



# sheng & lesser residence

los angeles, ca february 2002

## Project Description

This hillside dwelling addition maximizes light and a sense of openness while creating privacy and mitigating noise from the busy boulevard below. With an extremely limited budget and a site which buries much of the cost in the unseen foundation, the design was kept simple - prioritizing strong spatial experience over expensive detail. The compact three story house fits snugly into the steep hillside. The relationship formed between the modern house and its rustic environment is a natural and complementary one. Through expansive window openings, details such as the oversized wood trellis, and designed relationship between spaces and trees, the house takes full advantage of its unique surroundings.

The greatest challenge for the house design was to diminish the awareness of traffic noise from the adjacent busy street and create a sense of enclave and privacy. However these sides also had some of the most interesting views. The mostly solid and double width (for sound mitigation) north and west walls were designed with a minimal number of openings to frame the attractive views while obscuring the street.

The one large opening on these walls exposes the stair from the outside while an old sculptural oak tree is framed by the window from the inside. The other opening is a long glass slot at the ceiling which exposes the view from the second level to the nearby hills while masking the view to the street.

The views to the east and south yards are private and therefore walls were made completely transparent. This maximized a sense of expansiveness and an easy relationship of indoor to outdoor. The living room south side is a double height wall of glass, inviting light to fill the house and exposing views to a bamboo garden. The deep eave keeps summer sunlight out while allowing winter light to warm the space. The new master bedroom's east wall is also made transparent, in this case to the hillside. Morning light filters into the room but is likewise controlled by the deep overhang.

The design of this modern, open house weaves light, space and views while exercising sensitivity to a steep site on a busy street.