Houses

designed for the country

think

Edited By Gary Takle

Stanley Saitowitz | Natoma Architects
Photography by Rien van Rijthoven

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Edited By Gary Takle
With Text By Emma Peacock

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Silvio Rech & Lesley Carstens
Photography by DOOK

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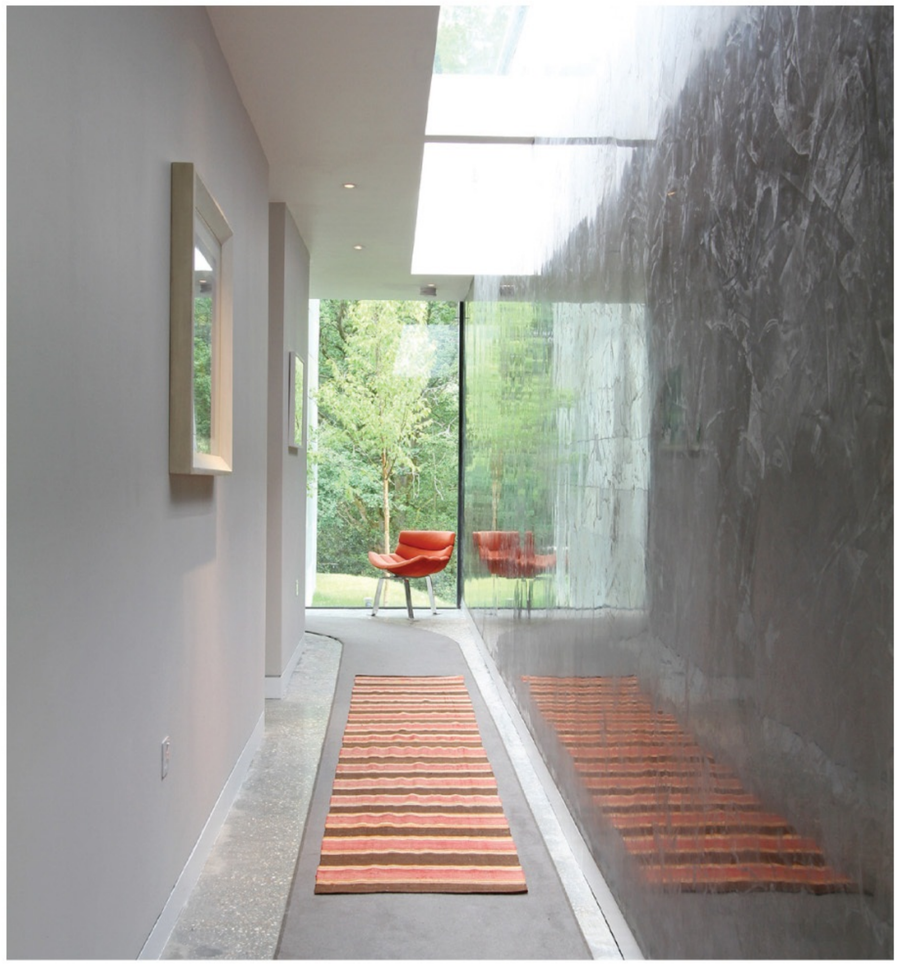
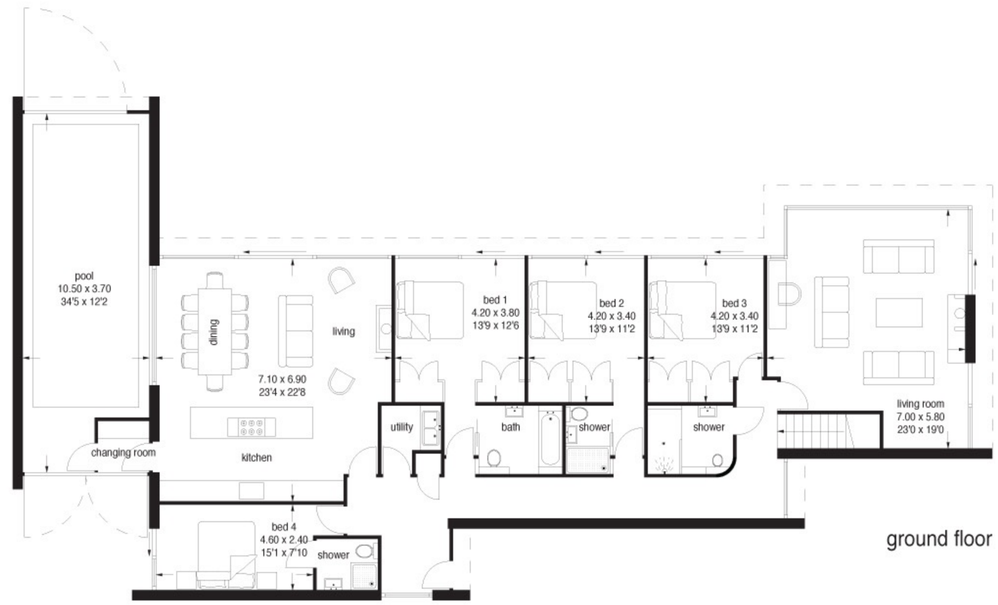
ABOUT: Andy and Aurore Down met while studying Architecture at Dundee University. They each had varied working experiences in both the public and private sectors before forming their own architectural practice, Archplan, in 1992. Based in London, Archplan specialises in residential architecture, new build and refurbishment, interior design, and project management.

The philosophy that drives the company is to provide a personal service with an emphasis on understanding a client's vision for their property and to help them turn this into reality. Although instinctively contemporary in style, Archplan has a track record of sensitive refurbishments of period and listed buildings.

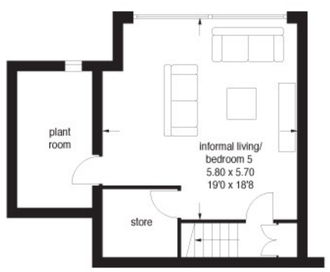
Gardeners Hill

Surrounded by an expanse of undulated lawn and framed by lush, tranquil woodland, this modern house takes full advantage of a gorgeous location by embracing, rather than competing with the surrounding environment. Conceptualised by Archplan's Andy and Aurore as their own residence, this design engages with the landscape to offer spectacular views from every room.





ground floor



basement

There is a hint of eclecticism about the house: the north elevation, facing a nearby road, appears monolithic and is clad almost entirely in green Indian slate, which provides privacy and cuts out road noise. In contrast, the south elevation is articulated primarily in glass to offer unbroken views across the lawn to the woods. This approach creates a bond with the landscape, which is then enhanced by the presence of a timber deck that runs the length of the glazed façade.

Gun metal polished plaster is expressed throughout the interior. For example, the material is used to define the curved hall that runs the full length of the building. Set beneath a continuous glass roof, this feature wall is then bathed in a soft glow from above. The polished plaster also provides a striking frame for one of the home's two wood burning fires, which are used as a means of harvesting the waste timber from the surrounding forest.

Given the vagaries of the British climate, the indoor pool is a logical luxury. Separated from the kitchen by a full-height glass wall, it is a place in which to relax or exercise during winter. During summer on the other hand, both ends of the wall can be used as huge gates that open to reveal the woodland, creating an additional point of connection to the outdoors.

This home rejects the contemporary trend of contrasting with the surrounding landscape. Though it is a bold and modern addition to the traditional Surrey countryside, it has a soft relationship with the landscape and blends naturally with its setting when viewed through the trees.

Photography by Peter Wright

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Calvin Chen

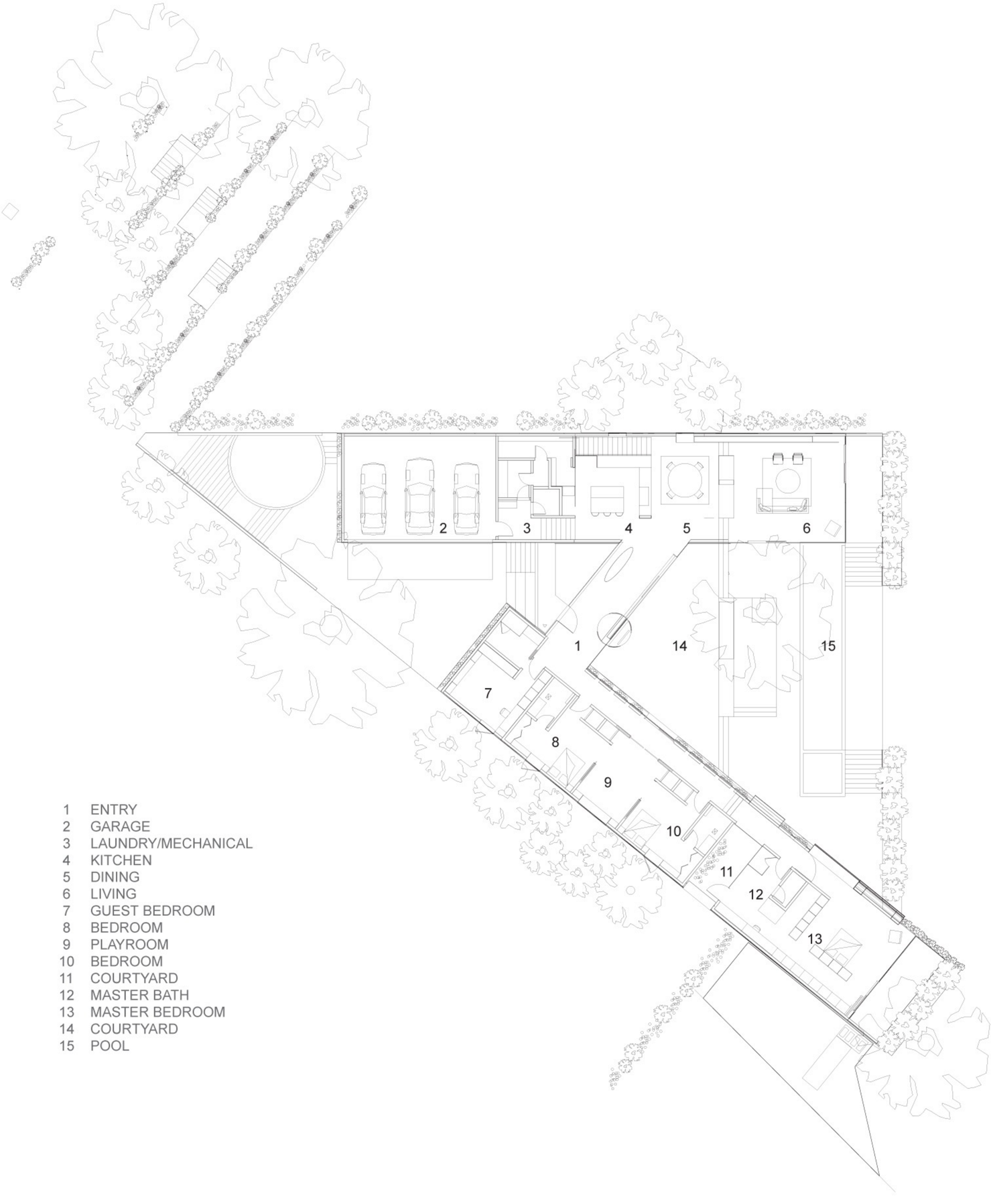
Thomas Bercy

ABOUT: Bercy Chen Studio LP is a multidisciplinary design and build firm based in Austin, Texas. Founding partners Calvin Chen and Thomas Bercy, both graduates of the University of Texas at Austin, began the firm in 2001. Calvin Chen has worked on several award winning projects, focusing his talents on design/build projects with attention to global vernacular culture and materiality. Thomas Bercy, meanwhile, has worked on a range of projects around the world and has been influenced by early modernist and art nouveau buildings.

In 2006, Bercy Chen Studio received the Emerging Voice Award from the Architectural League of New York and has been named as one of Architectural Record's 2006 Design Vanguard.

Cascading Creek

The Cascading Creek house is a handsome, sophisticated and refined example of modern architecture. The building conceptually extends from the limestone and aquifers of the central Texas geography, appearing as a comfortable progression from the language of the landscape.



1 ENTRY
2 GARAGE
3 LAUNDRY/MECHANICAL
4 KITCHEN
5 DINING
6 LIVING
7 GUEST BEDROOM
8 BEDROOM
9 PLAYROOM
10 BEDROOM
11 COURTYARD
12 MASTER BATH
13 MASTER BEDROOM
14 COURTYARD
15 POOL

The home's structure is articulated along two long native limestone walls, which serve as boundaries to distinguish the lush, tropical interior space from the more wild, natively planted outbound vegetation. The residence's alignment with the stone walls divides it into two wings, public and private. The offset between the main wings acts as an exterior courtyard, allowing transitional outdoor living for much of the year.

Three mature Oak trees located on the site informed the positioning of the boundary walls and building elements, with respect and communication with the landscape apparent in the subtle design. The roof structure serves as a natural basin, collecting rainwater in a way similar to the vernal pools of the nearby geological feature, Enchanted Rock. These roof basins harness additional natural flows through the use of photovoltaic and solar hot water panels, with the water, electricity and heat generated tied into an extensive climate control system to supply both the heating and cooling for the residence.

The form and structure of the home is simple and elegant. With a modest street-side façade, the house extends gracefully onto the block to embrace the stunning surrounding views. Circular water features soften the clean modern angles of the projecting wings. The use of glass is well thought out and innovative, with semi-opaque glass lending both privacy and mystery to the property, while clear glass grants easy access to light and allows a strong communication between the interior and exterior environments.

Balanced and clear-cut, this home seems to have an almost symbiotic relationship with the surrounding landscape. Rather than competing for attention with the topography of the site, the home reflects the characteristics and history of the area, resulting in an attractive, subtle home.

Photography by Bercy Chen Studio LP

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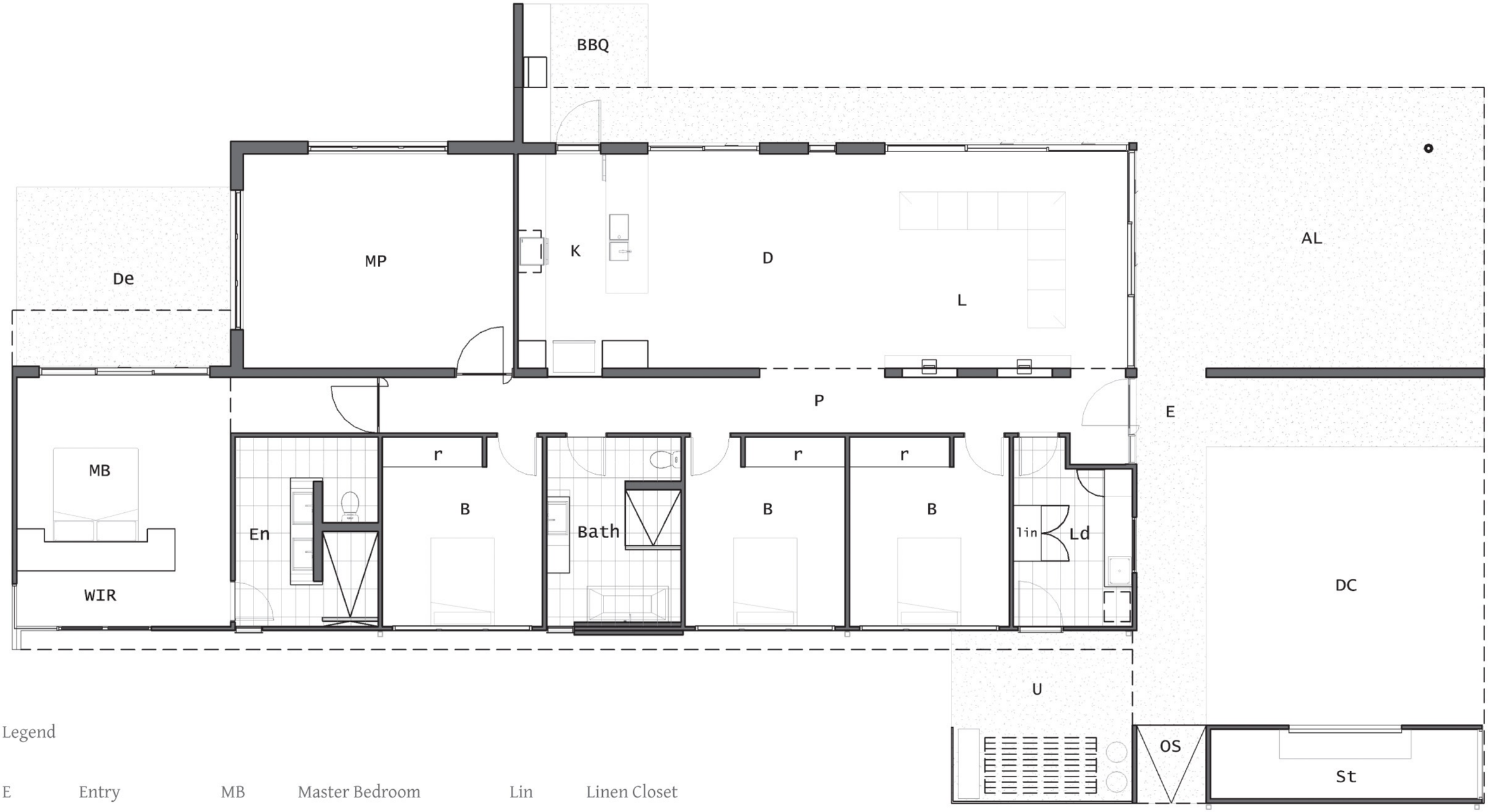
mishack. owner, Marcus Browne Architect

ABOUT: Bluewater Building Co is a custom design and construction company based in Dunsborough in the southwest region of Western Australia. By working closely with a client from design through to construction, they provide a design perfectly in line with the client's desires.

miShack is a company owned and run by Western Australian Architect Marcus Browne. Bluewater Building Co worked closely with Marcus from the initial concept and throughout the execution of this project.

miShack

Built by Bluewater Building Co, this Yallingup home was designed using Marcus Browne Architects' innovative design system, miShack. The result is a contemporary, unpretentious and child friendly home perfectly suited to site context and the lifestyle of the family. A texturally distinct, handsome façade gives way to a well-zoned interior that caters to every need the family might have.



Legend

E	Entry	MB	Master Bedroom	Lin	Linen Closet
L	Living	En	En suite	St	Store
D	Dining	WIR	Walk In Robe	OS	Outside Shower
K	Kitchen	B	Bedroom	DG	Double Carport
AL	Alfresco	Ba	Bathroom	U	Utilities
De	Deck	R	Robe		

Holding four bedrooms within its single storey frame, this holiday retreat sits below an aesthetically arresting skillion roof, with the façade articulated in a range of contrasting colours and texturally diverse finishes. Sleek composite and steel cladding provide a subdued base against which the custom cedar cladding creates a warm, inviting focal point for the house. Extensive glazing is a feature that enhances both the exterior and interior aspects of the home.

The skillion roof design adds a dynamic element to the house, yet also serves a practical purpose. Clad in durable steel, the design conveniently funnels water from the entire roof surface down into a specifically crafted custom-pressed gutter system, which ensures the home harvests just about every raindrop. The roof and cladding combine to evoke a traditional rural shed, matching those dotted amongst the surrounding rural landscape. The neutral colours of the metallic and rust finishes reflect the local granite, with the suggestion of contrast forming between the sparkling quartz lines and oxidisation on the exposed surfaces.

Dedicated conceptually to a laid-back, Surf Coast country lifestyle, this is the quintessential near-beach country retreat. This is the sort of modern, well conceived design that invites you to drive up after a surf, unload your gear, and get ready to relax. An outdoor shower allows you to wash off the salt and sand, after which you can then dry off in the afternoon sun, hang up your wet-suit and pop the top off a beer, all without going inside.

All of the internal walls are of timber-frame and clad with plasterboard, except for a masonry blade wall that runs from the outside through to the centre of the home. This blade wall and some of the feature walls in the bathroom and en suite are instead finished in glass-faced render, a sleek and attractive feature. Reverse brick veneer has been used for thermal mass in the north-facing living areas, and the concrete floor acts as a heat sink for capturing winter sun, limiting the need for artificial heating and cooling and resulting in the more environmentally sound building.

The MiShack system is a hassle-free and cost effective way to achieve an architecturally designed home without the lengthy consultation and design process. Simplifying and streamlining the ordeal, the architect collaborates closely with the builder, allowing for projects to be planned and priced far more quickly than with a traditional bespoke design process whether you're building a luxury weekender or a permanent home for the family.

Upon completion of this project, the client said of the home, "The house is a fantastic design for a family. There is a really good separation of the living areas and a wonderful indoor/outdoor connection that just adds to the feeling of expanse. I don't think there is anything I would change. The architect and builder paid such close attention to detail. I was part of the design process and gave the architect a clear indication of the sort of house we wanted to build. The fantastic thing was that we were all on the same page from the start, even down to the landscaping. They were every client's dream," she said.

Photography by Mark Cooper, Lime Graphic Media

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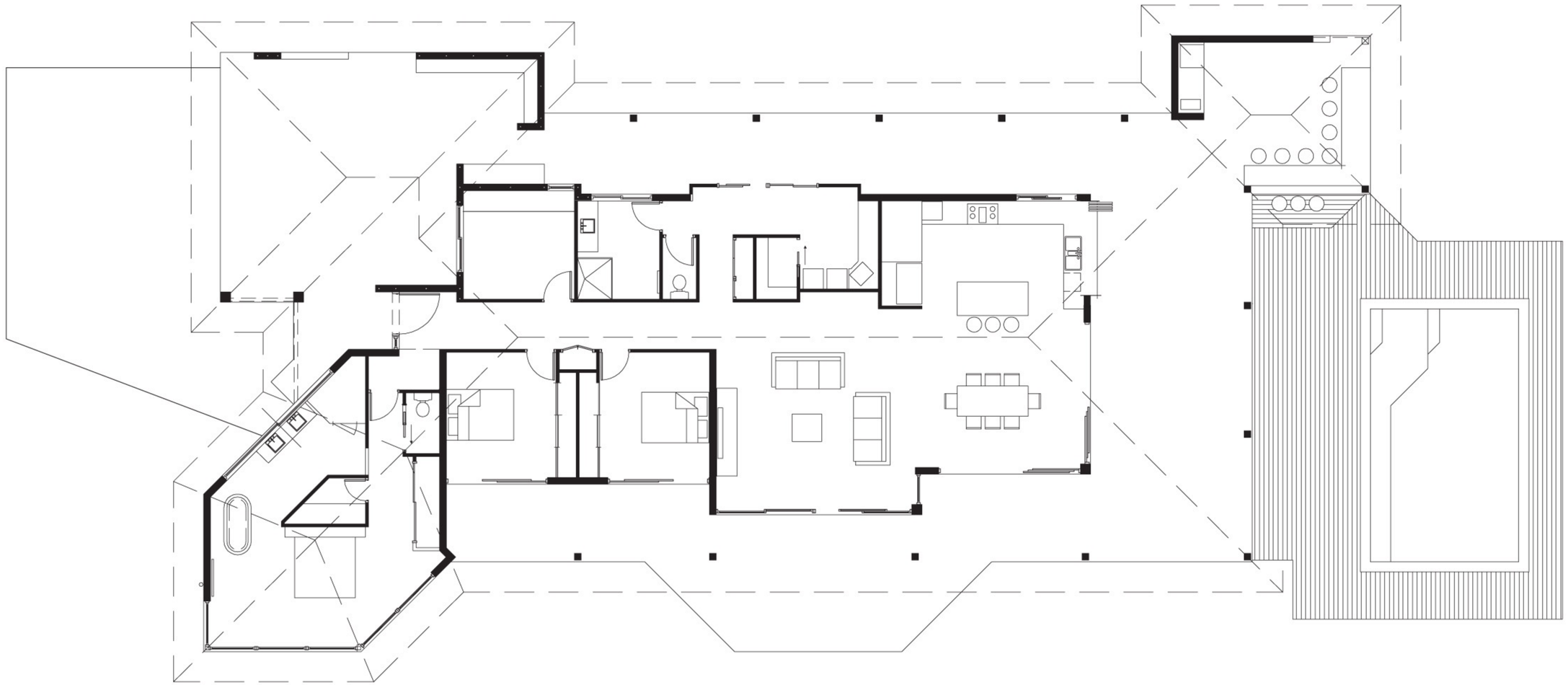
ABOUT: With an Associate Degree in Building Design, Kevin Stoter has some twenty years of experience working in the building design industry in North Queensland, Australia. Over that time, Kevin has gained invaluable experience with several regional architectural and engineering firms before setting up his own business in Cairns.

For this project in particular, Kevin sought the assistance of Interior Designer Vicki Popik (pictured left) from ESP Design in Townsville to achieve better connective solutions with the inside finishes and detail.

Cowley Hill

Capturing fantastic views across open pastures, natural forest and the nearby coast, this sublime contemporary hilltop home isn't a typical farmhouse. Catering to a busy farming family, the house was conceived to be practical and functional, yet with a low profile. Contemporary design and extensive glazing draw the stunning outlook into the home as a dynamic aesthetic feature.



NORTH

The demands of rural living are well met in this handsome modern design. The verandahs surrounding the home are not only a perfect place to relax and enjoy a sunset, but are also a practical transition zone to prevent muddy feet and clothes making it into the home. Additionally, the house is zoned to keep utility areas at the rear line of the floor plan, separated from the living areas but still connected by the encapsulating verandah.

A large outdoor area is shielded by an extension of the roof. As such, it can easily adapt to accommodate any social gathering, whether large or small. Direct and practical access to the kitchen, bar and utility areas ensure that outdoor entertaining from the house is a breeze.

There are distinct advantages in such an isolated location. There is a level of privacy inherent to the block that allows rooms to be open to the outside without the need for concealing blinds or shades. For example, the bath and en suite adjacent to the main bedroom feature full aspect views to the ocean, creating a truly luxurious atmosphere within.

The simple, open spaces in this design give full voice to the magnificent views, while unfussy contemporary finishes unify the inside and outside of the house. Working with the interior design team from the beginning of the project ensured that the façade and interior décor were well matched. As a result, the completed home represents not only a practical house to serve the needs of its working family owners, but also an attractive, well designed and modern homestead that is ideally suited to its location.

Photography by Kate Pacey

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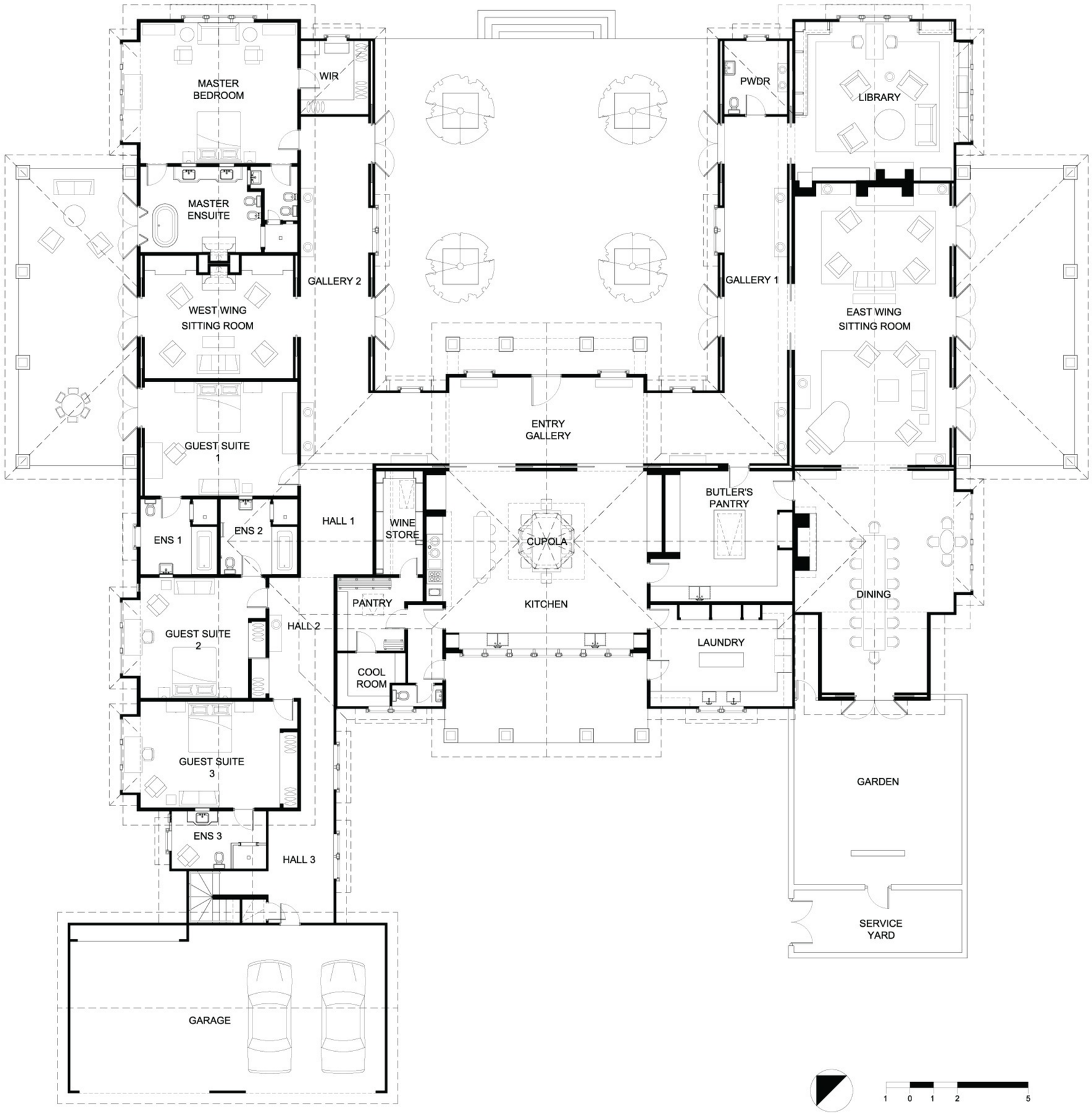
ABOUT: CATT Architects have made residential lifestyle architecture their passion for over 25 years. Their designs aim for contemporary classics that endure beyond current fashions. Working with the best interior designers, landscape architects and builders, CATT Architects create beautiful homes in beautiful surroundings for their clients.

Allanvale

This grand, rolling estate has replaced a ramshackle collection of fibro-cement shearer's quarters, previously arranged haphazardly around a 1930s homestead. Preserving the iconic ambience of Australia's farming history, but updating it for comfortable and modern rural living, this breathtaking design is beautiful, expansive and inviting. CATT Architects were honoured to be part of a collaborative design team for this project, one that included preeminent garden architect Paul Bangay and the internationally recognised interior designer and larger than life personality Mr John Coote, who sadly passed away in early 2012.


MASTER BEDROOM
WIR
MASTER ENSUITE
GALLERY 2
WEST WING SITTING ROOM
GUEST SUITE 1
ENS 1
ENS 2
HALL 1
WINE STORE
PANTRY
CUPOLA
KITCHEN
ENTRY GALLERY
GUEST SUITE 2
HALL 2
COOL ROOM
GUEST SUITE 3
ENS 3
HALL 3
GARAGE
PWDR
GALLERY 1
LIBRARY
EAST WING SITTING ROOM
BUTLER'S PANTRY
LAUNDRY
DINING
GARDEN
SERVICE YARD
1 0 1 2 5

The owners of this working farm sought a homestead that would serve as a place to come home to, as well as a family retreat. They also wanted the ability to entertain international guests and introduce them to the unique aspects of Australian rural life. Despite the extensive acreage of the property, the original homestead was modest and in a considerable state of disrepair.

All of the existing outbuildings and lean-tos were demolished, with only a timber two room bungalow and a porch remaining from the original structure. It was from this small retained building that the new, beautiful and sprawling home arose. The new plan pays respect to the identity of the original section by maintaining its form, detailing and scale. However, the focus of the home is reversed, instead surrounding an entry forecourt on the opposite side. The linking element is a wide perimeter gallery that suggests a built-in verandah, adding a whole other level of style to the design.

Material decisions rely on guidance from the original bungalow. Corrugated iron, stucco and timber weatherboards are traditional and unmistakably pastoral Australian. These elements are then highlighted by traditional double-hung windows with lead detail. It is these classical elements of the home that so united both inside and out, serving to make the design timeless.

True to the style of a traditional country homestead, the kitchen is at the heart of this design. Forming the central link between the existing and newly constructed sections of the home, the kitchen is equally accessible both from the front and rear doors of the property. Implemented by interior designer John Coote, a large, copula-style clerestory light rests well above the big kitchen table, flooding the space with an inviting light. More than that however, it serves as a welcoming beacon that is visible even on the distant approach from the surrounding ridges, reinforcing the importance of this communal area.

In the tradition of grand estates, landscape architect Paul Bangay re-routed the arrival road to detour around a newly built lake and arrive at the property over a pleasant stream. This then allows the house to be enjoyed from a distance and its setting taken in as one spirals up toward the gravel forecourt. Extensive terraced gardens to the west side of the “H” shaped building serve as a set of giant steps that gently ascend to the stables set on a higher ridge. These terraces also offer a changing floral display that can be enjoyed year round from the dormitory wing and the western porch.

