

An Elevated Take on “Beachy” Design in the Bay Area

October 16, 2024



Interior Design: Field Theory

Interior Architecture: Kress Jack

Photographer: Margaret Austin

Stylist: Anika Gawthorne

Builder: Burdell Construction

“This home is located in a really special part of San Francisco, in the Sutro Heights neighborhood of the Outer Richmond,” designer Leah Harmatz tells us. “It’s at the far western edge of the city, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The home is a block from Sutro Heights Park, a beautiful historic park with amazing views. It’s a quiet residential area in the city, close to the surf at Ocean Beach and hiking trails at Lands End. Some days are completely enveloped in a cozy fog, and other days you are surrounded by a sparkling blue ocean.”

Her clients grew up in the Bay Area and had lived in the house for over ten years before reaching out to Leah’s firm, Field Theory. “They initially reached out to me before they began their project to see if I could work with them on the design,” Leah recalls. “We immediately clicked, but I was moving to New York for six months to install a hospitality project, so I had to tell them the timing wouldn’t work out. Fast forward a year, and they reached out to me again just as I was moving back to San Francisco to see if I could help them through the second half of construction, furniture selection and final styling.”



Once the timing was right, Leah was eager to help them create their dream space. “They live in the home with their two young daughters, they have a really active lifestyle, and they wanted to create a space that feels truly welcoming, comfortable, and livable,” she explains. “Our goal was to design a space that felt comfortable for lounging and relaxing, working on kids’ art projects or coming home sandy from the beach post-surf.” But, it also needed to be a stylish reflection of their tastes and conducive for hosting and entertaining. “They knew they wanted to add a third-story primary suite with a roof deck and views of the ocean, as well as a first-floor family room hangout den that opened onto the backyard.”

In phase one, the family worked with the team at Kress Jack on initial interior architecture, kitchen and bath design, and material selection. Leah and the Field Theory team got to work next. “We selected paint colors, kitchen countertops, tile, and hardware, tile layouts and grout colors, stair railing design, designed built-ins and custom millwork, all furniture design, specification, ordering and installation, and styling,” she says, ticking off each item. “We were really aligned aesthetically on all the decisions, which made for a fun, smooth process. My favorite moment was when their younger daughter joined us for a site visit, and she brought me a selection of her most treasured periwinkle blue possessions to guide the color palette of her room.”

She admits that the biggest challenge was making sure the home felt lived-in, approachable and storied, despite the new, modern construction. “We incorporated lots of warm natural woods, layered textures and cozy rugs, handcrafted furniture and ceramics, and vintage and antique pieces from my shop and also my clients’ family heirlooms,” she explains. However, finding the right style wasn’t the only hurdle. “During construction, one of the biggest challenges was experiencing unusually wet weather—it was the rainiest December since 1862! The builder, Peter Towey, of Burdell Construction, did an amazing job completing the project on time and within budget, and it was a really seamless collaboration, especially with the unusual circumstance of joining the project midway through.”

