

# ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

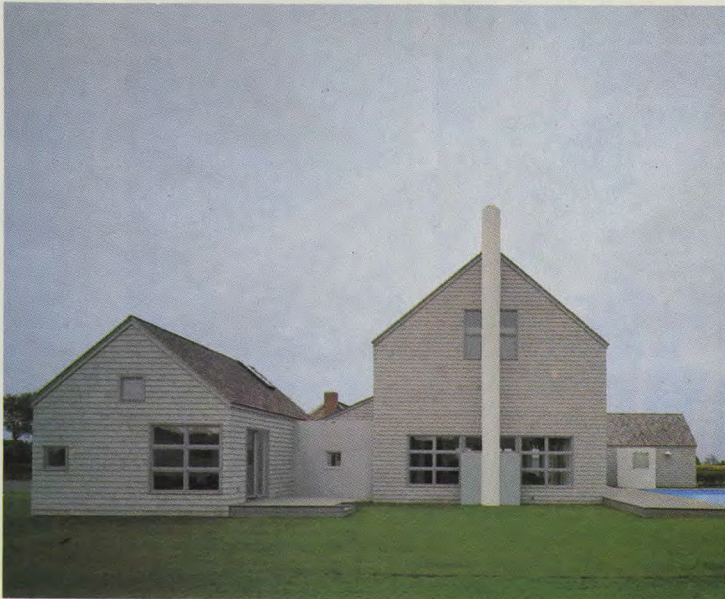
Business Design Engineering  
A McGraw-Hill Publication, Six Dollars a Copy  
Record Houses, Mid-April 1985



# Radler House

## Bridgehampton, New York

By Bruce D. Nagel



"No flat roofs," insisted Bruce Nagel's client, Harvey Radler. This prohibition may sound like an outright dismissal of modernism at large, but in fact the veto has more to do with the strict sense of appropriateness that seems to dominate every aspect of life in New York's fashionable Hamptons. "If we had been building in the dune area to the south, we would have had a flat roof, too, like the others," Radler explains. "But here (a one-acre site next to 40 acres of potato field) it's more rural and a peaked roof fits in better."

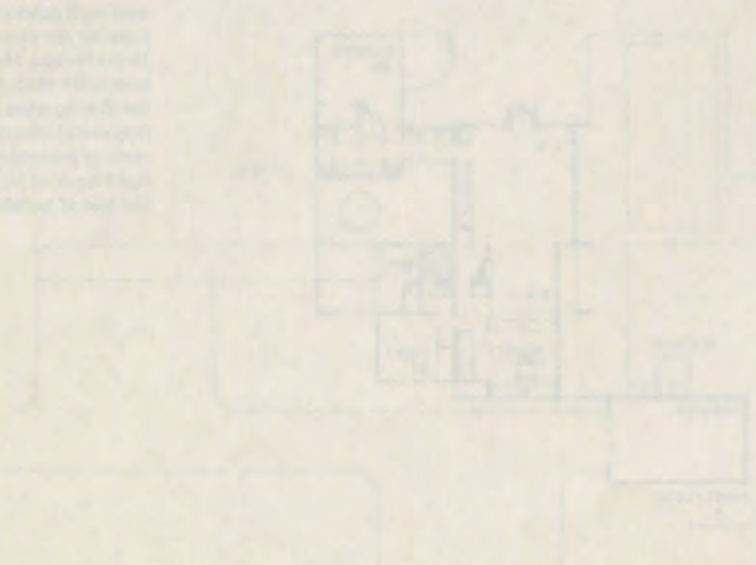
For Mr. and Mrs. Radler's country retreat, Nagel adapted the ad-hoc compound layout typical of eastern Long Island farms, breaking down the 2,200-square-foot program space into a cluster of distinct units. Thus, there is a main single-gabled "farmhouse" sheltering the living room, dining room, and a second-story bedroom, with a "lean-to" wrapping around to enclose the kitchen and guest apartment. The master-bedroom suite occupies a "shed" connected by a passageway to the main complex. A 30-foot, freestanding chimney stack at the west end of the house instantly conjures up "silo." No sooner has the mind registered "farmyard," however, than it detects playful departures from that pastoral genre. On the south front, for example, facing the potato field (opposite), the main volume sheathed in gray shingles gives way to expose a stucco facade pierced with a mosaic of operable windows and doors. Besides allowing for energy efficiency, the stucco wall and openings anticipate an interior that is emphatically modern. On the north, the blank face of a shingled screen wall suggests a more formal street facade. A pivoting door (below) heightens the drama of entrance, as does a low ceiling that funnels towards a curved pink wall and suddenly expands into a living room soaring 28 feet up into the rafters (or rather T-beams) of a pitched roof (overleaf).

