



38 / BALUSTRADES OF THE UPSTAIRS BALCONIES AND  
THE CONCRETE FRIEZE



*Comparing the star-octagon frieze design with the lily frieze design*

THE HOUSE ITSELF, IN RATHER UNEXPECTED WAYS, DEFINED THE GEOMETRIC ORNAMENT OF THE CONCRETE FRIEZE.

It came time to form and pour the frieze. Originally, I had assumed it would be a star-octagon design. That idea came from the very first mockups in our yard. So we started with a new mockup of the original frieze, on site, made in styrofoam. It didn't look quite right. I asked Randy to make it deeper, to change the size of the octagons. None of it seemed quite right.

Then we tried an entirely different frieze design, reflecting the lily tiles in the base of the house. We made long pieces of this new frieze. It looked silly, too decorative, not calm enough—pretentious, not simple.

In the end, we went back to the simple star-octagon design, but smaller, a scale which left the

building alone and a deeper cut for the relief, so that the design was more definite, more blockish, more calm. In this case, GOOD SHAPE emerged from the unfolding process.



*A test of the lily frieze design with the balustrade design:  
This design didn't work at all.*



## 39 / FRONT DOOR STEPS



*Using a simple board to judge the height, width, and length of a concrete parapet which was to be built on both sides of the concrete front door steps*

THE FRONT DOOR STEP EDGES EMERGED NATURALLY FROM WHAT HAD GONE BEFORE.

We had gradually built up an assumption in our minds that there would be a beautiful concrete stair leading up to the front door, but had never thought about the form it would take, what it needed to be like in detail.

Instead of drawing, it was easiest and most effective to hold up a board, showing the position of a wall that would contain the steps on ei-

ther side. In twenty minutes I suggested a few key details. We looked at the steps in a mockup of concrete blocks and cardboard. The width of the top was an issue. The way the bottom tread worked, whether it was straight or splayed out. The information from these experiments was given to Randy, who then formed and built the steps.

They were built very quickly, with not too much thought, beyond that one day's work.



## 40 / PAINTING WINDOWS AND EXTERIOR WOODWORK

ORIGINALLY THE HOUSE WAS GOING TO BE YELLOW ABOVE AND GRAY BELOW. INDEED, I FIRST MADE THE LILY TILES WITH THIS COLOR SCHEME IN MIND, WITH AN AWARENESS OF THE YELLOW QUALITY THAT WAS GOING TO EXIST ON THE SITE.

However, once we had the house up, the concrete formed, the upper plaster in place, and the windows primed, the gray and white was so beautiful that painting the upper wall yellow seemed altogether wrong. Separately, Chris and Stephanie, different craftsmen on the project,