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Shell House

DAAM

Location: Roxbury, New York

General Contractor: Whritner Builders

Located in the Catskill Mountains, the Shell House was designed in 1996 by Seymour Rutkin with consultation from the Monolithic Dome Institute. DAAM was hired to remodel the kitchen and entry foyer and redesign the HVAC system of the shotcrete dome to accommodate contemporary living needs, while maintaining the structure's existing aesthetics and quirks. Operating within the unique spatial constraints of the dome's oblate ellipsoid geometry, they developed a design strategy that opened up the kitchen floor plan and reoriented the room to alleviate problematic head clearance issues. The curvaceous theme is then elaborated further in various details — the front door lights, kitchen drawer pulls and tile pattern.

"This is essentially a kitchen renovation," noted one juror, "but the firm accomplished more in a kitchen renovation than one might have accomplished renovating the whole home." Added another, "They had to be really inventive to put something in place that can live up to the texture and the geometry of the concrete shell. The way this adds these vertical lines and dimension to the dimensionless sloping concrete walls makes it feel like it belongs there."

