

March 31, 2005

For Immediate Release

Capitalizing On Conflict

**GLASS WALL, HARSH WEATHER
INSPIRES AWARD-WINNING DESIGN**

RALEIGH, NC – When Raleigh architect Frank Harmon, FAIA, designed a house along Shem Creek in Charleston’s low country, he faced a serious problem: How could he capitalize on the view of the creek and allow cooling breezes to enter the house, yet protect the creek-side elevation from excessive summer heat and extreme weather conditions, including hurricane-force winds and debris? The solution? A series of 800-pound, hand-fabricated steel screens, designed so that a single person can balance and manipulate them, which recently received a design award from *Inform*, an architectural journal in Virginia that covers four mid-Atlantic states.

The 10 screens, fabricated by Christian Karkow of Raleigh, are hinged above a porch that fronts the contemporary house’s large, southwest-facing glass wall, and are constructed of metal frames that encase perforated-metal panels commonly used in industrial flooring. Made of hot-dip galvanized steel, they resist the region’s wind-borne, corrosive salt. In their horizontal, or open, position, the screens shade the house in spring and fall. In the vertical position, they protect the glass wall from threatening weather and provide a shaded porch under the fierce summer sun while allowing cooling breezes to enter the house.

Shaped by climate and site, the award-winning screens also recall elements of the house’s physical context, such as the metallic construction of steel boatsheds down the creek and the shading blinds of traditional Charleston Single-House porches. The screens’ color and texture blends with silvery live oaks on the site.

Harmon, who calls the screens “a 21st-century solution to a 400-year-old problem,” received the award in the “architectural objects” category. His screens, along with other winning designs, will appear in the magazine’s May 2005 edition. *Inform*’s circulation area includes Virginia, West Virginia, Washington D.C. and North Carolina.

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