balustrade and natural oak treads cast shifting shadows throughout the day. According to principal Heather Dubbeldam, "Curvilinear forms are employed throughout – arched openings between rooms incite anticipation as they frame views of what lies beyond, resonating with curved walls, display nooks, the kitchen island and banquette – further enhancing the house's sculptural sensibility."

In addition to utilizing the latest sustainable systems and materials to promote well-being, large windows and skylights provide abundant light, natural ventilation, and connections to the outdoors. Mahogany-framed, floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors on the third floor provide access to a roof deck; a similarly lofty door in the kitchen opens to the furnished back patio.

Similar spatial strategies continue in the design of the rear yard. The volumes of charcoal-coloured panels that comprise the new rear façade are stepped back on multiple planes to create a roof deck and recessed entrance. In the back garden, compression and expansion is further explored through narrowed planting beds that open to wider spaces designed for play, dining, and relaxing. The wooden pergola, brick pavers, and ochre outdoor furniture are a nod to the various temperate climates the family has experienced together, while the landscaping of lush plantings provides interest year-round.



Flow House was designed for an art-centric family, weaving together curved forms and the owners' whimsical artwork and sculpture. A glimpse of the flowing staircase is viewed upon entry, framed by warm oak built-ins on one side, and whimsical print on the other.

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The dining room table, custom designed by Dubbeldam, was fabricated by Commute Home. The view through the arched interstitial bar area leads to the kitchen and floor to ceiling glass doors beyond.

05



Floor to ceiling mahogany doors bring the outdoors in. An overhead trellis shelters the outdoor dining room set on a brick terrace. An arched alcove displays the owners' collection of personal objects collected from their travels.

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A curved built-in bench of white oak frames the breakfast room, animated by a display of the owners' personal images and collection of her ceramic pieces.

07

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A curved built-in bench of white oak frames the breakfast room, animated by a display of the owners' personal images and collection of her ceramic pieces.

07

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The curved kitchen island in white oak is topped by a matte Caesarstone counter and accented with tactile fixtures like the hand-molded clay pendants lights and antiqued brass faucets.

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Hand-cast whimsical Spanish tiles line a bar alcove carved into the extruded archway that connects the dining room to the kitchen, a nod to the clients' passion for craft. The owner's ceramics are displayed above the bar.

09



The powder room boasts a custom concrete sink fabricated by Anthony Concrete and Pierre Frey wallcovering.



The living room is separated from the entry by a custom millwork piece that floats below the ceiling and includes a bespoke mural by local artist Dasha Valakhanovitch.

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The curved stair guards appear as if they have been sculpted rather than built. Awash in natural light from the skylight above, the winding balustrade casts shifting shadows throughout the day.

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A glimpse of the entry
foyer and living room
below is framed by the
undulating stair guards.

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A photograph of a modern interior space. The walls are white and feature large, flowing, curved architectural elements that create a sense of movement and fluidity. A wooden staircase with light-colored steps is visible in the lower right corner. The lighting is soft and even, highlighting the smooth surfaces and the organic shapes of the architecture.



On the second floor landing, a built-in bench forms an intimate reading nook, animated by natural light from a side window.

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The stair functions as a light tunnel, drawing natural light deep into the interior.

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The large central skylight brings light down into all four levels of the home.



The ensuite bathroom is imbued with natural light from a large skylight over the molded Corian vanity. A view through the walk-in closet leads to the principal bedroom and roof deck beyond.



The design of the rear garden continues the strategy of of compression and expansion, achieved through planting beds and defined areas for dining, lounging and play. The exterior wall cladding, comprised of grey-toned cement board panels, is a subtle backdrop to the warm brick pavers and lush planting.

