

# WHAT'S TRENDING IN ARCHITECTURE

*A conversation with* TANNER WHITE AND HILAND HALL ♦ *written by* MERYL SIEGMAN

Tanner White Architects



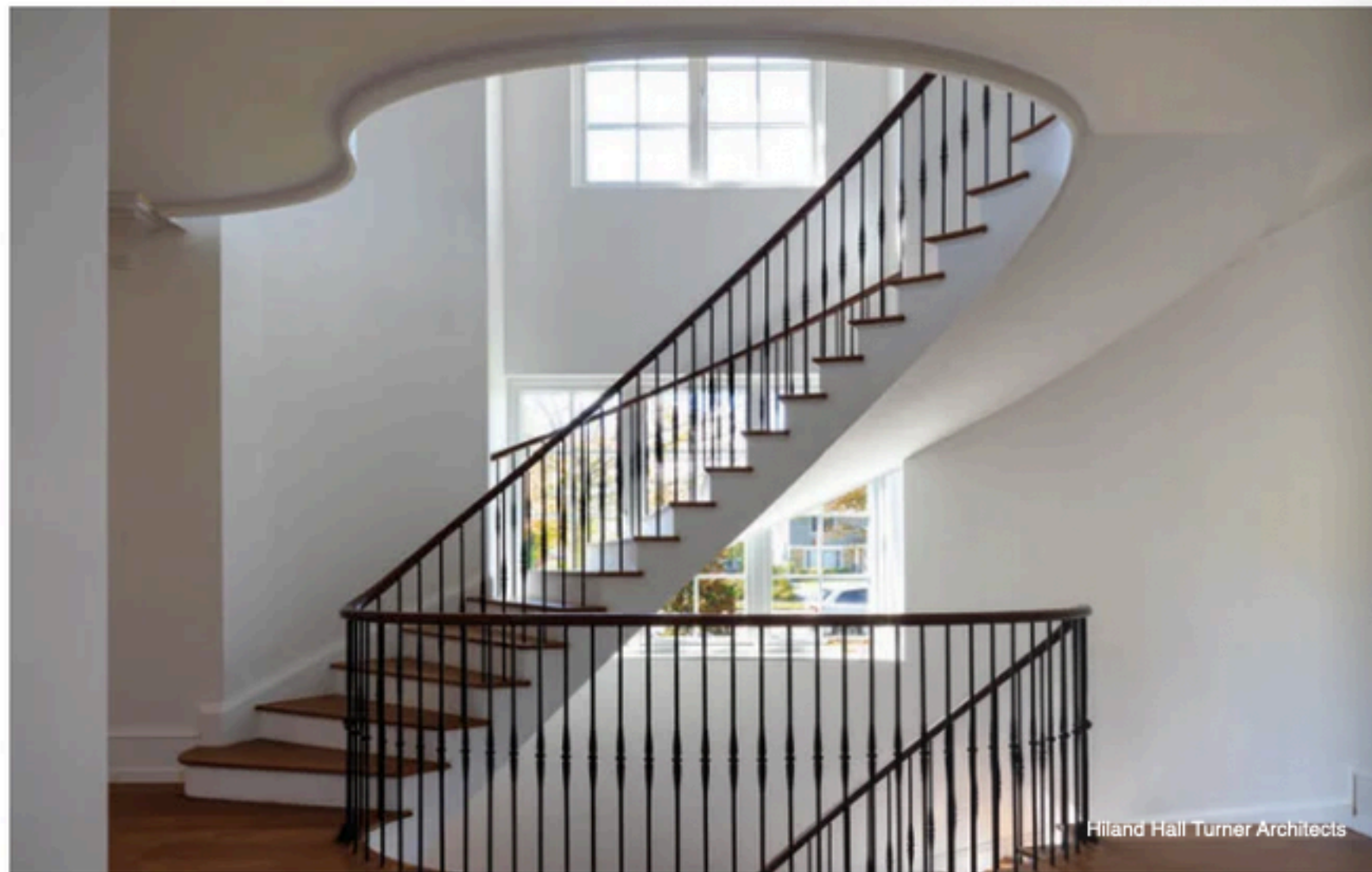
Hiland Hall Turner Architects

**A**re you curious about the latest trends in residential architecture? We checked in with two leading experts in the field to find out what they had to say about the subject.

