

The home here was always about a state of mind and a place of being rather than an expression of myself.



Project Name

FENARIO

SCOPE OF PROJECT

Architectural Design
Complete Home Build-Out
Project Management

Project Data

2022 / Residence

Project Status	Complete
Location	Penticton, British Columbia
Project Area	350m2

REFRAMING THE IMPOSSIBLE

For those with ambitious goals, finding a team skilled and creative enough to make it happen can be the hardest part of the project.

When Charles Cleghorn, a former advertising exec turned wine entrepreneur, set out to build his home, he had an ambitious vision: a gorgeous, modern building designed to maximize the views from his bench-top property overlooking Skaha Lake in Penticton. But his plan came with significant hurdles that involved both the design and the property. He was told it was impossible. Builders pushed compromise after compromise. But, he didn't want a consolation prize, so he kept looking for a contractor who was up to the challenge.

After nearly a year of being told no, Charles found Ritchie. Though they recognized the difficulties that had led every other builder to shut him down, Ritchie also caught fire with his vision. They wanted in, and they delivered.



Sedimentary rock that Fenario was built into.

01.

CHALLENGE

To engineer and build a 350 m2 home on the edge of a bench while minimizing the visual weight of the building and maintaining focus on the endless views.
02.

OUTCOME

Inspired by Charles’ vision, they helped him craft a structure that met his aesthetic goals while working within the confines of his budget and the natural challenges of building on a slope. To do this, they planned to build the bulk of the home into the rock face, leaving only a minimalist garage visible from his driveway.



A lot of planning, a lot of foresight, and a lot of handholding from the Ritchie team helped me make good decisions early on, which protected me and saved me a lot from cost overruns.



I think we were very fortunate, but it wasn't just luck. There was a lot of thoughtful considerate planning early on that helped ensure that it would be a success despite the complications.

03. **THE ROAD TO RITCHIE**

Initially, Charles had planned to use prefab, modular structures to build his home. However, after spending over nine months working with a manufacturer, Charles was told he would have to compromise on his vision and sacrifice almost half of his requirements to make it work. So, he pivoted and started looking for custom home builders that were able to creatively problem solve. Seeing our portfolio of past builds, and our ability to bring together imagination, creativity and engineering, he reached out to us.

04. **STAYING LIGHT**

Charles approached them with a carefully curated presentation, including his vision for the home, design details, materials and inspirations. We pulled pieces from his presentation and designed and presented a blueprint that perfectly aligned with his concept while addressing the inherent challenges. To keep the visual weight as light as possible, they hid most of the structure by building it right into the rock, leaving only the garage fully visible. Though buried in bedrock, they kept the space bright with an open concept layout, clean lines and large windows that bathe the home in natural light.



With unmatched views of Skaha Lake, every interior space was intentionally designed to maximize natural light.







05. **TWEAKING
THE DETAILS,
MAINTAINING THE
VISION**

The original concept was a building nearly made of glass, so the eye would see straight through to the view beyond. By combining the glass with minimalist architecture, Charles wanted the structure to almost disappear, making it seem as if it was a natural part of the scenery. However, given his property and where he wanted to place the home, this posed major issues.

After testing the bedrock, they discovered it would not support the weight of a house without a massive, 15-foot-high foundation wall. This was not only prohibitively expensive but would also ruin the aesthetic.

Instead, they reworked Charles’ inspiration by nestling the home in the rock, instead of on the rock. This not only maintained Charle’s vision and preserved the stability of the foundation, but it also cut costs on the entire project.

