

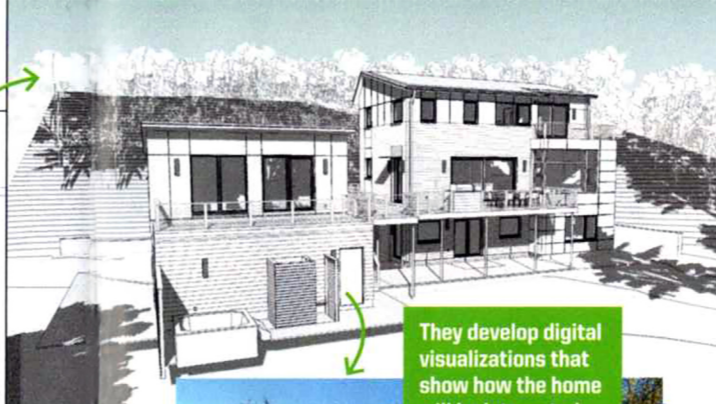
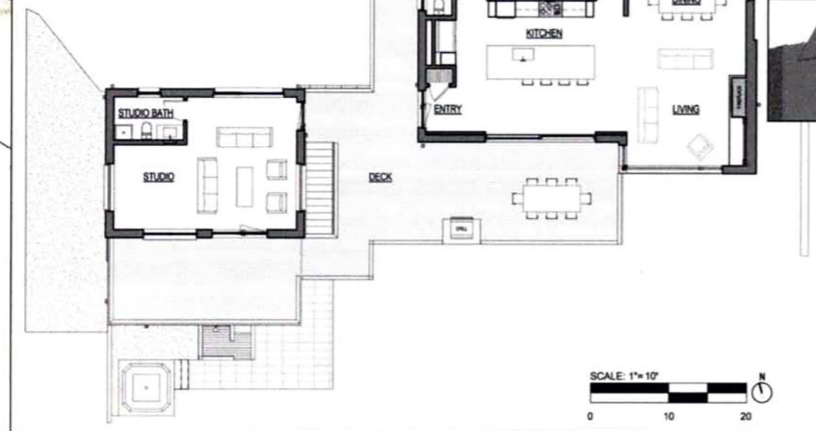
Home Green Home

Stephanie Horowitz talks about her work as a sustainable architect

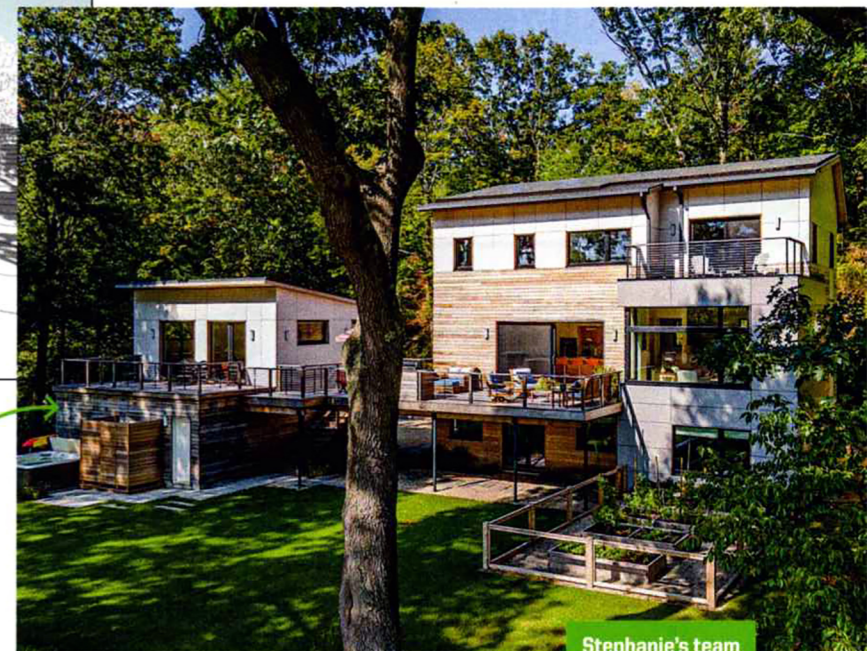
Stephanie Horowitz



Stephanie and her team start by making sketches and floor plans.



They develop digital visualizations that show how the home will be integrated into the surrounding landscape.



Stephanie's team created this home for a family that values time outdoors. How does the design support this priority?

Scholastic Art: What is your job?

Stephanie Horowitz: I'm an architect at ZeroEnergy Design. I manage a team of 10 people and lead our design practice. My firm specializes in green, residential architecture. We work on single-family homes and larger multifamily buildings, often affordable housing. We are committed to designing healthy places that are energy efficient, durable, beautiful, and delightful places to live.

SA: When a client approaches you about a new project, what is your working process?

SH: First we need to understand what the client is looking for, how they live, and what they think is beautiful. We also learn about the site we're designing on. We process that information and start testing design ideas. We create multiple designs based on what we've heard from the client and what we have observed on the site. The client weighs in, and eventually we arrive at one design that we then develop.

SA: Are there technical or design skills that are important for your work?

SH: The technical aspects inform the creative process and vice versa. Being able to conceptualize space in three dimensions is important. One aspect of the design process is to create something that is beautiful. And another facet is to design an experience. You can look at a building as an object, but buildings are lived in. So it's important to be able to think about and be able to design the experience of being in the home or building.

SA: Were you interested in architecture as a kid?

SH: I think I initially had parallel interests in design and environmental issues. As I began to learn about the amount of energy that buildings use, there was a collision between these two parallel passions.

SA: When did you decide to study architecture in school?

SH: I applied directly to an architecture program as an undergraduate. I focused on the study of architecture, and I was able to pair that with my interest in energy and environment through classes outside of the architecture school.

SA: What was your path after college?

SH: When I was in college, I had a great experience working on a design-build project. I collaborated with other students at the university to research, design, and build a solar-powered home. That's how I met my future business partners. After graduating, I worked for another firm but in the process was starting my own company that was focused on this niche of sustainability, or green architecture. I left that first job after a year and have been doing this ever since.

SA: What challenges have you faced during your career? How have you overcome them?

SH: It was challenging to be a young professional starting a company. But I think it was helpful that I co-founded it with people who had aligned but different expertise from mine. For example, one of the co-founders had a background in business and finance. That allowed me to learn how to be an architect and not have to focus as much on starting a company. Having a multidisciplinary team was crucial to being successful and making it happen with very little professional experience.

SA: What do you love the most about your job?

SH: I love working with families and organizations to create beautiful, comfortable, healthy spaces for living. Whether our impact is on an individual family or a community, being able to shape and create that space for living is really at the core of what I love about my job.

SA: Do you have advice for students interested in becoming architects?

SH: Make observations about the built environment in your sketchbook and think about how a space influences the people in it. How does a building contribute to—or detract from—the public space?

HOW TO BECOME AN ARCHITECT

GETTING STARTED:

- ▶ Keep a sketchbook. Make observations about the spaces you use every day.
- ▶ Develop a portfolio of your own designs. Try a variety of styles so you'll have a versatile skill set.
- ▶ Get an internship.

EDUCATION:

Most architects have a bachelor's or master's degree in architecture.

SALARY:

Architects can earn \$75,000 to \$145,000 or more, depending on experience, employer, and location.

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