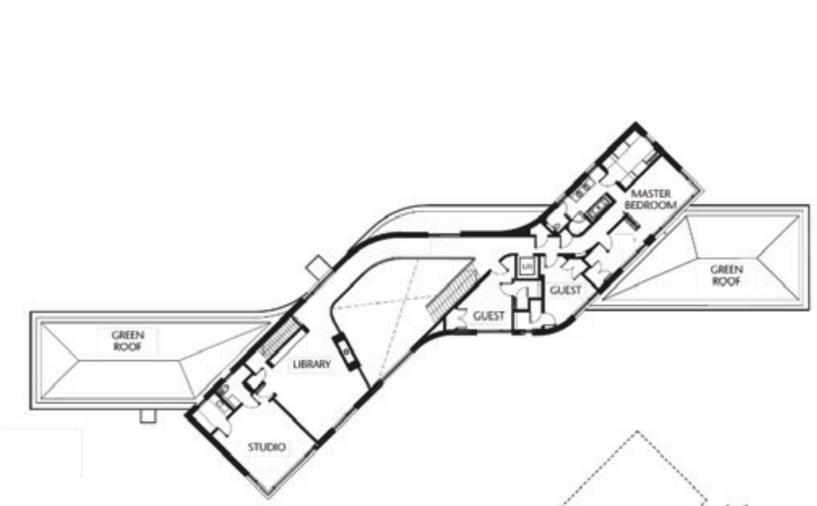
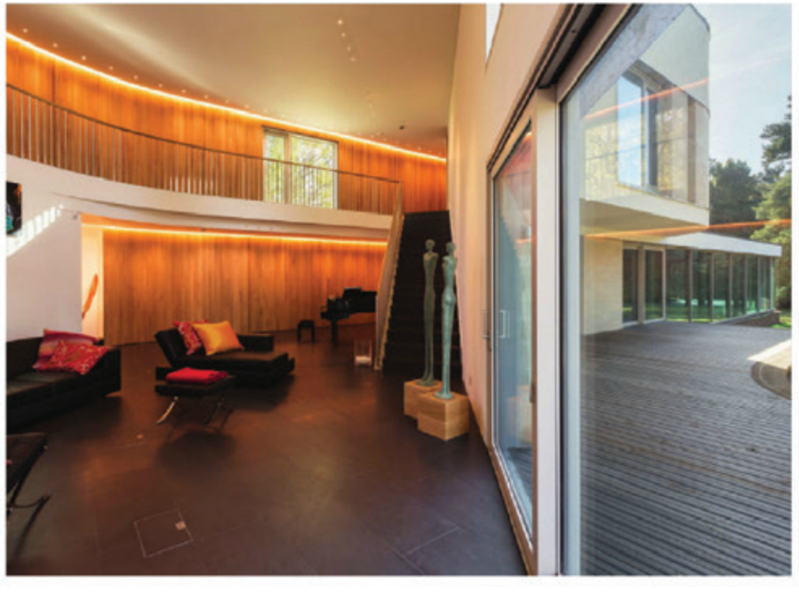
ADRIAN JAMES ARCHITECTS
MEANDER HOUSE

Located on a three-hectare site in the Oxfordshire countryside, the Meander House is intended to be like 'a walk in the woods', with two overlaid sinuous forms weaving between clusters of pine, birch and poplar. The interiors focus on a double-height living space from which a pool wing leads south and a kitchen wing north. The first floor curves away from the central space in two wings, diverging from the ground floor as dramatic cantilevers. Consequently the master bedroom and guest wing hang up to nine metres out from the lower floor. The cantilevers had to be extremely rigid, and this was achieved by suspending them from a massive steel beam, spanning 40 metres from end to end, concealed in a deep parapet. Because the 'ends' are hung,



▵ Site plan; south gables; pool interior (phs: David Fisher).
¢ Ground and upper floor plans; long and cross sections.
▿ The double-height living area opens to a west-facing deck. The exterior employs a palette of white render, stainless steel edgings and Ancaster white stone (which appears light ochre next to the render). These materials are used counter-intuitively in that the render is used as the sculptural form-giver, while the stone makes up the ribbon linking the bands of glazing. Both floors are arranged around along a circulation spine which is lined with a continuous wall of oak boards. Inside, apart from the oak, walls and ceilings are white, floors are basalt and ironmongery is stainless steel.



they require little structure themselves, enabling large areas of glazing and a shallow floor which accentuate the sense of weightlessness.

The house is designed to touch the earth lightly – visually, metaphorically and in its energy use. The highly insulated fabric includes a bed of extreme loadbearing cellular insulant below the pool. Fenestration is arranged to maximise solar gain on the south and west facades to the pool room and living space. The north-east elevation facing the entrance is relatively blank, with only a high kitchen window and an understated front door. A ground-source heat pump, supplied by ten 100-metre-deep boreholes, provides space heating, and 42 square metres of rooftop solar panels supply the pool and hot water. Both systems are managed by a sophisticated BMS which uses the pool as a heat sink.□

○ **Architect** Adrian James Architects **main contractor** Benfield & Loxley **structural engineer** OMK Design **qs** BAQUS **services engineer** GF Cross & Sons **lighting consultant** VBK Lighting **pool** Guncast Swimming Pools **external masonry** Stone Cladding **Ancaster limestone** OG Masonry **basalt floor** Devonstone **windows** Schueco. L2i (supply) **kitchen** Bulthaup **sauna** Klafs **steel balustrade** DJ Engineering **steel structure** Cahill Welding Services **joinery** Wardlaw **external blinds** Hunter Douglas, Waverley Blinds (installer) **lift** Schindler.