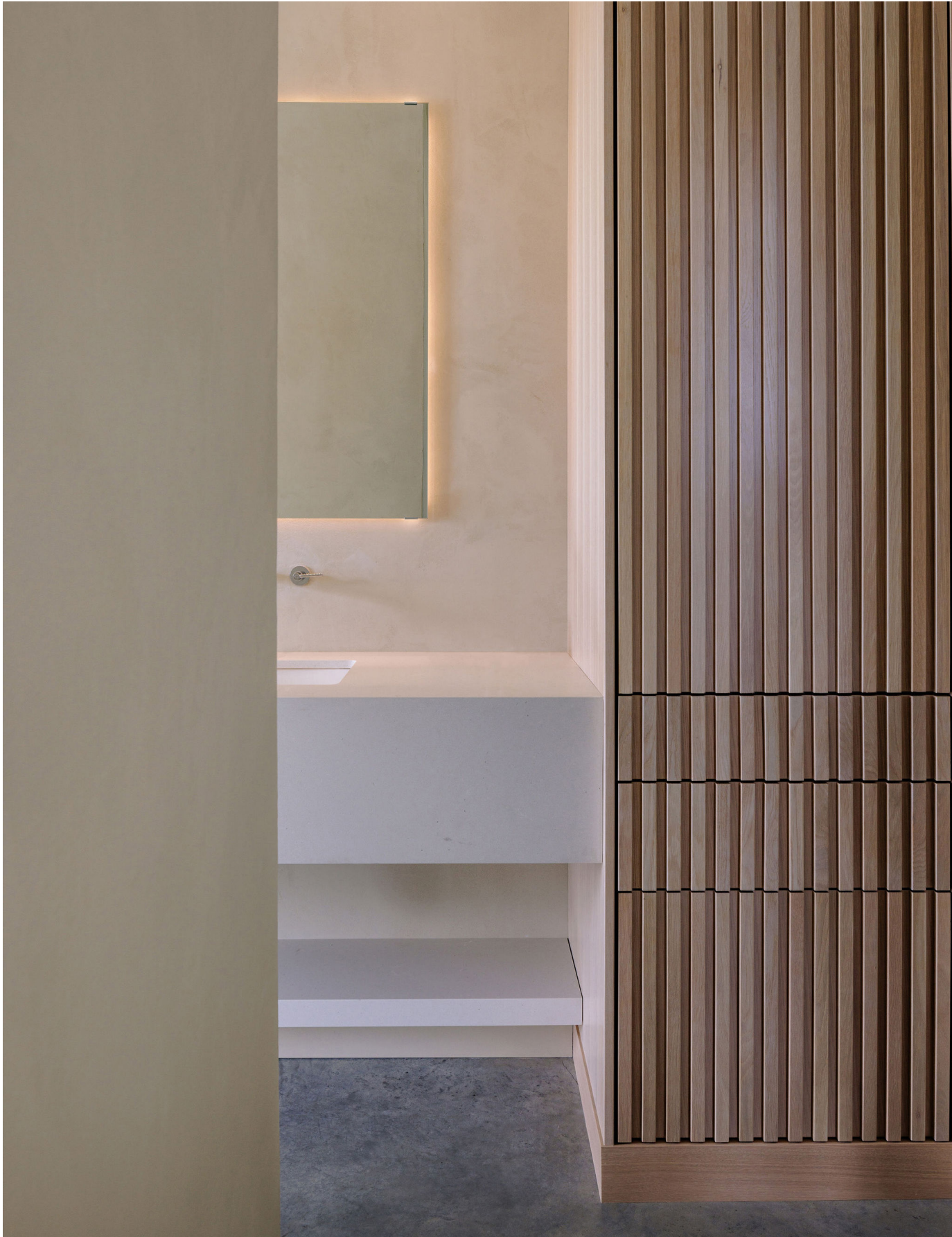
06. **NATURE WILL
BE NATURE –
ENVIRONMENTAL
COMPLICATIONS**

Every build comes with unforeseen challenges and with larger ambitions than most, they knew going in there would be more complications than were obvious.

From weather-related events to COVID, they faced a variety of problems to overcome during the build.

