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THE ASCENSION

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Faculty of Architecture,
Landscape, and Design**
at the University of
Toronto is giving the Ivies
a run for their money

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Meg Graham
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"The transparency and openness towards the backyard is inspired by the client's need for a social interior/exterior space," Graham says.

This transparency is further emphasized by the split in the home, which extends from stern to bow, and floor to ceiling, allowing for a thoroughgoing introduction of natural lighting and ventilation. Additionally, a bridge connects separate portions of the second floor, allowing for unique interaction with the interior space. "The home is designed to create comfortable intimate moments for the day-to-day life for the couple, though we built in a sense of spectacle to the home to allow for openness and the ability for the couple to host large groups of friends and family," says Graham.

The distinctiveness of the split "boxes" at the front of the home is reinforced by their material difference. Beige buff brick binds the garage half, and the entrance half is clad in dark ipe—a tropical wood that requires annual care but serves to introduce a natural warmth to the project. Ipe is also used on the deck and fencing in the back of the home, and is matched on the interior with kumaru flooring—another dark, tropical hardwood. The Boffi kitchen, Canadian limestone fireplace, and dark bronze-anodized-aluminum windows round out the material flourishes of the home.

"With the Split House, as with all of our homes, we also bumped up the required amount of insulation to tighten the envelope, and we also incorporated other passively sustainable elements, such as slight roof overhangs and passive ventilation through the home," Graham explains.

Due in part to its "split," the project has a greater sense of transparency between interior and exterior spaces than standard modern homes, which continues to work to the credit of the Split House. "We never have projects that look the same in terms of expression," Graham says. "We have a lot of fun working with our clients, and I believe that is really reflected in this home."





Superkül Inc. By Benjamin van Loon

Superkül doesn't pretend it's anything that it's not. Headquartered in Toronto and championing an essence of allayed modernism and efficient design, the 12-member architectural firm is

assertively cool. With no braggadocio beyond its diversity of expertise, Superkül does everything from design to master planning for small- and large-scale residential, commercial, and institutional projects. Founded by Andre D'Elia in 2002, the firm is currently headed by D'Elia's partner and wife, Meg Graham, who joined Superkül in 2005

and currently splits her time between design work at the firm and professorial duties at the University of Toronto. "We focus almost exclusively on modern design, and gravitate towards projects that, in some way, break the mould," says Graham. "We're interested in ambitious projects, no matter the scale." Super cool.

1. Split House

1

Split House

Toronto, ON

Started
2005

Completed
2009

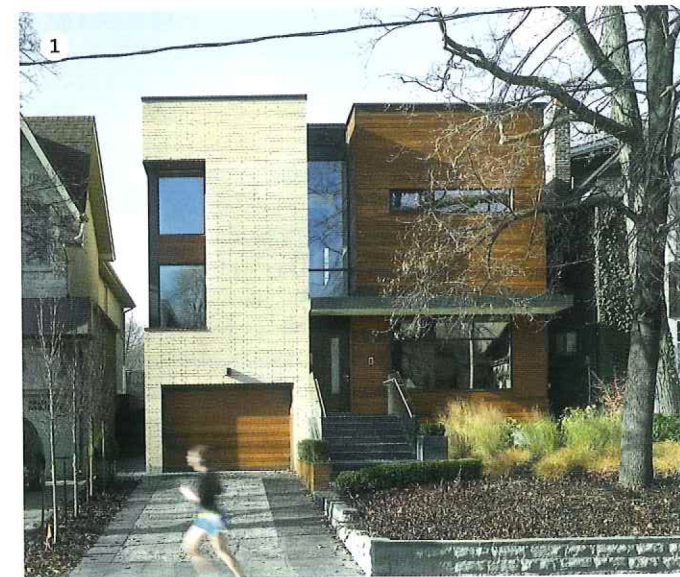
Size
3,000 square feet

Building Type
Residential

Located on the fringes of a historical district in Toronto, and responsive to the fabric of the surrounding residential context, the Split House gets its name from the literal split—in plan and section—running through the centre of the structure. The split is initially reflected and reinforced in the material and visual dichotomy on the frontal exterior of the home, and as it moves through the structure, it promotes a bilateral sense of privacy and transparency.

"This project started out as a renovation, but the clients—a couple—wanted a home that was intimate for them but also appropriate for hosting up to 30 people," Graham says. "It made more sense to start fresh." Though the home isn't located in the historic district per se, Superkül nonetheless ensured the home's design was tied in proportionally and materially with the neighbouring properties. By

Photos: Shai Gil



relating the dimensions of the Split House to the adjoining sites, it stands as an aesthetically distinct structure without being intrusive or presumptuous.

The front of the home communicates a sense of privacy and partial opacity, whereas the rear remains open and transparent to the backyard, integrating itself with the pool area and exterior landscape.