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An evening view from the grotto pool exhibits the home's warmth and expansive windowing.



GRANDBERG & ASSOCIATES ARCHITECTS

NEW YORK ARCHITECT CREATES FAMILY OASES IN ANY STYLE

by Kaleena Thompson

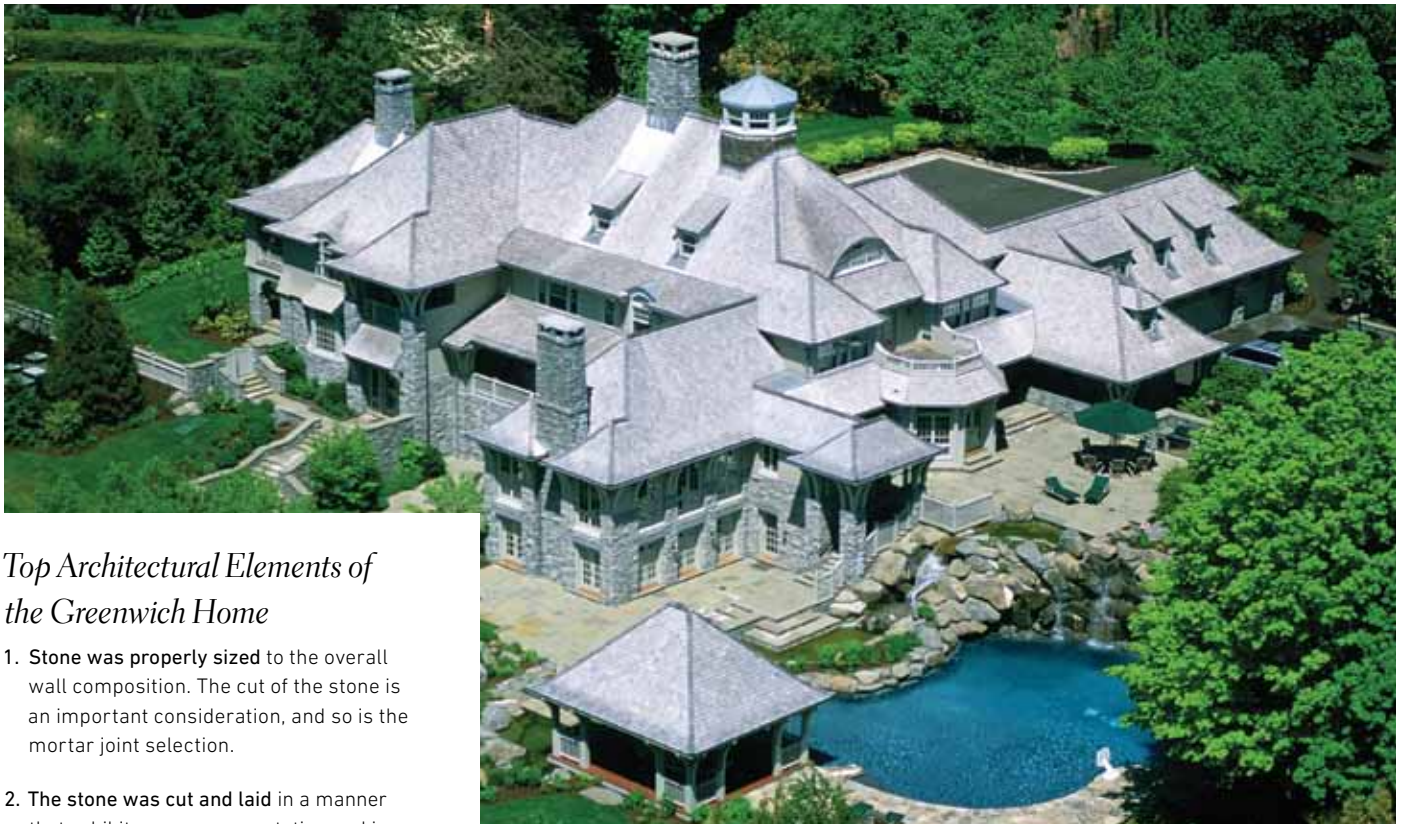
The turning point in Ira Grandberg's life came through a chance encounter with a legendary architect in 1965. At the time, the young designer had just left the University of Arizona School of Architecture, but an impromptu meeting was arranged with well-known Philip Johnson, famous for his Glass House in Caanan, Connecticut. "He took the time to study my portfolio," Grandberg says. After much encouragement and advice, Johnson helped arrange an interview with the Columbia University School of Architecture, from which Grandberg graduated with honors in 1970.

Now in its 35th year, Grandberg's firm, Grandberg & Associates Architects, is known for its timeless and beautiful high-end residential homes. The firm, previously located in New York City, is now based in Mt. Kisco, New York. Constructing homes from 4,000 to 20,000 square feet in size, it is recognized for its versatility and skill in building design and site planning. "We are intuitive designers who welcome any design challenge," Grandberg says. "Every project is unique because we pride ourselves in not being formulaic. ... We understand the envi-

ronment and come up with fresh solutions."