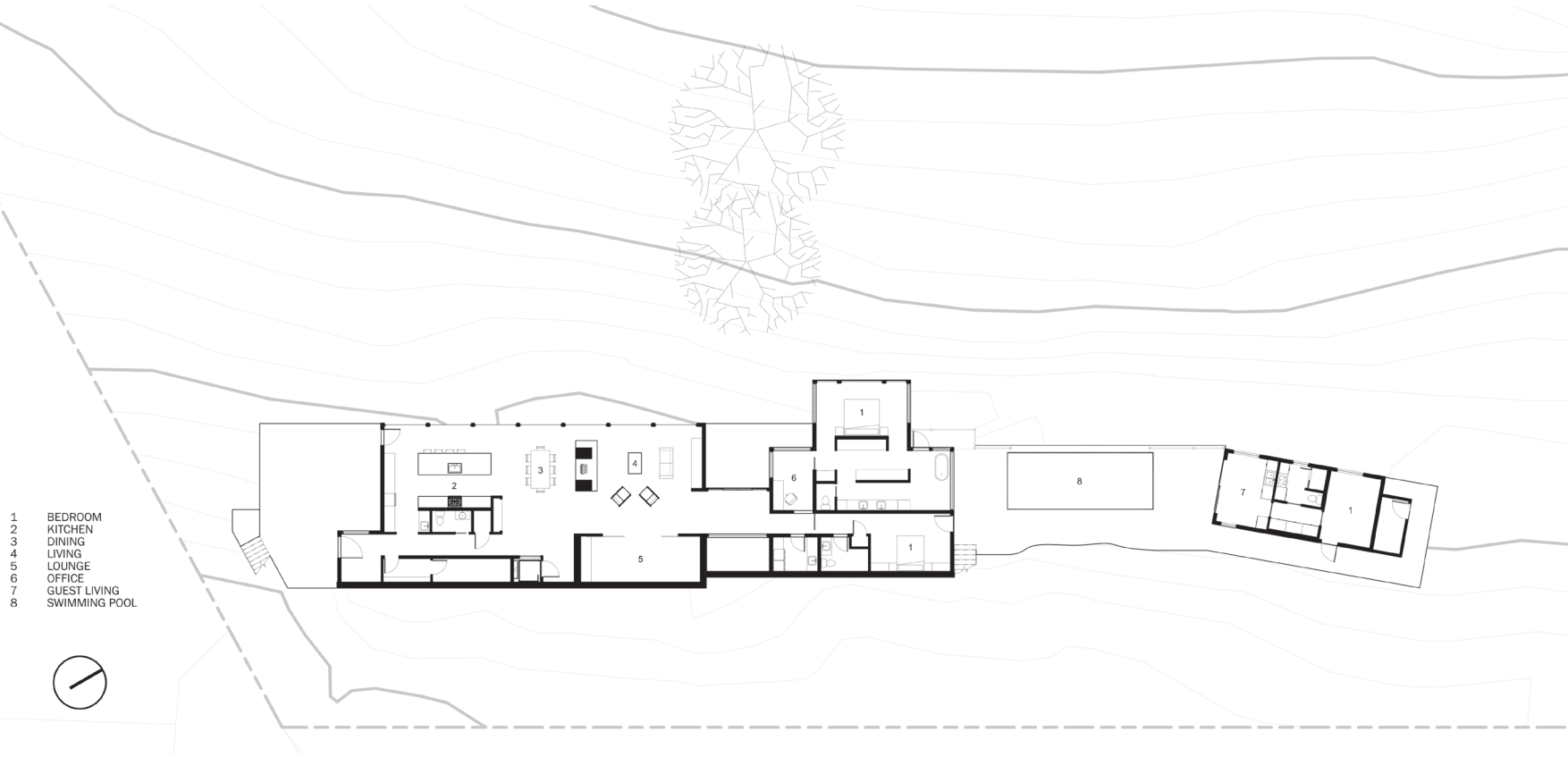
- A massive freeze-thaw event exposed the ledges of the home to groundwater, which then froze and caused slope stability issues and new structural challenges to overcome.
- COVID-related challenges, including supply chain issues, caused additional, unexpected construction delays.
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This threw our schedule into disarray, which made it difficult for Charles to be on site regularly so he could be part of the final design decisions. To make it easier for him to be on-site, they arranged for a nearby AirBNB for Charles.





*I still have all
of the original
architectural
drawings
because I love
them so much!*







Warm minimalist built in millwork throughout.



Throughout the whole process, there was constant proactive and transparent communication, which is definitely the hallmark of Ritchie. Just really, really good communicators.





06. **RELISHING
THE FINISHED
PRODUCT**

After years of being shut down and told his dream was impossible, Charles now lives in his carefully curated home: 145 feet long, nestled 14 feet into a rock face with an expansive view that defines both the interior and exterior.

Though they faced challenges along the way, this build was incredibly satisfying as each step pushed them to find new, creative solutions where others had only seen barriers.

In fact, Charles was so happy with the team that he approached them again after completion to start Phase 2 of the build. Together, we've since added an outdoor swimming pool and separate pool house to the property, maintaining the same low-impact aesthetic to keep nature centre stage.



Looking for a builder you can trust? Call Ritchie for a consultation.