Photography by Lupco Veljanovski

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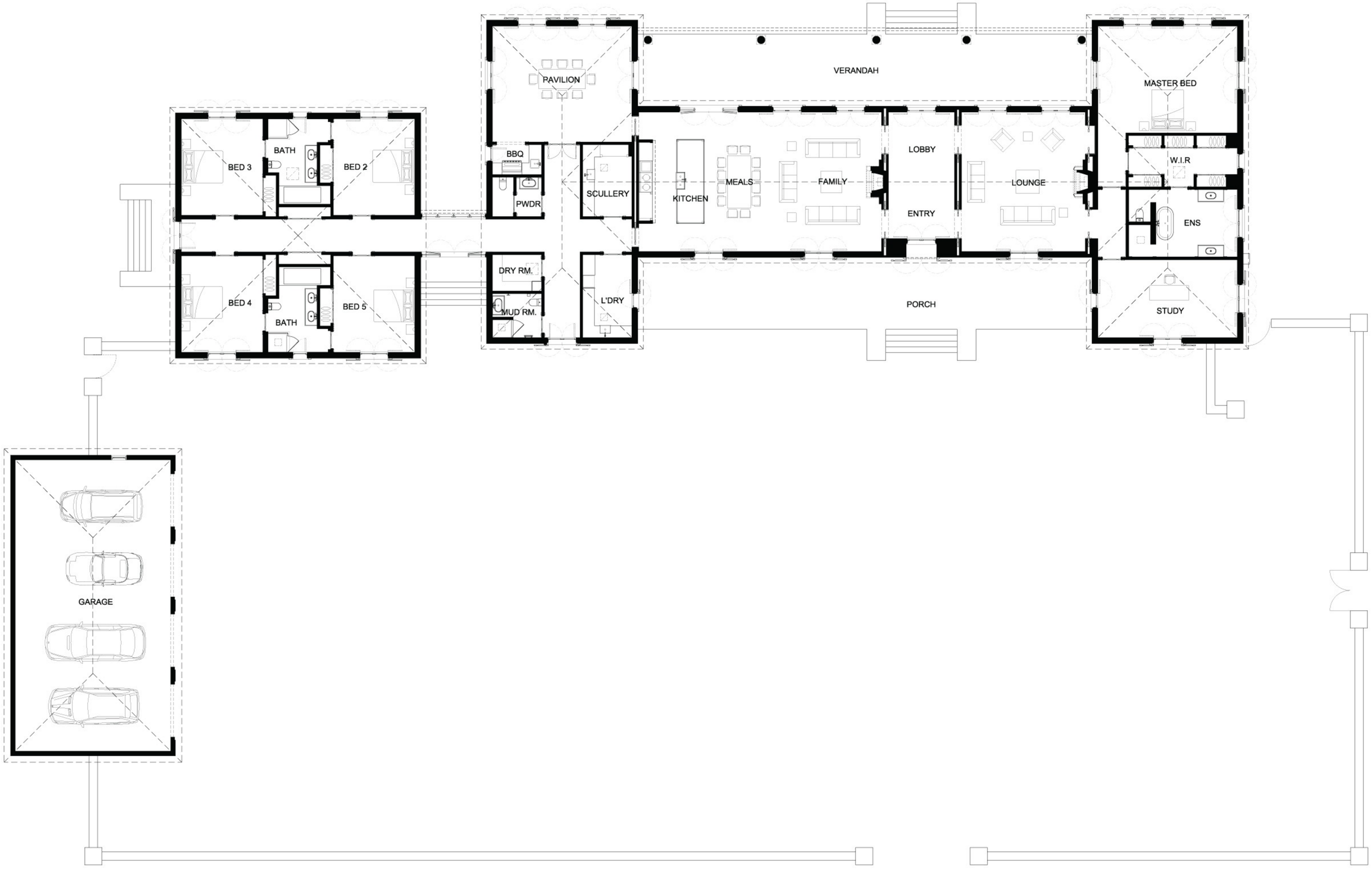
Bathumi

Styled as a traditional Gentleman's country retreat with a difference, this gracious rural property, set within an extensive and lush landscape, is a truly handsome family home. Enjoying a substantial frontage to Lake Mulwala, CATT Architects orientated the home to make best use of the available views over the water. Meanwhile, Paul Bangay's elegant landscape design caters to the owner's particular love of garden exploration amongst the substantial acreage. It is little wonder then that Bathumi was the winner of the HIA Regional Home of the Year Award in 2012.


PAVILION
VERANDAH
MASTER BED
BED 3
BATH
BED 2
BBQ
PWDR
SCULLERY
KITCHEN
MEALS
FAMILY
LOBBY
ENTRY
LOUNGE
W.I.R
ENS
BED 4
BATH
BED 5
DRY RM.
MUD RM.
L'DRY
PORCH
STUDY
GARAGE
1 0 1 2 5

KK638

Set upon an expansive lawn and approached by a winding road bordered with trees, the home serves as the central hub of the property, around which the luscious garden rooms are arranged. Walkways branch out in all directions from the house, leading to a tennis court, a summer pavilion and a swimming pool.

Comprised of a single level on a raised podium, the home is entered via a spacious lobby, one that feels perfectly suited for joyful arrivals and lingering goodbyes with friends and overnight guests. The open ended lobby introduces the guests to the fabulous view across the lake. This entry space leads off on one side to an expansive family room and country kitchen, while off to the other side is the large master bed wing, which includes a relaxed retreat. At the opposite end of the house, a separate detached annex is joined by an all-weather link, allowing the guest suite and children's wing to maintain a sense of interconnectedness but giving all a sense of privacy.

Flat arch French doors with traditional espagnolette locks add an extra air of stateliness to the home, while subtly curved bell roofs of slate span over traditional timber beamed ceilings. These interiors, by Stuart Rattle, also feature recycled timber and flagstone floors, with the smell of burning wood set to be a winter-long pleasure as it emanates from the antique limestone fireplaces. All rooms open out directly onto a wide, colonnaded verandah with a traditional timber lined ceiling, taking all opportunities to maximise available views to the lake and the gorgeous sunsets.

With a series of practical, beautiful and joyful garden rooms emanating from a handsomely constructed, gorgeously designed family home, this property is to be enjoyed in its entirety.

Builder: R&R Quality Homes
Photography by Digital Photography Inhouse (DPI)

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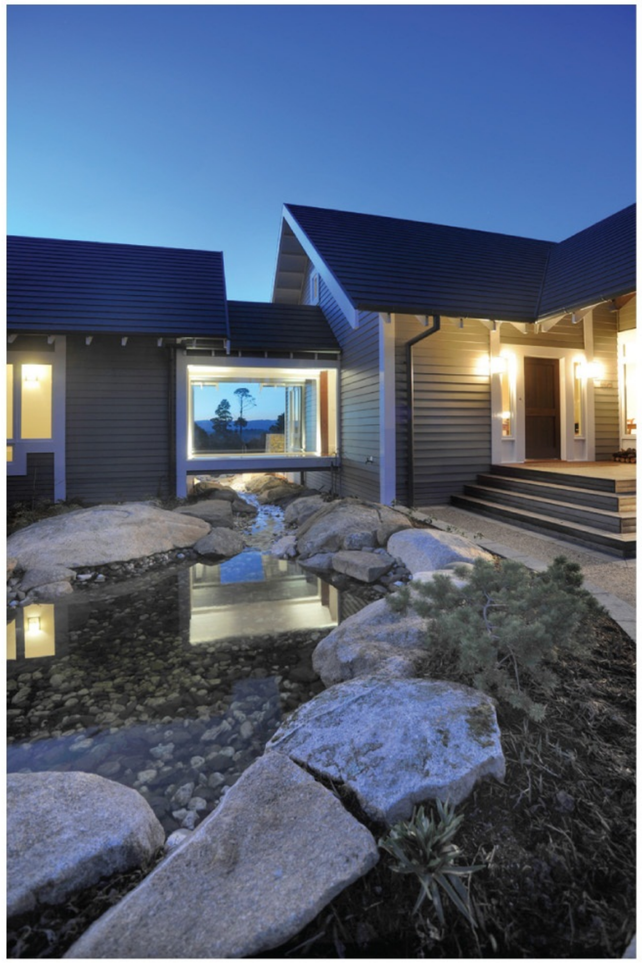
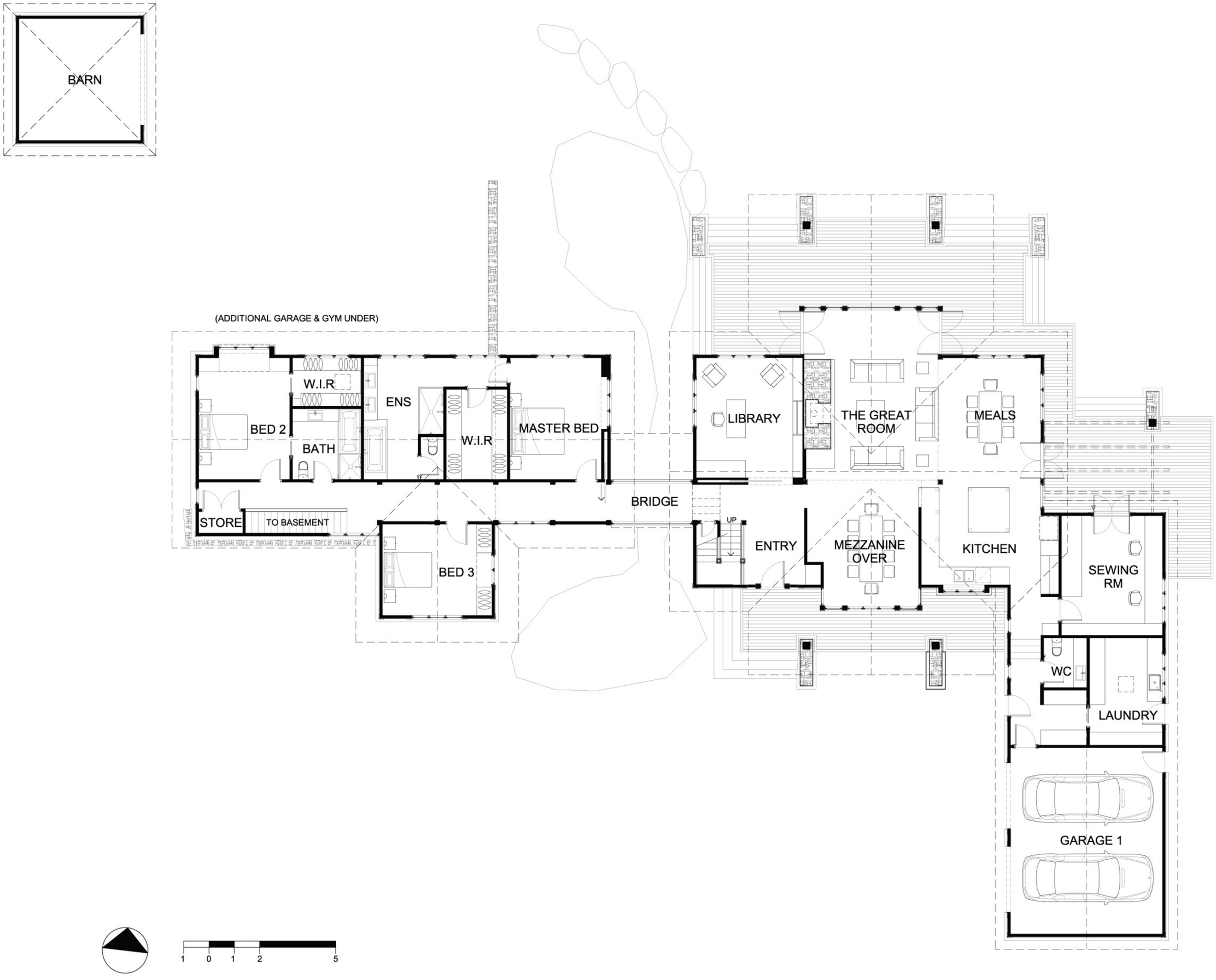
Montana

Borrowing from the unique architectural style of American mountain lodges, this gutsy expression of timber with its steep shingled roof sits proudly on a substantial, gently sloping site with a magnificent view. With a stunning vista that runs down across a valley and extends to a distant wooded ridgeline, this ideal setting is perfect for the American-inspired home. CATT Architects design response was to anchor this handsome, wooden plank sided home to the landscape with a locally quarried stone used both as a podium and as column bases that links the extensive use of timber to the pebble-lined stream that runs beneath the building.



SHAKER
VILLAGE


BARN
(ADDITIONAL GARAGE & GYM UNDER)
W.I.R
ENS
BED 2
BATH
W.I.R
MASTER BED
LIBRARY
THE GREAT ROOM
MEALS
BRIDGE
STORE
TO BASEMENT
BED 3
UP
ENTRY
MEZZANINE OVER
KITCHEN
SEWING RM
WC
LAUNDRY
GARAGE 1
1 0 1 2 5

Wide wooden decks and porches surround the property, forming an inviting space in which to sit and watch the changing of the seasons. The expanse of sky visible from the property becomes a dynamic daily spectacle.

The site contours run parallel to the view. Accordingly, the home stretches in a linear fashion along the contours, allowing every room to feature floor to ceiling views. This also gave the house an unusual orientation, leaving its road-facing side to the rear of the building and thereby completely blocking the view. However, by separating the dormitory wing from the main living area, this problem has been averted, with the resulting glass-sided 'bridge' serving as an attractive and unusual design feature.

This bridge, which runs above a trickling pond, perfectly frames a distant pine, a feature that can be enjoyed either from within the bridge itself, or even from the road by casual passers-by. The stream beneath the bridge links a rock pond at the front of the property to a newly formed lake some distance from the house at the bottom of the sloping block.

The length of the home has been concealed by creating an unambiguous entranceway. The gable roof is cruciform, thus forming right angles over the entry to highlight and emphasise that this is the entrance to the house. The resulting high gable allowed for a dramatic elevation in line of sight to the views of the sky and the distant ridge from within the 'Great Room' with its voluminous roof cavity and towering stone chimney. Inside this dramatic space, a mezzanine study serves as a retreat from the rest of the house. While more private, the study is still connected to the activities of the house, positioned as it is above the 'Great Room' central hub.

Photography by Lupco Veljanovski

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ABOUT: The work of David Jameson's studio is rooted in the distillation of an elemental approach to architecture. Negotiating modernist constructs within a historical context, the operation of David Jameson's work is formed by repositioning and braiding each project's diverse pressures into a unique situational aesthetic.

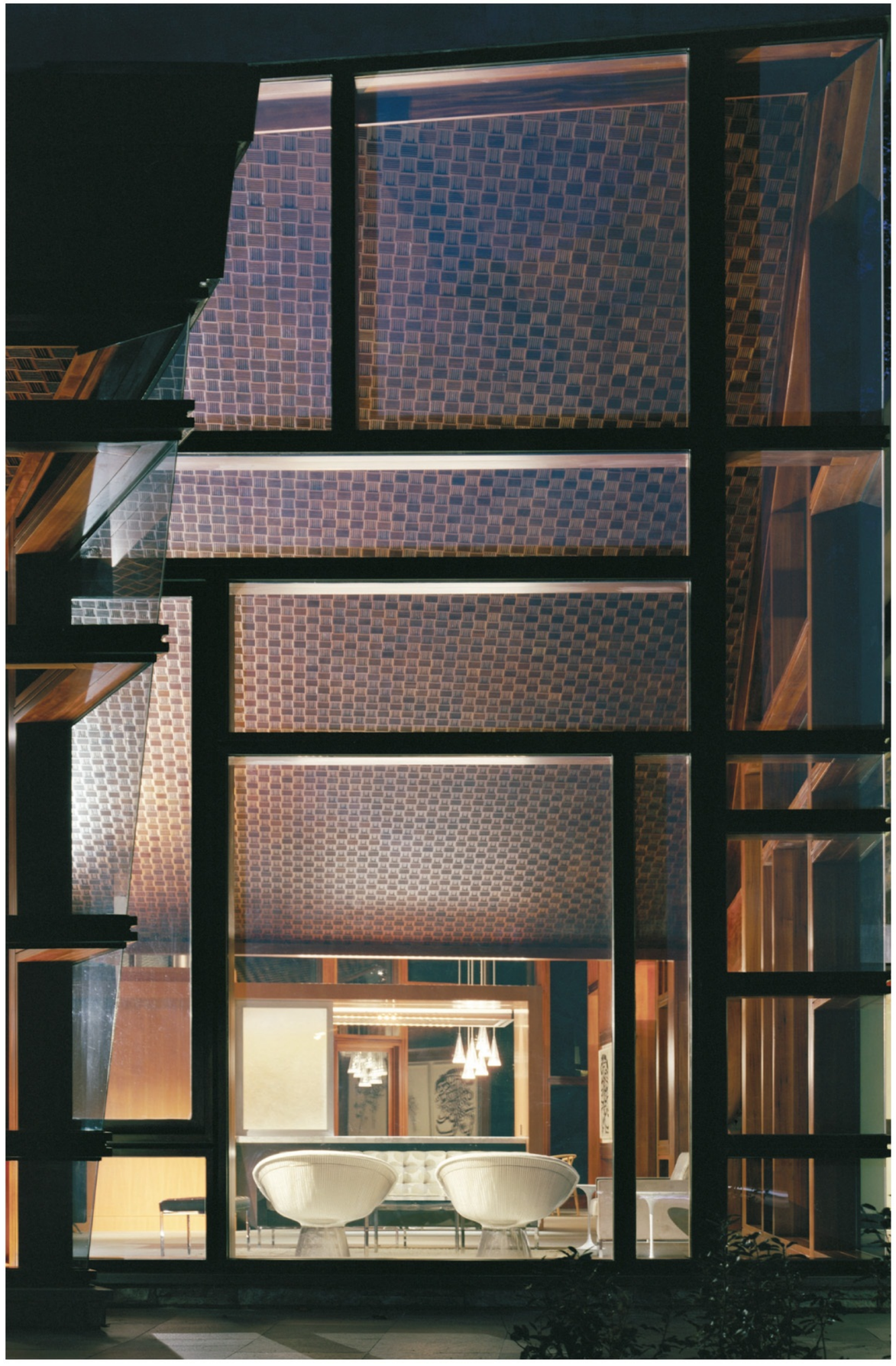
Exploring notions of reflectivity and interstitial space, the resultant logic of the work is at once experienced from both the interior and exterior of the building and formed with specificity to the conceptual genesis of each work. The work is conceived as an intertwining of the products of industry and the hand of the artisan.

Glenbrook Residence

Designed to reflect a visual and distinct connection to nature, David Jameson's work has brought to fruition the client's request for a natural looking home that allows space in which to conduct business affairs. Jameson was faced with the challenge of incorporating a corporate-style office into a practical and comfortable residential house. To this end, two adjacent living spaces have been created and linked together with clever design concepts and a shared courtyard.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SECOND FLOOR PLAN



The public and private wings of the home make up the foundations of the design concept. The threading of walls through the tree-scape creates a distinct yet connected structure, allowing the house to be divided spatially into the 'most public' and' most private' zones and a living pavilion that can become either or both.

An asymmetrical linear-patterned oversize treated metal door greets visitors at the main entrance of the house. Cut limestone panels create an earthy calm that greets those who walk through this doorway. Polished timbers and stark white paint create a juxtaposition that allow the natural timbers to become a main feature of the house structure. Natural tones within the assorted furniture carry the rustic, natural feel of the house from the grounds outside through into the living area.

Unusual swirling stainless steel ribbons intertwine, creating a handrail for the entrance staircase and first level barrier to the open space of the room, an artistic draw card that sets the tone for a journey through the house. Despite the apparent discord of this more synthetic product with the natural materials used throughout the design, the flowing pattern of the steel feels organic and carries the eye from the bottom stair up to the first level of the home.

The extensive use of glass paneling within the home creates a spacious and open living environment. The linear window surrounds seem to mirror the natural woodlands beyond the glazed walls. This design allows natural light to be optimized within the house structure and adds to the open feeling that David Jameson's studio has created in this building.

Upon stepping into the one of the many external courtyards, visitors to the property are able to feel just how well the design of the home replicates the surrounding environment. Sharp, angular rooftops give the house an appearance of undulation, resembling nearby mountains. The natural stone that clads the exterior of the home adds a rustic charm to the façade, mirroring the scaled escarpments of the surrounding geology.

Photography by Paul Warchol

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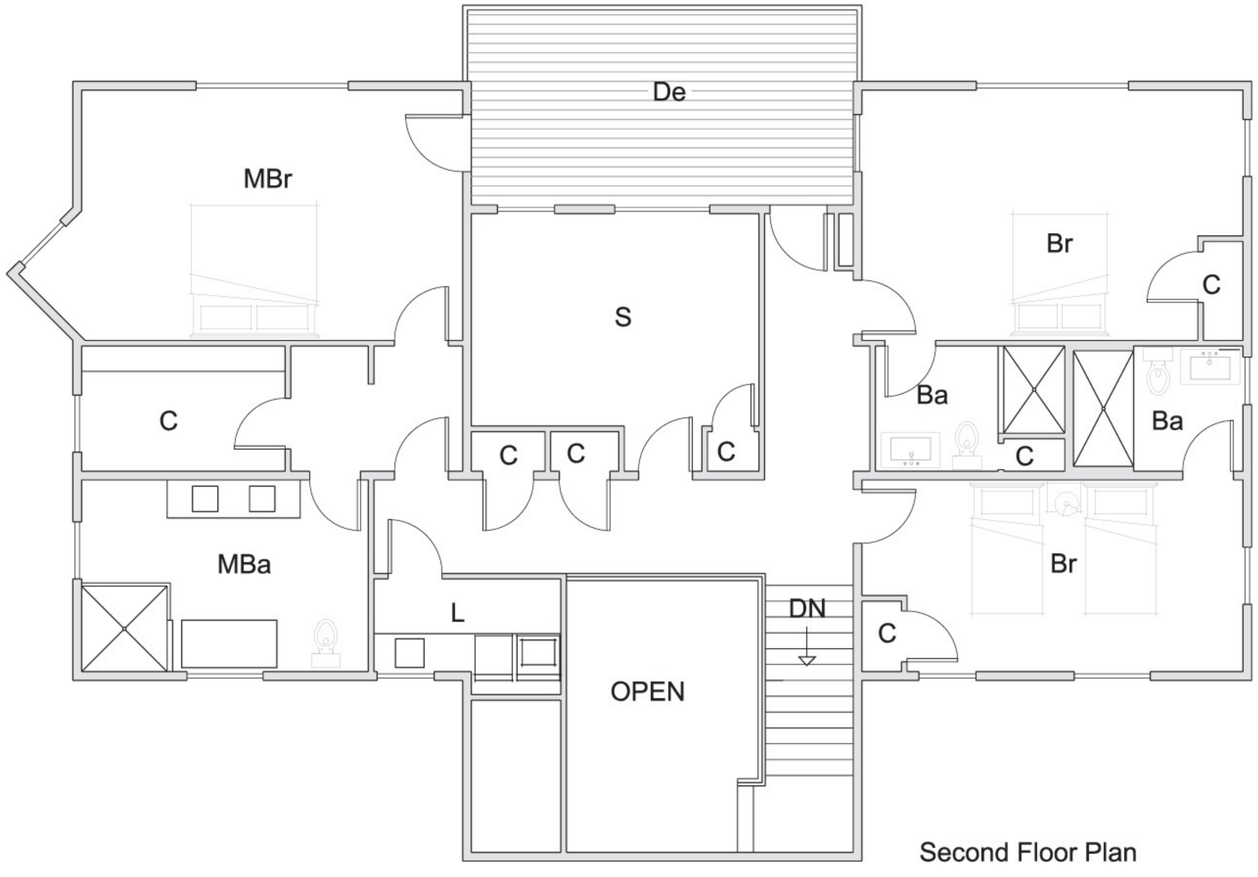
Mark L. Schmid, A.I.A.

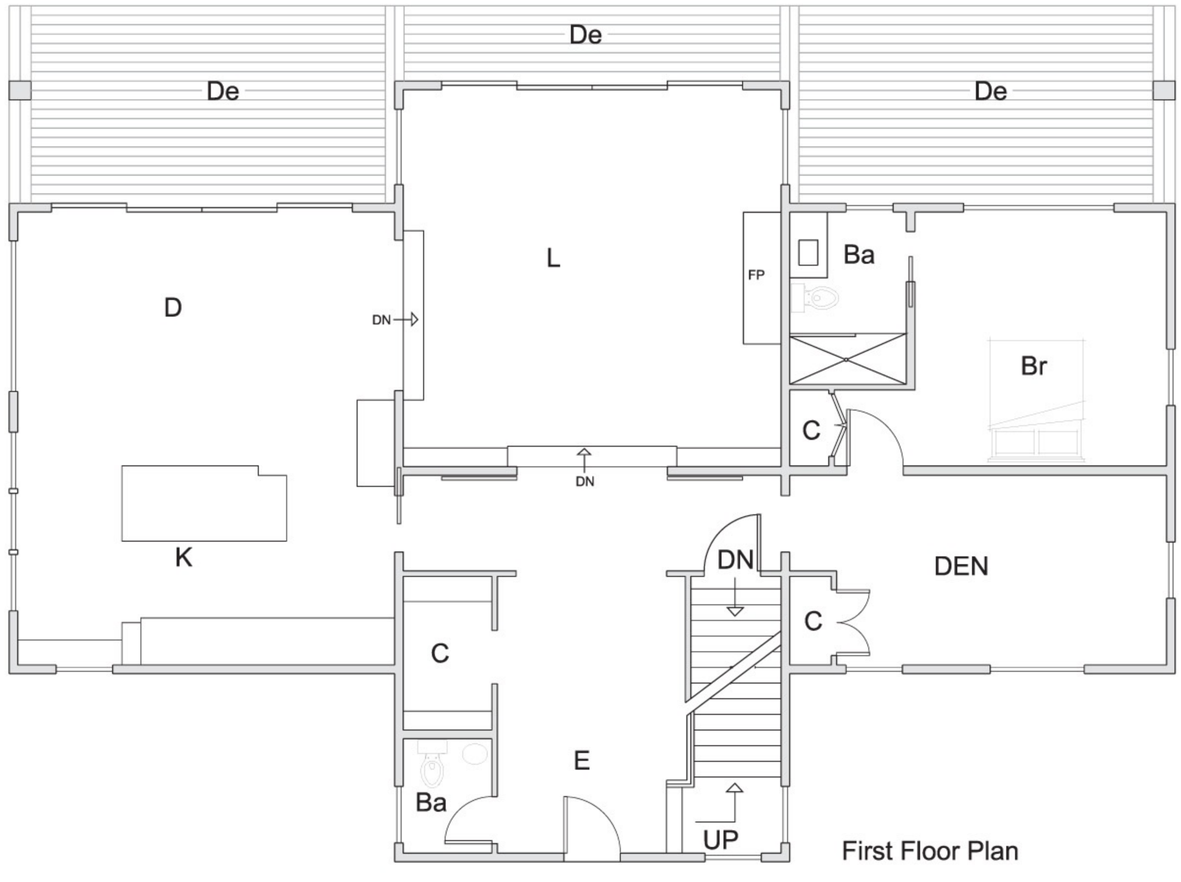
ABOUT: Mark L. Schmid is the founding partner of the New England-based firm, Dewing & Schmid Architects, which has specialized in residential design since 1984. Schmid and his team of design professionals believe in the principles of respecting and preserving the beauty of existing surroundings, while creating new and enduring traditions.

The Field House

Distinctive and modern, this beautiful country home offers the charm of a traditional farmhouse with the benefits of a carefully articulated, contemporary design. Capturing a tranquil view of a coastal river, the orientation of the home is perfect, while the design considers sustainability and environmental impact from every angle. The end result is truly picturesque.



Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

KEY

Ba	Bathroom
Br	Bedroom
C	Closet
D	Dining
De	Deck
E	Entry
K	Kitchen
L	Laundry
MBa	Master Bathroom
MBr	Master Bedroom
S	Study

Isolated on an expansive field and framed by a line of trees, the house is striking upon approach. Both transitional and modern, the design references the vernacular of nearby properties, borrowing from the style of Greek revival farmhouses. Closer to the property however, the modern edge to the design becomes apparent.

Cut-out balconies ensure that the house retains its barn-like, traditional silhouette, yet provides a shaded alfresco dining area and a place to enjoy the scenery. White cement fiber cladding (made from 50% recycled fly-ash) is punctuated by hints of red and rich brown cedar.

Inside, the home is inviting and cozy, yet expansive. Though the owners have grown children, there had to be space for them to stay during visits. As such, the home can easily accommodate a number of people. Open spaces and extensive glazing breathe life into the well zoned rooms, where rich veneer on the bamboo cabinetry and warm timber floors provide a sense of welcoming comfort.

The gorgeous timber floor is constructed mostly from recycled American chestnut and is supplemented by sustainably farmed cork and bamboo. Recycled rubber tires were also used on the basement floor slab, while cabinets are made with formaldehyde-free cores. All of the timbers used within the frame and interior are FSC certified, while all paints and wallpapers are low V.O.C.

The home has been designed to be highly energy efficient, producing zero net energy, with the phrase “reduce, reuse and recycle” used as a mantra throughout the whole design. Triple glazed windows and a standing seam metal roof protect the house from both high winds and a broad temperature range. To aid the home’s efficiency further, rainwater is captured in an underground cistern and used for irrigation.

Balanced and approachable, this design stands out as a striking example of a home crafted for its site. The environmental considerations that the design painstakingly embodies elevate it above the common standard, making it not only attractive but practical. Recycled material and high-quality, sustainable products are also used throughout to great effect.

Photography by Peter Vanderwarker

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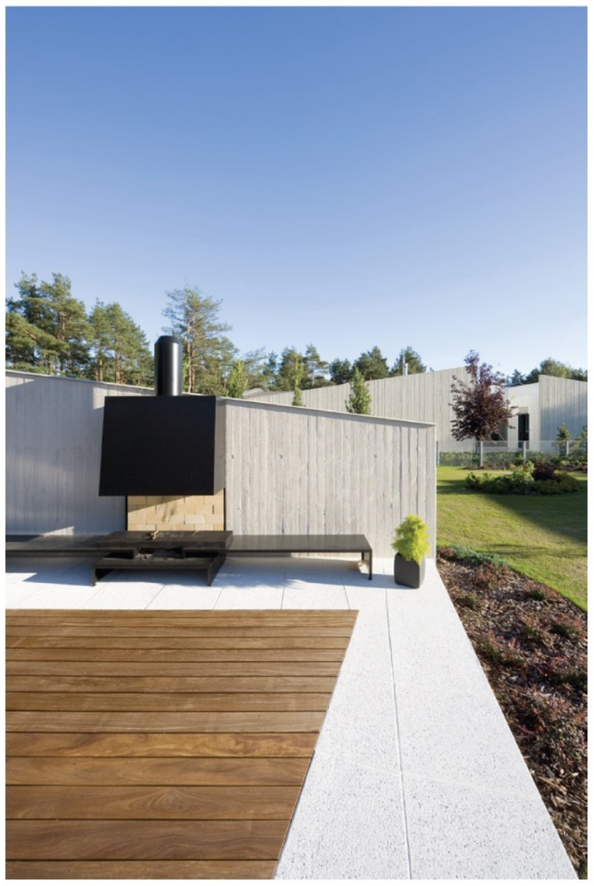
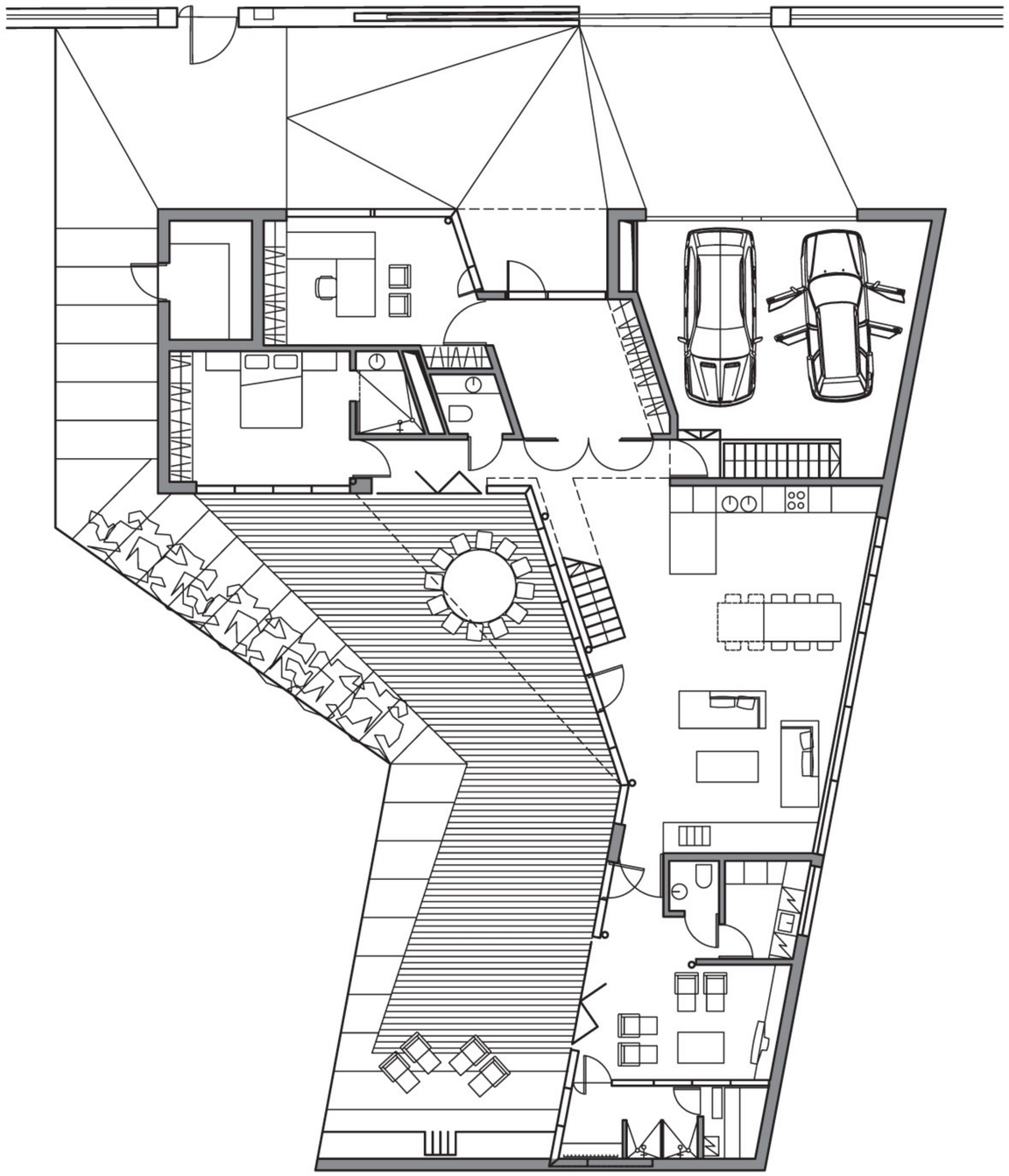
ABOUT: Born in Tartu in May 1971, Martin Aunin started in the industry as a freelance architect between 1994 and 1997, when he began working in collaboration with the architectural and consulting engineering company EA Reng AS. He has since completed a number of award winning and beautiful buildings and structures, both in Estonia and abroad.