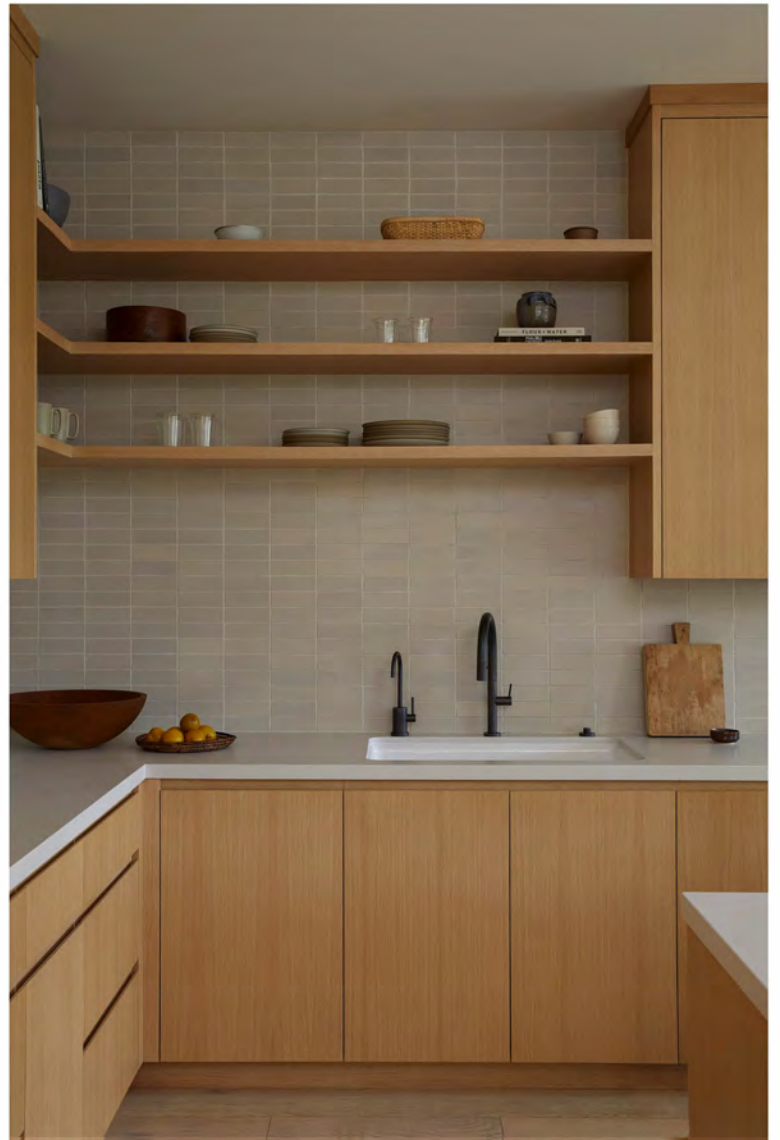
Leah was on the project for roughly a year and a half before the end result was revealed—a warm, elevated space the homeowners will love for years to come.