Tanner White is the principal of Tanner White Architects, an award-winning boutique architectural firm known for designing custom homes that combine beauty, function and sustainability. Established in 2012, the firm has an impressive portfolio of projects, ranging from its home base in Fairfield County, CT, up and down the East Coast, and as far flung as Turks and Caicos and Colorado. Tanner takes pride in the fact that his firm designs in a variety of styles, rather than limiting itself to just one, likening it to a chef who can cook anything.

Hiland Hall is a third-generation architect, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. His firm, the New Jersey-based Hiland Hall Turner Architects (HHTA), founded in 1990, has a portfolio that includes outstanding residential





Hiland Hall Turner Architects

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—HILAND HALL, Hiland Hall Turner Architects



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projects throughout the United States. His work is based on incorporating his clients’ past and present, as well as goals and needs, into his designs. He conceives creative solutions that take into account identifiable architectural elements, context, history and new technologies. HHTA was recently added to Forbes’ list of America’s Top 200 Residential Architects in 2025.

**D+D: Do you see clients shifting towards a more natural environment? How would you describe “natural modernism,” the design theory that blends the clean lines and functionality of modernism with the natural world?**

**Hiland:** There has definitely been a shift towards embroidering a home’s environment into its interior to create a more defined and appropriate access to the outdoors from the household. In the past 15 years, I’ve noticed a tendency for our younger clientele to look for a new, vibrant experience rather than replicate their grandmother’s house. The advent of larger fenestration allows for the construction of features such as window walls, resulting in more integration of the exterior and bringing in additional light, visibility and experience for those dwelling inside these homes.

In my practice, natural modernism means integrating natural materials in a contemporary manner. A good example is using natural planking in the interior, like walls and ceilings.

We’ve seen a lot of that—planks that are intentionally modern with a natural feel are used for surfacing walls.

**D+D: Are you noticing a comeback of “historical character”?**

**Tanner:** I believe so. There are certain architectural styles that we’re not doing much of anymore because clients are getting tired of the status quo. Many of those trendy farmhouse-looking houses are just watered down versions of what was originally creative, so people are getting a bad taste in their mouths.

Our younger clients are showing an interest in traditional, time-stamped architecture such as colonial and federal. We just finished an historic house in Southport for clients in their early 30s. Contrary to what I thought they would ask for, they rejected recent trends and wanted something more timeless. They don’t want to invest in something that will be out of style in five years. But they should understand that there are still other styles out there, such as true “modern” architecture, which is thriving in our state.

**Hiland:** I view historical character as a traditional direction in architecture, with elements such as entablature and crowns. We are often called upon to design buildings with authentic character. However, I do not see a direct comeback; rather, I see a modern approach. This is because many of

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—TANNER WHITE, Tanner White Architects



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our clients are much younger. I believe that the manner in which historical character should be developed is with authenticity. Of course we can “do” historic character, but I am seeing a shift in direction towards modernism. A lot of us are experimenting with historical forms, but translated into a more modern vocabulary.

**D+D:** Are the open floor plans that were once so popular becoming a thing of the past? If so, what are your thoughts on creating closed floor plans?

