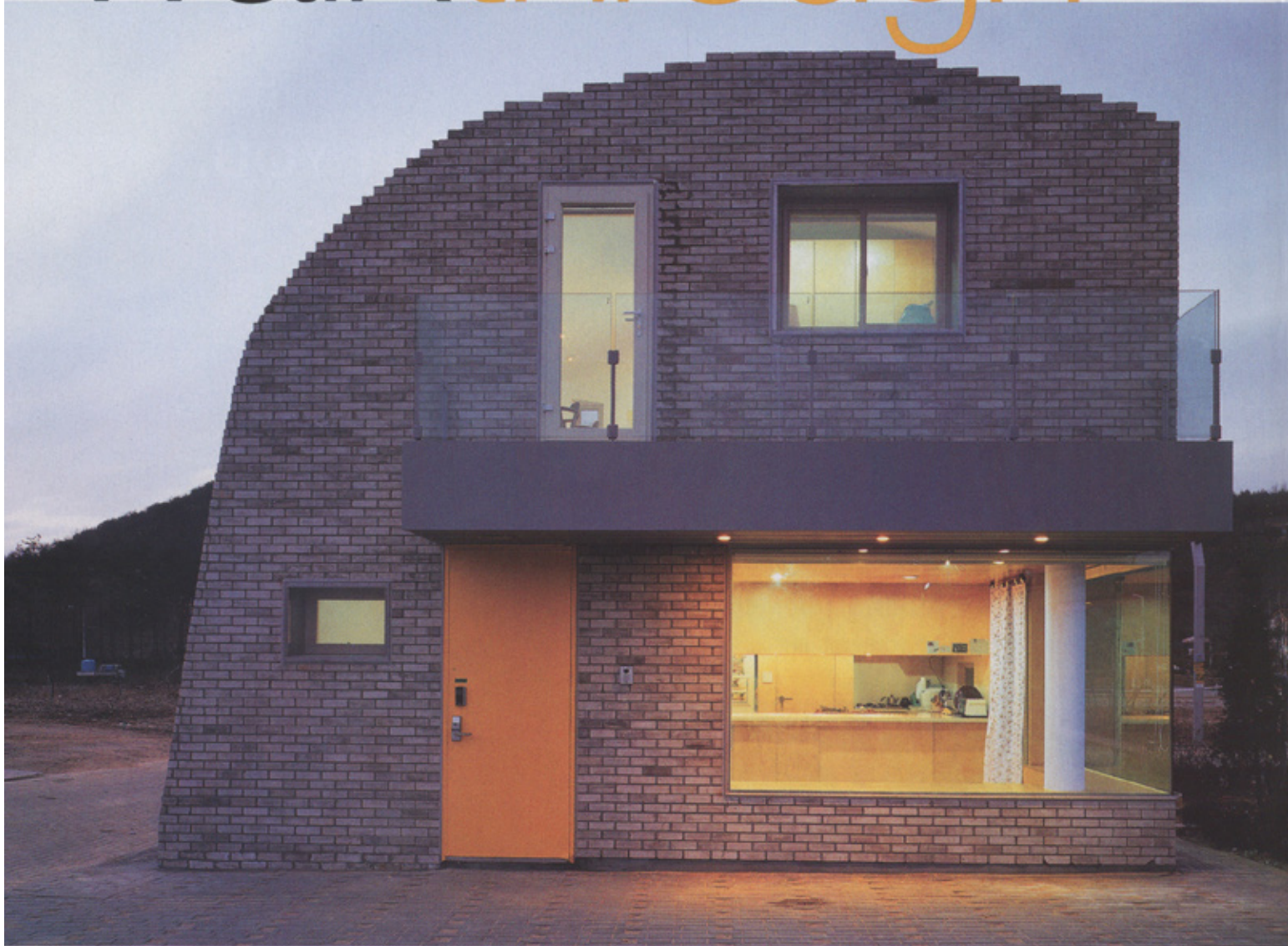


# INTERIOR DESIGN

JUNE  
2004

life's a beach

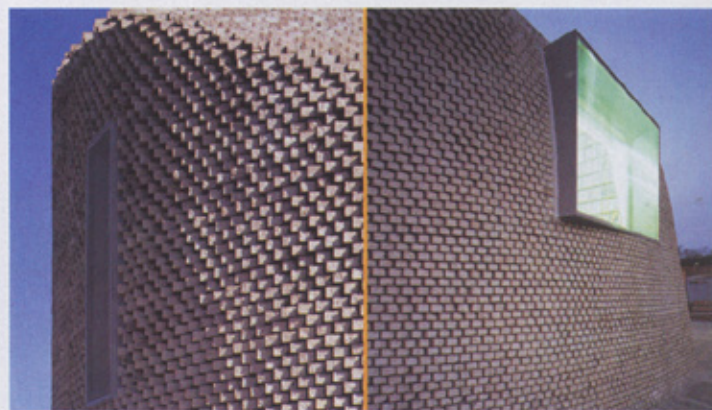
# walkthrough



## living on the edge

COLD WAR GEOPOLITICS MAKE STRANGE bedfellows in Heyri, South Korea. What with intensifying land pressure from nearby Seoul as well as easing tensions between North and South, once untouchable borderland is now being pioneered by an ambitiously utopian creative population. And it was at the resulting community, Heyri Art Valley, that **Mass Studies** principal Minsuk Cho and **Slade Architecture** principal James Slade built a little brick house filled with big ideas.

Then partners in Cho Slade Architecture, the two architects received the commission from a "hard-core activist" couple with two young children, as Cho describes the family of Younghyo Jin and Sookhee Chang. Slade, for his part, describes the entire art-centric development as "oddly artificial yet natural," and the Jin and Chang residence's craggy profile recalls the geology of the surrounding hills. "It's a hybrid between a rock and a building," he says. "Like the ground had →



*Clockwise from top: A ground-floor window reveals the dining area and galley kitchen of a house in Heyri, South Korea. A single dormer window punctuates the side elevation. The shell beneath the bricks had to be specially waterproofed.*

## walkthrough



*From top: The children's desk is built into the balustrade of the mezzanine balcony, which provides access to two bedrooms alongside and an exterior balcony at the end. Storage is tucked underneath a birch stair with a painted steel handrail. A bookcase partitions off a study area at the front of the house.*

just piled up to make a house." Entirely clad in brick—jutting out from walls and even the vaulted roof—the two-story structure's seemingly complex geometry is simply formed by the intersection of two arcs. The curved footprint, roughly 15 by 15 feet, follows the edge of the site, at the end of a row of 3,200-square-foot lots. "Then we got the idea for a curve in section, which basically echoes the one in plan," explains Cho.

