



HOUSE ON

*Samuel R. Lewis and Associates
Mechanical Engineers*

*Edward H. Bennett
Landscape Architect*



*Living room and terrace from west, shown above
in detail and below in relation to rest of house*

Joseph Molitor



MOUNTAIN RIDGE

Residence of Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Bennett

Tryon, North Carolina

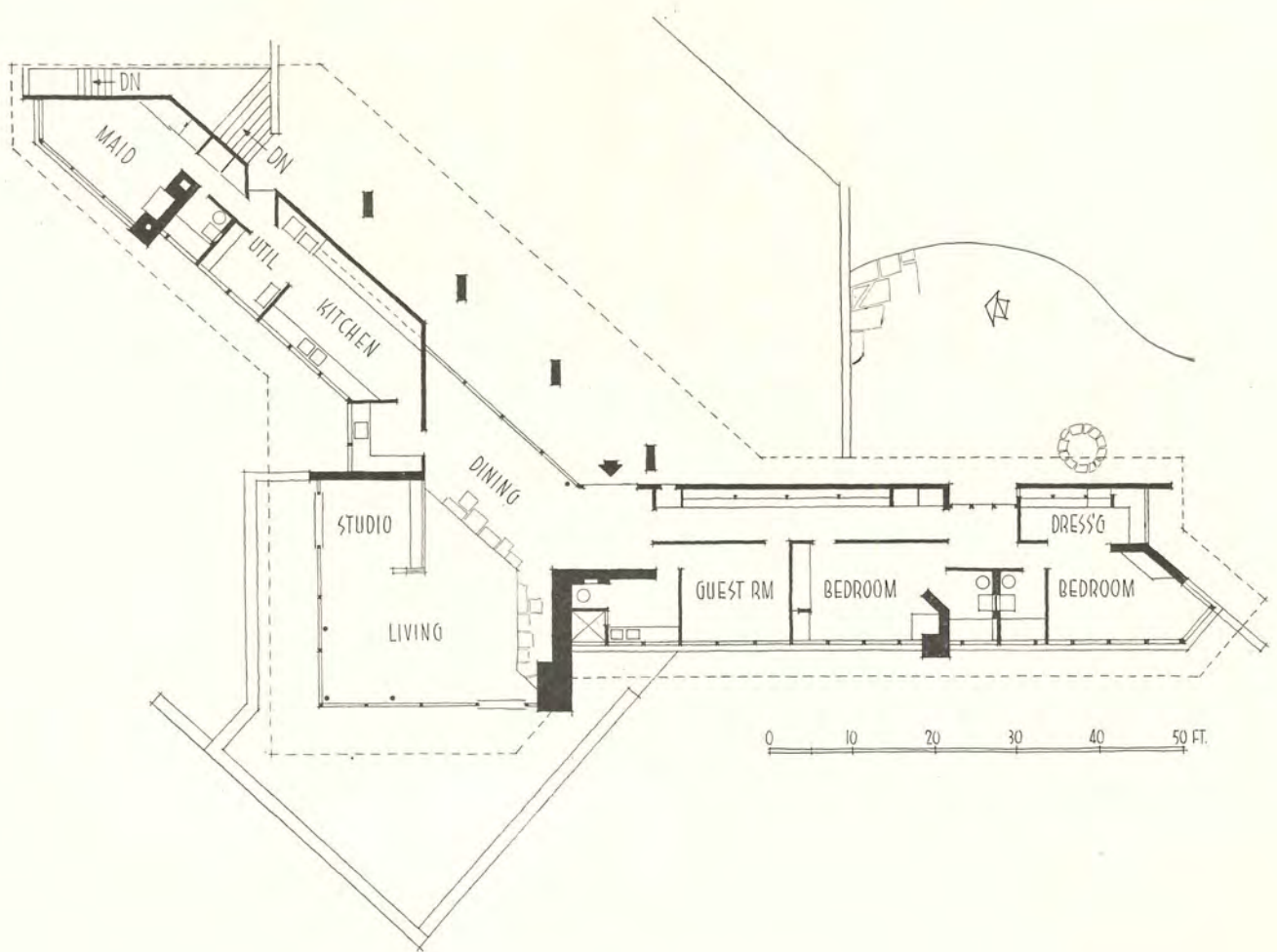
Schweikher and Elting, Architects

THIS house in the mountains of North Carolina was designed for the winter use of a semi-retired city-planner and his wife. The sloping site is heavily wooded and commands a fine view to the west across a valley to the mountains. The plan permits all major rooms to enjoy the view. Separate but adjoining apartments, each with a fireplace, are provided for the owners. They share a terrace on the east, screened from the motor court by a brick wall. The big living room with terrace on two sides, has distinct areas for dining, lounging, and study. The maid's room, at the end of the service wing, has a fireplace and is practically a duplicate of the master bedroom at the other end of the house. There is no garage nor any carport in the usual sense. Instead, a projecting roof along most of the entrance side of the house, can shelter several cars at once. It also provides a covered walk to the entrance door. Entrance side of house has no glass except at dining area. The roof pitches in a single direction, upward from the entrance side. The masonry walls opposite the entrance and between study and pantry are carried above the roof to the same height as the chimneys.