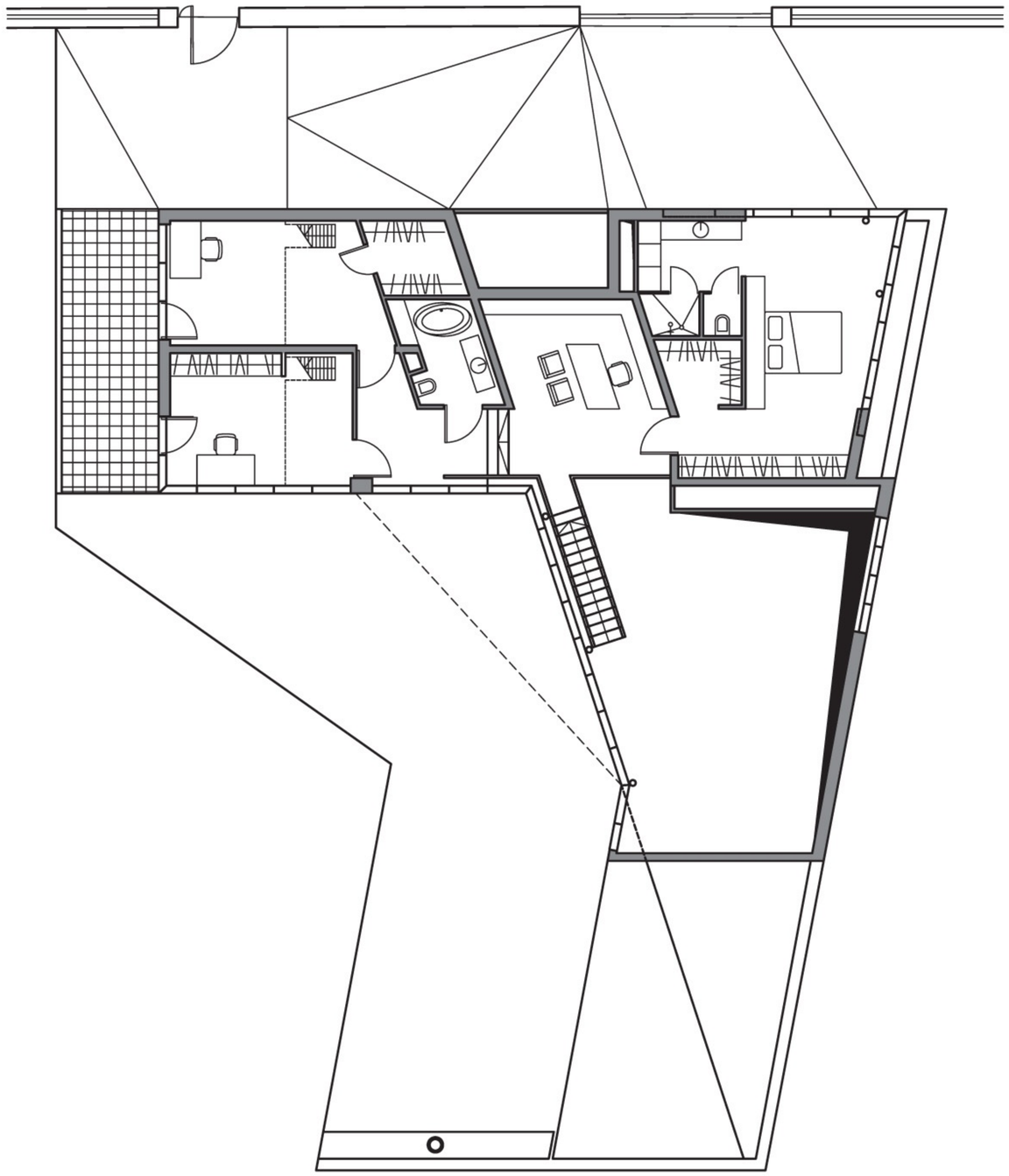
Black House

Built as part of an architectural agreement between two neighbours, The Black House represents one half of a coherent project that spans two properties. This integrated, holistic living environment is a rarity in Estonia, but the innovative curved wall, which gives way to two beautiful and architecturally rich houses, is a welcome novelty in Nomme, an old lowrise estate near the capital of Tallinn.





Lower Floor



Upper Floor

Despite relatively small plots and large floor plans, both properties retain their privacy thanks to collaboration during the planning stages and the use of glass and stepped terraces. The houses wind low along the border of the plot, enclosing a patio that contains the terrace and an inviting open fireplace. A thin concrete sheet surrounds the wooden deck, which gives it the appearance of floating slightly above the ground.

The terrace connects to a sauna annex through accordion-style glass doors. The house is articulated logically down the L-shaped plan and divided into two discrete wings. To one side, shared communal spaces, including the sauna, are kept separated from the more quiet, private areas such as the study and guest room. Most of the house is articulated across a single storey, but two corners of the structure sit on the second level and house bedrooms, expansive closets and bathrooms.

The guiding concept behind the designs was to build economical, architecturally distinct homes that would harmonise with the location. The solution arrived at by Martin Aunin was not to build a reproduction of the traditional suburban garden environment, but rather to pull out some characteristic features and to interpret them in a modern and inviting way.

White concrete walls with board shuttering make reference to the white-washed houses nearby. An unprejudiced architectural language is established; a passerby can only see the trapezoidal form of the finished concrete. The clean concrete finish may seem hard and cold, yet the imprints of fine-sawn formwork impart plenty of warmth to the design.

The Black House, in deference to its name, is actually an interplay between black and white, light and dark, solid and translucent. The fluidity and straightforwardness of material is the basis of the outer shell. Its public front is solid white concrete, with traces of the mould left visible. The courtyard-facing surfaces meanwhile are sided in black tile and dressed with black Venetian blinds. However, in contrast to the solid concrete forms facing the street, only glass façades are exposed to the yard, creating an elegant conversation between form and void and allowing visual access to the lawn.

The black and white tonality continues in the interior with a uniform black wood floor throughout the lower storey, running smoothly under the façade window and into the terrace. Meanwhile, the black, vertical elements of the patio façade are morphed within the house into white diagonal ceiling and wall surfaces.

Energy efficiency dictates much in the language of residential architecture. In spite of this, the Black House proves that even modern glass houses and attractive contemporary forms can be made suitable and sustainable in any climate, even the harsh Estonian winter.

Photography by Tiit Veermae and Kaido Haagen

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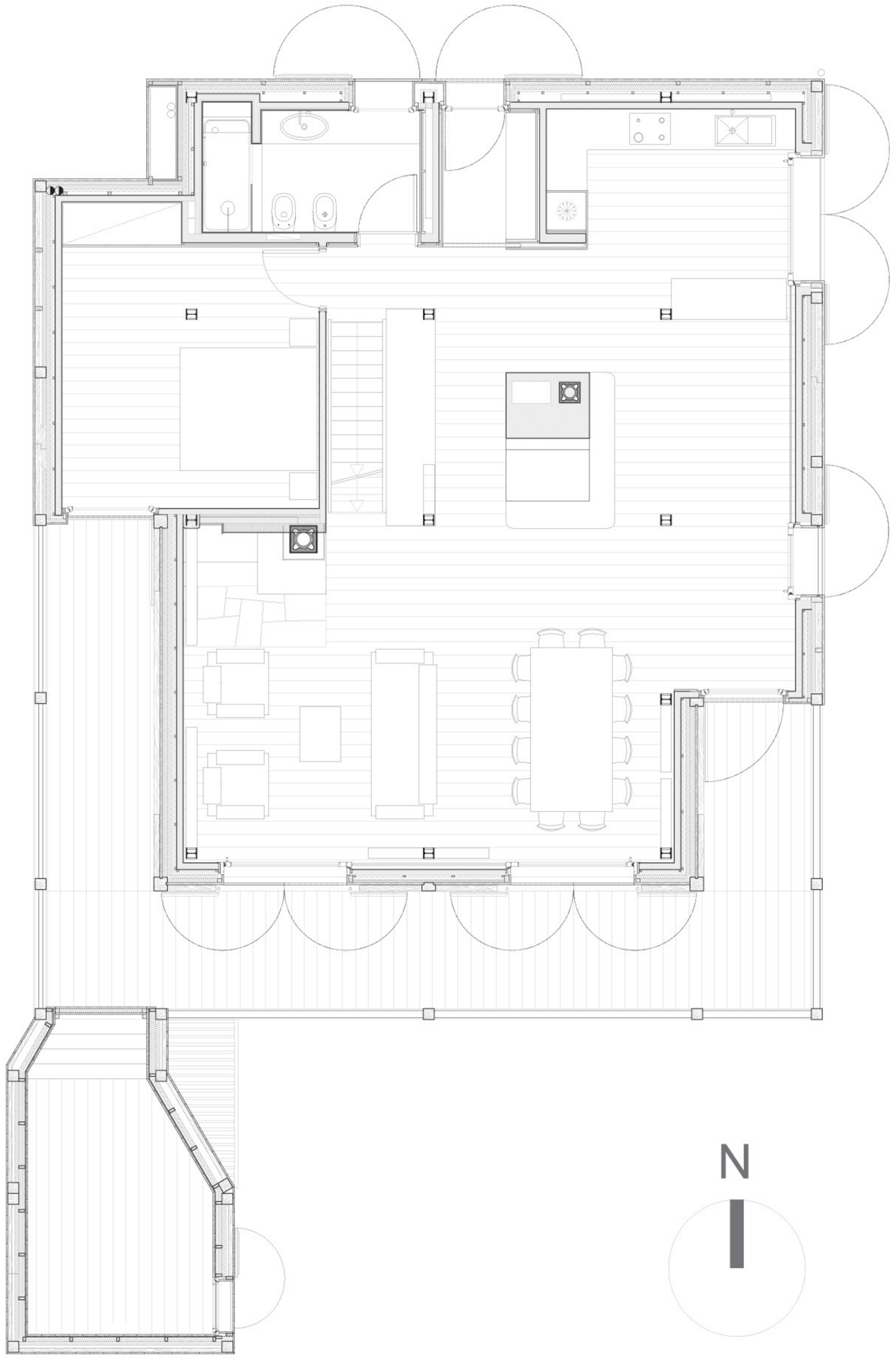
ABOUT: EXiT architetti associati is an architecture studio founded by Francesco Loschi, Giuseppe Pagano and Paolo Panetto in 2004 and is located in Treviso, Italy. It focuses on architectural and urban design as well as interior and landscape design and draws upon the collective professional experiences of its founders in Italy, Spain and Portugal. In 2009 EXiT was nominated as one of the best emerging architecture firms in Giarch (Coordinamento Nazionale Giovani Architetti Italiani). In 2010, projects realized by the studio were displayed in the Italian Pavillion at the Shanghai EXPO-2010.

Restoration of an Alpine Barn

This restored barn in the Italian Alps is resplendent in its acknowledgement of age and place. Located in the Selva di Cadore, and owned by a mountain enthusiast, the beautifully rebuilt home celebrates seasonal and annual changes in the environment and respectfully defers to the importance of its location.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In the Italian Alps, barns vary in form, materiality and structure between regions. In the Cadore, located in the World Heritage Site of the Dolomites, alpine barns are always constructed from wood and stone, with the ground floors typically used as stables and the upper floors as haylofts. The owners of this property sought to convert the traditional barn upon it into a contemporary holiday home, resulting in a truly striking design.

Restoring an historical barn like this one requires unity of landscape, architecture, interior design, materiality and craftsmanship. Everything from the treatment of the wood to the final piece of furniture is important in developing mutual continuity throughout the space.

The starting point of construction was the removal of the wooden elements and structural joints. After the building had been dismounted, much of the wood was cleaned and restored, with most of the original timber retained for reuse later. Other pieces were replaced with new treated beams to maintain chromatic continuity across the façade.

In the revised design, the newly exposed black steel structure respects the modular geometry of the barn while acknowledging the original wooden structure. Some of the previous annexes that limited the original volume were removed, while those that were essential were discretely integrated into the new plan.

Great attention was given to the selection of materials. Larch and fir clad the exterior, with the light and warmth of these elements balanced by the bold, strong inclusions of Dolomia Stone and black steel. Texturally, these are further enhanced by the application of rough white plaster. As such, the interaction between these materials and the light coming through the windows is important, with the ambience of every space in the home characterised by the precise interaction of these materials.

With a focus on sustainability, the building is totally energy self-sufficient thanks to a photovoltaic system integrated into the roof. In addition, the house also generates 0 emissions due to an electric under-floor heating system.

There is a philosophy that drives this design and dictates the natural aging and progression of the timber. New colours will become apparent – greys to the north and reds to the other points – and then stabilise. The wood will bear witness to the passing of time, thus acknowledging the history of the building itself. Small imperfections such as scratches, nail marks, and peculiar joints have been deliberately kept within view and reach to maintain a sense of history and charm. This is a house that changes with the seasons, the light, and the humidity; a house that truly communicates with its context.

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ABOUT: The quintessential look of a Garth Chapman Queenslander is unrivalled and unique. Since 1988 they have been renowned for their distinguished appeal, achieved by authenticity of architecture, superior standard inclusions and attention to detail. Whatever your preference, Garth Chapman Queenlsanders will ensure you receive advice that provides you with style, class and timeless character.

Mt. Samson

This striking dream home in Brisbane, Australia, is elegant, spacious and eye-catching, representing the very best in design and workmanship. The expansive double-storey Queenslander is unique, in that it blends timeless colonial style with hints of French panache, as well as the luxury of top modern design fixtures and finishes. It's little wonder that this beautiful home won the Queensland Master Builders Award for Best Heritage Home 2012 (Brisbane region).

The house is magnificent when viewed from the street. Attractive butterfly stairs lead to a full-length and wide timber verandah. Bound by colonial style railings and elegant support posts decorated with post collars and brackets, entrance to the home is granted by cedar-framed French doors, which are concealed by the decorative, high portico and make for a truly grand entrance.

Inside, a series of sophisticated modern rooms are finished and furnished in subtle style, befitting the inviting façade. A colonial arch leads from the entrance hall into the formal living room, where a real wood fireplace, surrounded by sandstone, is a key focal point. From here, another elegantly decorated archway leads into the kitchen and dining room.

The kitchen is a chef's delight. An extensive range of premium Gaggenau appliances provides a variety of cooking and entertaining options, while the seamless stone bench top with waterfall edges and the central island bench are eye-catching and functional features. The room opens out to the rear verandah via a cedar bi-fold window, and a walk-in pantry with cabinetry fit-out ensures the kitchen is efficient with everything at hand.

The living areas throughout the home are warmed by 'Forest Red' hardwood flooring, balancing the delicate white walls. High ceilings allow air and light to move through the interior, while the intricate design details serve to fill the house with personality.

A Durian timber internal staircase, bathed in light from a large, north-facing picture window, leads to the lower level of the home. This area houses a 'boys' bar and billiard room, a study with in-built cabinetry and shelves, another large bedroom, a gym, laundry, a bathroom with external pool access and a super home theatre.

For added comfort, the house contains a home automation system - the result of months of programming and installation and over five kilometres of cabling, capable of controlling every electronic element of the home from anywhere in the world. The system handles lighting, temperature, televisions and, importantly, the beautiful, engineer-designed home theatre room.

In addition to the sprawling and expansive home, a two-storey studio and garage (affectionately titled the 'toy-shed' by the owners) has been designed and constructed in sympathy with the main house. Contained within are a kitchenette, large living area, bathroom and large rear entertaining space, ensuring a fully self-contained unit. Fitted out similarly to the main house, this serves as luxury accommodation to visiting guests and family.

A lower level of the 'toy-shed' is separated by a suspended concrete slab, providing a massive storage and workshop area, as well as a space to contain all the boys' toys and acreage accompaniments. One double and two single garage doors provide ample access.

The essence of a traditional Queenslander is beautifully expressed in this design, yet the contemporary interior, complete with every luxury a dream home should include, makes it an ideal dwelling suited to a modern lifestyle.

Photography by Glenn Weiss Photography

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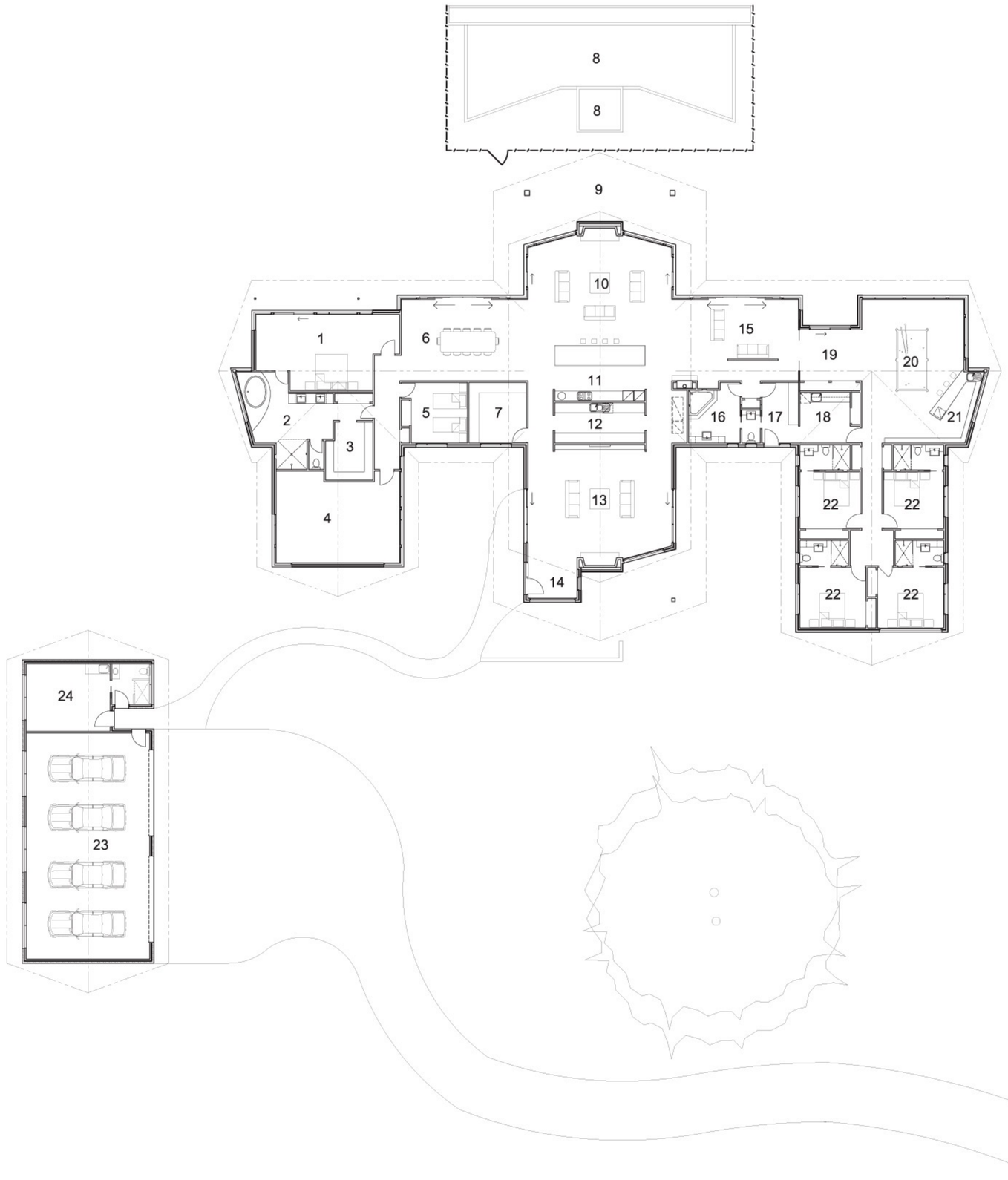
ABOUT: The development of functional design together with considered detailing to exacting standards has been the Graeme Alexander Homes way now for 28 years.

Eagle Point

Fitting within its expansive site, this low profile home is a delightful sprawling building that takes full advantage of its superb elevation with view lines over the 50 acre property to the lake. Modern without being confronting, its low pitched roofline and overhanging prow-type gables with raised centre line create a subtle shape that disguises its bulk on this prominent headland.



1 Master Bedroom
2 Ensuite
3 Dressing Room
4 Retreat
5 Bedroom
6 Dining Room
7 Study
8 Pool and Spa
9 Entertaining Area
10 Living
11 Kitchen
12 Scullery
13 TV Room
14 Entry
15 Family
16 Bathroom
17 Mud Room
18 Laundry
19 Alcove
20 Rumpus
21 Bar
22 Bedroom with Ensuite
23 Garage
24 Workshop

The simple exterior lines are extended to the interior with everything on one level. Central placement of bedrooms, bathrooms, utilities and communal spaces was integral. It is this strong layout that contributes most prominently to the successful inviting design where every space is alluring, with every room offering comfort and relaxation whether one is seeking solitude or interaction. The voluminous home containing six bedrooms is large enough to accommodate all the extended family and their entourage in luxury and style.

Glazing is well considered to make the best use of the views and access to the sunlight. To the east, expansive windows frame panoramas of the water, meanwhile windows to the north allow for maximum solar gain, no matter the weather.

Though this house has an undeniably modern aspect, the subtlety, balance and acknowledgement of family suggests a warmth of classic charm surrounded by stunning natural beauty. Elegantly giving way to inspiring views, this low profile home is perfectly suited to its site.

Photography by Robert Hamer

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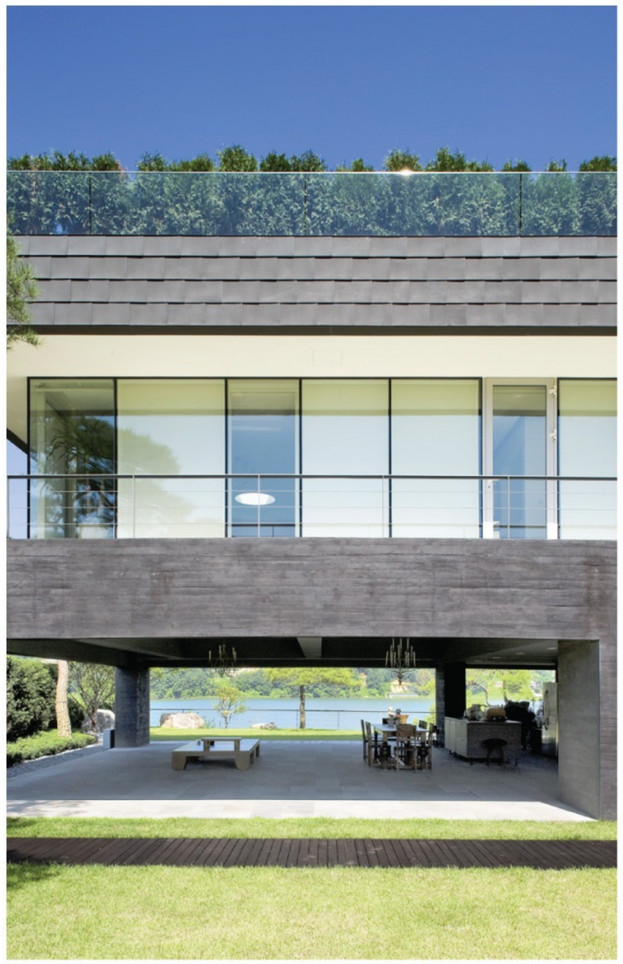
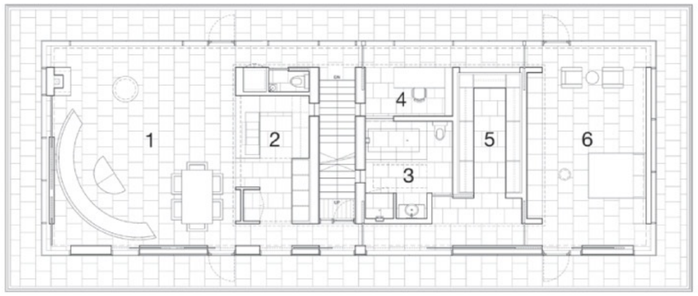
ABOUT: Hyunjoon Yoo (A.I.A.) is a chair of department at Hongik University School of Architecture and principal architect of Hyunjoon Yoo Architects in Seoul, Korea. His work has been selected as one of Seoul's 15 Architectural Wonders by CNN and he has been a consultant for many projects, including the remodeling of the Blue House, South Korea's presidential residence. He has also served as a judge in competitions such as the Korea National Architecture Competition and has authored a number of books, including "52 9 12", "The Flow of Contemporary Architecture" and "Modernism: Cultural Hybrid between East and West".

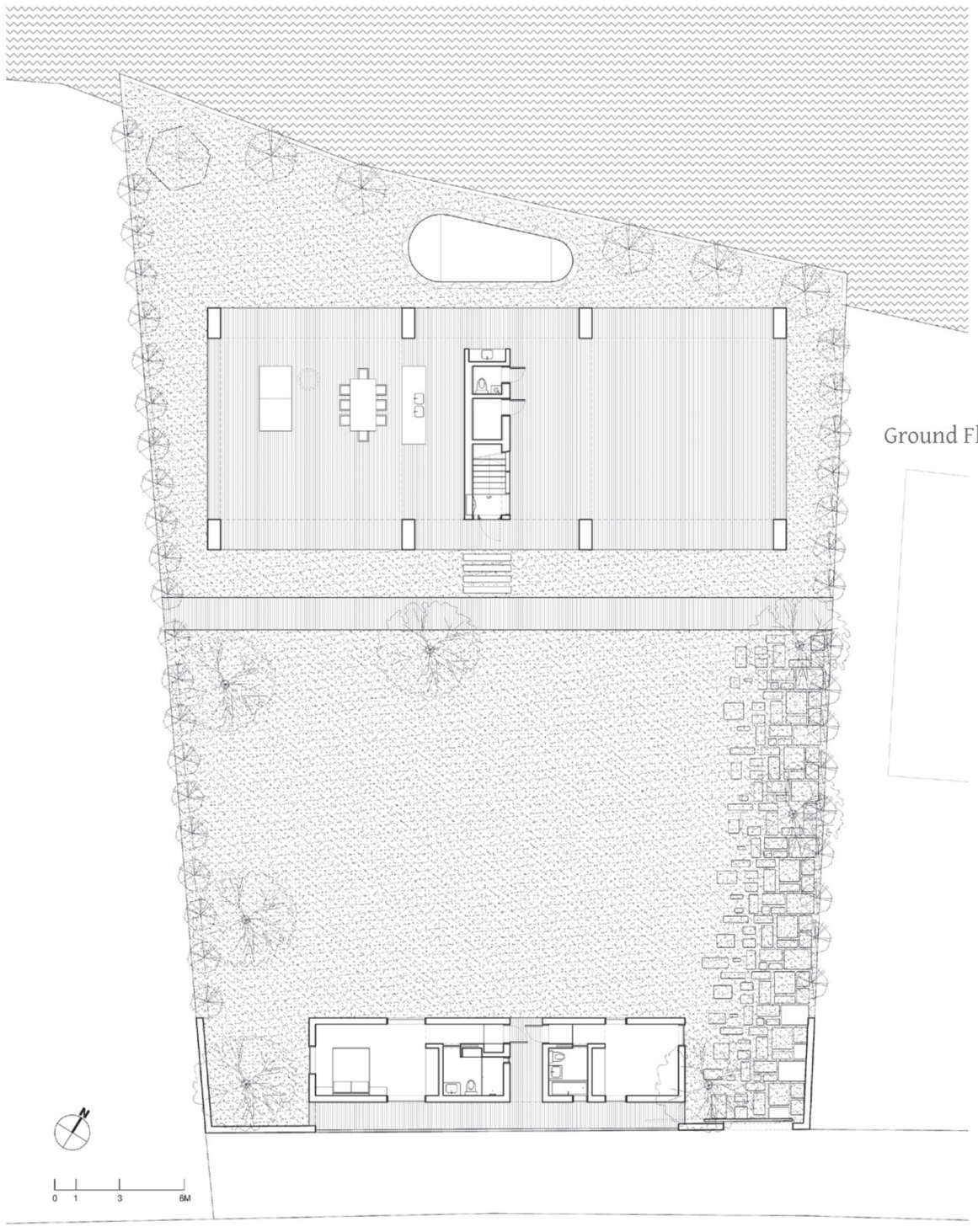
Floating House

Located to the northernmost point of the site and leaving room for an expansive and sun-filled garden, this beautiful home is magnificent and stately. Built for a couple in their fifties who run a nearby traditional Korean restaurant, the house is local to their business, yet captures a gorgeous view of the river from above and abides by Feng Shui principles to achieve a stunning, flowing living environment.





Upper Floor



Ground Floor

KEY

1. Living Room
2. Kitchen
3. Bathroom
4. Library
5. Dress Room
6. Master Bedroom

To give the house an impressive presence, a one-metre wide balcony is clad in the same material as the façade and extends outward from all four sides, making the interior look as though it is expanding outside. Supportive columns on the first floor are thicker than necessary, giving the impression of strength, while a waterspout inside gives this level the appearance of heavy rock. Black concrete is an infinitely stylish finish, mirroring the tiling of many traditional Korean houses.

The internal plan is based around the notion of 'space within space'. Private zones, including the bathroom and the dressing room, as well as utility spaces such as the kitchen, are concentrated to the middle of the plan and compactly distributed. Bedrooms occupy the easternmost point of the home, with living rooms acting as counter-balance on the west, and a corridor linking the two together.

The interior materiality is delightful. A mixture of opulent finishes, luxurious furniture pieces and elegant lighting creates a grand presence that speaks to the nature of the site and the lifestyles of the owners. Based on the notion that architecture is a way of designing spatial relationships, simultaneously physical, visual and psychological, the home is carefully crafted to relate on each of these levels. A guest house for visiting grandchildren is built as a discrete structure to the south. Low profile and casually rectangular, this building bears no visual detraction upon the main house, yet offers privacy for the owner's daughter and her family when they come to visit.

With a lovely view of the South Han-River to the north of the property, this beautiful home embraces a stunning view. Taking advantage of the best elements of the site, the resulting home is an ideally comfortable space for the owners, one that provides ample space, a stunning internal layout and close proximity to their business.