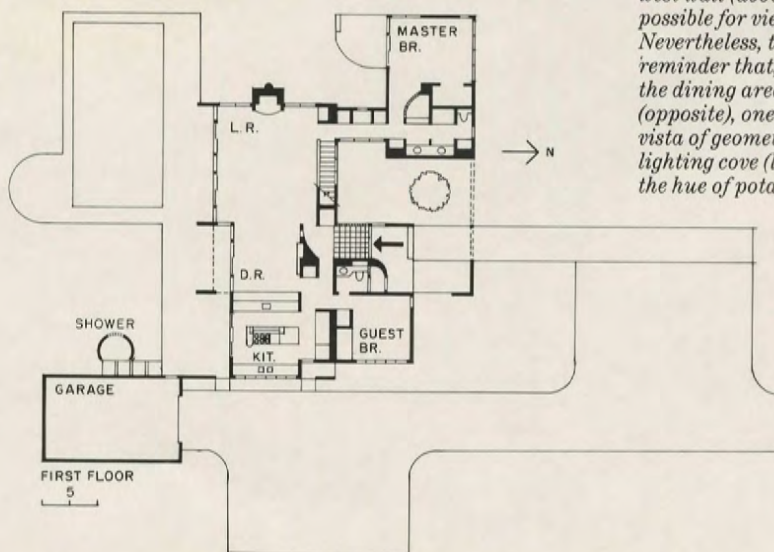
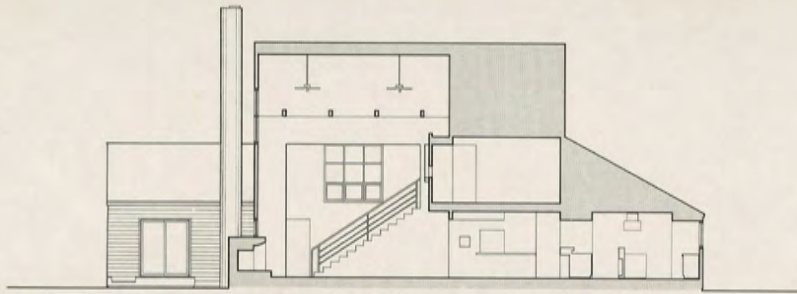
Nagel has emphasized the airy openness of this lofty volume through contrasting elements of sculptural mass: a second-floor bedroom that juts like a projection booth over the living room; the fireplace, a carved-out block that punches through a grid system of windows to the west; and the curving wall of the entry that also helps to mold the dining area. The open plan that accommodates the Radlers' informal style of entertaining in the major living spaces is offset by the privacy of bedroom suites that can be closed off entirely when not in use. Articulated forms and a palette of dusky colors further accentuate the particular identity of each element. Bruce Nagel's decision to design "a piece of modern architecture dressed in rural clothing" has yielded a surprisingly comfortable blend of countrified sophistication, an image that reminds us of the abstract purity that artists in many media have discovered down on the farm. *J. V. I.*





The clustered massing of low, gray-shingled volumes associated with eastern Long Island's farmyard vernacular is most pronounced on the public facades to the north and west (upper photos opposite); the south face (above), viewed from a neighboring field, interjects the contrasting note of a boldly punctuated stucco screen wall, commonly associated with a different Hamptons "vernacular" grounded in the design of Gwathmey Siegel and Richard Meier (Nagel worked in the offices of both firms before establishing his own practice). The 6-ft 8-in.-wide pivoting front door (near left), a cast-concrete chimney stack, and a circular outdoor shower with window (at right, above) compose a playful idiom of the architect's very own.





*The Radlers asked that the gabled west wall (above) be as open as possible for viewing sunsets. Nevertheless, the focal hearth is a reminder that, facing back toward the dining area and sleeping loft (opposite), one can enjoy a subtle vista of geometry and color. A pink lighting cove (left in photo above) is the hue of potato fields in bloom.*



**Radler House**  
Bridgehampton, New York  
**Owners:**  
Mr. and Mrs. Harvey L. Radler  
**Architect:**  
Bruce D. Nagel  
66 Newtown Lane  
East Hampton, New York 11937  
**Structural engineer:**  
Severud, Perrone, Szegezdy, Sturm  
**General contractor:**  
Caramagna & Murphy Inc.  
**Photographer:**  
©Timothy Hursley/  
The Arkansas Office