SUPPLIERS

Tile

Mutina Tierras, rust (Stone Tile)
Mutina Mews, ink industrial (Stone Tile)
Abecadari Clotet, matte blue (Huguet)
STI Mosaico, mid-grey (Stone Tile)
Elgin Tortora (Stone Tile)

Wood Flooring

European Oak, brushed stone, basic knotted (Moncer)

Light Fixtures

Falco ceiling light (Kuzco)
Herculeum suspension light (Mooodi)
Waldorf Double suspension light (Lambert et Fils)
Dot Wall sconce (Lambert et Fils)
Island Pendants by DA ceramics
Nelson Saucer Bubble Lamp suspension light (Herman Miller)
Commute Living suspension light

Furniture

Boutique sofa (Mooodi)
Aranha coffee table (Branco & Preto)
Custom white oak dining table, designed by DA+D, fabricated by Commute Design
Saarinen white marble Tulip table (Knoll)
White wire chairs (sourced by SMASH)
Lucinda Terracotta (CB2)
Wood farmhouse table (Up Country)

Millwork

La Fabrika
Lakeland Interiors
Brennan Finely Millwork

Wall Coverings

Pierre Frey Wallcovering Esquisses in blue

Stone

CB Marble kitchen counters & backsplash
Anthony Concrete custom powder room sink

Stairs

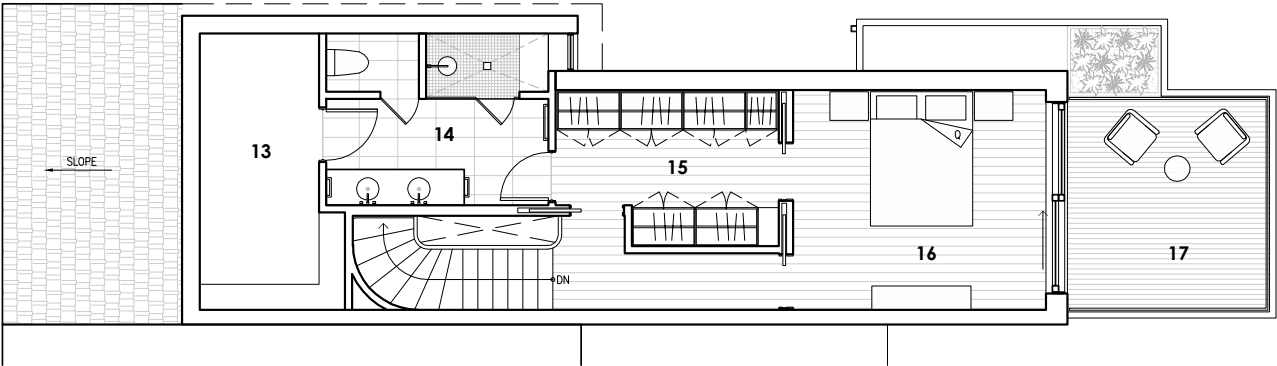
Berman Stairs

Exterior

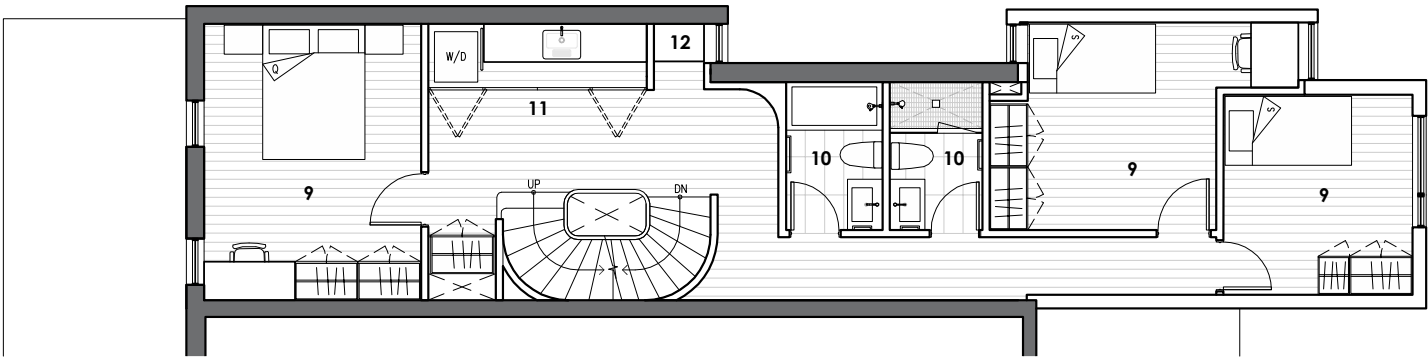
Hardie Panel in Aged Pewter
Solid Alder wood front door (Amberwood)
Aluminum-clad wood heritage windows (Kolbe)
Mahogany wood with Penofin Verde oil windows & doors (Bauhaus)