Photography provided by Hyunjoon Yoo Architects

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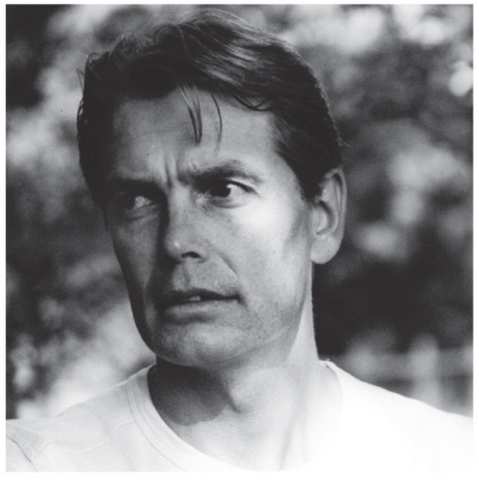
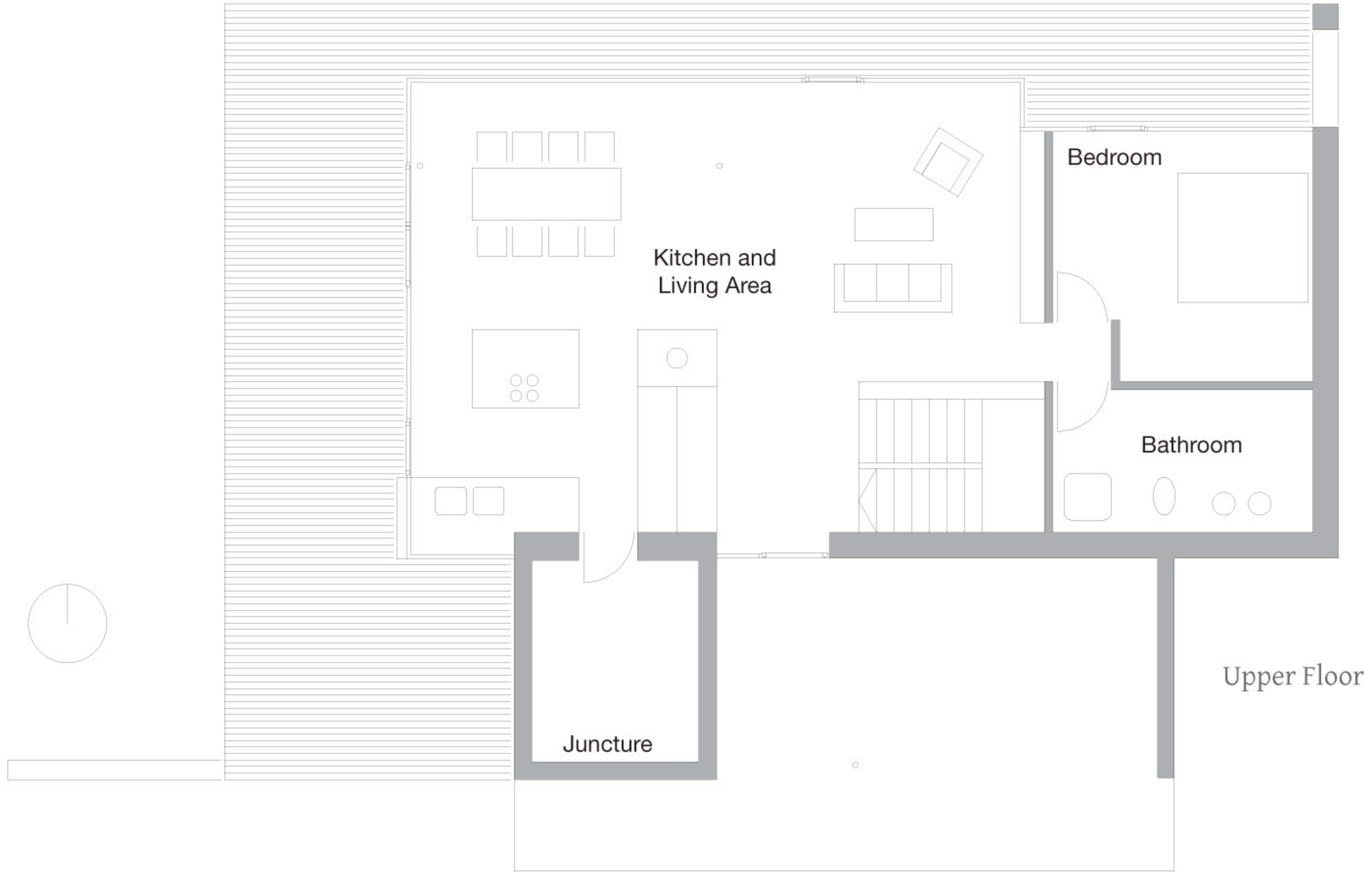


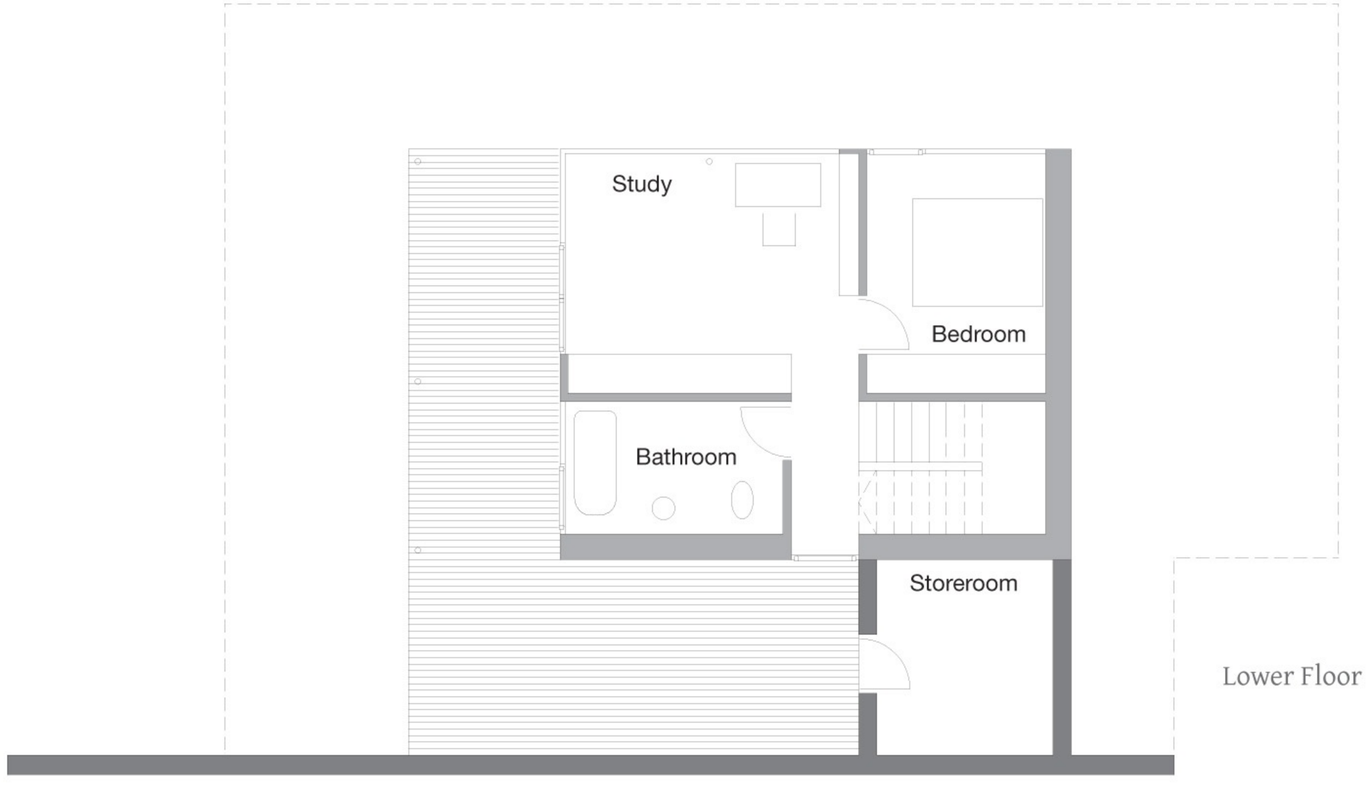
ABOUT: Daniel Sauter, born in 1963, practiced trade prior to studying architecture in Germany. He began his own practice in 1992. His offices, k_m architektur in Bregenz, Austria and Lindau, Germany work on affordable houses, apartments, offices and industrial buildings, kindergartens, schools just to name a few. As well as his work in the field of architecture, for which has received numerous awards, Daniel Sauter has also held various teaching positions.

Wohnhaus am Walensee

With views over Lake Walensee and across to the steep mountain ranges of Churifrsten, this gorgeous rural site in Unterterzen is spectacular on its own. The home built upon it is a transcendent, triumphant example of design that embraces the advantages of a gorgeous plot, stunning views and an integral locality. Resting on a steeply sloping meadow, the building is articulated upon several steel supports, giving it the appearance of floating above the sloped site. The clear form and the use of timber, concrete, and glass as the predominant formative materials create a home that seems to extend naturally from the hillside in a captivating progression between natural and constructed.



Upper Floor



Lower Floor

A loggia encircles the building toward the lake, framing an open plan living space that creates a comfortable transition between the interior and exterior and elegantly highlights a fantastic panorama. The effect is intensified by sliding glass doors as high as the room itself on the side of the façade. The rear of the house is more private and enclosed.

On the upper floor, a spacious, open kitchen, living and dining area extends from a centrally placed wood stove, an inclusion which supplies the entire house with heat. The floor to ceiling glass windows seamlessly integrate the views into every communal space in the home, creating generous, bright interior rooms with spectacular views.

On this level, the master bedroom and en suite are well connected to the communal spaces, creating a comfortable progression from bed to breakfast.

The basement floor houses some enclosed, less-used areas. A home office and a bedroom with en suite are kept separate from the rest of the house, allowing private retreat for visiting guests.

Every room in the house is functionally designed and carefully dimensioned. The construction is geared toward an ecological, economical and high-quality home characterized by the harmonious blend of materials into the natural environment. Rooftop photovoltaic panels and a stove in the livingroom produce most of the energy for the home, ensuring a sustainable, beautiful home well into the future.

Photography provided by k_m architektur

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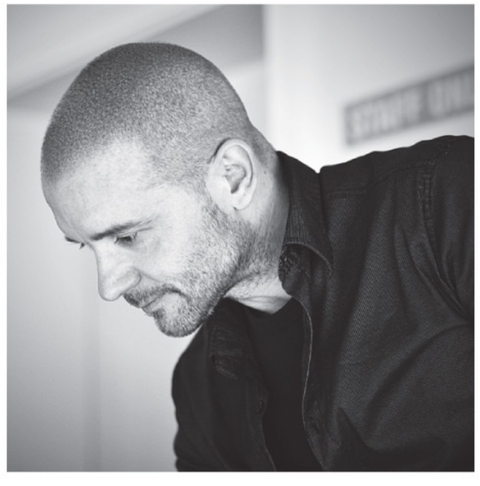


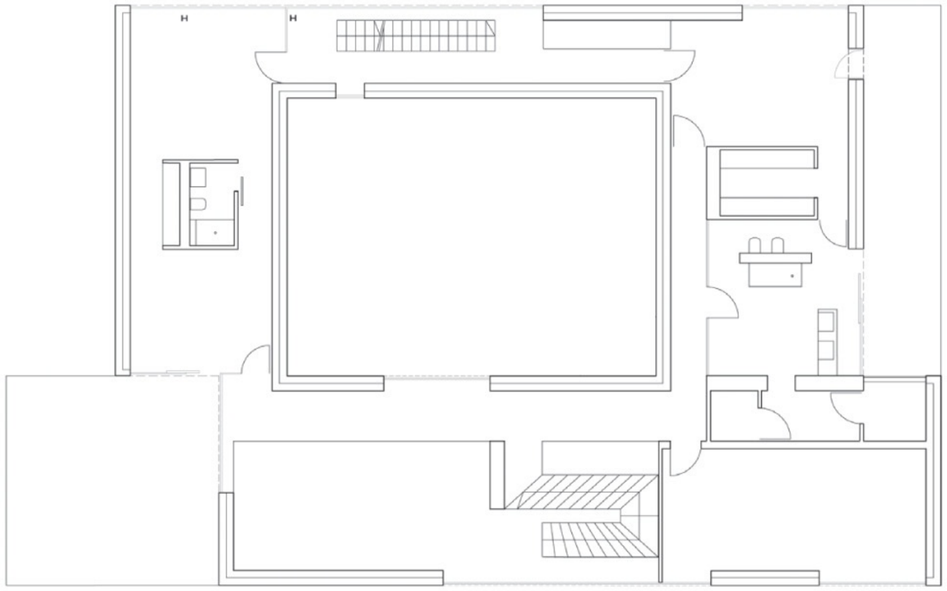
ABOUT: Robert Konieczny is a leader and founder of KWK Promes Architecture studio established in 1999. Since forming the practice, Konieczny and the company have received a number of awards as well as international recognition for their innovative projects and designs.

Konieczny is fivefold nominee of the European Award of Mies van der Rohe Foundation. Moreover, he holds the prestigious award for House of the Year 2006 for the Aatrial House selected as best housing project in a competition organized by World Architecture News.

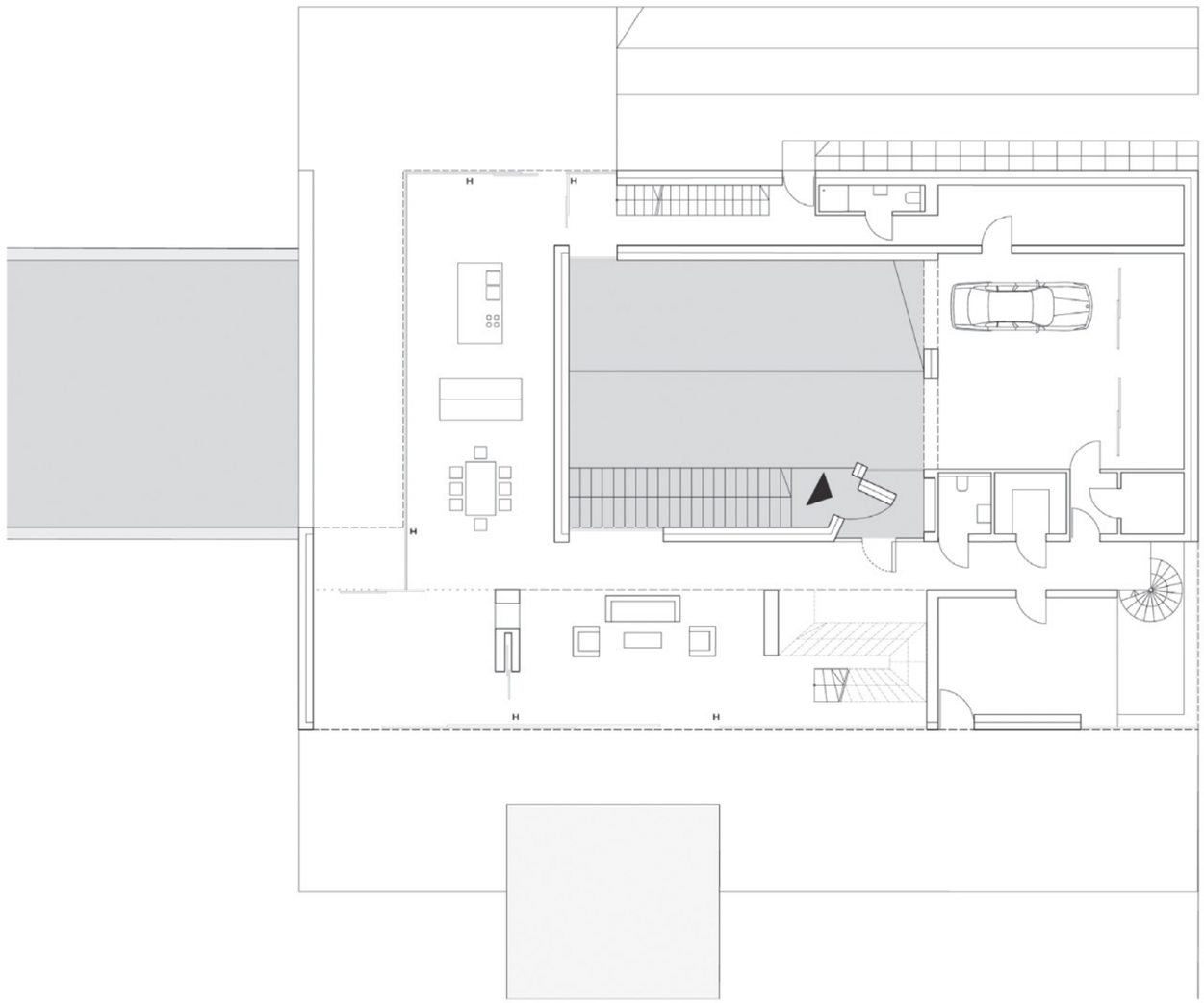
In 2011, Robert was awarded by the Minister of Culture in Poland for his outstanding achievements in the field of architecture.

Aatrial House

Located close to Opole in Poland, in a mostly undeveloped area, this innovative architectural design is surrounded by a low density settlement of 1970s era ‘cube houses’. Set on a beautiful one-hectare site bordered by forests, KWK Promes have crafted the ‘Aatrial House’, a handsome structure balancing solid forms and open, glazed spaces that radiates outward from a central atrium.



Upper Floor



Lower Floor

The site posed only one significant challenge, that of an awkward south-western access point. The considerate and elegant solution posed by the architects is what gives the house its name. As opposed to an Atrial home, where the design is introverted, the 'Aatrial House' is closed to the inside and opens up to its surroundings.

The guiding element of the design was a lowered central driveway separated from the garden, which leads inside the building to the ground floor level from beneath. Around this path, the inner atrium arises and the building opens from this point to all sides. With its terraces unrestricted by the need for street access, the only way to access the garden is to take a journey through the atrium and the house itself.

Entrance is granted to the property through a gateway situated to the east at the highest point of the sloping site. From here, a 10 metre wide driveway follows the slope as it declines and is then lowered beneath ground level. Meanwhile, the surrounding garden has been partially raised and as a result is not only conceptually but also physically removed from the driveway. A high retaining wall further enhances the sense of separation.

In complement to the surrounding architecture, the structure of the house is represented as various transformations of a cube shape. As a result of stretching and bending particular surfaces of the cube, all the walls, floors and ceilings are defined, while in the null spaces, the inner atrium and terraces take form.

The idea of form evolving from structure has defined the interior and exterior architecture, as well as guided the use of materials. The building is a reinforced concrete monolith, with the cube structure finished in polished concrete and all additional elements creating a dark juxtaposition in sleek ebony. The driveway and retaining walls are formed of quarried granite blocks, one of the key material characteristics of the surrounding area.

Photography by Aleksander Rutkowski and Juliusz Sokolowski
Portrait of Robert Konieczny by Marcin Gola

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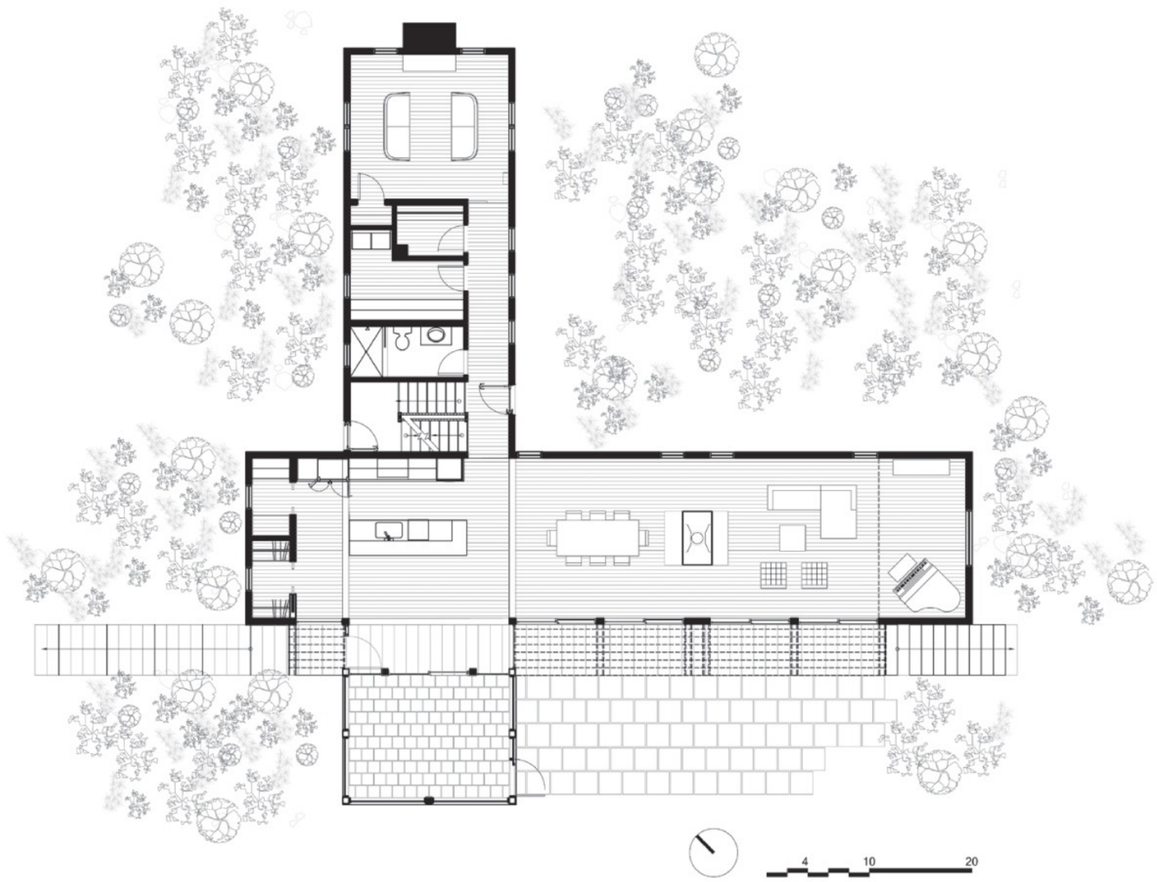
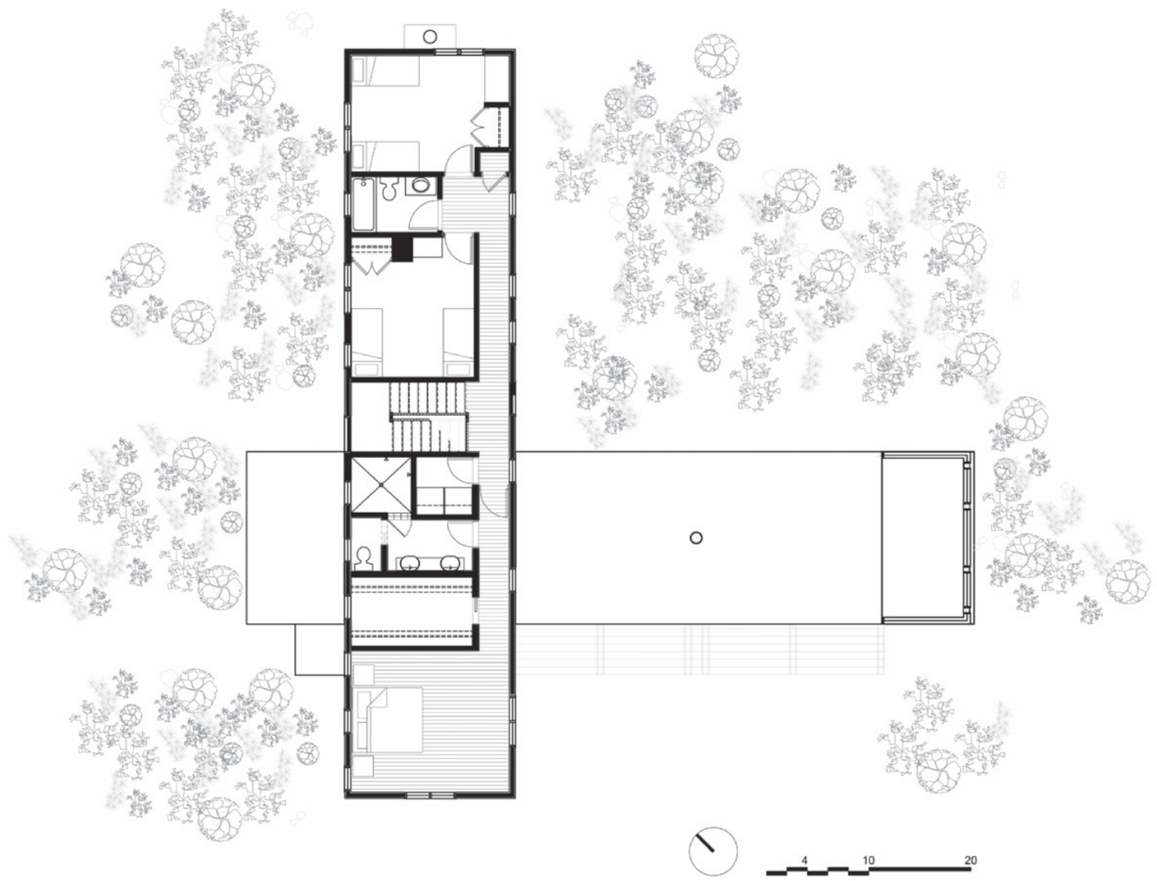
ABOUT: LLB Architects is one of the most established architectural firms in Rhode Island, with a practice built upon a distinct project approach defined through a comprehensive relationship with their clients. Since their founding in 1936, a commitment to responsive and thoughtful design, integrated project process, and New England practicality have remained their primary principles.

Miller / Carr Residence

This gorgeous home is a universal design that balances modernity and traditionalism. The home comprises two intersecting bars aligned with cardinal points. These crossing forms have juxtaposing materiality and structure. The two-storey wing has gabled ends, is clad in Alaskan yellow cedar, and contains the private areas of the home. The single storey bar contrasts with metal corrugated siding and contains the shared areas of the home in an expansive open floor plan.



Lower Floor



Upper Floor

The traditional gable-ended wing of the house is clad predominately in cedar shingles. Columns, pergola and trim have been left to patina grey, a common aesthetic choice in New England coastal communities.

The colour of the metal corrugated-siding is in keeping with surrounding tree trunks and outcroppings. Bluestone has been used at the patio, porch, entry, kitchen counters and fireplace surrounds, both a durable and aesthetically delightful finish that is warm and understated in its simplicity of texture and colour.

The interior palette is simple: white walls, cabinets and trim against bamboo flooring focus attention on the client's beautiful art collection and frame the lush, dynamic views.

The literal heart of the home is the kitchen. Situated at the intersection of the distinct wings of the home, this is a place where family and friends gather to eat and celebrate in each other's company. With easy transition both to the private and shared zones of the house, this is a glorious and beautifully articulated space.

The house enables the owners to enjoy the natural beauty of the site, framing quiet courtyards. Minimal considered landscaping enhances indigenous habitat, creating a strong and inviting connection to the natural world and preserving the beauty and wildlife of the site. Reaching into the garden, the house has become a vantage point from which deer, wild turkeys, coyotes, fisher cats, wood chucks, hawks and hummingbirds have been observed.

Photography by John Horner Photography

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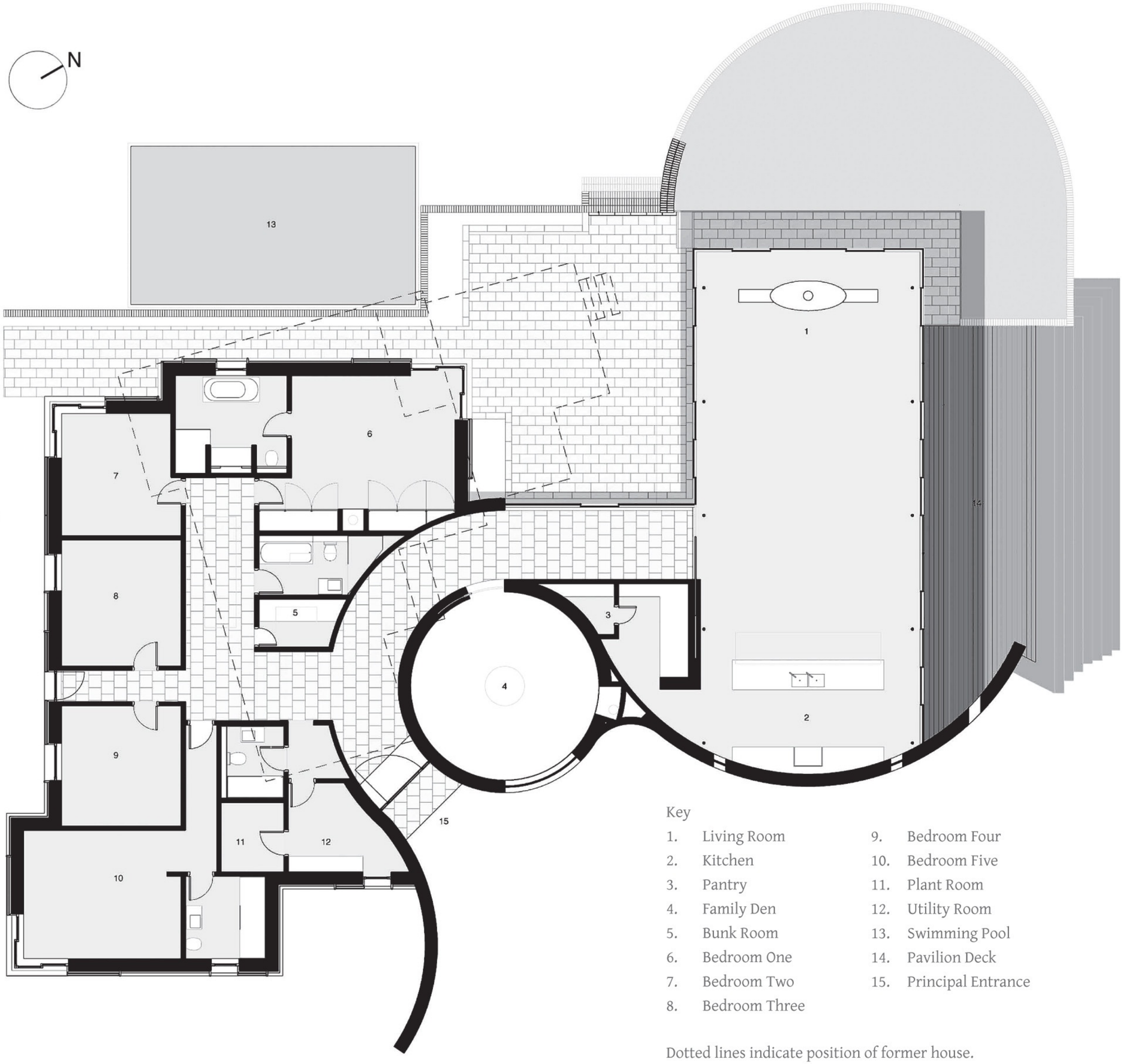
ABOUT: Jonathan Manser comes from a family of architects; both his father and sister are architects, and his mother is an architectural journalist. The family business, The Manser Practice, was formed by his father in the early 1960s and now has offices both in London and Leeds. With a work force of around 30, their projects have reached the world over. Jonathan is Managing Director.

He is regularly invited to act as an awards assessor, including judging for the RIBA and as European Hotel Design Awards Chairman of Judges.

Glass House

A long, sinuous, reflective black wall introduces the home with a little mystery from the approach. Travelling along a gravel drive and through a wood toward the home, the sparse planting of trees gives away subtle glimpses of the sea as it begins to unravel an air of unique brilliance. At just a single level, the low profile of this home affords a great degree of privacy, while offering sweeping views to the Solent beyond.



Key

1. Living Room
2. Kitchen
3. Pantry
4. Family Den
5. Bunk Room
6. Bedroom One
7. Bedroom Two
8. Bedroom Three
9. Bedroom Four
10. Bedroom Five
11. Plant Room
12. Utility Room
13. Swimming Pool
14. Pavilion Deck
15. Principal Entrance

Dotted lines indicate position of former house.

A gorgeous oversized sawn timber door provides entry to the home – and you know from this point on that it's going to be special. Failing to disappoint, a restrained and mostly white palette provides a stunning sample of what to expect past the curved entry hall. Leading past a private family den you will arrive at the open plan pavilion which houses the kitchen and living area and make up one wing of the home.

Seemingly structureless, the pavillion appears to have no walls, with much of the perimeter clad in glass. This transparency affords a greater scale of light, as well as introducing vistas that few are lucky enough to experience. Glare is countered by the deep overhangs of the roof, also ensuring that the space is evenly lit and easier to comprehend in sunny weather, whilst being very well lit in more overcast conditions. The beautiful dark timber living room floor also absorbs solar gain, effectively reducing the load in the under-floor heating.

To the left of the entry corridor is the bedroom block, comprising five bedrooms and four bathrooms, as well as a plant and utility room. At the front of the property is a large entertaining area accompanied by a luxurious pool. Accessible from both wings of the home, this is an area that boasts astonishing views and the opportunity to utilise the surrounding land as an extension to its entertainment capabilities in the warmer months.

Upon consideration of the facts, The Manser Practice decided that rebuilding the existing home, rather than renovating, was more economical in the long run as it would allow for a more sustainably oriented approach to design.

Photography by Jonathan Manser and Morley von Sternberg

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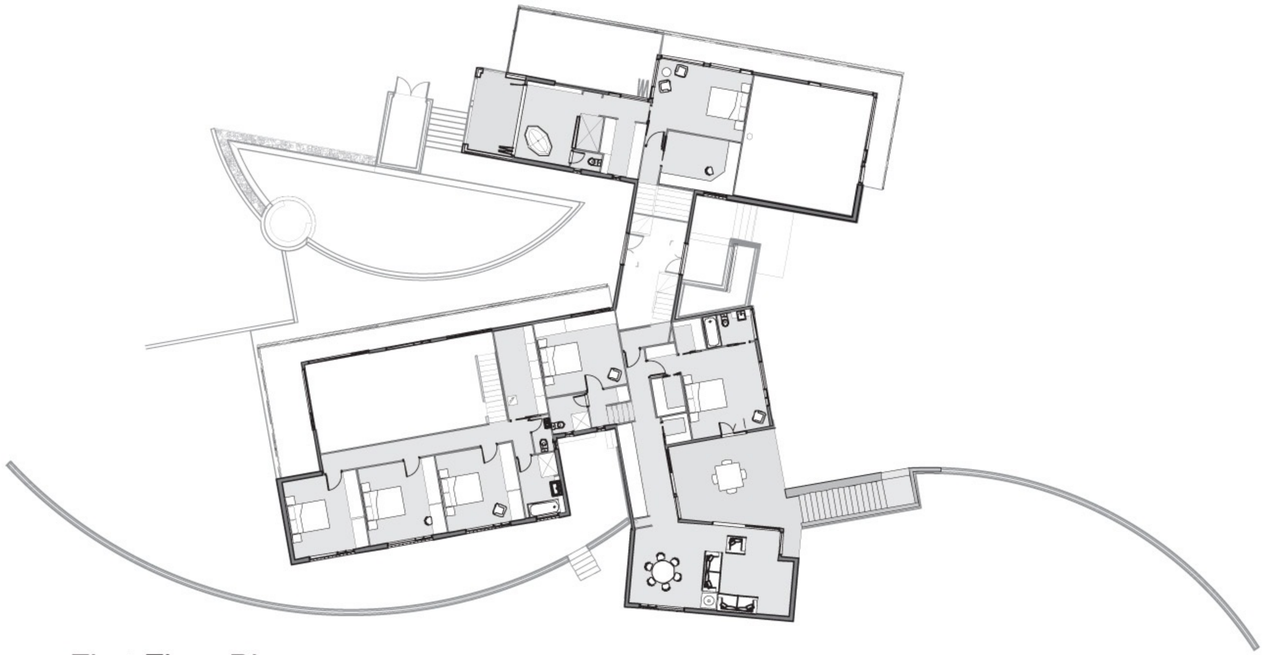
ABOUT: Working and living at Benloch Studio in the heart of the Macedon Ranges, 90km north of Melbourne city, Australia, Marcus Roberts started his current practice in 2001, after an earlier academic career. Since then he has developed a specialty in unique residential projects, from complex additions and remodeling of existing buildings, to individual homes with project values of up to $2m. Innovative attention to detail, materials and good livability are common threads in his approach to architecture.