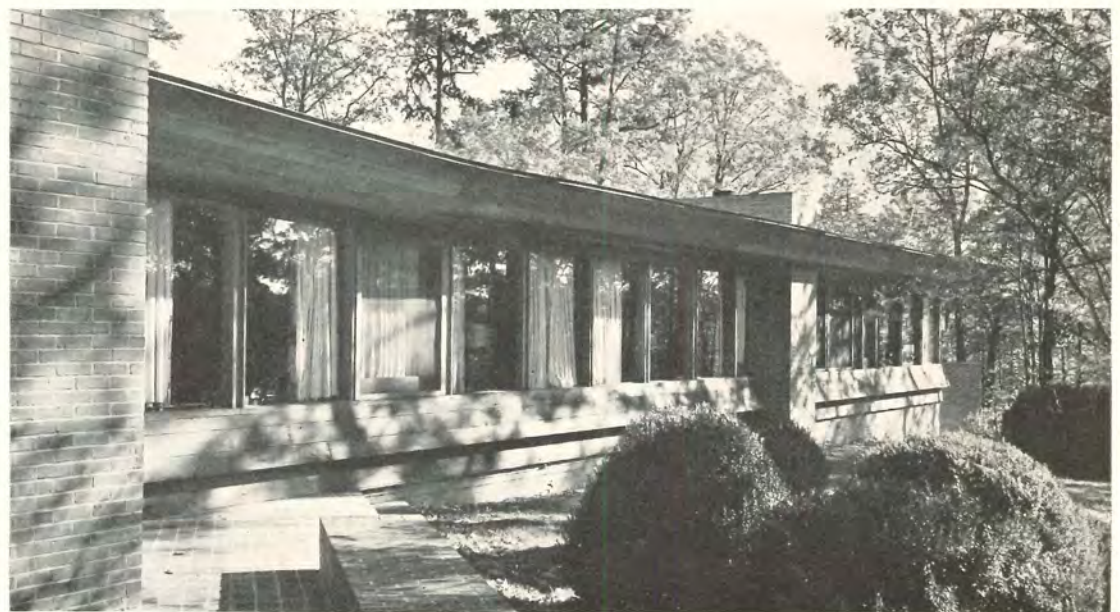
Left: general view of entrance side of house seen from drive. Service wing at right, bedroom wing at left. Below: main entrance, with skylight over dining area. In foreground, terrace outside bedroom wing, separated by brick wall from entrance court





Ventilation in bedroom wing is through single giant louver below the windows. Bottom-hinged doors on interior drop down to hang flush with wall

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Right: living room fireplace, terrace beyond. Below: dining area overlooking entrance court. Since roof extends almost 18 ft beyond glass wall, skylight is provided. Door to pantry at left. In both views intersecting ceiling boards give illusion of ridge or mitre; ceiling is actually one plane





End of bedroom wing, seen from outside (above) and inside (below). Bottom of page: living room terrace. Fore-shortened wall is same shown on p. 122



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HOUSE ON MOUNTAIN RIDGE



SITE, OWNER'S REQUIREMENTS AND BUDGET —
SOMETIMES IDEAL, ALWAYS A CHALLENGE

Since buildings must be designed for use, restrictions of one sort or another are an inseparable part of architecture. The conditions imposed by the site, the requirements of the owner, and the limitations of the budget are all restrictions in a sense. When we speak of an architect's design as a "solution," we are referring to the problem presented by these restrictions.

Although architecture without restrictions is inconceivable, too many restrictions can easily stifle it. Up to a certain point, restrictions may actually be beneficial, by challenging the architect to do his utmost. But where the restrictions are so severe that they dictate the design of the building, they may be fatal to architecture.

In residential design the deadliest of all restrictions is an insufficient budget. This in itself is a serious obstacle, but normally not insurmountable. It is the indirect effect that is most to be feared. Where the owner must borrow heavily in order to build, the resale value of his house becomes all-important. In such a case the design of the house is often determined, not by the architect and not by the needs of the owner, but by the mortgage lender's idea of its resale value.

On the brighter side is the fact that now and then an architect has the good fortune to be able to carry an architectural idea through to fulfillment without having to compromise on any essential point. If the architect is clear in his own mind as to what he wants to say and if he has the skill to say it clearly, the result will be interesting architecture, at the very least. If what the architect has to say is important, the result may be great architecture.

The Ekdale house is a brilliant example of what can happen when site, client, and architect are all exceptional, and restrictions are not severe. A clear-cut architectural idea has been skilfully stated and carried through without compromise. The same is true of the Bennett and the Palmer houses. The Poetker house differs from these only in that its successful result was achieved in spite of extreme difficulties. Possibly this is a case where the numerous obstacles stimulated the architect and resulted in a better design than would otherwise have occurred.