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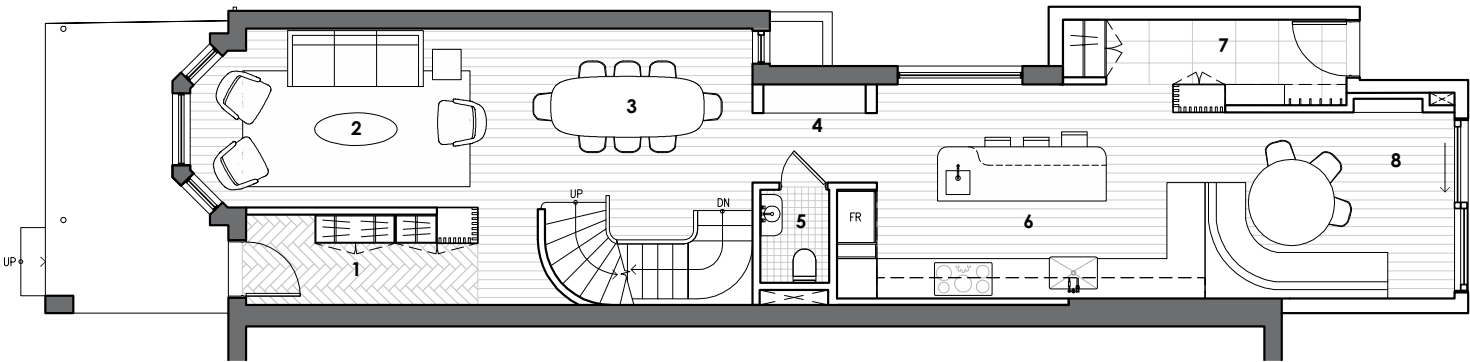
FLOOR PLANS



Third Floor



Second Floor



Ground Floor



- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Entry Foyer | 7 Mudroom | 13 Utility/Storage Room |
| 2 Living Room | 8 Breakfast Room | 14 Ensuite Bathroom |
| 3 Dining Room | 9 Bedroom | 15 Walk-In Closet |
| 4 Built-In Bar | 10 Bathroom | 16 Principal Bedroom |
| 5 Powder Room | 11 Landing/Laundry | 17 Roof Deck |
| 6 Kitchen | 12 Reading Nook | |

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PROJECT CREDITS

Location: Toronto, Ontario (The Annex)

Size: 2,500 s.ft. | 230 s.m.

Architecture/Interior Design/Landscape Design: Dubbeldam Architecture + Design

Project Team: Heather Dubbeldam, Andrew Snow, Krystal Kramer, Gigi Presentey, Omkar Kulkarni, Scott Sampson

Contractor: DDF Contracting Ltd.

Consultants: Blackwell Structural Engineers

Photography: Riley Snelling

For more information, please contact: Emily MacLennan

T. 416.913.6757 | E. press@dubbeldam.ca

www.dubbeldam.ca

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @DubbeldamArch

Photos from this press kit are available for download on

Dropbox: <https://tinyurl.com/bdhv8ken>

Dubbeldam Architecture + Design is a multi-disciplinary design studio committed to creating thoughtful projects that embody sustainable approaches. With a diverse portfolio incorporating a wide variety of project types, their work ranges from homes, multi-unit residential projects, workspaces, hospitality, and mixed-use buildings to landscape design and architectural installations.

Along with over 100 design awards and wide recognition in national and international publications, Dubbeldam is the recipient of the Canada Council for the Arts Professional Prix de Rome and the 2024 Architectural Practice Award from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, two of the highest honours for architectural practices in Canada. With a commitment to design excellence and a focus on sustainability and wellness in architecture, Dubbeldam is recognized for creating innovative, unique, and environmentally responsible design solutions for live, work and play.