Marcus is a member of the Australian Institute of Architects and a former Lecturer in Architectural Design and Theory at Deakin University.

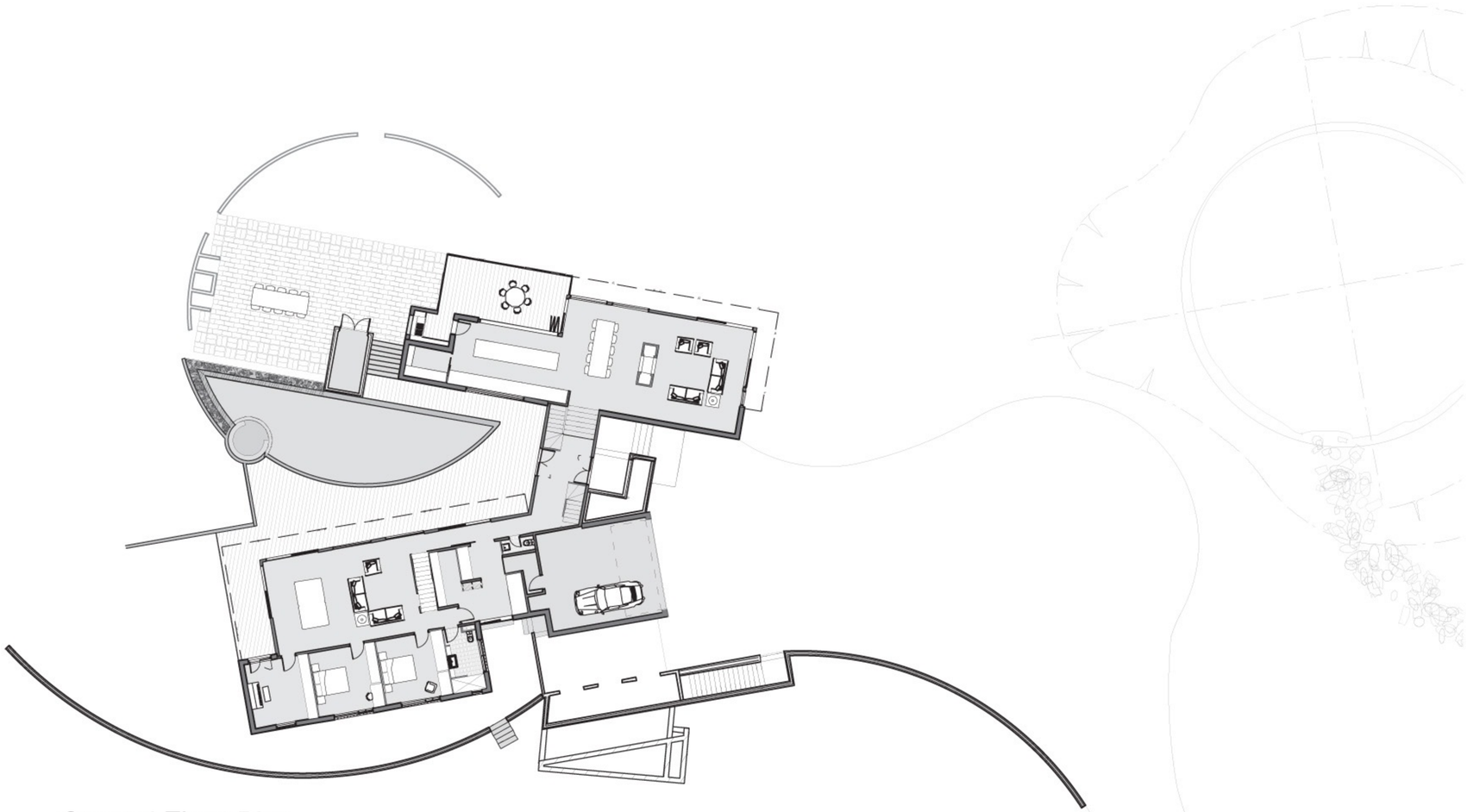
"I'm particularly interested in the use of materials in a raw or natural state. In this house the block walls are left unadorned to show their textural qualities, while timber and stone is intended to age gracefully into the landscape. Where steel is used it doesn't try to be anything other than what it is."

Yarra Valley House

The graceful distribution of space in this handsome modern design represents a rejection of the sprawling, ponderous floor plans of many country homes. Replacing a very large and very long Colonial style farmhouse surrounded by a verandah, the new home is an ideal contemporary Australian home, embracing the cool climate and the rural climate without relying on the clichés of outback living.



First Floor Plan



Ground Floor Plan

The building is carved into the hillside and divided into three wings that separate the house into guest, parent and children's zones. The façade is articulated in textured block-work, which refers to the excavated strata of the site, and timber ship-lap cladding that reflects the beautiful Eucalypts scattering across the landscape.

With three generations of the family in the house, zoning was a huge consideration during the design. The home needed to accommodate the owners, their five teenage children, and the grandparents, along with the possibility of guests. As such, each zone of the building would need to have the right degree of separation, yet retain interaction with the other spaces. Thirdly, given the large number of rooms (eight bedrooms, five bathrooms, three living spaces and two kitchens) a building form that wouldn't necessitate overly long circulation paths was needed.

The challenge of comfortably accommodating the five teenage children, parents and grandparents and their possible guests was met by designing the home as three discrete elements revolving around a central entry point. The entry itself contains stairs that lead to three different levels, with three generational zones of the house.

The teenagers' zone is spacious and comfortable, offering a large double-height rumpus room, five bedrooms and a music room stacked on the south-side, with glass doors leading to the pool area to the north, adding extra visual flair and practicality. The older generation, meanwhile, have a self-contained living zone - a first floor 'apartment' with its own living and dining room, kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms. Though connected to the main house through the mid-level central entrance, it also has its own courtyard terrace and entry. The main suite to the north of the home comprises a general living area at ground level and a more private first floor bedroom, study, en suite, dressing room and roof terrace.

In addition to its many internal applications, the act of wrapping the three zones of the house around the central entry has enabled the creation of a number of courtyard and semi-enclosed spaces. These are used to provide sheltered areas that can be used at different times of the day, or when the prevailing winds shift around.

To keep continuity throughout the home, five main building materials unify the structure. A concrete block forms the southern and western walls, offering protection from the harsh weather conditions. While this same colour of block is used throughout the design, three distinct size variations and surface textures have been used to create a horizontal strata pattern that traverses all the block walls.

Silvertop Ash Timber Shiplap cladding is used on the northern and eastern walls. Over time, this will slowly age to a soft silver-grey colour to add a weathered, yet dignified appearance. Extensive glazing on the northern walls are used to provide excellent access to views, as well as good solar gain in winter. In addition, the glass is protected from the summer sun with fixed louvre screens.

The eastern, northern and western façades of the house have protective double-height verandahs made from galvanized steel, with timber louvre sun screens added to protect from rain and help keep the house cool in summer.

Capturing magnificent views, this design meets the challenges of a sloping site brilliantly. Sitting atop the crest of the hill, the home is windswept, yet protected. The third in a series of four homes designed for different members of the same family, this beautiful and innovative house represents a keen understanding of the lifestyles and expectations of the clients.

Photography by Marcus Roberts

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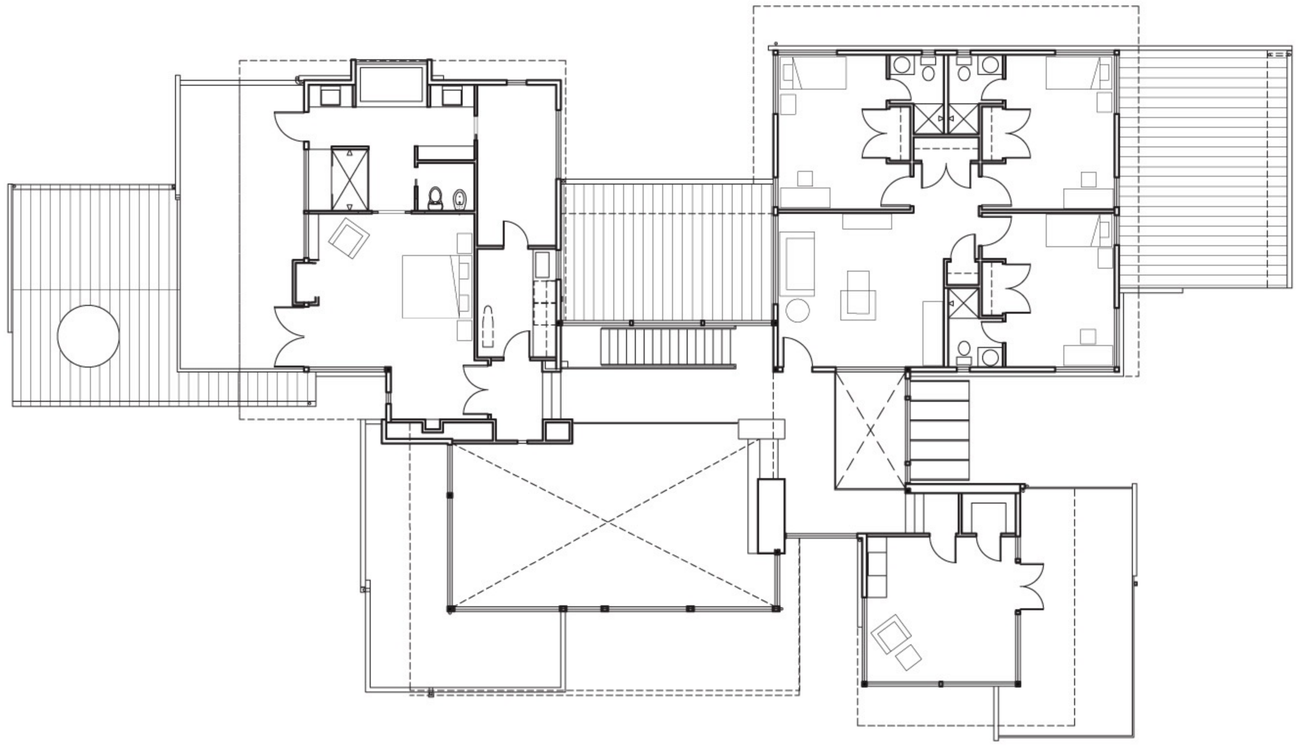
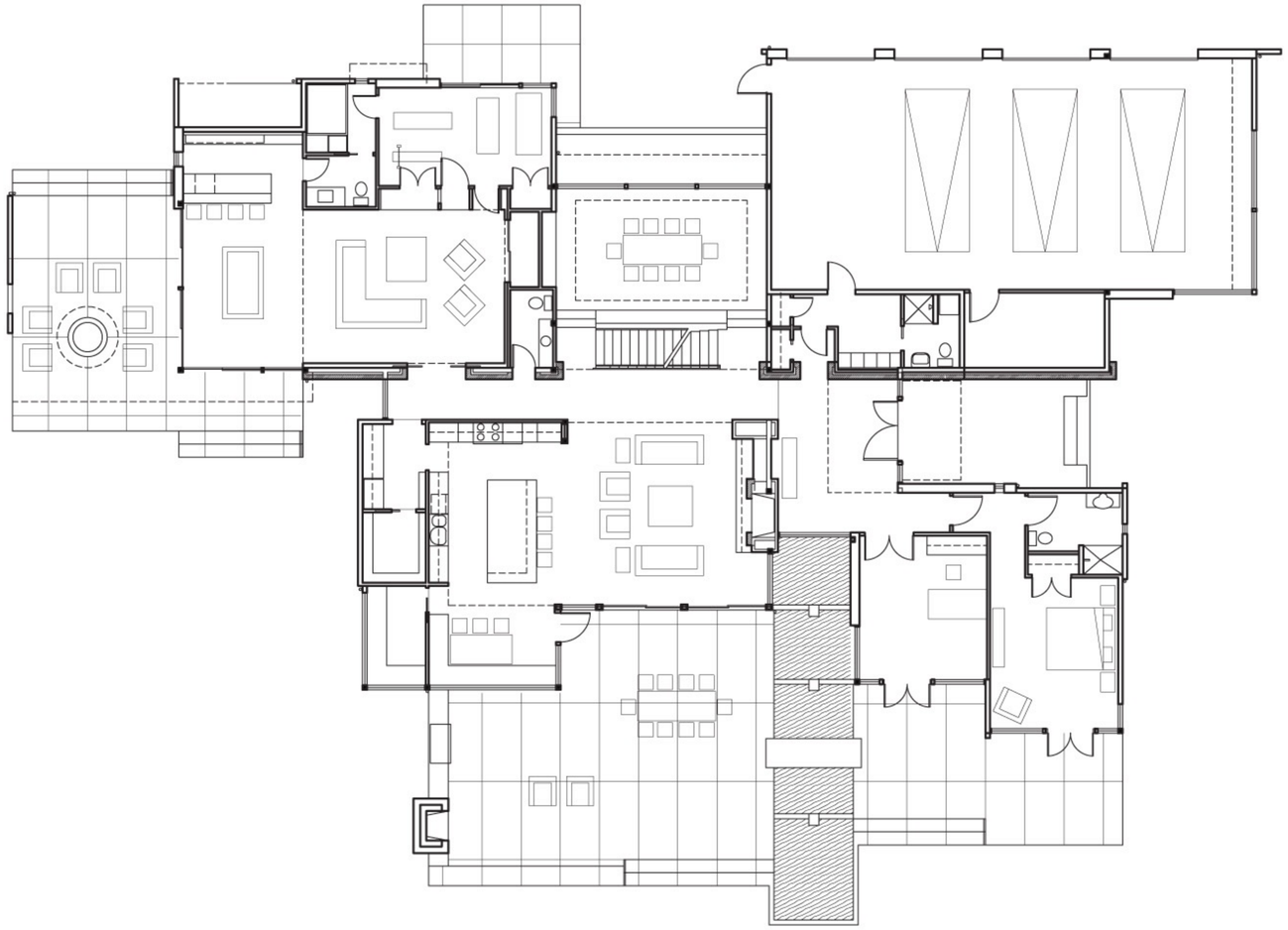
ABOUT: Graduating from Harvard University Graduate School of Design in 1990, Regan McClellan founded McClellan Architects in 1997. He has an abiding interest in the integration of landscape, architecture and interior design to create completely integrated designs, having worked with Michael Van Valkenburgh, an internationally recognized landscape architect. Regan believes that a successful home design comes from the integration of the life of the owner with the potential of the site.

Forest House

The eye-catching form of this layered country design gives way to an expansive dream home, the ideal living space for a family with four young boys. Providing ample space for the family and their diverse hobbies and interests, the home gathers daylight, has dedicated entertainment areas, a gym, a private office and an art studio.



Upper Floor



Lower Floor

Clad in cedar siding and stucco, the colours of the façade were chosen to ensure harmony with the hues of the surrounding landscape. The effect this has is both natural and elegant. A particular fixture found on the entry wall, the ledgestone, is drawn through the interior of the home as well, pulling the natural textures and raw colours of the façade and surrounding topography into the house.

The internal colour palette is a blend of warm, inviting browns contrasted by clean, striking whites. Extensive glazing makes the most of the lush greenery that surrounds the home. In addition, a range of timbers and highlights of natural stone give the main living space, a double-height void, a natural, earthy ambiance, perfectly matched to the forest-bound property.

Centered around a large, two-storey living area, the extensive glazing floods the open plan with natural light. Adjacent to this central area, three pavilions contain the bedrooms, the guest suite, the office, the entertainment area, the art studio and the garage, with the living space designed to encourage a sense of connection when traveling between these different parts of the home. The angular roof planes help to articulate the central living area and the surrounding pavilions.

An extensive series of terraces and roof decks connect the home to the rest of the five acre estate. Each outdoor space offers visitors to the home a different experience or a fresh outlook. Large windows in the living and kitchen area serve to draw the forest in as a dynamic ‘fourth wall’ of greenery. This also offers a beautiful view of the large lawn, where the family might engage in a game of football or simply enjoy the sunlight.

As an extension of the entertainment area, a large covered deck surrounding a fire ring offers a more intimate connection to the nearby forested area. Additionally, the upper roof decks are yet more private again, offering a place to escape from the more active areas of the home without feeling segregated from the activity of the family.

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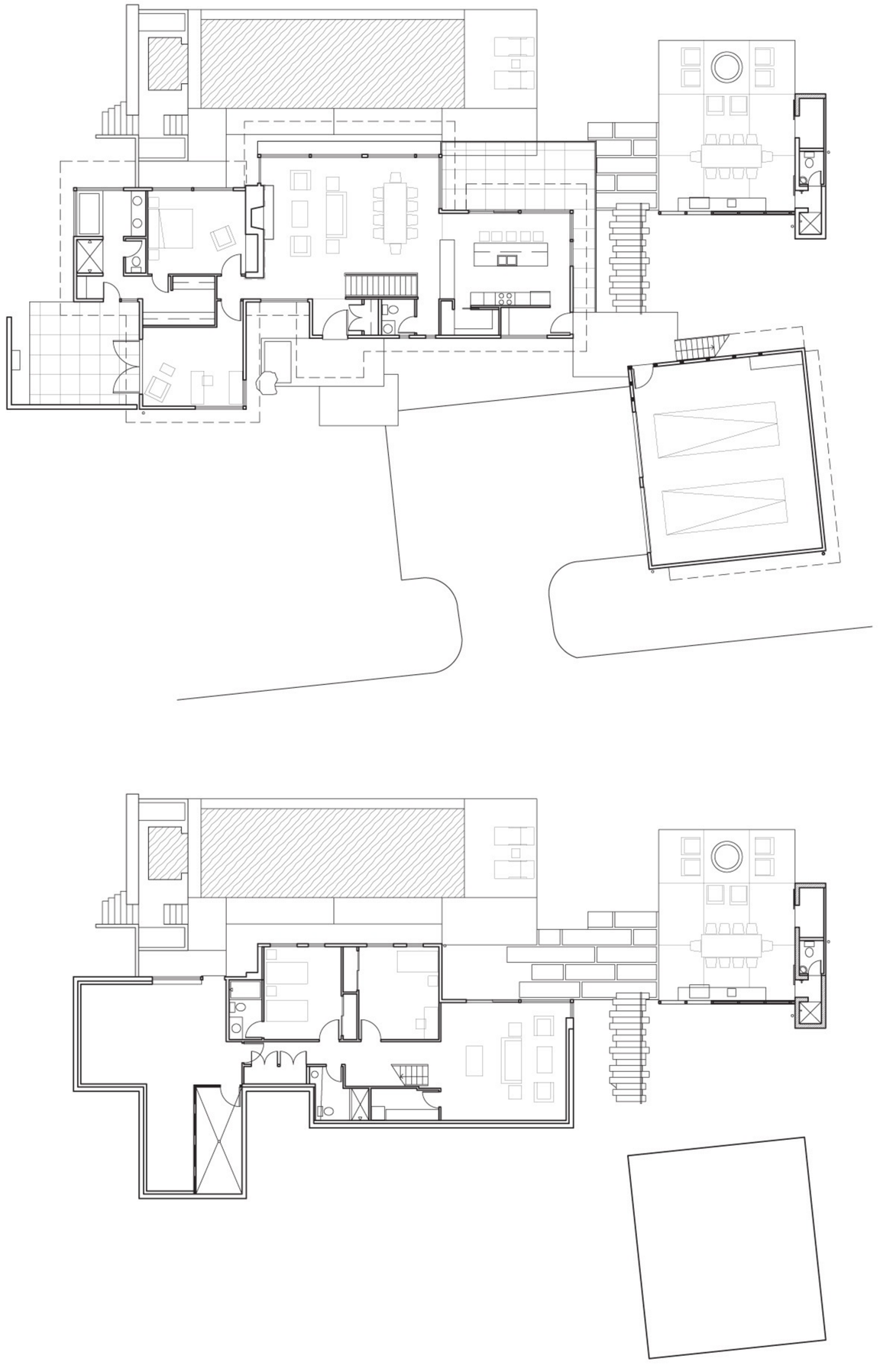
River House

Built on the shore of the Columbia River, this weekend retreat provides many areas for comfortable outdoor living and easy accommodation for a family of five. The home mediates the harsh desert climate of the hills behind the home and the lush, green landscape found at the riverbank, resulting in a well ventilated home perfectly suited to the diverse environment. A holiday home par excellence, this is a perfect place to relax in summer and a comfortable home base to enjoy the Ski Season at the nearby mountain ranges in the winter.



Upper Floor

Lower Floor

Bright aluminium windows balance the earthy cedar siding and stucco. The home is perfectly situated on the site to take advantage of the unique connection to the land, and takes advantage of the local microclimate and prevailing breezes to passively cool and heat the home.

The house comprises a number of areas for outdoor entertaining, including a dining space, barbecue and a firepit adjacent to a large pool and spa. A sloping lawn provides a natural link between the river and the pool terrace. Facing the river, the kitchen deck, pool and outdoor rooms are arranged to form a communal area for activities, with the colours and materials of the space intended to harmonise handsomely with the desert landscape of eastern Washington. These exterior spaces emphasise the open lifestyle of the location, connecting strongly to the activities surrounding the water in particular. Above the garage, a one-bedroom apartment provides a luxuriously private space for weekend guests. In summer, the home opens up to the river and provides support for swimming, boating and just generally enjoying the outdoors.

The landscaping to the entrance of the home features grasses adapted to the dry climate. A combination of wood and stucco siding complement this natural, grassy pathway, with this side of the home noticeably more insular than the others. A small fountain provides a point of relief from the dry, drought-resistant theme.

Photography by Patrick Barta

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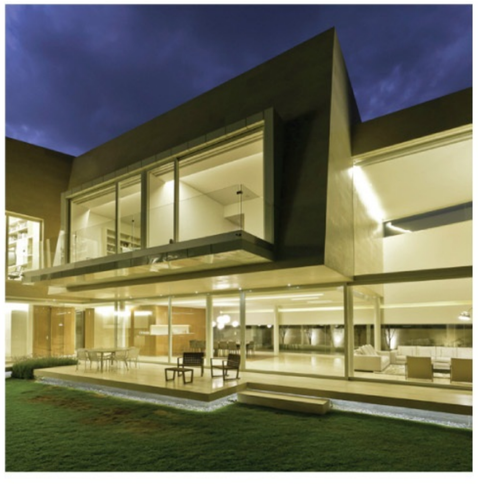


ABOUT: Migdal Arquitectos is a joint project development and construction firm led by principles Jaime Varon, Abraham Metta and Alex Metta. The company deals with a wide range of projects, both domestic and international, all supported by a group of professionals who are specialists in a range of disciplines.

Migdal Arquitectos believe that design has the power to enrich the urban environment. Their aim is to create architecture that surpasses traditional design, having addressed developments in social housing, middle and residential housing, office buildings, shopping centres, industrial parks, specialised buildings and a host of others. Migdal Arquitectos' transcendent projects become urban icons in the cities in which they are located.

Country Club Residence

Built beside a golf course in Mexico City, this gorgeous country club home utilises the striking view, a strong connection to the outdoors and a flood of natural light to achieve a striking effect from the façade. Internally, the layout is open and functional, allowing for comfortable modern living.

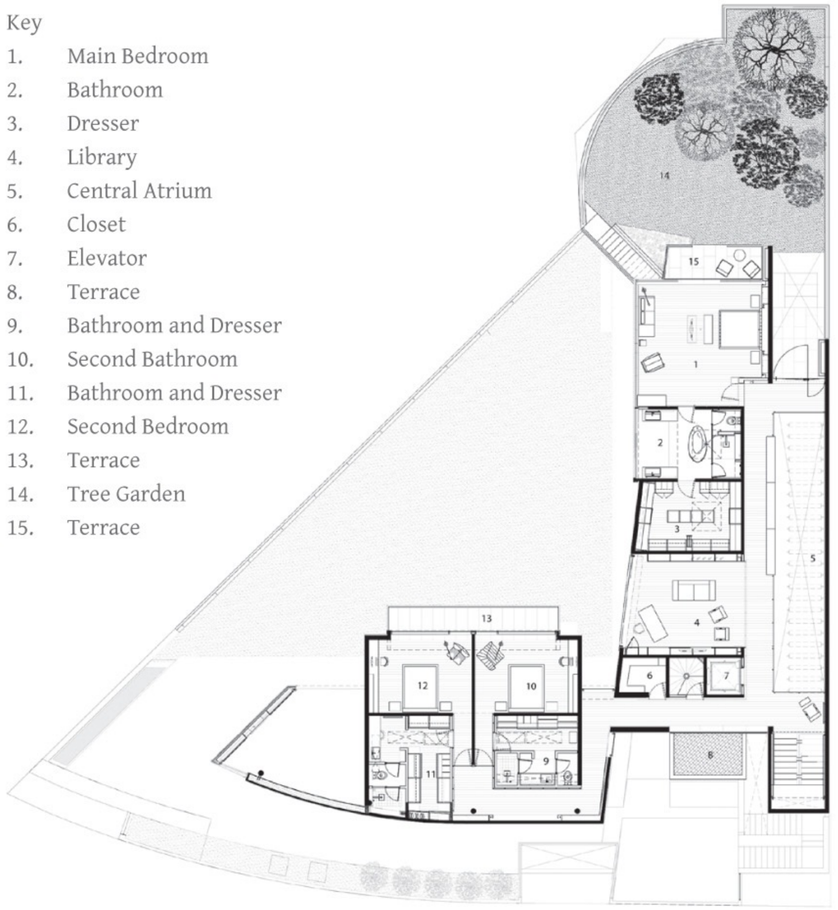
Key

1. Plaza
2. Living Room
3. Dining Room
4. Breakfast
5. Restroom
6. Elevator
7. Kitchen
8. Central Atrium
9. Family Room
10. Guest Room
11. Bathroom and Dresser
12. Garden

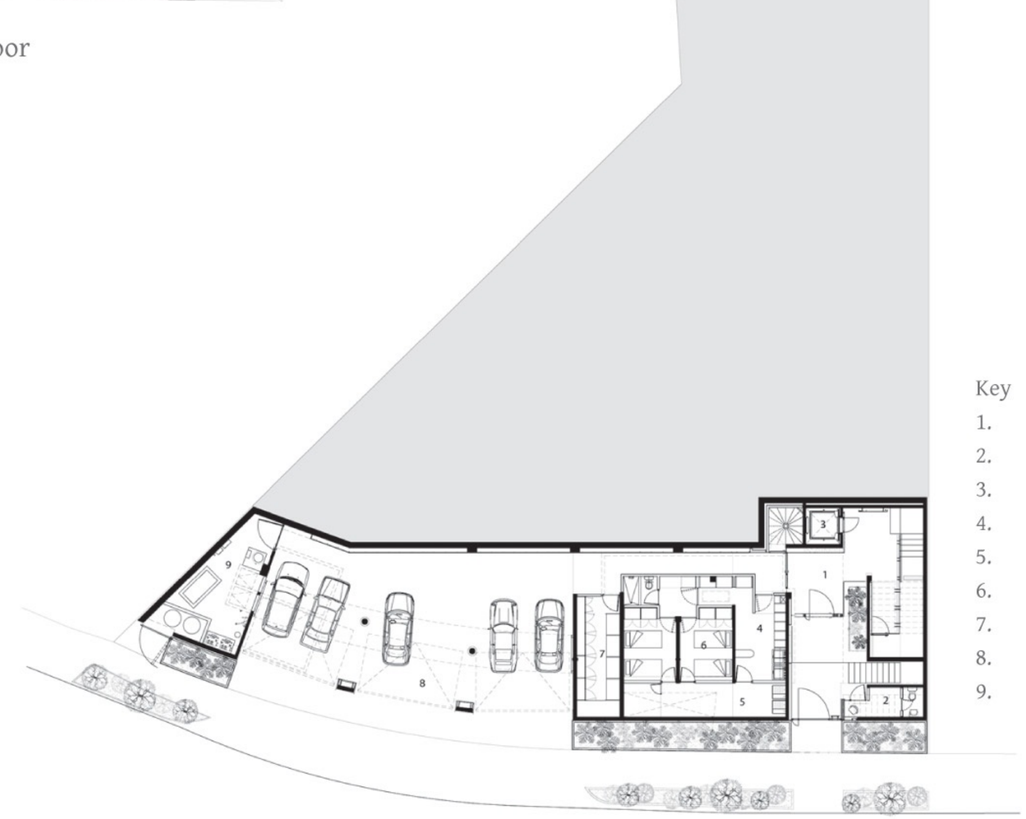
First Floor

Key

1. Main Bedroom
2. Bathroom
3. Dresser
4. Library
5. Central Atrium
6. Closet
7. Elevator
8. Terrace
9. Bathroom and Dresser
10. Second Bathroom
11. Bathroom and Dresser
12. Second Bedroom
13. Terrace
14. Tree Garden
15. Terrace



Second Floor



Ground Floor

Key

1. Access Lobby
2. Surveillance
3. Elevator
4. Laundry Room
5. Yard
6. Service
7. Stowage
8. Garage
9. Machine Room

The L-shaped residence adopts a southern orientation that respects the topography of the site. This arrangement permits all of the internal spaces to have visual access to the ‘great garden’ that surrounds the home, creating continuity between the house’s exclusive green area and the nearby golf course.

Articulated over three storeys to make best use of the available space, the home comprises a services basement that appears from the outside to be a modern ‘podium’ made of black stone, with the rest of the residence resting atop it. The second layer comprises the public, transparent and ‘light’ spaces. With direct links to the main garden, these inviting, communal and transitional spaces are a joy to dwell within. The third storey meanwhile, supported by slender metal columns, accommodates the home’s private zones and connects with the ‘Tree Garden’ - a final feature that preserves all the existing nature of the site.

The material palette in this design is limited, yet very effective. The façade is articulated in black stone, beige marble, aluminium and glass, with the stone of the podium contrasting with the beige marble of the volume above, controlling views and creating a striking street presence.

From the ground floor, the house appears transparent and bright, with a connection formed with the outdoors through the extensive use of doors and terraces, creating an entirely continuous space.

Inside, the theme of the exterior design is brought to the interior, achieved by the continued use of the beige marble. The double height living space is an especially outstanding feature of the home. Wall to wall glazing in this room creates an open and tantalising daily living space. This is further defined by hanging walls that unfold from the ceiling, lending optional scale or confinement to the room as circumstances dictate.

Photography by Luis Gordoa

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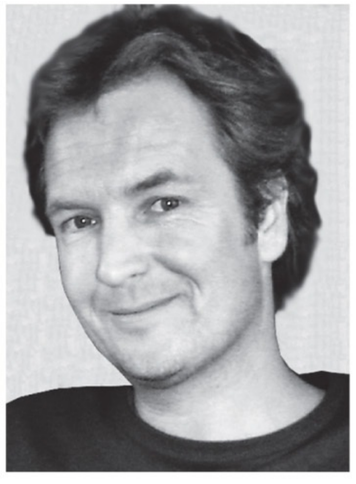


Håkon Vigsnæs

Meredith Bowles

ABOUT: JVA, established in 1996 by Einar Jarmund and Håkon Vigsnæs, is a young Norwegian practice responsible for building a series of highly accomplished, modestly-priced houses in Oslo and its outskirts. Past projects include working with the Norwegian Ministry of Defence in 2006, Galleri Trafo (Norway) in 2006 and the Oslo School of Architecture in 2002.

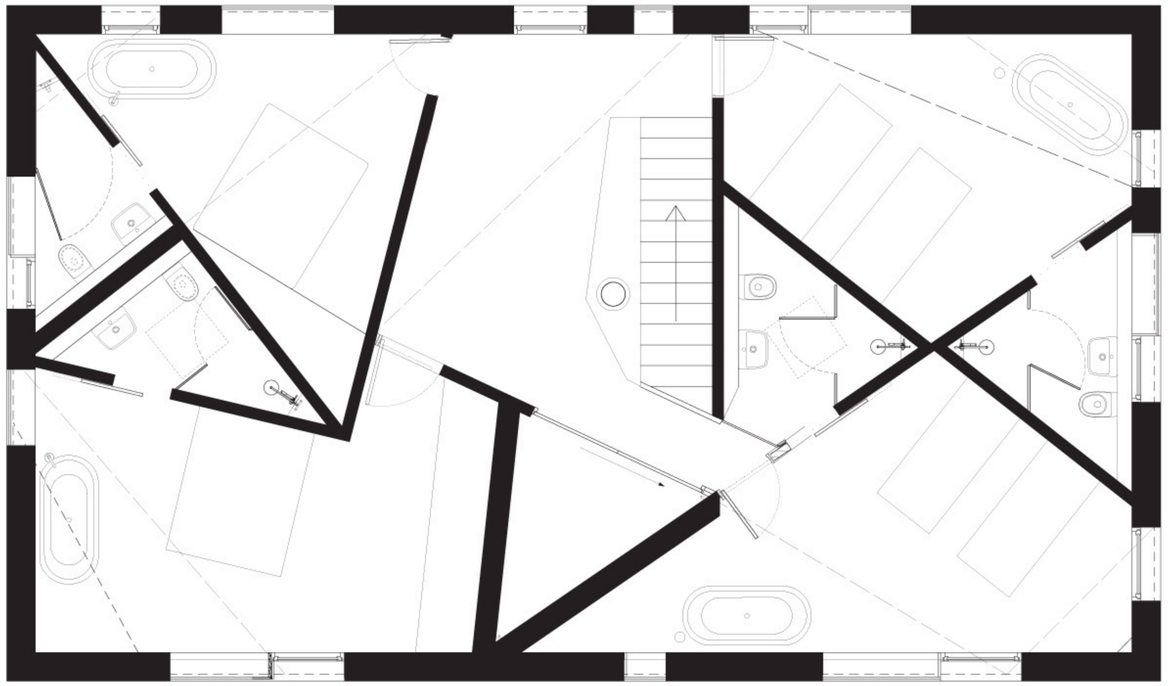
Meredith Bowles is the founder and principal of Mole Architects Ltd., based in Ely, Cambridgeshire, a firm that has established itself as a leading practice for designing low-energy, contemporary buildings with a particular emphasis on regional character.

