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Alessandro Armando ' Manfredo di Robilant
Cambridge, MA
Photo © Paolo Rosselli



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Alessandro Armando and Manfredo di Robilant Cambridge, Massachusetts

Site size: 6,000 square feet

Project size: 5,393 square feet

Program:

A family living in Cambridge, Massachusetts asked Turin-based architects Alessandro Armando and Manfredo di Robilant to overhaul their gabled, 19th-century house. In addition to improved insulation, the clients wanted privacy, but also views to the street.

Location:

The site occupies a dense residential block located between Harvard and MIT campuses.

Solution:

For the renovation, the architects maintained the spirit of the old, three-story house on the interior leaving the original beams exposed, while adding a sleek, contemporary exterior. An entrance on the east facade opens into the kitchen and dining areas on the right, and a living room on the left. On the northeast corner of the living room, the architects added floor-to-ceiling mahogany-framed windows and floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. A staircase leads to the second and third floors, which contain bedrooms, a studio, and a playroom. Most notably, the architect reconciled the client's need for both privacy and openness by creating sliding aluminum panels that can slide to cover the large glazed portions of the exterior.

Construction Methods:

The architect reinforced the original timber structure, added insulation to the existing walls, and then covered them with a skin of translucent plastic panels. This layer promotes airflow in-between the skin and the timber walls in the summer, while keeping the house warm in the winter.

People

Architect:

Alessandro Armando - Manfredo di Robilant,
Via Delle Rosine 10
10123 Turin, Italy
+39 (0)11 0376131

Architect of record:

Samir Srouji

Interior designer:

Manfredo di Robilant + Samir Srouji

Engineers:

Sami Kassis, structural

Consultant(s):

Landscape:

Adrian Fehrmann

General contractor:

Bertram Corporation
300 Industrial Drive
Random Lake, WI 53001
1-920-946-0254

Window timber frame:

Bigelow Carpentry
97 Mill Street
Franklin, MA 02058
1- 508-520-7245

Landscaping:

Martin Lucyk Landscape Construction Inc.
19 Demars Street
Maynard, MA 01754
617.610.6898

Photographer(s):

Paolo Rosselli
Photographer - www.paolorosselli.com

Products

Structural system

Timber, only the sliding shutters of the big window have a concrete base.

Exterior cladding

Other cladding unique to this project:
Inner Layer: THERMAX Sheathing

Exterior Layer: Transparent Plastic Panels Rodeca: PC 2540-7, with UV protection on the exterior face.
Rodeca GmbH
Freiherr Vom Stein Stra'e, 165
D-45473 M'lheim / Ruhr

Roofing

Metal:

Metal panels, painted light grey, fixed above a layer of rigid insulating Armstrong panels

Windows

Wood frame:

Big Window: custom made mahogany wood; other windows plastic Armstrong profiles with embedded insulation. The two sliding shutters are aluminum, custom made by Bertram Corp.

Doors

Entrances:

Home Depot, painted silver.

Wood doors:

Home Depot, painted white

Other unique products that contribute to sustainability:

A thick layer of rigid insulating panels, separated by an in-between air chamber from the (also insulating) Rodeca panels, ensure a high level of insulation in both winter and summer. The roof, painted with very light grey, reduces the need for summer AC.

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