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## Swell House

Highland Park, New Jersey  
**Studio ST Architects and Z-A**

### Two firms create a modern appendage for a suburban home, deftly merging old and new.

A renovation and 1,000-square-foot expansion conceived for a 900-square-foot home in Highland Park, New Jersey, achieves maximum visual effect for a budget of only \$400,000. Unhindered by neither a complex program nor a compelling setting, collaborating designers Studio ST Architects and Z-A took an alternative approach to suburban additions—such as contrasting old and new, borrowing the old to cover the new, or placing new inside the old.

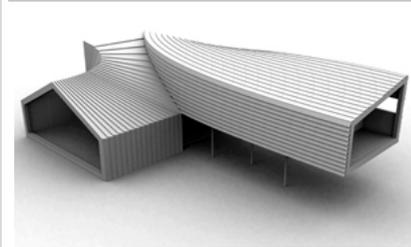


Image courtesy Studio ST Architects and Z-A

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Swell House's new volume appears like a mutated outgrowth of the existing house, a move inspired by salvaging the original footprint and roof to decrease demolition waste. The roof profile is extruded, twisting 90 degrees to create the terminus of a new volume that largely hovers on pilotis; that foundation, in turn, maximizes water permeability on the lowland site.

The old house has been converted into a giant room devoted to public uses, while the addition is largely private. A semi-public family room links the two. Despite the double curvature of the new volume, it is made of simplified, orthogonal surfaces.

Just as the form of Swell House offers a new way for appending new architecture to an older suburban house, the architects' choice of clapboard cladding reconsiders the potential of an iconic suburban material. Besides lending a sense of intelligent humor to Swell House, the clapboard, like the deployment of pilotis, achieves several environmental objectives. On the eastern elevation of the new volume, for example, planks are set vertically above the existing structure to act as bris soleil for the family room. Moreover, on the morphed roof structure above the existing house, planks are set perpendicularly and draped over the existing vertical structure to create a double skin, which insulates during winter and permits a cooling stacking effect to take place in warmer weather.

**Formal name of project:** Swell House

**Location:** Highland Park, New Jersey

**Architect:** Studio ST Architects and Z-A

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