Dune House

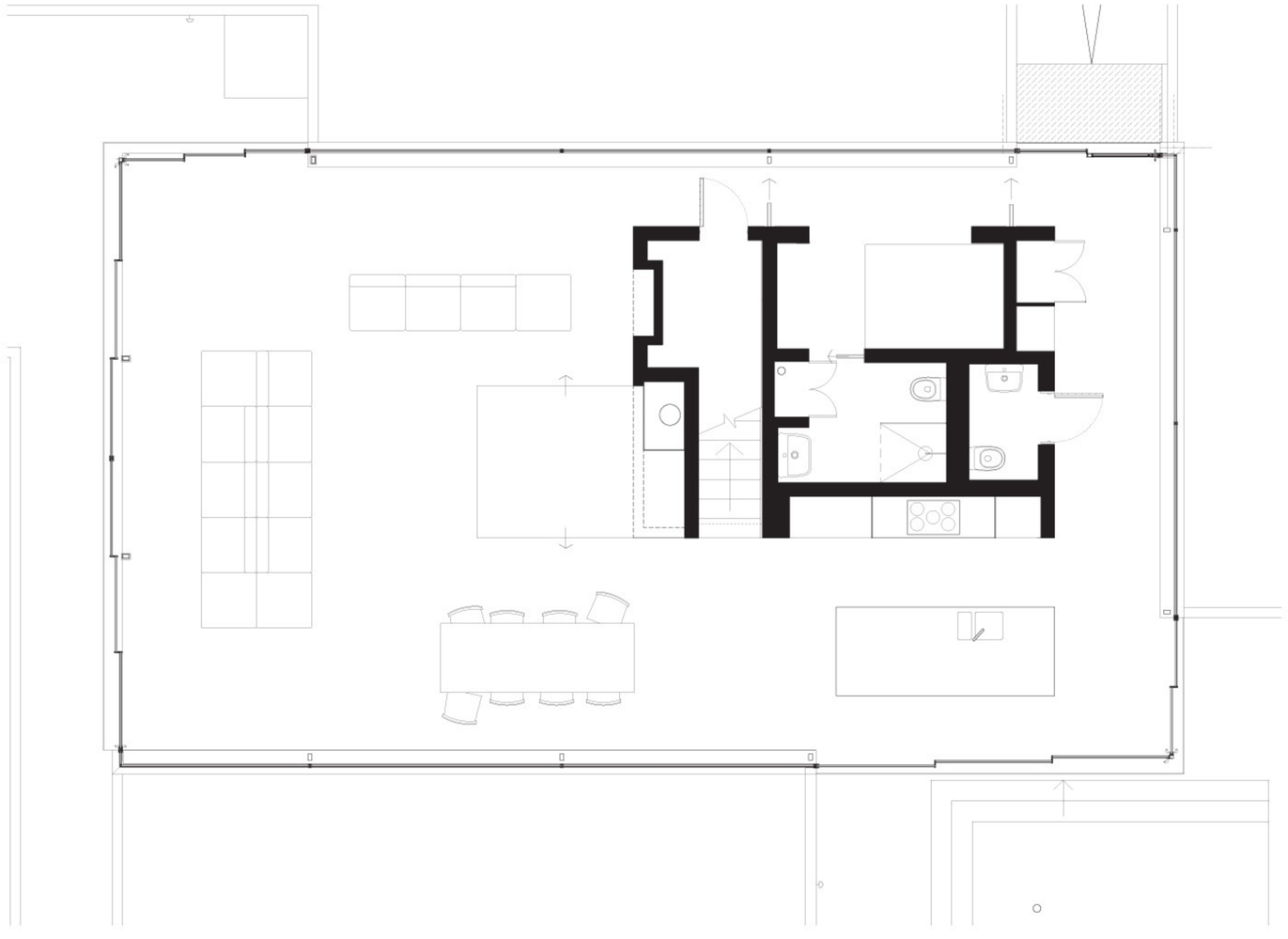
The Dune House in Thorpeness on the Suffolk Coast bears a strong relationship to the form of traditional British seaside strip houses, while drawing in a new contemporary materiality. In this eclectic rural vacation destination, this stunning beach design balances environmental concerns and conservation area requirements with a commitment to excellent architecture.

The Dune House

Miele



First Floor



Ground Floor

The client, Living Architecture, selected Jarmund Vigsnaes Arkitekter through a short competition process to design a replacement for the two-storey chalet bungalow previously found on this site, one of the only inhabited stretches of beach in England, while Mole Architects were appointed as collaborators as part of their ongoing relationship with the client. The new home was to be the second in a series of redevelopments for Living Architecture, with others designed by Nord, David Kohn and Peter Zumthor. The previous house had been extended upon ad hoc during its 100 year lifetime and was suffering serious structural problems. The new home was to be built on the existing footprint to offer a romantic remembrance to holidays at bed and breakfasts.

Located on the edge of a conservation space in an area of outstanding natural beauty, consultation with planning officers throughout the design and development process was integral to gaining support for the project. This diligent attention to the requirements of the build ensured that the house had full backing from the planning committee upon submission of the design.

The ground floor is a stunning glazed box. Set into the dunes to protect it from the strong winds, and equally to open it in all directions for wide views, it gives the solid wood clad top floor the appearance of floating above the sand. Additionally, the corners of this level can be opened as sliding doors, emphasising the flowing accessibility.

The geometrically complex first floor and roof are constructed from cross-laminated timber panels supplied by Eurban. Concrete, glass and aluminium on the ground level relate the mass to the ground, while the upper floor is constructed in solid wood, with the cladding stained dark to match the existing gables and sheds found in the area. This juxtaposition of light and dark creates a vibrant contrast between the ground and first floors.

Given the 1 in 200 year risk of flooding, the home's design makes some concessions. The polished concrete and easily removable doors found on the ground floor are two such examples of how the issue of flooding was accounted for. In addition, the house has a central core of concrete situated upon a raft foundation, while the first floor is supported by slender steel posts that rely on the concrete spine, which also contains the stairs, plant room, water closet and shower rooms.

Photography by Chris Wright, Living Architecture

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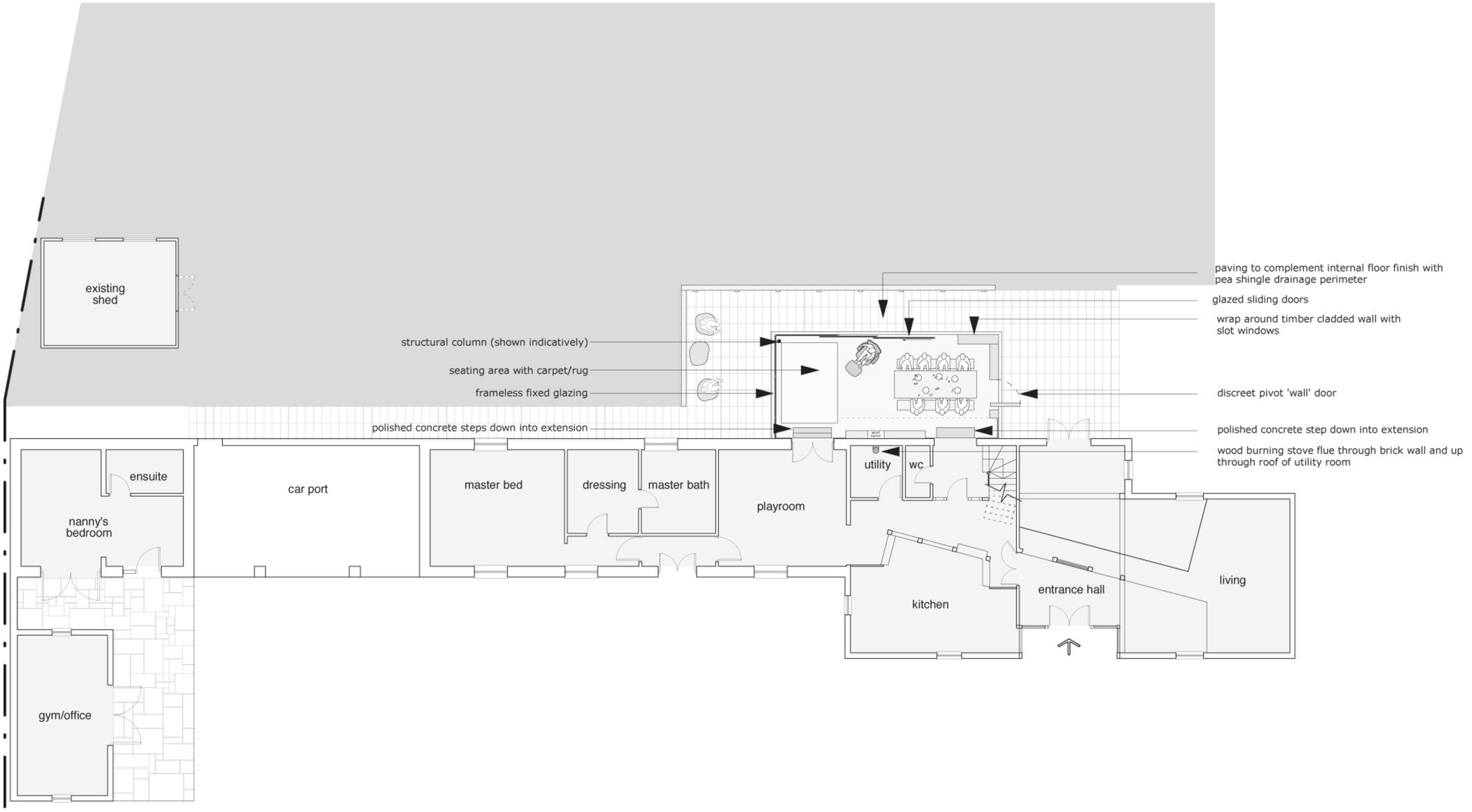
ABOUT: Training at both North London University and University College London, Nicolas Tye developed his unique approach to architecture and design through years of education, as well as practical training in his father's studio, Alan Tye Design, and ORMS Architects in Clerkenwell.

In 2004, after a number of years in the ORMS London office, Nicolas had the opportunity to buy a derelict 2500 sq ft barn in Bedfordshire. Wishing to understand more about the hands-on issues of building, Nicolas took a year out of his role as a project architect to build his own house. In doing so, he learned how to site manage, coordinate and complete a project beyond the traditional architect's understanding.

Dovecote Barn

Finding luxury in simplicity and forming a sympathetic, complementary addition to a Heritage property, this rear extension to Dovecote Barn designed by George Yam and Nicolas Tye has transformed the building into a practical family living space. Adding depth to the long, narrow footprint of the existing construct, the addition contains new dining and informal social areas, providing direct access and a strong visual link to the main living and children's play areas. In addition, the secondary objective of retaining the character of the building has also been achieved.


existing shed
structural column (shown indicatively)
seating area with carpet/rug
frameless fixed glazing
polished concrete steps down into extension
paving to complement internal floor finish with pea shingle drainage perimeter
glazed sliding doors
wrap around timber cladded wall with slot windows
discreet pivot 'wall' door
polished concrete step down into extension
wood burning stove flue through brick wall and up through roof of utility room
ensuite
nanny's bedroom
car port
master bed
dressing
master bath
playroom
utility
wc
kitchen
entrance hall
living
gym/office

Located in Great Amwell, Hertfordshire, Dovecote Barn is found within a local conservation area. As such, a major challenge lay in getting the local authority to accept such a contemporary addition within the historical region. Fortunately, detailed research into the heritage frontage of the barn, in addition to pre-planning advice sought from the Conservation and Planning Offices, ensured that the proposed design would satisfy both the council and the owners. Additionally, the local Parish Council and owners of seven neighbouring properties were consulted, with all giving unanimous support for the scheme from the planning stage.

The existing barn is the true statement of the exterior, with its relationship to the extension playing a key role in the aesthetic impact of the façade. The design respects the heritage of the old building, retaining the strong linear aspect of the existing property. In addition, the profile has been 'tucked under' the existing eave level, so as to minimise the visual impact. Full height glazed panels were strategically placed to highlight the exposed brick wall of the barn and the views out to the landscaped garden. Native plants were used in the landscaping to further integrate the building into its setting.

The extensive glazing located on two sides of the extension allow the existing building fabric to appear as a feature of the design and provide a sense of lightness in the structure. With its new dining area, the addition has allowed the existing dining room in the original home to be converted into a children's play space, which is both visible and accessible from the current main living space. Level access provided for a seamless transition from inside to out.

There is an elegant, simple luxury to this extension that arises from its finishes and products. Hand batched polished concrete flooring and steps are a solid, cool and neutral flooring option, underneath which a Nu Heat single zone underfloor heating system provides climate control. Allgood door furniture brings a subtle elegance to every room, while the Sonos built-in audio system is one of those little indulgences that is so often overlooked, yet so integral in characterising a space. Modular lighting with Rako controls complete the extension's interior makeup.

Photography by Nerida Howard

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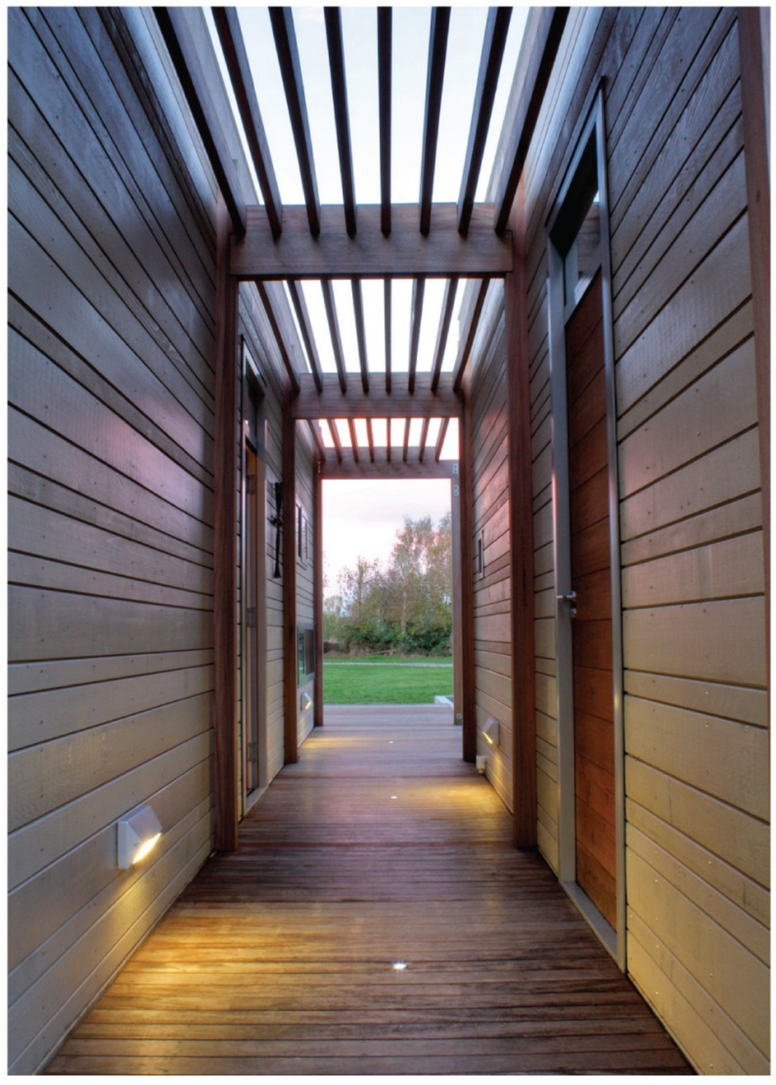
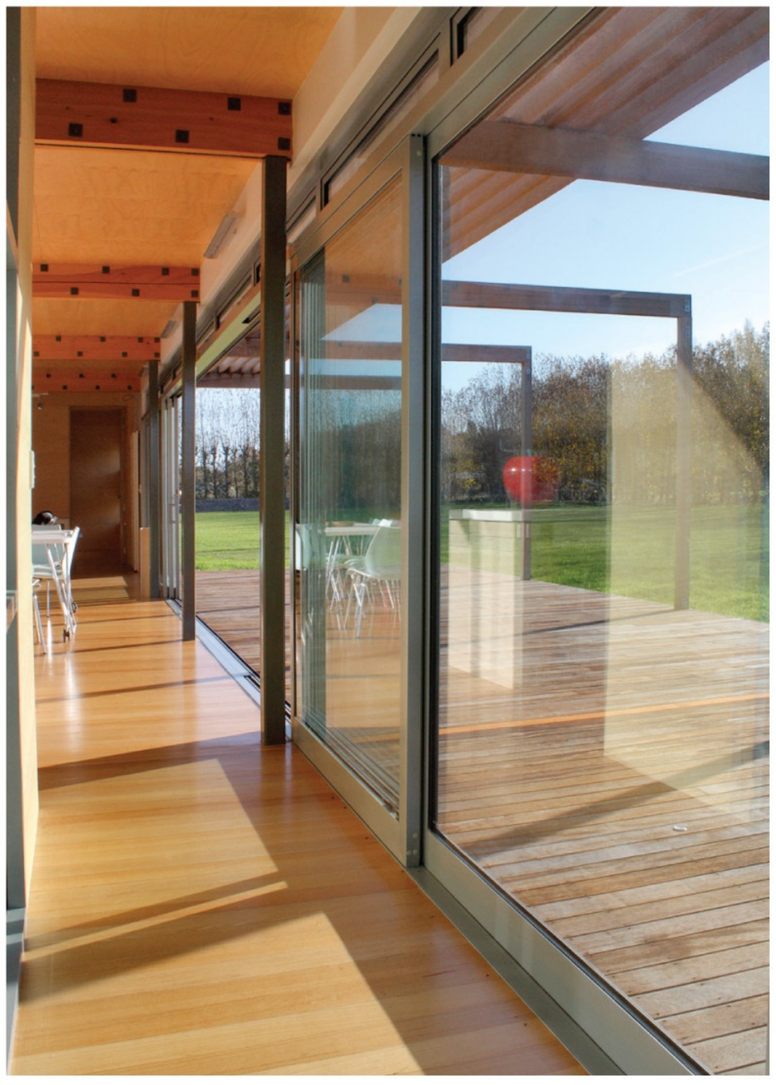
Simon Novak and Richard Middleton

ABOUT: With a wide range of experience in architecture, Novak+Middleton exhibit a strong response to individual clients' expectations and requirements, believing the strength of good design stems from the expressive use of form, materials, space and light combined with a thorough understanding of each client's individual objectives. The ability to provide a quality service with an outstanding response is paramount in the philosophy of the practice. Novak+Middleton are committed to producing sustainable and environmentally responsible architecture. The practice is a member of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, the Green Building Council and the Sustainable Business Network, also taking an active role on the NZ Registered Architects Board and in the NZ Institute of Architects Awards program.

Ahikouka Weekend Retreat

The fine, simple, and solid form of this property in Wairarapa, New Zealand reflects its site context with a unique and impressive timber cube. Conceived as a series of stacked apple boxes resting lightly on the land, these habitable cubes reinterpret the traditions and forms of classic New Zealand construction. The crafting of the timber, the expression of the structure and the unique union of the cladding, lining and joinery are raw and unique in this home.





1 boardwalk
2 bunk room
3 bathroom
4 utility
5 kitchen
6 dining/living
7 bedroom
8 dressing room
9 garage
10 store/plant room
11 terrace
12 deck
13 driveway
14 future pool

N

floor plan

0 1 2 3 4 5

Strong and simplified, the bold architecture of the building boasts an expanse of glass inserted to one side, which heightens the experience of the site and gives a feeling of being both close to and protected from the outside environment, as well as capturing the essential spirit of a New Zealand holiday retreat. The façade is both linear and natural, adorned with timber arranged in varied horizontal and vertical patterns in reference to the crates used on the site, a former apple orchard.

The design takes its cue from colonial architecture, but builds upon it with contemporary design ideals and craftsmanship. Two simple box structures are orientated along the primary axis of the site to form the bulk of the building and are linked by an external gallery. In addition, the building is positioned on the site so as to maximise visual access, while simultaneously utilising the Eastern shelterbelt to create a sense of cosy enclosure. The building's skin alludes to the logical internal functionality of the home, and makes use of transparency and solidity to denote private and communal spaces.

The entrance to the home is intentionally discrete and unimposing against the façade. This lobby then opens to a large, interconnected open-plan living area, positioned centrally to provide space for various family holiday functions that can occur independently, yet remain connected. Further, the living spaces are open on both sides to the outside and the sun.

Bedroom spaces, meanwhile, have been positioned at each end of the building. These discrete, private rooms provide sheltered, restful areas that are removed and conceptually separated from the nearby interactive living areas. Long slot windows have been positioned adjacent to bunk beds, providing individual control of view, sun and aspect.

Built as a holiday home for a large, young family, the house reflects the owner's love of the landscape and forms a strong relationship between the built and natural environment. A sense of place and respect for the tradition of New Zealand architecture was important to the client, something that is clearly reflected in the bold, appealing design.

Photography by Charlie Martin

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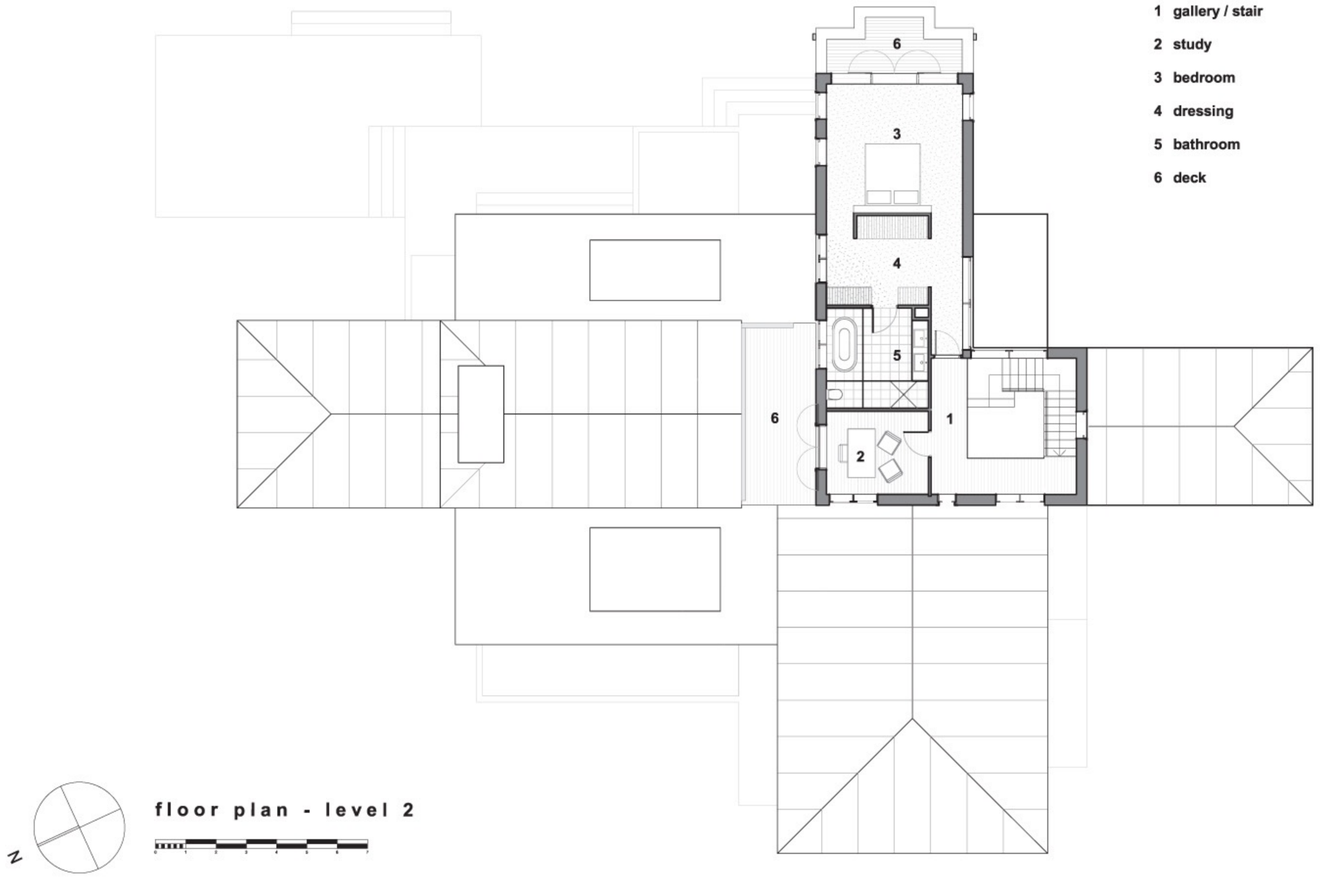
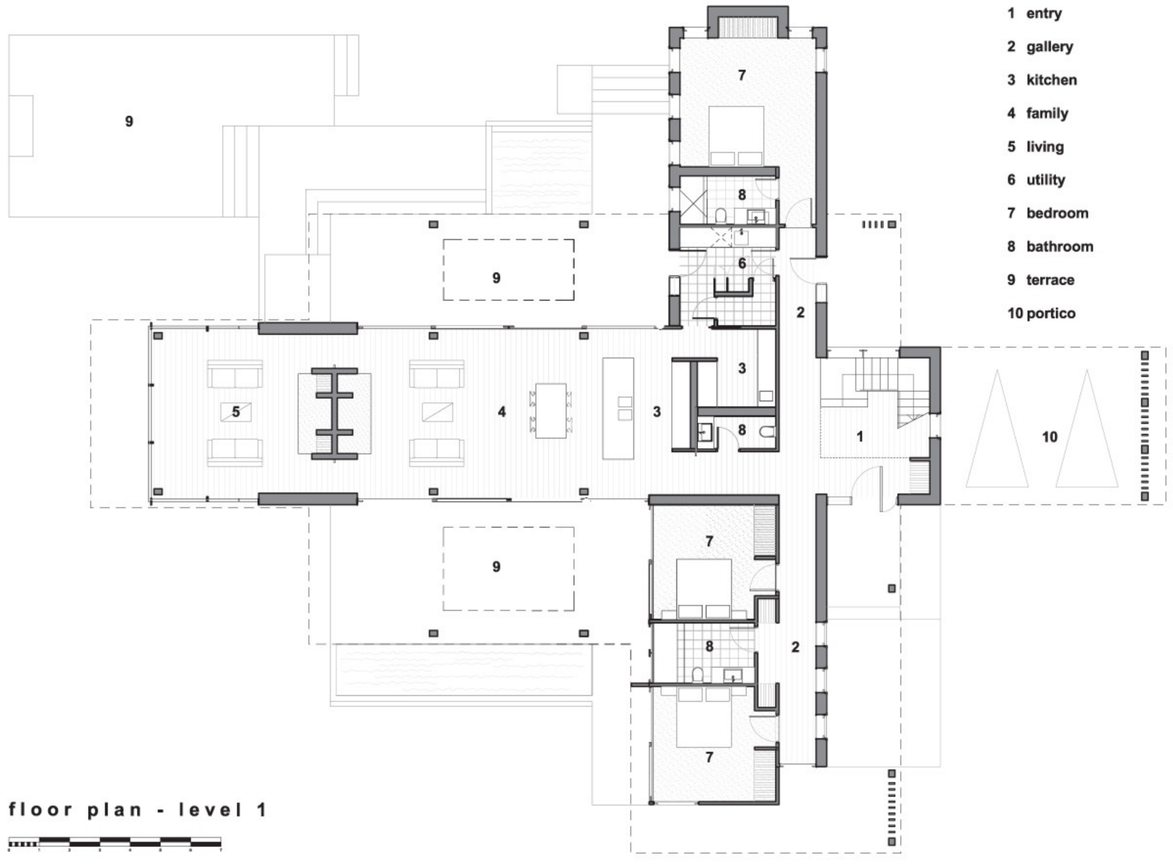
Te Rama

Located on a historic site south of Waikanae in New Zealand and adjacent to a native bush reserve by the Waikanae river, it was integral to the clients that this project respond to the existing features of the land and the history of the region. As such, their aim was to create a positive relationship between the built and the natural environment. The beautiful home that resulted enhances the experience of the site, while the communication between the built form and the natural structure is exquisite.



floor plan - level 2



floor plan - level 1

Named ‘Te Rama’, a phrase that translates as ‘torchlight’, the home’s design makes reference to the light that guided canoes moving from Kapiti Island. In addition, the original homestead was entirely destroyed by fire in 1996, an elemental force that further informed the new house’s form.

After exploring a number of alternate orientations, the position of the original homestead was chosen as the most effective site for the new home, as it allowed for the best connection to the adjacent bush reserve, garden and tennis court. The new building is comprised of solid and void, two design elements used as a metaphor for the union of past and present. Two contemporary and highly glazed single-storey wings extend to the north and west, creating a series of visual layers that ground the house while simultaneously complementing the more traditional and solid language of the main two-storey form.

The externally expressed materials are carefully considered and delicately implemented. The primary two-storey structure is intentionally solid, the stone façade with its deep reveals creating further reference to the rich history of the location. The interplay between the two-storey building and the single-storey forms adjacent serves to lessen the visual impact of the imposing two-storey form, which is then further softened by the use of timber, glass and large overhangs.

Internally, the living spaces are positioned to create the strongest visual connection to the site. The kitchen and family spaces open to both the east and west sides and are connected to large terraces that layer naturally into the garden. Expansive canopies on either side of the central family room provide both shelter and a transitional space that encourages passage between inside and out.

Beyond the family room, the main living space utilises floor to ceiling glazing on three sides, creating a connection with the site and the native reserve outside. Meanwhile, bedroom spaces have been positioned to provide sheltered and restful internal areas, yet remain strongly connected to the site.

This is a magnificent home, one that enhances space and light in an inherently timeless way while embracing the history of its site.

Photography by Paul McCredie

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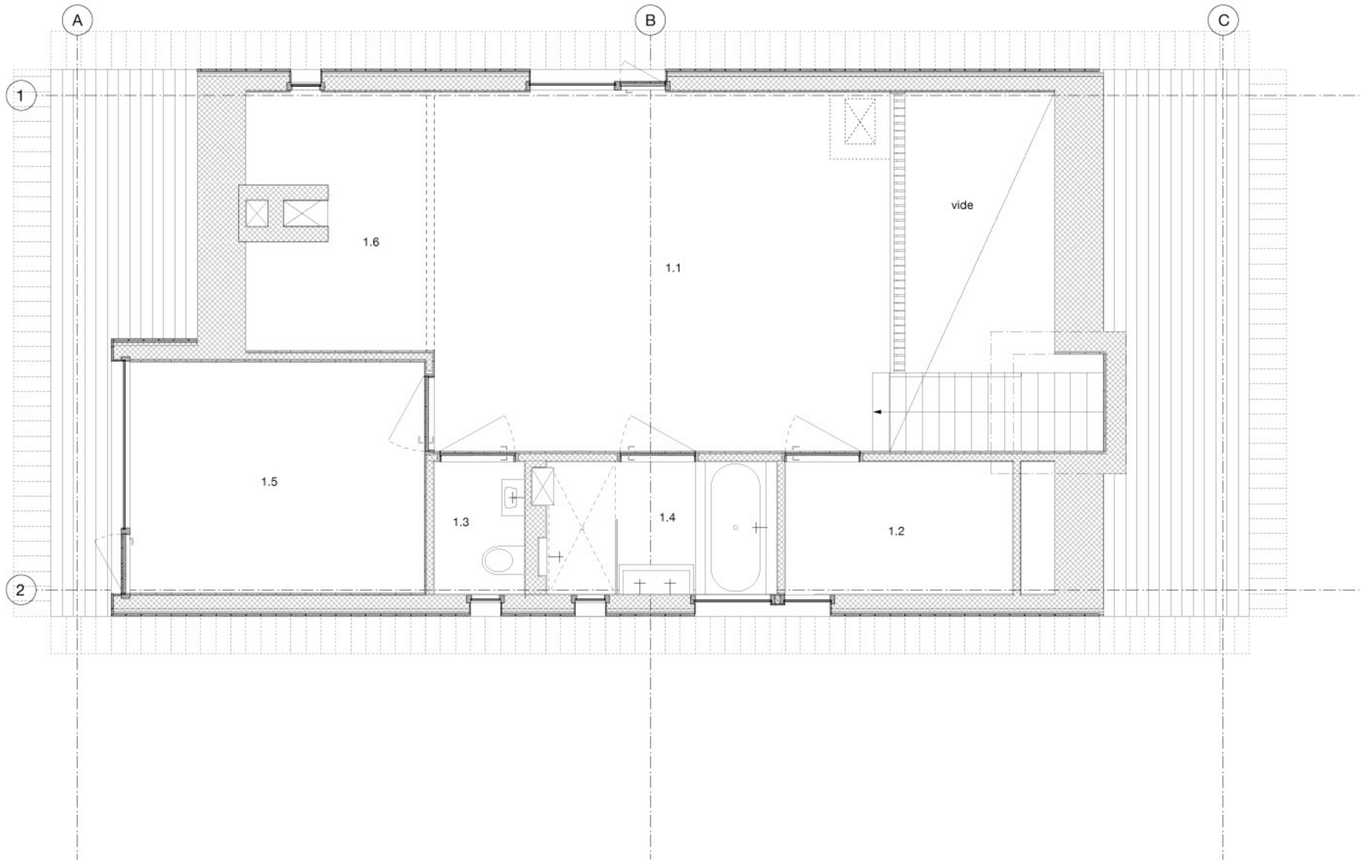
Haiko Meijer

ABOUT: Onix is an international architectural firm operating in northern Europe. With a parent office in Groningen, The Netherlands, and a branch in Helsinborg, the firm employs an international staff of 30 people, led by founding architects Alex van de Beld and Haiko Meijer in conjunction with senior designers Allart Volgelzang and Berit Ann Roos. The company was formed in 1994 and has since built and designed a large and diverse portfolio of projects, ranging from urban studies, housing projects, schools and public facilities to interiors and experimental constructions.

