

2010 Residential Architect Design Awards

Claremont House, Chicago

custom / more than 3,000 square feet / merit

By [Bruce D. Snider](#)



Claremont House

brininstool + lynch, chicago

The elegance of schematic plans typically frays a bit on the way from trace paper to bricks-and-mortar reality, but architect Brad Lynch's house in Chicago's North Side seems to have made the trip unscathed. The big ideas here include a kitchen/dining/living space that spans the depth of the building between end walls of floor-to-ceiling glass. "My homage to the front porch," explains Lynch, who also included retractable shades.

Second-floor bedrooms are as private as the main level is public, while a lower-level family room opens toward the rear, onto a subgrade courtyard. A monolithic millwork volume rises through all three floors, containing storage, kitchen, and service functions and separating living spaces from the linear stair that acts as the house's primary circulation spine.

The clarity of Lynch's scheme and the fidelity of its execution struck a chord with our panel of judges, who called the outcome "incredibly disciplined."

2010 Residential Architect Design Awards

Claremont House, Chicago

architectural design detail / merit

By [Bruce D. Snider](#)



Claremont House

brininstool + lynch, chicago

A well-designed stair is seldom merely a means of moving from one floor to another. But even by that standard, this one is a notable overachiever. Occupying a space that extends from the front of a deep, narrow townhouse-form residence to the rear, it conveys not only people, but also light, air, and even structural stresses in the building frame.

“It’s the spine through the entire house,” observed one of our judges, “and you peel off at various landings and other events.” A landing midway between the main and lower levels comprises a compact entry hall. Open risers filter light from windows at the front and rear of the house and

facilitate natural ventilation. By bridging the three-story opening, the stair’s welded steel frame helps stabilize the building’s long side wall. “Cleanly done,” declared another judge, who called the stair “the most important organizing element of the house.”