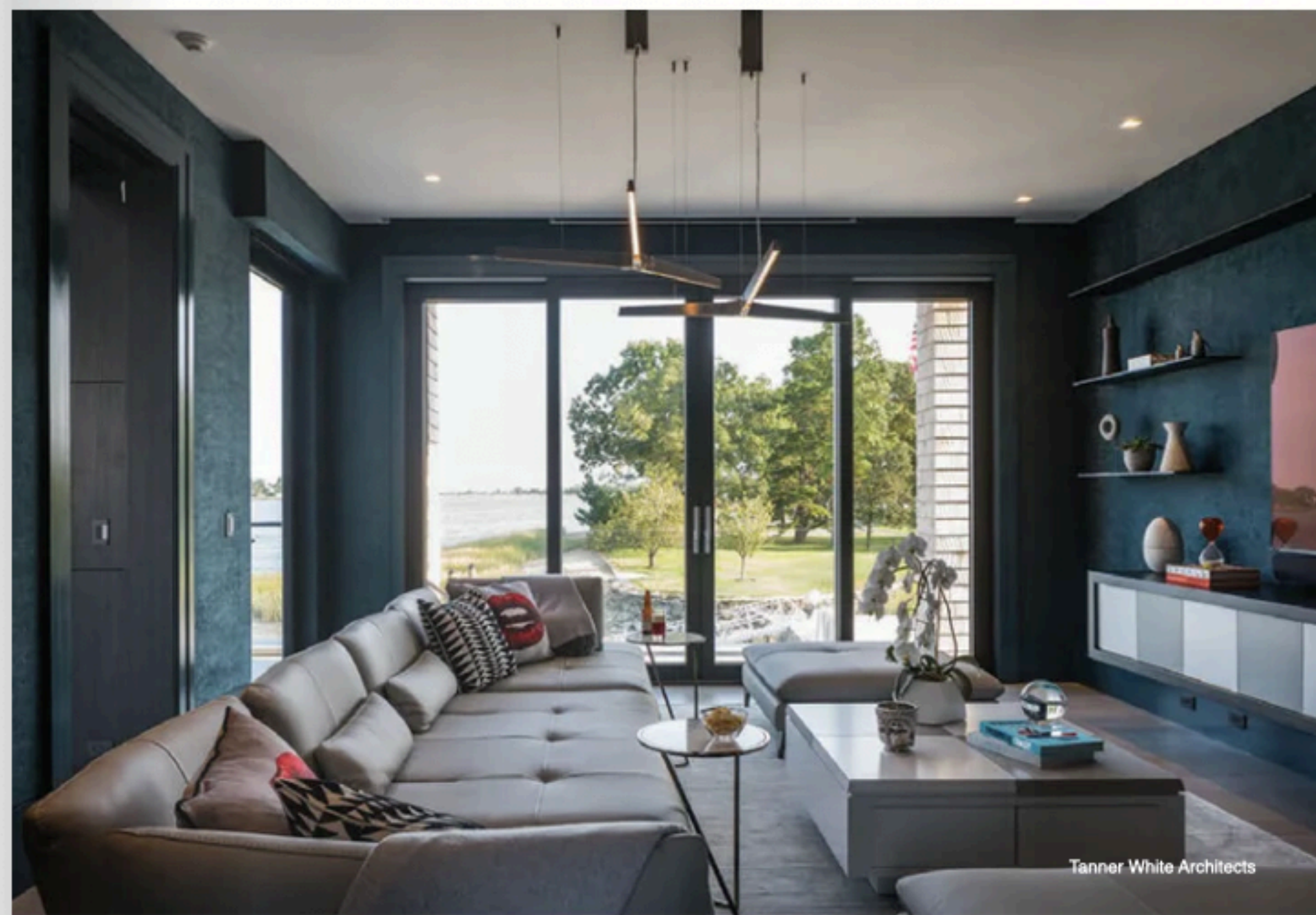
**Tanner:** Many of the designs we are doing for our clients are hybrids: open entertainment spaces, but more private ones that are multi-functional, i.e. an office that can double as a bedroom. Our clients don’t want one large open space, but prefer to be able to switch the mood to a more private, intimate room when needed, such a playroom for the kids that can be closed off. People seem to be getting tired of what was trending, and don’t want to be able to see the kitchen from the living room. We accomplish this by creating rooms that can be opened up or closed to create a separate space.

**Hiland:** Because people are living differently, I am noticing a trend towards open planning with an approach that is more modern. Traditional houses had separate rooms—parlor, dining room, living or sitting room, kitchen with a breakfast area. We always ask clients about their lifestyles and how they want to live, and it looks like we’re not going back to parlors any time soon. The younger gen-





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eration has embraced an open plan concept for their living areas, but not for bedrooms.

**D+D:** Can you share some architectural trends or styles that you would like to see make a comeback?

**Tanner:** The houses that trigger an emotional response in me are Italianate: boxy in nature, with 12 - 14 foot ceilings, low pitched roofs, and a transom on top with a wraparound porch. I would love to see some version of that with today's take by using modern materials and technology.

**Hiland:** While there are the classicists who exercise a classical style and execute more formal buildings, we are moving in a different direction with our clients. I don't see them going back to a historical or traditional style. We are turning to

modernism and encouraging that lifestyle with our clients. While there has been a direction towards historical styles, I feel we are in a place that is directed by more youthful and vibrant clients who enjoy some experimentation. So I don't see more traditional styles coming back any time soon. We've gone beyond it in our relationship to defined rooms.

**D+D:** So what are some of the trends you've been seeing in 2025?

**Tanner:** Certain rooms are getting a lot bigger, such as mud rooms and food pantries. We're seeing a demand for these large second kitchens hidden behind the main kitchen so occupants aren't staring at appliances and piled-up dishes. Multiple home offices per floor are popping up. While