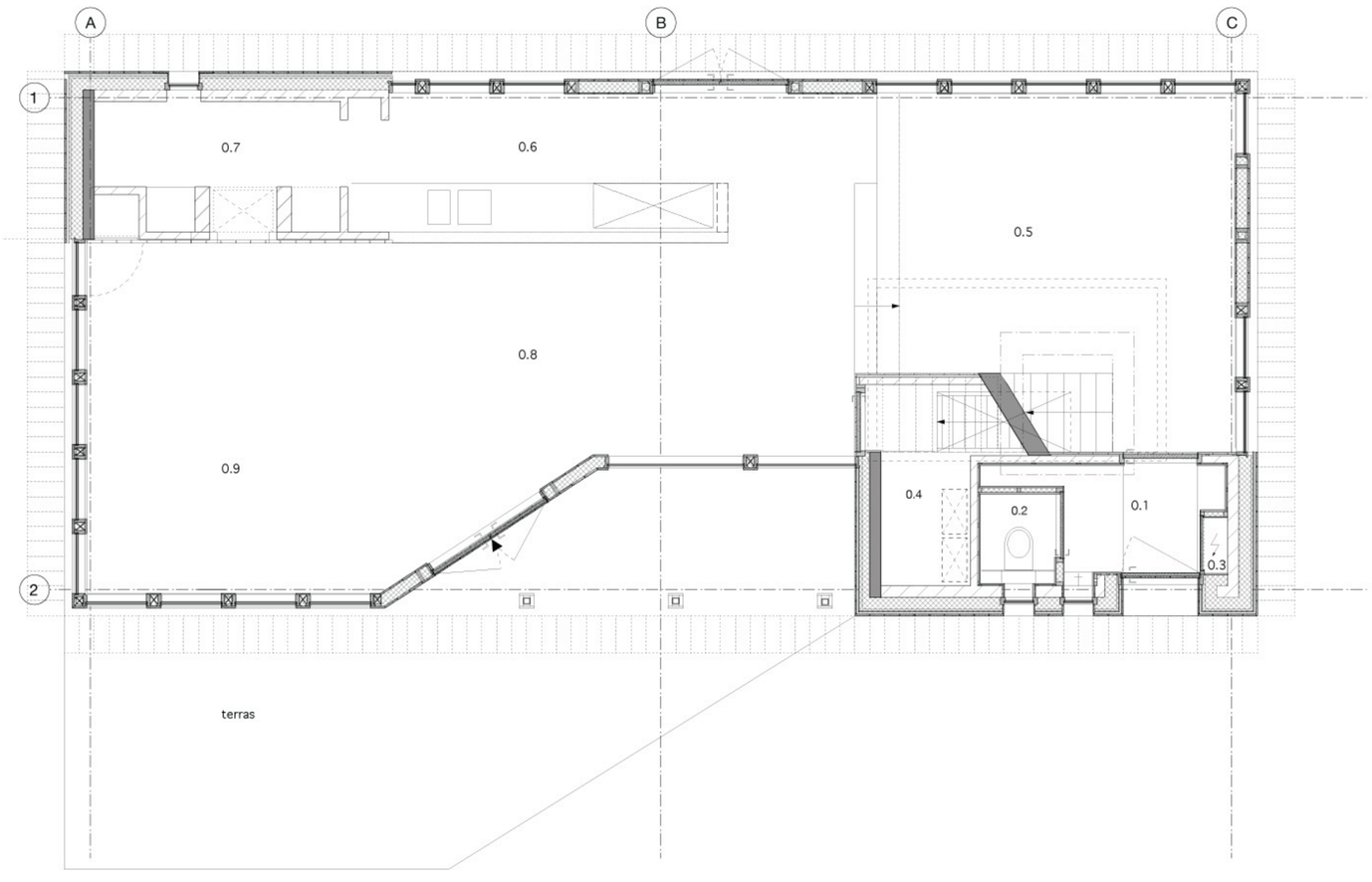
Chimney House

The Chimney House in Bosschenhoofd draws beauty from its simplicity, turning the form of the chimney (from which the home takes its name) into a feature element of the façade and drawing on the materiality of the timber planks. The plan evolved from a simple original thought: the Chimney is disappearing in modern architecture. With this in mind, the resulting design features several chimneys, each in a different size and shape and with a discrete function.

Upper Floor



Ground Floor



Key

0.1	Portal
0.2	Toilet
0.3	Closet
0.4	Closet
0.5	Dining Room
0.6	Kitchen
0.7	Scullery
0.8	Living Room
0.9	Study
1.1	Seating Area
1.2	Laundry Room
1.3	Toilet
1.4	Bathroom
1.5	Bedroom
1.6	Bedroom

The sprawling block is surrounded by a wooded parcel to the south and agricultural land to the north, with the wooded area providing soundproofing from a nearby motorway and some amount of shade from the harsh afternoon sun. The house takes optimal position on the block, relating to existing buildings and taking full advantage of the site context.

The layout of the home is simple, with the main volume sitting within a rectangular floorplan beneath a saddleback roof. Of the previously existing buildings, only the old house remains completely intact, today used as a studio. The walls of the existing shed were dismantled, with only the original roof remaining and supported by columns to be used as a carport and storage area for wood for the hearth.

On the ground floor, a transverse roof appears to balance on two short legs. Between these legs in which storage, technical areas, and the entrance to the property are contained, there is a transparent interior orientated towards the exterior. This maintains a relationship with the more introverted upper reaches of the interior by means of a void. Meanwhile, the frame on the ground floor is formed by a row of balusters that interact with the sprouting stems of the Beech hedge. A splendid three-dimensional effect arises when viewing the surroundings from this vantage point.

The first floor is more secluded, resisting the warmth from the outside and housing the more private zones. The bedrooms and other spaces each have a window that serves as something of an alcove, a retreat within the room, with only the main bedroom having a large, north facing window. The simple saddleback roof volume blends with the four chimneys, with the chimneys themselves used not only as channels for the hearth, but to also provide light and space in the interior.

The material presence of the home is striking in its simplicity. Wooden planks played an important role and were the smallest element in the development of the house. The planks were used to make the shuttering, into which concrete was poured. This allowed the concrete to acquire the imprint of the planks, adding a unique textural quality. These same cuts of timber were then used for the façade, the roof finish and the interior walls. The surfaces were sanded back or allowed to sit course and raw as required, creating textural diversity.

Photography by Mark Sekuur

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ABOUT: Starting his practice in 1990, Ron Unger has been involved in a diverse range of projects throughout his career, including schools, childcare centres, commercial and industrial projects, offices and residential developments, as well as private homes.

His firm's architectural philosophy stems from a collaborative approach with the client and the builder in order to deliver thoughtful, practical and appropriate projects in response to the particular requirements of the client brief and site.

Balnarring Beach

An extensive renovation to this seaside property has transformed it into a stunning rural retreat. The new country holiday home has a hint of classic Hampton style supplemented by approachable Australian elements, with a level of contemporary integration that ensures it is not only a beautiful addition to the painstakingly landscaped expanse of the block, but a highly functional family home.

Working closely with the client, who is a good friend of the architect, this house is perfectly matched to the needs and desires of the owners and their large family. Glenn Mealey, the builder of the original residence, was re-engaged to carry out the renovations, ensuring a consistency throughout the design and a shared enthusiasm about the update.

The front façade and first layer of rooms remained more or less intact. A new kitchen, new living area and new bedrooms were built to the rear, accommodating family requirements and providing an extra level of comfort that the initial design did not offer.

Soaring truss roofs retained from the original design and complemented by unusually articulated glazing, are an immediately eye catching feature. This becomes a strong theme within the design, extending from the front of the property to the rear and overhanging the large deck area at the back, which has an operable louvre roof that allows for weather-appropriate shade.

The muted grey weatherboard façade serves multiple aesthetic functions. It blends naturally with the environment, complements the nearby ocean and contrasts with the greenery of the garden. Splashes of yellow have been added to create interest, breaking up the mass of the home.

The interior of the home is designed to capture stunning views from every possible position. The open plan kitchen, meals and living rooms have bifold doors, all of which open onto the large deck and verandah that overlook the landscaped garden, pool, tennis court, croquet field and countryside beyond. To create a warm, comfortable interior, the owners engaged a previously New York based decorator, Diane Bergeron, for the internal furnishings. An assortment of beautiful furniture imported from the US complement the natural, earthy tones of the space, while the Oak flooring, natural colour Alpaca carpets and locally sourced stone wall fireplaces provide warmth and textural variation. In the kitchen, white corian benchtops and wired glass cupboards are a crisp, sleek addition.

An existing barn structure has been converted into an entertainment and spa complex, which includes a gym, steam room, massage room, an artist's loft and a luxurious wide screen cinema room. This complement to the main structure of the home is the ultimate in personal, comfortable indulgence. In addition, the spa is enclosed with louvred windows and surrounded by a spectacular rainforest garden.

Outside the home, the spectacular landscaping by Leaver Landscapes is an integral feature of the design and includes the existing swimming pool and tennis courts, space for croquet, a fire pit area, an in ground trampoline, a lookout tower, a wetlands bio retention area with trails and boardwalks, a rose garden, orchard and vegetable garden, a fitness trail, several beautiful water features and the rainforest garden. As if this wasn't enough, the exterior also features an observatory, including a telescope, making for one truly awe-inspiring family home.

Photography by Robert Hamer and Jeremy Blode

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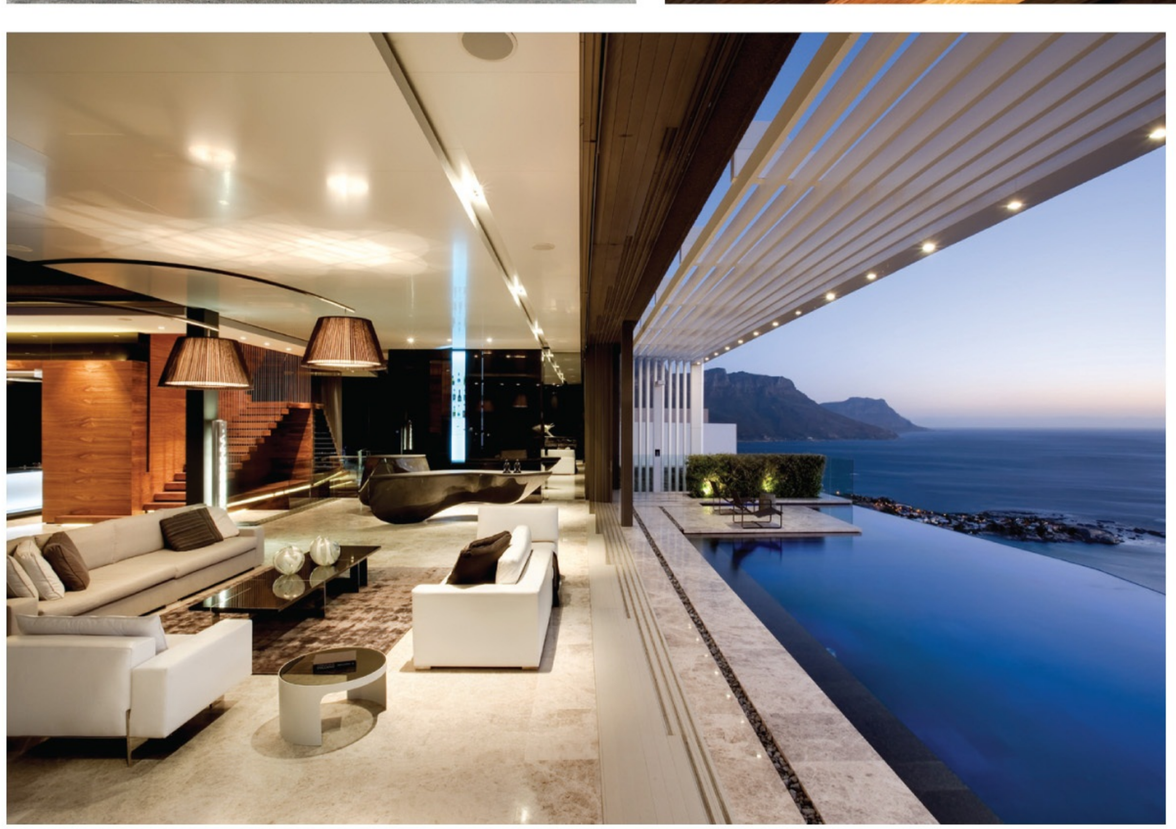
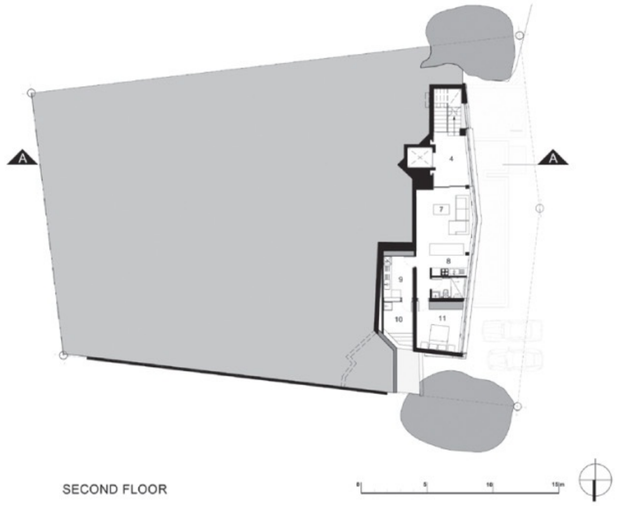
ABOUT: SAOTA – Stefan Antoni Olmesdahl Truen Architects is driven by the dynamic combination of partners Stefan Antoni, Philip Olmesdahl and Greg Truen, who share a potent vision easily distinguished in their buildings and an innovative and dedicated approach to the execution of projects internationally, nationally and locally. Projects range from large scale commercial and institutional to individual high-end homes. Inspired by the challenges and opportunities of site, context, brief and budget, they strive to create distinctive, memorable and timeless buildings optimizing the clients' quality of lifestyle and return on investment. The company has received numerous awards and commendations from some of the most respected institutions worldwide.

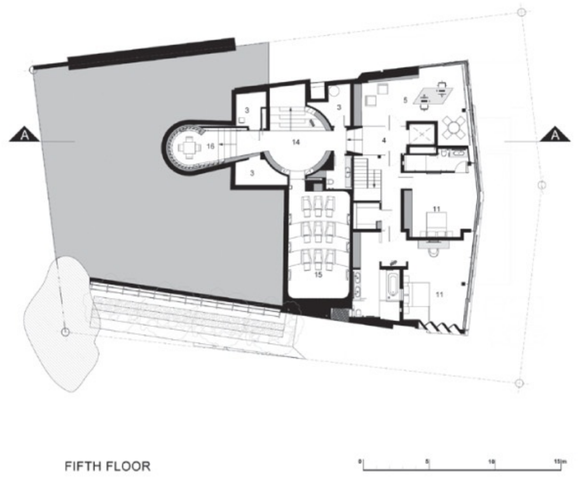
Nettleton 198

Managing to be both imposing and to sit naturally on the site, this gorgeous home by SAOTA was built for British expats living in Cape Town with a simple brief – create a six bedroom, seven storey home to embrace stunning views, make the most of the site and improve upon the existing structure. Inspiration for the form and presence of the façade was drawn from the nearby mountains. Dark colours and sleek textures contrast surrounding buildings, often clad in bright render. This allows the building to recede against the mountain, becoming visually unobtrusive. A multitude of spectacular views are the natural advantage of the site, with extensive glazed areas framing outlooks across the nearby ridge, Lions Head, and the sea.

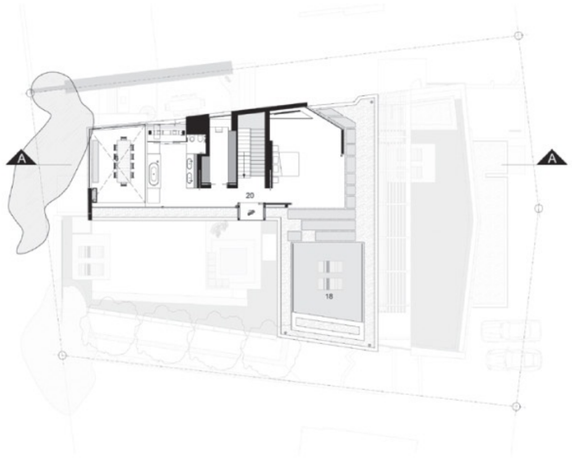




SECOND FLOOR



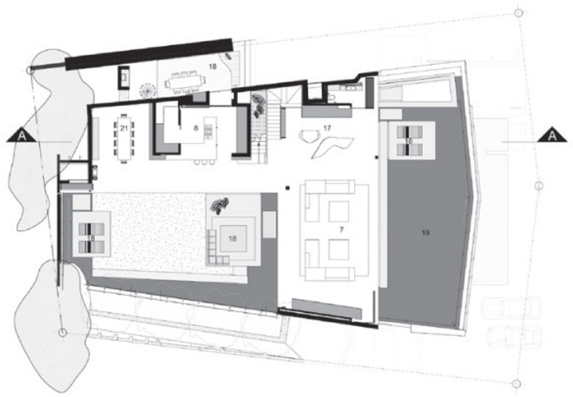
FIFTH FLOOR



SEVENTH FLOOR

FIRST FLOOR

FOURTH FLOOR



SIXTH FLOOR

GROUND FLOOR

THIRD FLOOR

LEGEND
1. ENTRANCE
2. GARAGE
3. SERVICES
4. LOBBY
5. OFFICE
6. DOUBLE VOLUM
7. LOUNGE
8. KITCHEN
9. LAUNDRY
10. YARD
11. BEDROOM
12. SPA
13. GYM
14. LIBRARY
15. MEDIA
16. WINE CELLAR
17. BAR
18. TERRACE
19. POOL
20. MAIN SUITE
21. DINING

The presence of the sun was a key informant to the design. Both a defining advantage and a harsh detractor, the direction and presence of the sun influenced the choice of screens, shutters and louvres that give the lower level its distinctive gravitas. The pattern of the shutter has the ability to constantly change, which is visually captivating. Extensive use of cross-ventilation has been made in order to offset the harshness of the sun-generated heat. The living room can open up onto the west and the east completely, giving it the feeling of an open pavilion.

The finishes and detailing were carefully considered and implemented to achieve an effect of effortlessness. The exterior of the building is clad in powder-coated aluminium, which resulted in a very robust and precise surface finish. Internally, a much warmer look was achieved with the use of walnut timber, a dark and dynamic wood. Black marble and black glass serve as sleek contemporary accents that visually separate elements of the space and bring depth to the already expansive home. The circular entrance area clad in walnut timber is a feature space within a home peppered with focal points. The room is amplified by a fascinating lighting installation of backlit slumped glass that renders an almost other-worldly atmosphere. The floating timber staircase, an elegant inclusion, employs hanging stainless steel rods for a refreshing and sleek update on a traditional balustrade.

The walnut-clad kitchen box, the granite rim-flow pool and the sculptural cantilevered carbon fibre bar are just some of the endless visual delights that tie the home together. These stunning, elegant features are seamlessly implemented in the open-plan space, a lean, focused interior that is both graphic and strong.

Photography by Adam Letch Photography

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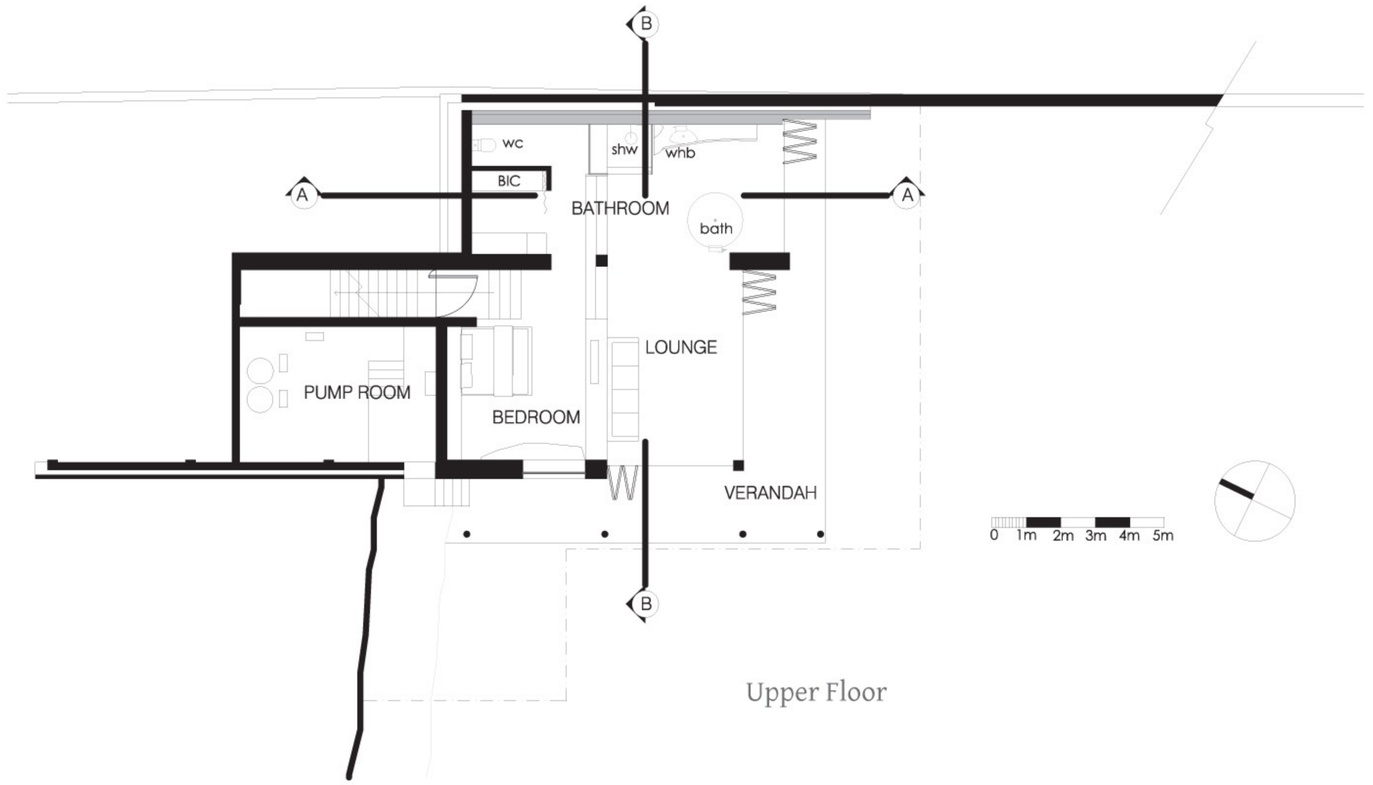
ABOUT: Silvio Rech and Lesley Carstens have spent the last ten years developing a 'hand-crafted haute couture' body of work in Africa. Part of the pair's design philosophy has been to live on-site in exotic locations, doing one project at a time and developing a 'total' design. This approach allows them to create a new language of architecture and a lifestyle particular to each situation. Most of their projects have included an element of skills transfer from the core team of builders that they have gathered from all over Africa to the local African communities.

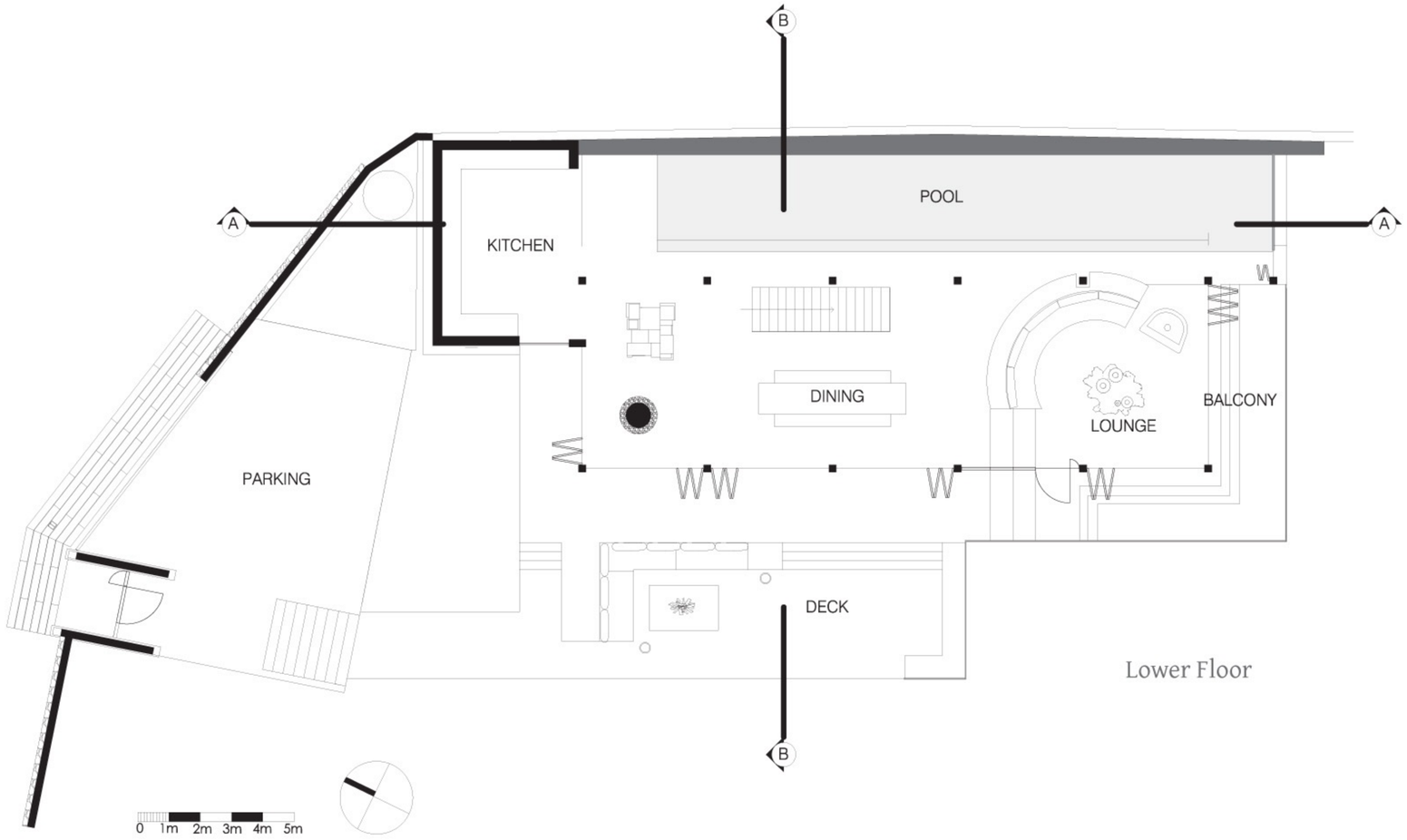
Rech and Carstens have been based in Johannesburg, South Africa since 2004 and have extended their scope of works into contemporary modern buildings, maintaining the same principles of holistic design in every undertaking.

Dalrymple Pavilion

This gorgeous dwelling embodies the traditions and language of South African homes, yet incorporates the elegance and functionality of modern design; a façade of simplicity is complemented by subtle technological sophistication. Built atop a 'koppie' (a rocky outcrop) the new pavilion is separate from the main house and encompasses a variety of spaces, taking advantage of and cues from the stunning surrounding environment.



Upper Floor



Lower Floor

Built upon a rural block, this pavilion serves as an ideal space for entertaining and one in which visiting family members and guests can stay. The house evolves naturally from the geography and plant life that surrounds it, with the pavilion structure, an open glass box, opening up to the dynamic and tumultuous scenery.

A rammed earth wall serves as a striking feature that enhances the home's connection to nature. Running the length of the house, the wall plunges dramatically into the pool and re-emerges on the lower floor. Adding to the organic theme further, the materiality of the entire project is raw and natural, with rusted metal, rammed earth and ironwood railway sleepers.

Above the indoor pool, a whale backbone sculpture is suspended. This element, one of the most eye-catching and striking in the whole design, is one that perhaps most singularly embodies the ambiance of the house. Within the main interior, the wall tapestry above the bed downstairs reflects the landscape outside, while the furniture draws on a library of designs that Silvio and Lesley have developed over the course of their career, with some created specifically for the pavilion. The sleek, minimal kitchen is both cutting-edge and ideally functional, and seems almost to disappear into the floor plan through the use of clean, sharp lines and subdued architecture.

Loosely referencing the archetypal 'Highveldt' verandah house common in South African homes, a long, wide porch (locally referred to as a 'Stoep') leads up to the building. This concept is reinterpreted in a contemporary way, with an outdoor fireplace and entertaining deck used to replace the traditional functionality of this fixture. The associated materiality of corrugated iron and cement are expressed in the rainwater collection tank and the cement screed floors of the central indoor area.

Photography by DOOK

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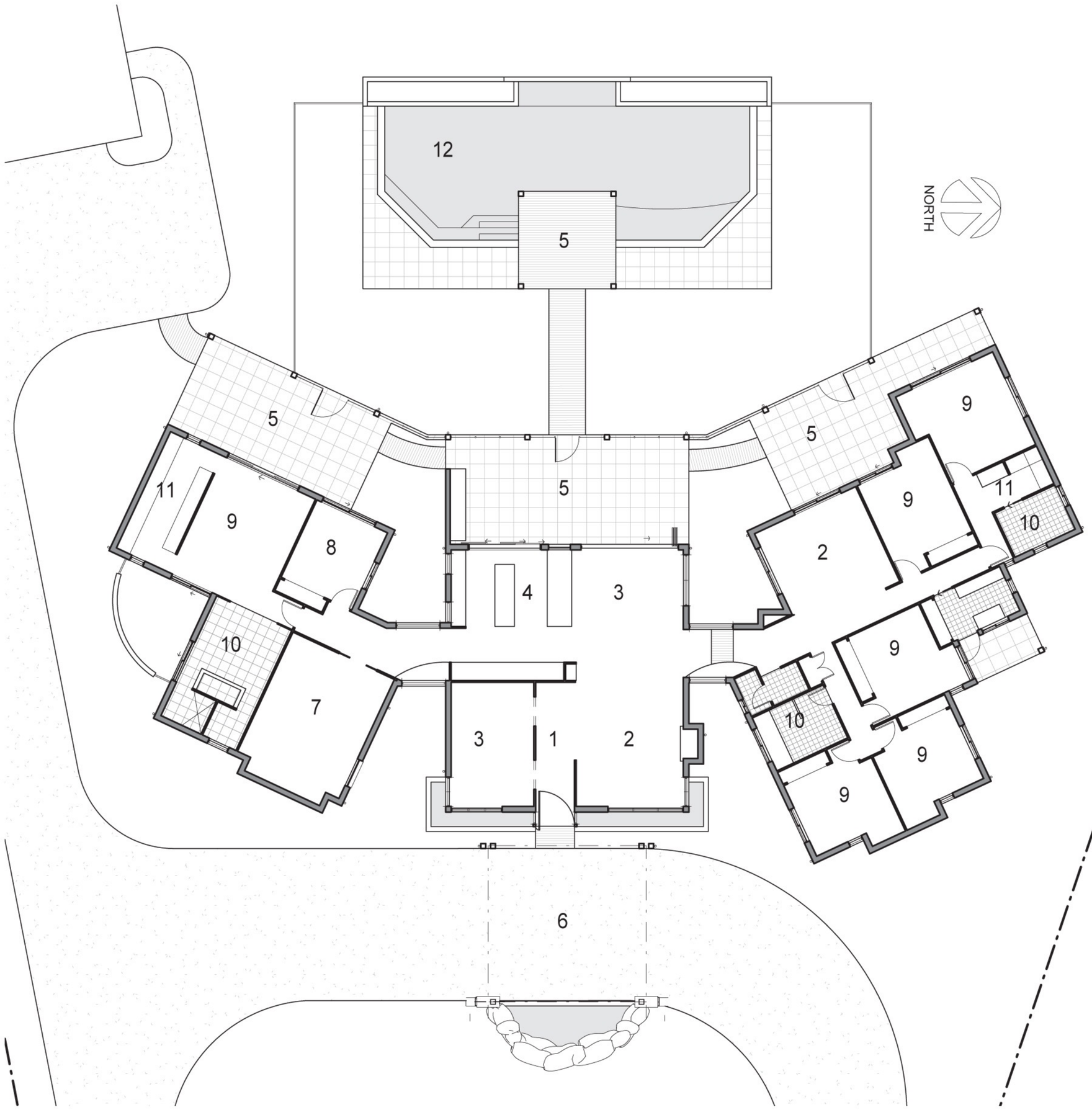
ABOUT: Soul Space Building Design is a vibrant and enthusiastic architectural practice with a strong commitment to providing excellent quality architectural design and comprehensive documentation services. The practice specialises in residential and commercial buildings as well as office and shop fitouts. Soul Space works closely with a diverse range of clients in providing creative, innovative and contemporary architectural design. Principle Designer Paul Hindes has some 30 years experience in the profession, gaining valuable experience working with award winning Architects John Andrews International, Edwards Madigan Torzillo Briggs, DEM and Inscan Design, as well as overseas experience in El Salvador.

Cooroiba

Stone feature walls, sliding security gates, a circular driveway to a porte cochère and a spectacular mature Palm Tree allude to the overall opulence of this expansive pavilion style home. Planned around a central outdoor living and pool area, the home is broken up into separate pavilions, linked together with glazed walkways overlooking garden courtyards and water features. A parent's pavilion with master bedroom and en suite looks into a Japanese inspired private courtyard to one side and the pool area on the other.