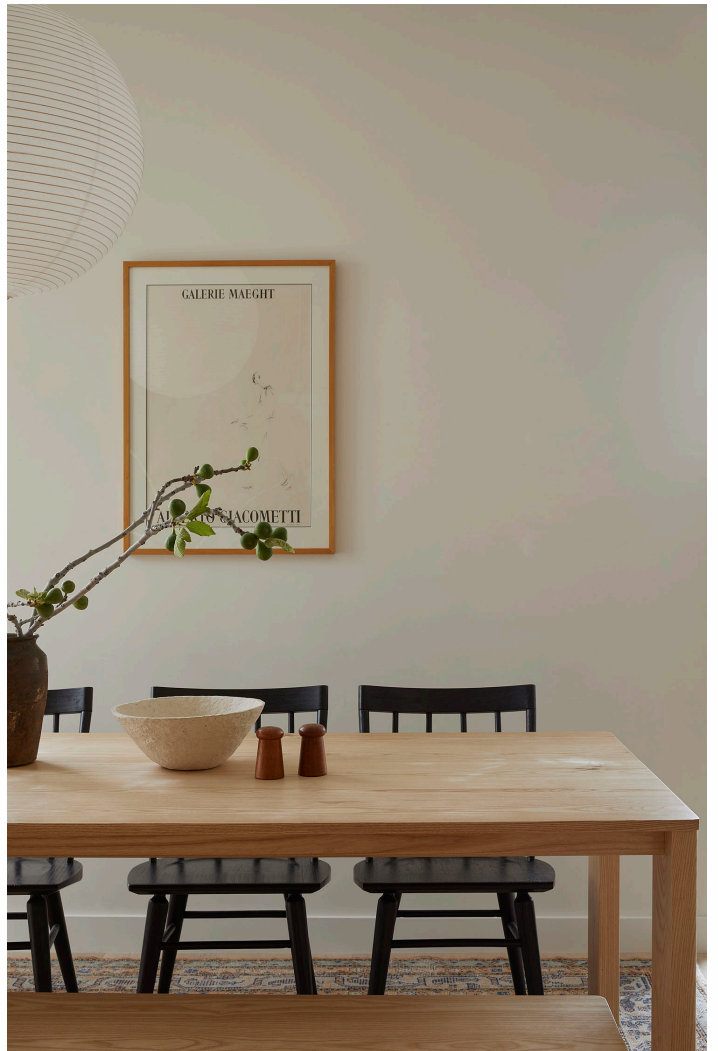








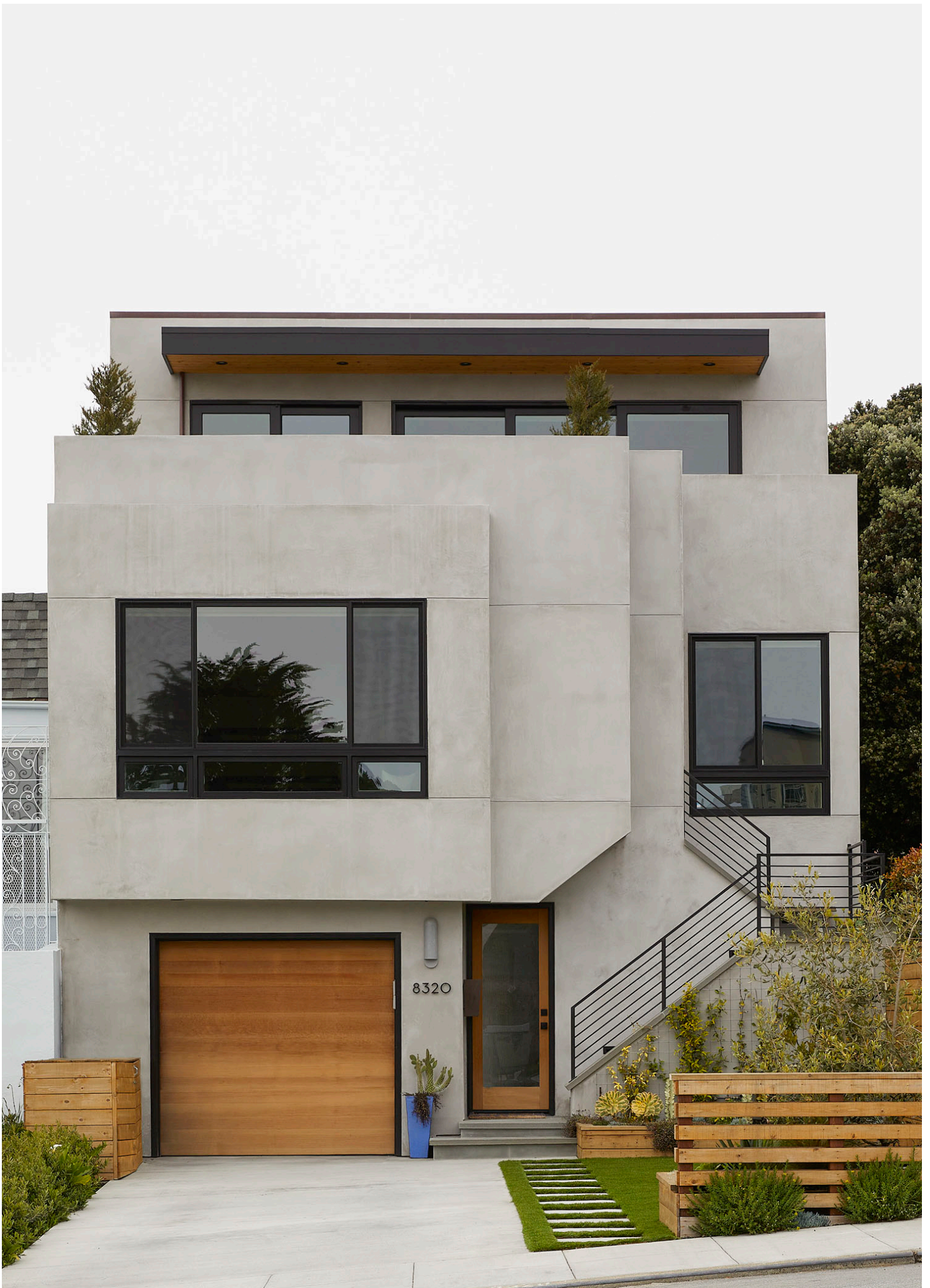












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