A Greenwich, Connecticut, home in the country manor style exemplifies the firm's detailed craft. The structure was envisioned as an informal setting for a young family and had to capture the spirit of the Adirondack environment where the client spends summers. Grandberg and the homeowner chose a stone, timber, and shingle palette. "The stone was used to allow the house to grow out of the land," Grandberg says. "The shingle allowed us to sculpt the house. The timber gave us a strong anchor to connect and scale the spaces. And the detailing gives this residence a natural presence and harmony with the site."

At 12,000 square feet, the plan Grandberg designed was informal yet elegant. "The front of the house appears as a formal two-story façade," he says. "At the back it becomes an informal three-story composition." The lower-level houses the recreational spaces such as the gym, changing rooms, a sauna, a billiards room, a bar, a wine cellar, and a media room, and "the hallways serve as art galleries, for the homeowner's collection of gems and rocks," Grandberg adds.



Top Architectural Elements of the Greenwich Home

1. **Stone** was properly sized to the overall wall composition. The cut of the stone is an important consideration, and so is the mortar joint selection.
2. **The stone** was cut and laid in a manner that exhibits proper presentation and is harmonious with the building's vernacular.
3. **Shingles** installed in relation to the building's scale provide a sculptural quality to the building envelope and an appealing texture to the building's skin.
4. **Tonal harmony** was achieved in Grandberg's design. He managed to create a shingle-and-stone house without any jarringly disconnected elements.
5. **The pool** has surrounding rocks that Grandberg says "grow out of the foundation. Water flows out of the rocks at various locations, thus completing the natural environment of the house and the landscaped areas."

Primary formal and informal spaces including the arrival hall, a library, a living room, a dining room, and a kitchen are located on the midlevel, and the family room, detailed with heavy timber, acts as a promontory overlooking the site.

The lower and mid- levels, connected by patios, overlook a cascading waterfall that terminates at a pool. The third level houses the bedroom suites, and a children's playroom and a balcony and cupola are located in the attic loft. It is no wonder the home received a Design and Masonry Honor Award for Excellence from the American Institute of Architects.

Another award-winning project in Connecticut

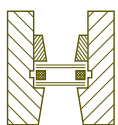
"We are intuitive designers who welcome any design challenge. Every project is unique because we pride ourselves in not being formulaic."

IRA GRANDBERG, PRINCIPAL



TIMBER ILLUMINATED
Heavy timber detailing defines the family room, located as a promontory overlooking the site.

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was the complete restoration of a 1920s stone cottage. “My goal was to maintain the character and materials of the original form,” Grandberg says. He matched everything from the stone and mortar to the windows, the hand-cast chimney pots, and the antique Ludowici roof tiles. In addition to adding 70 percent more space to the original home, the meticulous architect introduced trusses and beams in various sizes to provide scale and detail.

Distinctive exterior and interior details are also hallmarks of the firm, as evidenced by a Lloyd Harbor, New York, waterfront estate. Designed like a piece of art, “the front of the home, facing the road, is a wall penetrated by three portals,” Grandberg says. “The first opening frames a lighthouse and gives a hint of what lies beyond. The opposite west-facing façade has various architectural portals that frame coastline views of a harbor beyond as well as sunset panoramas.” These portals also act as solar screens and sheltering elements for the internal open-glassed spaces.

The clients also wanted an open interior in which to exhibit their children’s sculptures and photography—as well as their art collection. Grandberg therefore crafted “display walls” at key sight-line locations. The architectural portals also provide “picture frames” of the exterior view beyond.

For the Lloyd Harbor residents, their house is more than a haven; it is a celebration of generational achievements.

And all three projects might not have been if not for a fateful meeting. Grandberg’s early run-in with Philip Johnson paved the way for a career marked by client-driven innovation, and the homes he creates now exist in harmony with both their owners and the surrounding landscape. As Grandberg sees it, “Beautiful architecture can bring enrichment to people’s lives and

MESSAGE FROM H. HIRSCHMANN LTD.

H. Hirschmann LTD. has been designing and manufacturing custom wood windows and doors for nearly 30 years. The company, led by President Rolf Hirschmann in the tradition of European fine woodworking, has a reputation for offering unique solutions to complex design challenges within budget constraints. Its team of artisans combines time-honored woodworking techniques with the latest developments in modern window manufacturing—giving clients the benefits of innovation backed by a rich heritage of quality workmanship.

H. Hirschmann LTD. first started working with Ira Grandberg, principal of Grandberg & Associates, in the mid-1990s and is honored to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the firm, most recently on the Googe project in Westport, New York.