Key

1. Entry
2. Living
3. Dining
4. Kitchen
5. Outside Living
6. Porte Cochere
7. Media
8. Study
9. Bedroom
10. Bathroom
11. Robe
12. Pool

A comfortable lounge setting outside the sliding doors provides one of the many relaxing places around the home to enjoy a cup of tea and the paper. This pavilion also houses a study and a fully fitted media room for a family movie night.

A children's pavilion balances the home on the other side of the site, with four bedrooms, a family room and guest suite. Each room enjoys its own signature style, with bold wallpapers and distinctive furniture setting the theme for the space. The use of colour is not shied away from in this home, with crisp turquoise blues, rich chocolate browns and warm pinks combining with homely elements such as books and soft toys to create a cosy, welcoming home.

The formal living and dining area, exuding opulence with its rich colour palette, bold wallpapers and upholstery and magnificent baby grand piano, are housed in the central pavilion. Here also lies the kitchen and informal dining area, which flow onto the outdoor alfresco patio through sliding doors, that stack completely into the wall space. A generous barbecue complete with range hood is integrated into an indoor/outdoor bench with storage that continues on from the kitchen. Together with a large table surrounded by wicker chairs that reflect the home's rural setting, this area is a dream space for entertaining friends or for weekend family barbecues by the pool.

The pool is the focal point of the home. With a sheltered hot tub platform that extends over the pool's blue depths, various seating options and expanses of lush green grass, this area represents everything that is good about outdoor design.

The owners of this lovely home wished for something sophisticated, modern and elegant that took advantage of the large allotment to which it was exposed. What they got from Soul Space Design was that and more, a cleverly planned home exhibiting the finest quality fixtures and finishes that would more than comfortably house their growing family in style for many years to come.

Photography by Open2view

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ABOUT: Partners Scott Specht and Louise Harpman, who began working together while classmates at the Yale School of Architecture, founded Specht Harpman in 1995. A small company with rigorous standards for modern design, the firm's award-winning work includes commercial, institutional and residential projects, as well as custom furniture. The firm maintains offices in New York City and Austin, Texas.

Westlake Residence

On a tree-covered site in Austin, Texas, New York-based architects Specht Harpman were tasked with the renovation and expansion of a modest 1970s house. The existing structure was retained and refurbished, but such was the scope of the remodelling work, that for all intents and purposes, this elegant structure appears as a new build home.

Photograph by Casey Dunn

Photograph by Casey Dunn

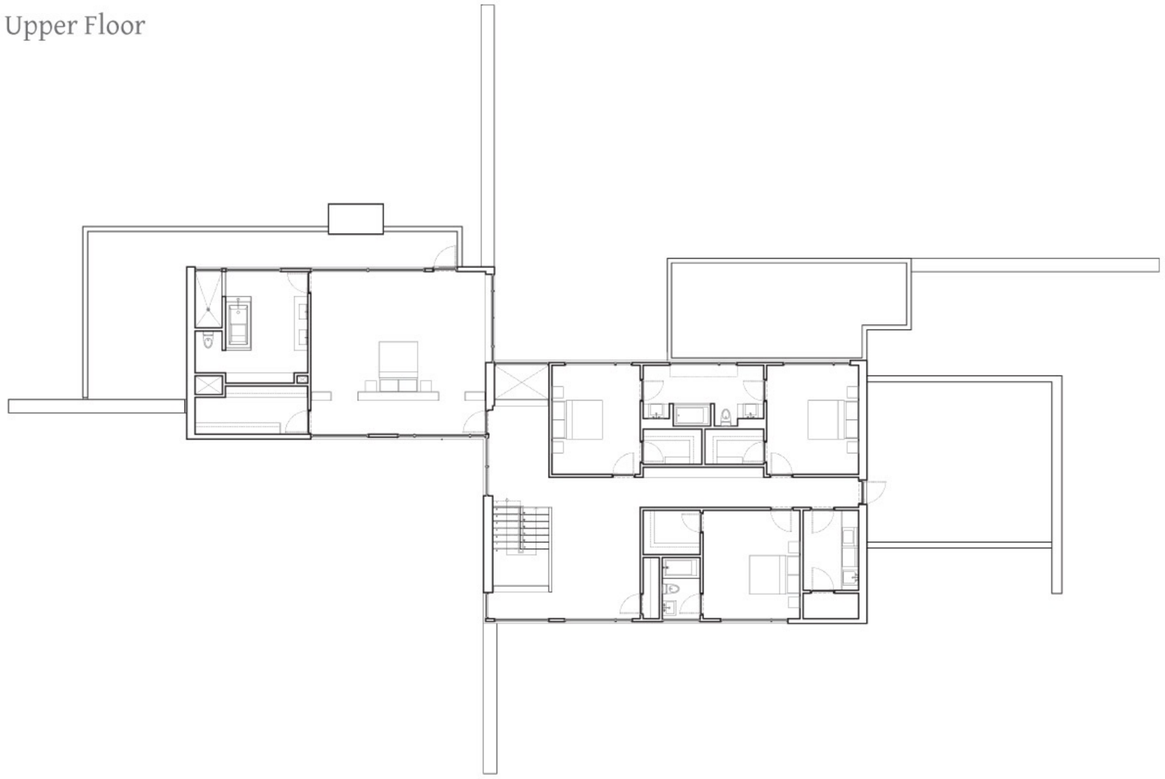
Photograph by Casey Dunn

Photograph by Casey Dunn

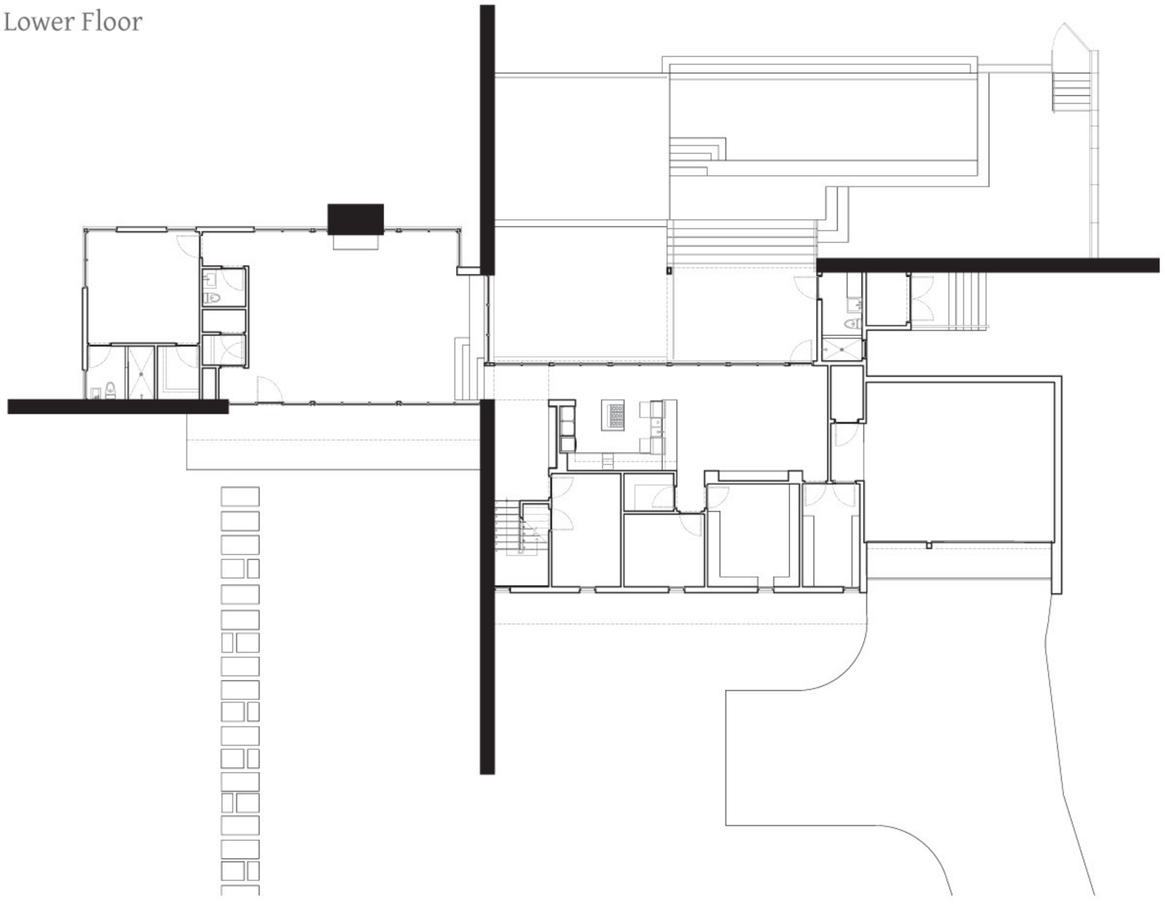
Photograph by Meg Mulloy

Photograph by Meg Mulloy

Upper Floor



Lower Floor



Photograph by Meg Mulloy

Nestled amongst vibrant greenery, the gorgeous architecture and materiality of the newly completed façade both complement and contrast with the surrounding landscape. Neutral shades of render allow the two-storey structure to emerge as an unobtrusive structure, perfectly suited to the context of the site.

Whitewashed rectangular stone pavers cut a path through lush grass on the journey to the front door. Extensive glass panelling on parallel sides of the living space allow an unrestricted view from the front of the house to the rear, allowing natural light to flood the area and imbue it with a feeling of openness and connection.

The generous living space serves as the physical and conceptual heart of the home, and establishes an effective theme of selective colouration – a subtle shaded palette of grey, black and white is interposed with bright moments of colour. At the centre of the room, a fireplace surrounded by comfortable sofas and overlooked by a selection of the owner's quirky artworks offers a breezy, comfortable introduction to the home.

The bold use of colour throughout the interior is a contrast from the subtle, neutral tones of the façade. Subtle shades of grey and white are interspersed with vibrant blocks of colour that create visual focal points without overwhelming the room, imbuing each space with inviting personality. The kitchen, bold and modern, balances crisp white cabinetry with solid black and stainless steel. Grey stone bench tops, delicately lit, soften the design.

The structure is arranged across several different levels, and sprawls into the surrounding landscape with a series of low masonry walls that extend from the house. Roughly aligned to the four points of the compass, these delineate the subdivisions of the internal living space. On the ground floor, family and communal pursuits are catered for. Upstairs, a more insular design lends itself to private bedrooms and bathrooms, and a private study with a garden view.

Rendered walls, flat roofs, exposed concrete and timber floors combine with the bold internal colours to banish any lingering memory of the earlier house. The new structure is elegant and expansive, belonging to a long tradition of calm, considered American Modernism.

Photography by Casey Dunn and Meg Mulloy as noted.

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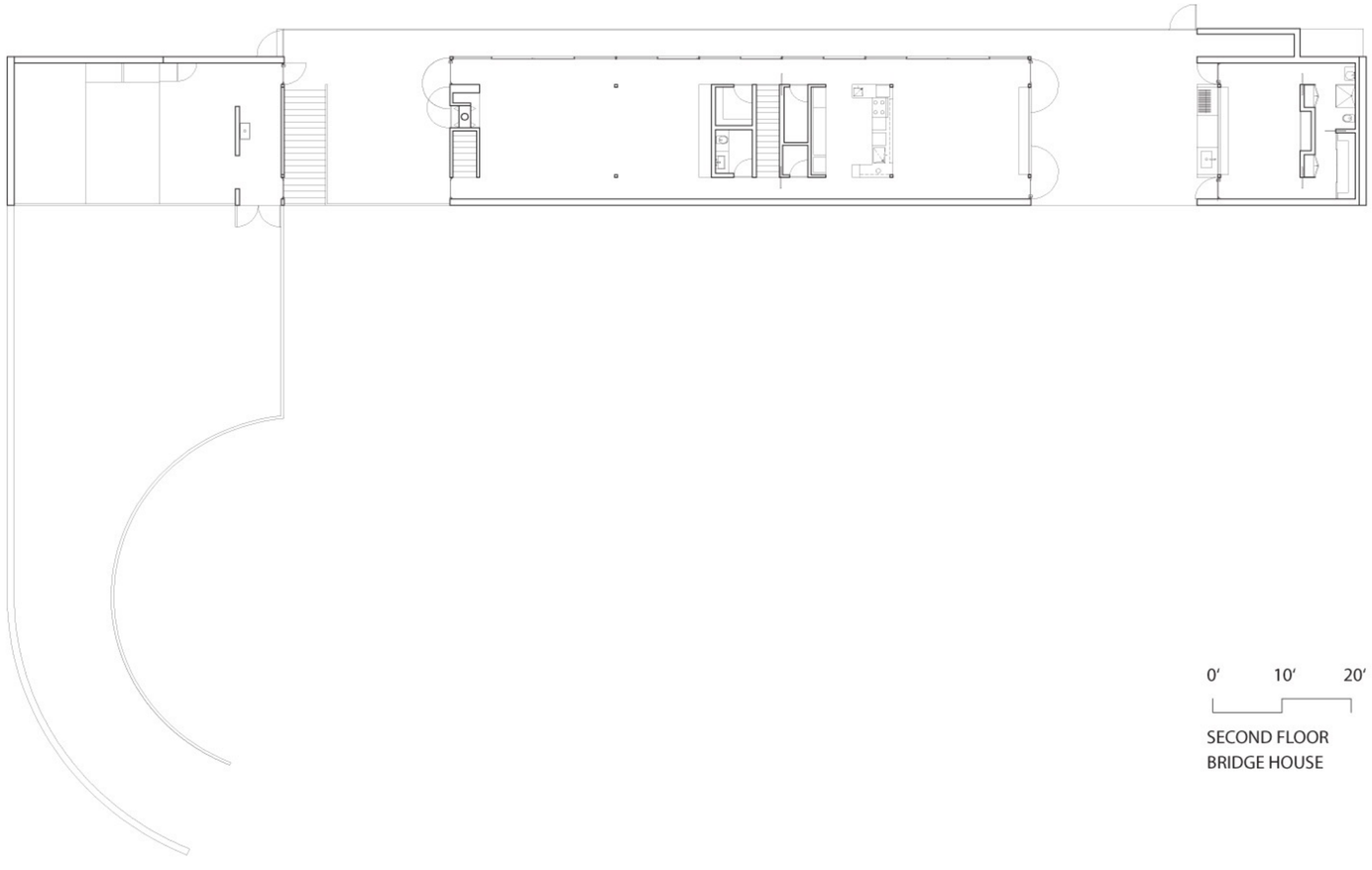
ABOUT: Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, Stanley Saitowitz received his Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Witwatersrand in 1974 and his Masters in Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley in 1977, where he is Professor Emeritus of Architecture. Stanley completed his first house in 1975 and, together with Stanley Saitowitz/Natoma Architects Inc., has since developed numerous buildings and projects, including residential, commercial and institutional.

Stanley Saitowitz and Natoma Architects Inc take an approach that combines locality and temporal context, space, system, instrumentality, materiality, duration and environmental sustainability to provide the most agreeable and beautiful outcome for all involved in the project.

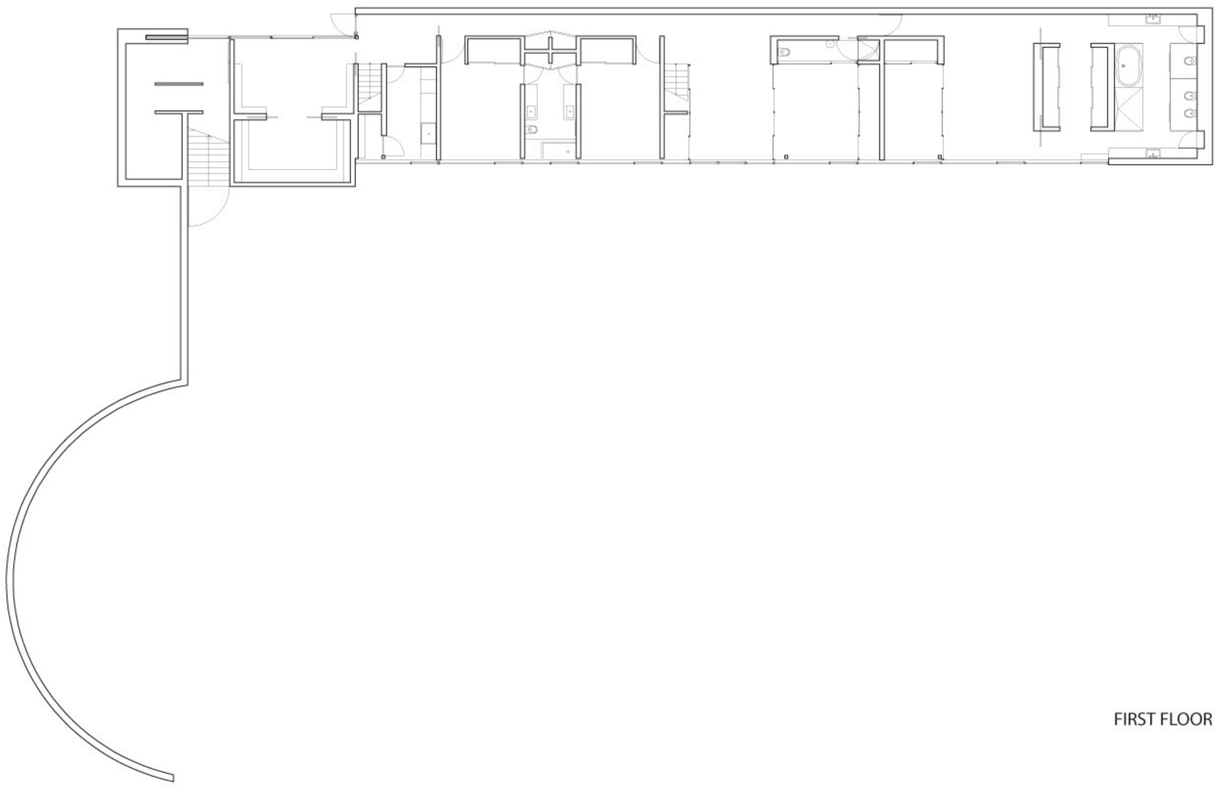
Bridge House

The location of this project presented a number of challenges for the design of the home. The site comprises fifteen acres of wooded grasslands through which a ravine cuts a central tract. Despite this, the eventual design by Stanley Saitowitz/ Natoma Architects meets these obstacles with exceptional grace and innovation. The incredible home extends across the width of the ravine, creating a bridge that spans east to west.



0′ 10′ 20′

SECOND FLOOR
BRIDGE HOUSE



FIRST FLOOR

Rather than undertaking a time consuming and environmentally hazardous procedure to cut and fill the site and provide a flat base on which to build the home, this innovative design works with the topography of the block, turning the ravine into a stunning visual feature that enhances, rather than merely exists upon the site.

The house itself is a continuous, 22-foot wide two-storey bar articulated in earthy corten steel plate cladding, which has been rusted to a gentle red colour and then balanced by the levity of sparkling glass.

Two open courts frame the home along the upper bridge, one serving as a point of entry, while the other connects the main house to the pool and guest quarters. A deck links these courts together on the northern side and connects to a path that leads into the landscape and up the nearby hill, creating an engaging and inviting natural progression between the house and nature.

The living areas reside within the upper level of the box. Surrounded by uninterrupted glazing, this space frames northern views to the hill, while the more private and shielded bedrooms are located below, which also feature continuous glass walls and frame theatrical views of the southern landscape.

From above and below, the opposing experiences of the site are focused – one broad and expansive, the other defined and closed. This duality creates an intriguing tension that gives the home a sense of character and marries it to the divided site.

Photography by Rien van Rijthoven

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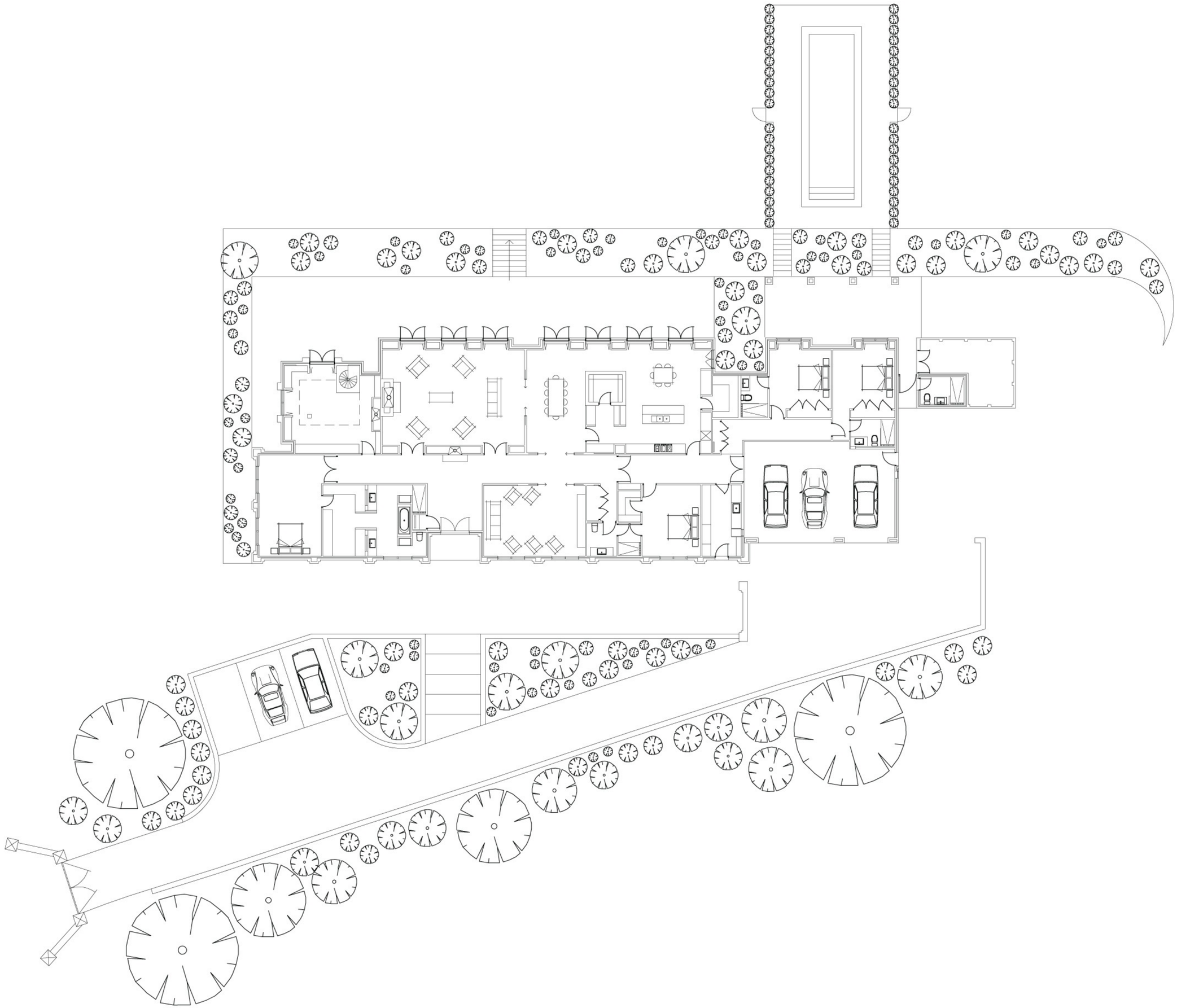
Roman Franetic, Architect, Director

ABOUT: With Stonehaven Homes, no stone is left unturned. Each and every creation is designed by an award-winning team of architects to take full advantage of the site, creating beautiful, sustainable and eye-catching houses. Stonehaven's intelligently designed modern homes are based on inspired architectural concepts, boast meticulous attention to detail, and offer superb craftsmanship and sustainability to ensure their clients' complete satisfaction. These are designs for life.

Contemporary Homestead

Located on the north face of Mount Macedon in Victoria, Australia, this simple and traditional farmhouse gives way to large, open entertaining areas and accommodation for adult children. The expansive family home extends along the side of the mountain, with a central entry that gives way to separate formal and informal areas, a home theatre, a master suite, a library and two additional bedrooms. All living areas and bedrooms, apart from the home theatre, take full advantage of the amazing range of views that the site affords.



Simple and attractive, the exterior is characterised by a blend of smooth and raw materials. Earthy render tones are used in an unusual mix of smooth finish and rough splatter to contrast with rockwork and the crisp lines of flat terracotta roof tiles. Copper gutters and downpipes complete the look, while mouldings formed from the render frame the windows. The interior is similarly gracefully executed. High profile skirtings and architraves suit the more traditional aspect of the house, while timber French doors and shutters feature in most rooms. Painting, tiling, stonework and other floor finishes (including timber and carpet) are of the highest quality, with their implementation displaying an unparalleled attention to detail.

Kitchen cabinetry was custom-made, with the hand-painted panelled doors a particularly eyecatching feature. Other doors within the space have metal screens for air circulation, an element that is common in traditional farmhouse kitchens. Capping off the kitchenware ensemble, the custom-made rangehood stands out amongst the traditional joinery.

A space for introspection, the library is a transcendent interior environment. Rich mahogany and a dramatic double-height void give the room a sense of classicism and the handsome intrigue of an old-world university library. Spanning two storeys, full access to the tower structure is granted by an antique spiral staircase, which is fitted with a metal handrail in order to bring it up to current regulations.

Embracing the side of the mountain, this elegant design is enhanced by its perceived simplicity. Unburdened with ornate decoration, each space has classic internal appeal and maintains a connection to the outdoors.

Photography by Michael Downes - Urban Angles

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ABOUT: Studio MK27 was founded in the early 1980s by Marcio Kogan and today comprises more than 14 architects, with employees in countries all over the world. The firm appreciates the simplicity of formal design, always working with special attention to details and finishes. In addition, Marcio and his team are great admirers of modernist architecture in Brazil and seek to fulfill the difficult task of continuing this aesthetic pursuit in their own works.

Casa V4

Many contemporary architecture projects are forced to make compromises in order to optimise space and utilise every square metre of the site. Casa V4, however, is a rare counterpoint to this trend. This design takes up far less than the bulk of the site and planning regulations would have allowed a far larger floor plan. Instead, this innovative solution creates a harmonic dialogue with the dimensions of the site and forms an agreeable relationship between the scale of the building and the locational context.

01 hall _ *entrance hall*
02 galeria _ *gallery*
03 jantar _ *dining room*
04 estar _ *living room*
05 terraço gourmet _ *gourmet terrace*
06 cozinha _ *kitchen*
07 louceiro _ *china cabinet*
08 depósito _ *storage*
09 adega _ *wine cellar*
10 dormitório _ *bedroom*
11 dormitório principal _ *master bedroom*
12 closet _ *closet*
13 pátio _ *patio*
14 ginástica _ *gym*
15 garagem _ *garage*

planta _ *plan*
1:200

0 1 5m

Situated in São Paulo, Brazil, Casa V4 is a low profile, single storey construction that seems to vanish when viewed from the street. The living room, positioned to the front of the house, has an open plan design and flows into the garden, the latter of which is protected from above by a delicate beam of exposed concrete. In addition, two rows of operable doors on either side of the living room can be completely retracted, constituting total integration between the front garden, the living room and the rear patio.

The living room, in this case, shelters rain and sun like a very large verandah. Under the beam to one end there is an open kitchen. Further, on the ceiling of this volume, a large deck has been created as a mostly empty space that is ideal for sunbaking and can convert back to an attractive roof feature when not in use. The integration of building and outdoor space makes the entire project seem like part of the garden.

The concrete beam that appears from the central wooden box structure houses two rooms that face the patio. This wooded, shaded area enables easy control over the internal temperature of the home and creates private havens within. Meanwhile, the bathroom of the master bedroom faces a small garden outside that is removed from the rest of the house, creating a secluded retreat for the homeowners.

The program outlining the client's needs and desires made this unusual and innovative project possible. The resulting urban, ground-floor house is a delicate extension of the site that integrates beautifully with its surroundings.

Photography by Nelson Kon

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ABOUT: Sutton Constructions is a multi award-winning company that individually designs and builds unique, eco-friendly homes in Victoria and Southern New South Wales. Principle designer Peter Sutton crafts each home to suit the client's particular needs, working together with them closely to ensure the best possible end result – a home that suits the owners' lifestyles and provides many years of comfort and enjoyment.

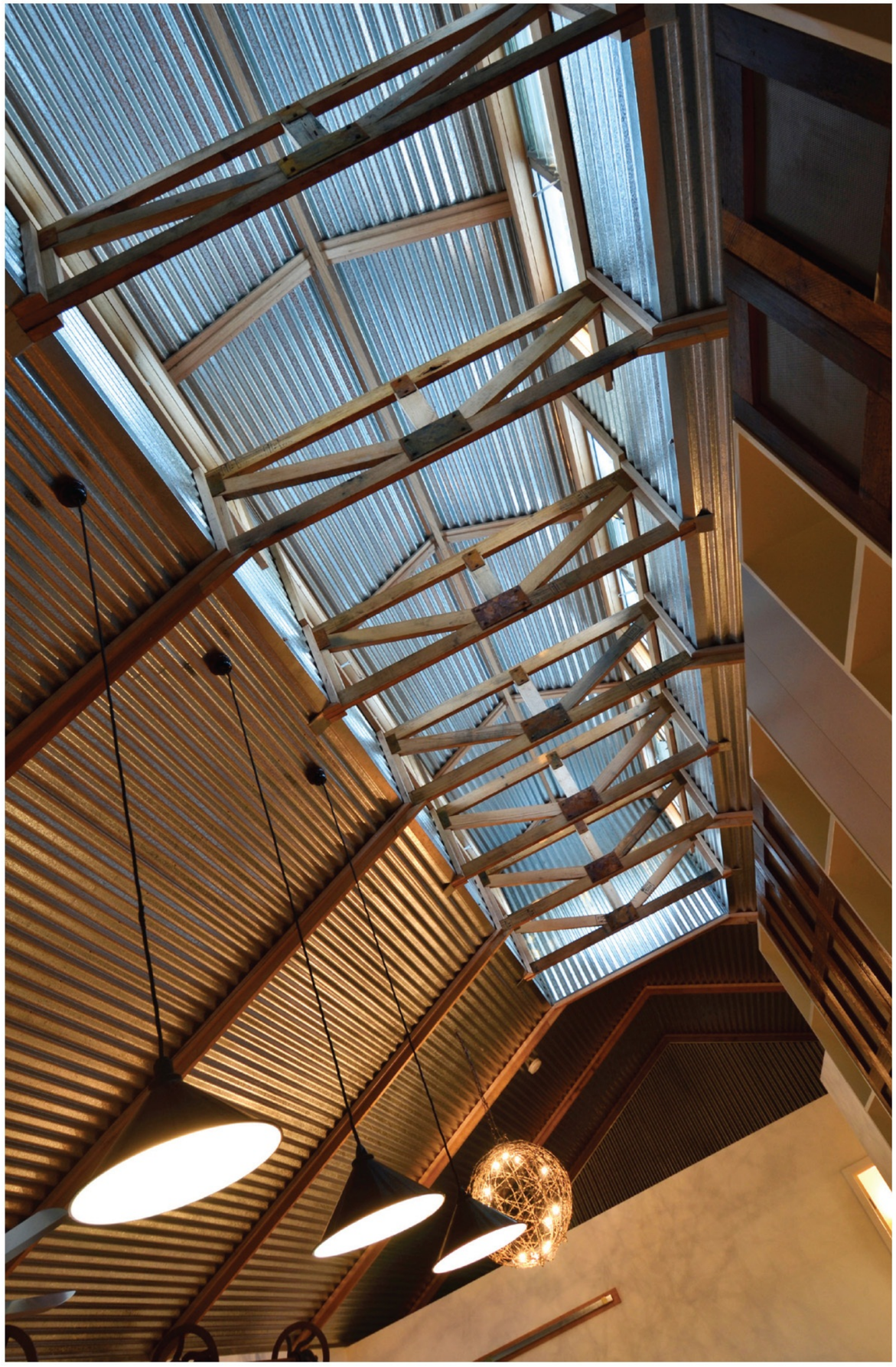
In addition, Sutton Constructions is committed to environmentally friendly building design, striving for 6 to 8 star energy efficiency and water-saving measures in every home.

Shearing Shed House

Lynn and Rowan Mason's unusual brief, together with a strong adherence to theme, has resulted in this intriguing and unique four bedroom home in northern Victoria.

Emanating rural charm, the house is clad entirely in corrugated galvanised iron - an iconic Australian material. Lynn and Rowan's vision was of a home reminiscent of a traditional shearing shed, with respect for the history of the land reflected in the design. Prior to the commencement of the project, a 'welcome to country' ceremony was performed by a local Aboriginal elder.

BRENGALA STATION
MJE MALVERN 115 PCS
R. & L. TRISHLIDA FLCE 1ST
E B FOREST FARM



A large verandah runs the length of the home and is completely meshed in to make additional reference to the structural language of a traditional Aussie farmhouse. An impressive feature is the lantern roof, commonly used in old shearing sheds, which was incorporated to allow more light into the home and to act as a thermal chimney.

Inside the home an original shearing plant suspended above the living area, exposed beams and a corrugated ceiling provide an industrial ambiance.

Considerable effort was spent making new materials appear weather-worn and marked by time. Acid was applied to the interior steelwork, producing natural looking rust, while new timber beams were hit with chains then smeared with sump oil to artificially age them. Visitors to the property find it hard to believe that this is an entirely new home and not an old farm building that has been subject to a quality renovation.

In the master suite, an open-air bathroom housing a cast iron claw footed bath is disguised from the outside as a galvanised water tank, further enhancing the rural aspect of the exterior.

A quintessential Australian classic, this is an extremely individual and supremely functional home, one that reflects the personality of the clients and ideally represents their dream.

Photography by Cass Naughton

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Photography by Paul McCredie

David Jameson Architect
Photography by Paul Warchol

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