

Beach Hampton

Good things in **small** packages from Telemark and Bates Masi Architects



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BATES MASI ARCHITECTS



Left: South facing elevation

Below: Two bedrooms divided by glass. The skylight lets light down to the first floor



The exterior walls splay out to allow for the skylight

Inset: The compact house at dusk

Over 40 years ago, a couple purchased a quarter acre of land located 500 feet from the Atlantic Ocean. The state, county and town codes evolved and what was purchased as a buildable lot had to undergo extensive negotiations to permit even the smallest house allowed. With a footprint of 15' x 20' and a height of two stories, 600 square feet was the largest house that could be built. The governing agencies determined the footprint, but there were conflicting regulations restricting the height. FEMA required the first floor to be elevated 6' above natural grade, while the town restricted the height of the building

to be 25' above natural grade. With these limited parameters, the strategy was to explore the geometry of the building in section and how it can expand perception of space.

Subtle shifts in the geometry of the building section maximize natural light and views to the sky, expanding the perception of space and openness while maintaining the 15' x 20' footprint. As the walls splay out from the base of the building toward the roof, the resultant void is a central light well.

The bedroom and study are separated by clear glass walls on either side of the light well, but



Above: Views into the second floor bedrooms



Above: Skylight brings light down into the kitchen, living, dining room.

Left: Entry, lined with beach grass

appear to be one large space. The acoustically divided rooms can be made more private by lowering the privacy shades.

To address the restricted height requirements, the floor and roof plates are engineered to be as thin as possible. Traditional ductwork is eliminated from the floors and roof and each space employs a separate, individually controlled, mechanical unit yielding higher energy efficiency. This

unique way of addressing each space is a study in sustainability relating to building smaller and living with less.

Part of the approval process included a required raised portion of the site dedicated to storm water control and sanitary system. This portion of the engineering requirement was utilized by treating the raised area as the foreground to the architecture. The plinth is landscaped with a native grass

that captures the patterns of the wind and references the nearby ocean waves. At the end of the path through the grass, the house is an object in the landscape perched on the edge of the plinth.

This 600 square foot house explores a geometric solution to create luxury with a minimum footprint. The experience and function of this small house is similar to the much larger neighboring homes, despite its limited size. 🏠