Resembling an airplane hangar from the front, a papal miter from behind, the unusual volume required that all the bricks be computer-modeled to preempt awkward meetings at the corners. The concrete shell underneath also had to be specially waterproofed to protect against seepage—a process that involved a synthetic sealant.

Cho and Slade demonstrated equally unlimited ingenuity in tackling the 900-square-foot space limit inside. Beyond the bright yellow entry door is a tiny foyer, where Korean custom dictates that shoes remain. To the right lies a dining area and galley kitchen, to the left a staircase. Curving along the exterior wall and illuminated by a generous dormer window, the stair arrives at a mezzanine balcony, which provides access to the children's and master bedrooms. [At the far end of this interior balcony, a door opens onto an exterior one.]

"The house is totally lined in wood," Slade says of the extensive use of birch. "It's like a giant piece of furniture."

Or a life-size jigsaw puzzle. An efficient floor plan becomes an exercise in enlightened cramming, thanks to space-saving efforts tucked into every nook and cranny. Storage and a powder room fill the area underneath the stair, while bedrooms feature closets running the length of their walls. A bookcase partitions off a front study area equipped with a built-in desk; the children's desk is built into the mezzanine balustrade.

Small as this may sound, it's part of a much bigger dream. Jin and Chang are planning to construct two modest adjacent buildings, to be used as a communal school and nursery by day, additional living space by night. "The property is not only theirs," Slade says, "but also a cog within their community."

—Aric Chen

GENERAL CONTRACTOR: HANOOO CONSTRUCTION.

