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## MODERNISM - ONE HOUSE AT A TIME

Mary Jo Bowling, Special to The Chronicle

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The house at 8 Kronquist Court proves that in most things ordinary, there lies the potential for something extraordinary. Kronquist Court is a small, almost hidden, Noe Valley cul-de-sac populated by simple, square houses built in the 1950s by a developer named Alfred Kronquist.

In recent years, the winds of Modernism have been blowing once again through Kronquist Court, mainly in the form of San Francisco architect Jonathan Feldman. Last year, the architect remodeled a house on the street and sold it. One of the developers who toured that home liked the project, and he decided to try it himself. He bought the house next door (8 Kronquist Court) and hired Feldman to transform it.

This is a rare case of the sequel being just as good as (if not better than) the original. Imagine the house pre-remodel as a dark box with several small compartments. Now, imagine that Feldman, after removing the tiny compartments within, took a carving knife and cut away the corners of the house, enlarged the windows and opened the roof. The result? Well, the Fifth Dimension said it best when they sang: "Let the sunshine, let the sunshine in."

Like most neighborhoods in the city, the houses on Kronquist Court are close together, but thanks to strategic corner and clerestory window placement, the views of the neighboring houses are carefully edited, so a person receives maximum light and privacy. The most dramatic "window" is both a skylight and a door. At the top of the stair tower he created by enclosing the entry stairs, Feldman placed a dazzling automated skylight hatch that slides open to allow access to the new roof deck. When it's closed, it looks like a huge skylight. When it slides open, it feels the roof is open to the sky.

But let's not start at the top, let's start at the bottom, at the ground-floor entry to be exact. One of the clever moves by Feldman's team was to reimagine the exterior of the house. It is a box no longer. In addition to the aforementioned windows, stucco, stainless steel and wood clad the outside of the house, adding color, texture and shape. Before the remodel, a person might have passed by the house without a second glance. Now, it would be challenging not to notice it.

When you walk through the front door, the whole story of the house becomes apparent. This is a 2,200-square-foot house that, despite being on a tight urban lot, lives in harmony with nature. Feldman took over the dreary basement of the house and turned it into a family room, work area and guest quarters.

A NanaWall System - a series of glass doors that fold open - is installed along the back wall of the family room. The instant you walk in, the sight of a serene, green garden greets you. Open the doors, and the garden and the family room become one space. As mentioned, this is a house that's less than 2,500 square feet, but because of the strong connection to the outdoors, it feels much larger.

It's even more impressive if you know the backstory. This was a house that was divorced from its lot. "To get to the outside, you had to either go around the house to the back or you had to descend a flight of rickety stairs to the yard," Feldman said. Now, the house opens to the outdoors at every turn.

The new, higher ceiling plane also lends a spacious air to the home. When the houses on Kronquist were built, they had slightly sloped rooflines and flat ceilings. The result was a cavity between ceiling and roof, not large enough for storage space. However, modern building technology allowed Feldman to have a truly flat roof and to raise the ceiling nearly a foot.

The stair tower (leading straight to the roof deck) starts on the ground floor. Walk up, and you are in the open living room/dining room/kitchen. This is a great room in every sense of the word. A band of high windows let in light and views of the treetops and sky, while screening views of nearby houses. A large, contemporary kitchen filled with sleek, Italian cabinets features a big window that frames the hillside garden perfectly.

The first thing a person notices are the sophisticated finishes that play with light and dark hues. The floors are a light white oak, picked by the owner to mimic those in New York City's Morgan Library. The cabinets are dark wood, the countertops are a white Caesarstone (a quartz composite). Throughout, the tiles are elegant in their shape and texture. The kitchen features small, round, glass tiles that go from countertop to ceiling. The bathrooms show delicately textured Xilo ceramic tiles that look like a natural, carved stone.

Continuing up the stairs, and through the roof hatch, you arrive at a magnificent roof deck with fantastic views. From here, you can see all of San Francisco, as well as a selling point that's not visible in other parts of the house: solar panels. Throughout, the house is designed using environmentally conscious techniques and green building practices. In addition to solar panels, the home features a radiant floor heating system.

**8 kronquist court**

**Web:** [www.8kronquist.com](http://www.8kronquist.com)

**Price:** \$2.295 million

**Square footage:** 2,200

**Price per square foot:** \$1,043

**Bedrooms:** 3

**Bathrooms:** 3

**Architect:** Jonathan Feldman

**Interiors:** Lisa Lougee Interiors

**Landscape Design:** Loretta Gargan Landscape + Design

**Contractor:** Lara Construction

**Realtor:** David Clarke, Vanguard Properties

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