



**Focus**

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SPECIAL EDITION

# Design Excellence Awards 2005

**Distinguished Building, Interior Architecture  
and Divine Detail**

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AIA Chicago

**915 North Wolcott**  
Chicago, IL

*Citation of Merit*

Architect – Studio Dwell Architects  
Client – Robert Ranquist Jr.  
Contractor – RCRDC Group LLC  
Consultants – Fisher + Partners

This residence is located on an unusually shaped urban lot with neighboring buildings to the north and an alley to the south. The goal was to create an urban retreat that provided privacy, yet was filled with natural light. Toward that end, the main floor plan was designed as an “open” plate which could use light from all four exterior walls. In addition, the “open” plan was applied vertically connecting the first floor to the second. Only 25 percent of the residence provides views to the exterior. The rest is either frosted or placed tight to the ceiling or floor. The jurors admired how the architect created an open, spacious environment on a tight city lot.



**House on the Edge of a Forest**  
Northbrook, IL

*Citation of Merit*

Architect – John Ronan Architect  
Client – Margot & Dan Kaplan  
Contractor – Fraser Construction

This house for a family of four explores the relationship between site, material, and program in a domestic environment. The building's discreet street facade gives way to floor-to-ceiling glass at the house's rear to offer views from each room into the adjacent forest. Masonry walls form the house's structure and divide it into living zones: service, relaxation, sleeping; the walls continue outside to create an entry court and terrace. The scale and detail of the home is in scale with its neighbors, jurors felt. They also felt the building was well-thought out – the large gallery can combine the owners' love of art with their way of life.



Photo © Margot & Dan Kaplan