



Image Credit:  
Brad Angelini

# Osler House

3081 Glazier Way

**ARCHITECT:**

David Osler, 1960

*Paul Dannels*

In 1960, the son of a farmer built a little house for his family on the farm where he grew up—on the outskirts of a small midwestern city. He nestled the home behind an old apple tree and sited it to provide views of the property down the hill to the west. This was after he'd served bravely in World War II, traveled some, and considered trying his hand as an illustrator in a big east coast city. Ultimately, he returned to the town of his childhood and the young woman he'd met when they were in high school together. They raised their family in the little house and, by all accounts, it was quite a magical place to grow up. In the meantime, the small city grew out to, and well beyond, the farm. The old apple tree is no longer there.

David W. Osler, the architect, built a career on the designs of a myriad of modern homes and his Osler House was among the first. He would later design another home, just up the hill, and later many more just down the hill, establishing a much sought-after modern living community on the edge of what is now Ann Arbor's technology corridor. The Osler House remained the special refuge for the family as the city grew and the architect's reputation flourished.

Throughout his career, Osler challenged himself to do better. He constantly developed, and increasingly refined, themes that suited his ideas for living.

The split-level entry of the Osler House, with tall flanking glass panes, private spaces a few steps down, and public spaces a few steps up, developed ideas he had used earlier on a home for his friend, the artist Milt Kemnitz. He continued to work on these themes and others in many homes to follow.

The home is a simple rectangular form clad in wood shingles. The split-level entry initiates a wood-slatted, dropped ceiling that defines a central spine that splits the public family spaces from the kitchen and study. It separates a formal living space from a small study with views to one another across the sunken entry. Beyond the entry are a kitchen, the dining area, a family space, as well as a covered deck off of the dining area, at the conclusion of the spine. A formal living space designed for the good furniture, not for children, is punctuated with a wood wall. Stacked, sliding doors can be used to seal off the kitchen along the edge of the spine, leaving open only the entertaining spaces from which guests, clients, and colleagues could gather, share cocktails, survey the old farm, and consider the approaching city. ●