

# A CONVERSATION WITH ARCHITECT WILLIAM SCLIGHT

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PHOTOS BY NICK MANSFIELD



Homenature Interior, Southampton

Southampton architect and developer William Sclight, of W. A. Sclight Architect, P.C., has been designing homes in the Hamptons for 30 years. It's his second career. In the 1970s and early '80s, he was a newspaper editor, working at the *New York Times* and *New York Post*.

However, since appearing on the scene in the Hamptons in 1985 with a new master's degree from Pratt Institute, he has become one of the region's premier architects. One of his most recent creations is the new building for Homenature next to Agawam Park in Southampton Village.

*Social Life* wanted to know more about Bill, his take on architecture, and what drives his designs.

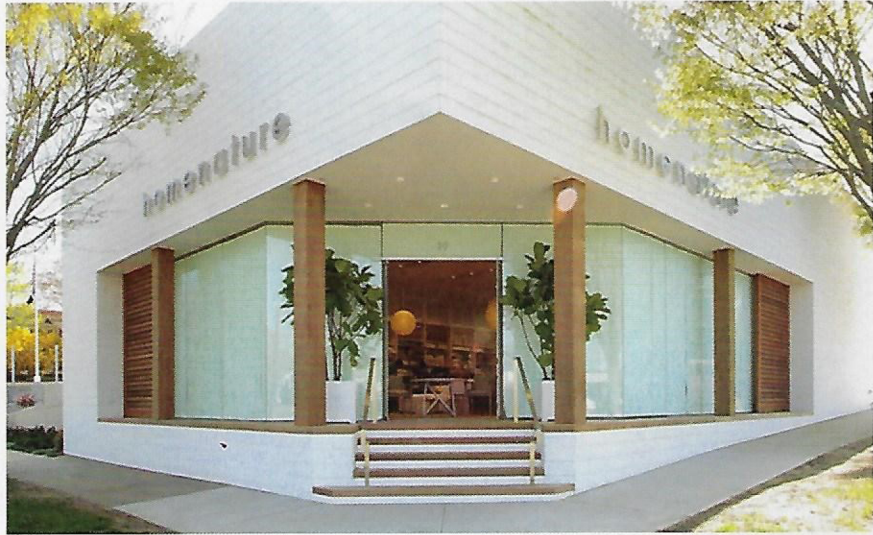
**Social Life:** You say being an architect is sometimes like being a journalist. How so?

**William Sclight:** When you make a building you are telling a story. Each client's needs are different, so there is special importance in getting to know the lifestyle and aspirations that the



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homeowner seeks to express through the architecture. Every project should be evaluated to make the best use of the site and to make the home a contributing and sustainable part of its environment, setting, and surroundings, including, in the villages, being a compatible neighbor to nearby properties.

**SL:** What is more frustrating: When a client has an idea about what they are looking for, or when they have no clue at all?

**WS:** When someone doesn't know, that can be quite difficult. But the truth is, people always know what they want, they just don't know how to articulate it. That's where I come in, where a good interviewer always comes in. You can learn a lot listening carefully and observing, even paying attention to the way people dress. I ask clients if they have magazine clippings; what is it that catches their eye. It makes a mosaic. You get a picture.

**SL:** What would you say has been the largest design change in the Hamptons over the past few decades?

**WS:** Unfortunately, in recent years, a few large developers have asserted dominance on the East End. The downside is a tendency for the built environment to be filled with cookie-cutter homes: the same ideas, the same formulas over and over. In my opinion, there is an aesthetic imperative to make the building a thing of beauty, a contributor to the environment, and a positive addition to the community's sense of place.

**SL:** What is your home like?

**WS:** It is an environment that is comfortable, memorable, familiar, and exciting. Your home must give you a feeling of repose, peace, and well-being. It should be as much a part of your existence as the clothes you wear, and it should present to the world who you want to be.

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