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## Canadian forest retreat by Christopher Simmonds stretches out towards lake views

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The upper storey of this forest house near Ottawa projects out from the landscape, creating a cantilevered living room offering views through the trees towards a nearby lake (+ slideshow).



The property is located in the Val-des-Monts district to the north of the Canadian capital and was designed by local studio [Christopher Simmonds Architect](#) as a retreat for a family who enjoy swimming, canoeing and kayaking.



The building's lower level emerges from the wooded hillside site, and contains a bedroom and mechanical services that are partially buried in the slope. A den at the front is flanked by a full-height window overlooking the water.



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The upper storey houses two bedrooms at the rear and an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area that projects towards the lake.



"The cottage was designed as a passage to the lakeside," project architect Rick Shean told Dezeen. "As you approach the unassuming blank facade from the driveway, the building resembles a simple shed sitting in the forest. As you move through the cottage it gradually opens up to a full view of the lake from the cantilevered living area."



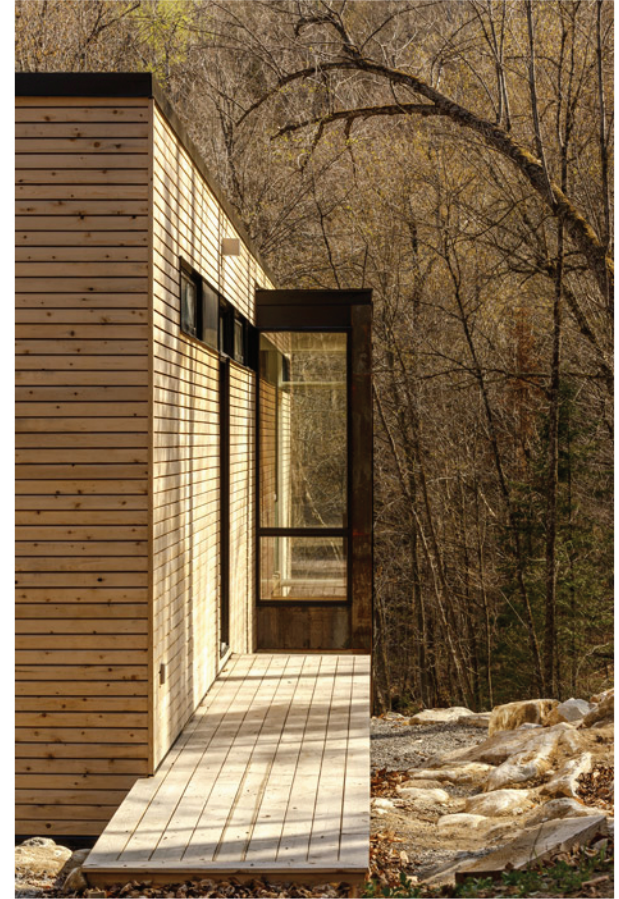
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Visually the building is separated into two intersecting volumes – one that is tall and thin, and another that is short and long.



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The first of these volumes – which encompasses all of the ground floor and part of the level above – is clad with partially weathered steel that evokes the texture of the rocks and earth on the site.



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A narrow path meanders up the slope towards the house's entrance, which is located on the upper level. A wooden deck on the west facade opens onto a hallway connecting the bedrooms and bathroom at one end with the living areas at the other.



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A unit containing the sink and integrated storage creates a natural divide between the kitchen and the dining area, which is connected to a large deck by sliding glass doors. Beyond this, full-height glazing extends around the corner of the living room – designed to emphasise the sense of floating above the sloping ground.



"The linear plan and cantilever articulate the passage to the lake and the cottage's position on the cliff's edge," added Sean. "The cantilever is used to create a sense of closeness to the water."



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The stairwell that descends from the dining area to the lower storey incorporates large glazed panels to ensure natural light and views reach the interior on both levels.



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The den at the bottom of the stairs is flanked by a large picture window, beside which is a door that opens onto the gravel path that provides a direct route into the forest.



White oak boards are used throughout the interior for flooring and to line the main hallway. The use of timber complements the surrounding woodland and is continued in the bathroom, where the vanity unit is built from silver maple.

Photography is by [Doublespace Photography](#).



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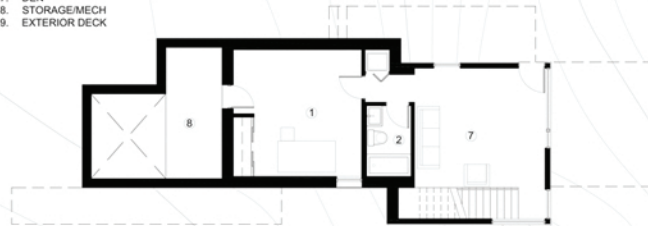
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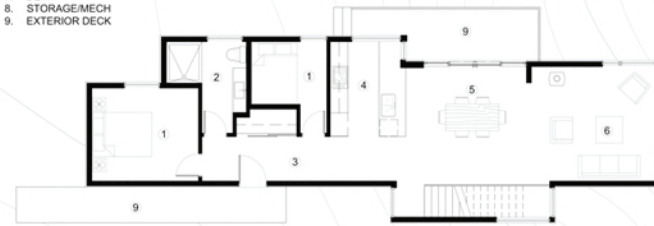
1. BEDROOM
2. WASHROOM
3. HALLWAY
4. KITCHEN
5. DINING
6. LIVING
7. DEN
8. STORAGE/MECH
9. EXTERIOR DECK



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

0' 5' 10' 20'

1. BEDROOM
2. WASHROOM
3. HALLWAY
4. KITCHEN
5. DINING
6. LIVING
7. DEN
8. STORAGE/MECH
9. EXTERIOR DECK



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

0' 5' 10' 20'