



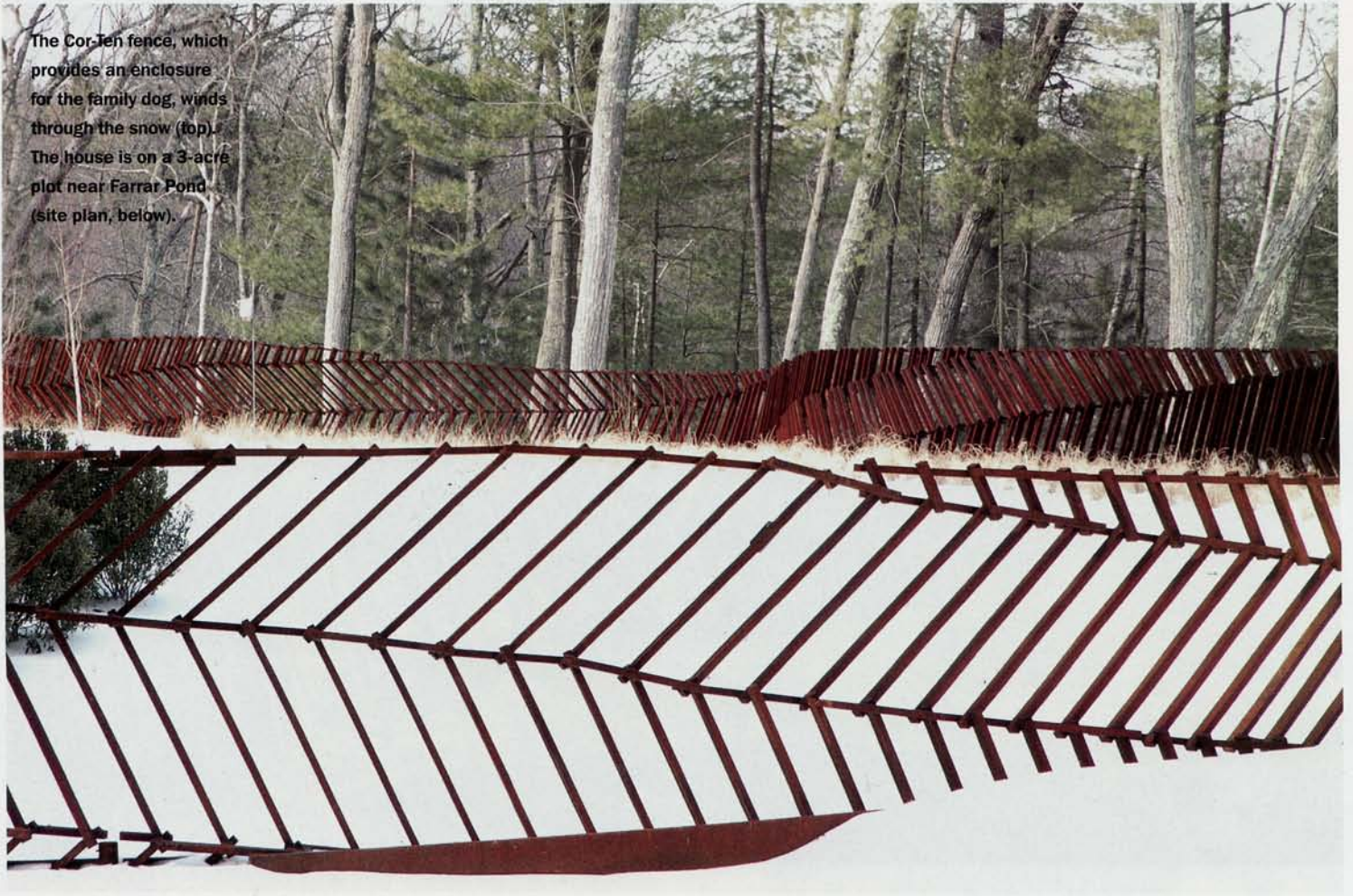
**ARCHITECTURAL**  
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# Snapshot

The Cor-Ten fence, which provides an enclosure for the family dog, winds through the snow (top). The house is on a 3-acre plot near Farrar Pond (site plan, below).



## A fence wraps the forest in the sound of music

By Beth Broome

At once brash and subdued, the Cor-Ten-steel FLEXfence snakes over the contours of a hardwood forest, creating an energetic musical score across the seasons for its quintessential New England setting.

The work of Brookline, Massachusetts-based landscape architect and environmental artist Mikyong Kim, the fence is one element of a larger landscape design for a couple's private residence in the bucolic Boston suburb of Lincoln. Situated on a 3-acre plot of kame-and-kettle topography overlooking Farrar Pond (a close neighbor of Thoreau's Walden Pond), Kim envisioned the fence, like her larger scheme for the house, as being stitched or woven into the landscape. While the programmatic demand was straightforward—a mechanism was needed to contain the couple's German Shepherd—the solution was anything but. Rather than designing a barrier in the traditional sense—a rigid structure dividing one property line from another—Kim was interested in creating a fluid and dynamic condition that flowed across the forest floor.

Because the focus of Kim's work is on urban parks and planning, she hesitated when the clients, who are highly active in the local arts community, approached her with a proposal for their private residence. But something about them intrigued her. At their initial meeting, the conversation between Kim (who once had ambitions to become a concert pianist) and the husband (a venture capitalist and blues guitarist) quickly turned





Flexible joints enable the fence to follow the earth's contours and facilitated the temporary compressing of the sections, which eased transport to the site.



to music. "We talked about Glenn Gould for the entire interview," says Kim. The two later talked at length about contrapuntal music, which, Kim notes, "takes a simple unit, like a cellular voice, and layers or repeats that." As they spoke, the idea for the fence took shape.

The modules, in the case of the fence, are the Cor-Ten rods, which are cut in seven different lengths and layered four deep to make a 12-inch-wide structure that ranges from 4 to 6 feet in height. The individual bars are fastened together with an intricate flexible-joint system, which enables the fence to expand and contract like an accordion. The whole thing, which is 825 linear feet, was fabricated off-site and brought to the residence in 55 15-foot-long units, scrunched into their most contracted position. The pieces were then craned into place, unfurled, and each of the joints was welded. Below-grade concrete footings every 10 feet anchor the segments to the ground. The flexible nature of the fence means that its form is in part dictated by the undulations of the topography. It is a gesture that emphasizes the interplay between the fluidity of the fence and the solidity of the ground.

While the FLEXfence serves its duty well as a physical barrier for the clients' dog, it also boasts higher accomplishments: Through sculpture, it registers the movement of the landscape and, almost literally, imposes a soundtrack on the natural environment. Indeed, in plan, says Kim, "it looks like a Philip Glass score." ■