



Text: Edwina Cameron | Photography: Christopher Frederick Jones

Plenty of open spaces are key to comfortable tropical living. **opposite** Louvres take advantage of cooling crosswinds.



Tropical Template

With its simple pavilion structures and sustainable design principles, this Sunshine Coast beach house is not only alluring but shows how to live comfortably in a warm climate.

The architects describe the “Marcus Beach House” as a “simple frame to enable a contemporary sustainable lifestyle to unfold”. The owner describes it as “the kind of home all Queensland homes should be like”. Whichever way you describe it, the airy and light atmosphere within the home speaks for itself. The Marcus Beach House was originally designed by Bark Design Architects in 2001 for a young family on an economical budget, who minimised costs where they could without compromising the contemporary relaxed beach aesthetic of the house. It now belongs to semi-retired art director Owen Davis and his wife Beryl, who split their weeks between a few days’ work and a few days’ living in perpetual holiday mode at home.

“We love architecture – we’re a bit nutty towards it,” Owen says, while explaining the lifelong house-lust that led him to the Marcus Beach House. The couple watched the three-bedroom home take shape from afar as it was built for its first owners, not imagining that it would one day belong to them. “We were attracted to the architecture and the peaceful area of the home,” says Owen. “It feels almost like living on an island.”

The house is about 250 metres from the Sunshine Coast’s quiet Marcus Beach, a secluded enclave of a few clusters of homes away from the hustle and bustle of Noosa. Its location, site and original client brief meant encouraging a beach-house atmosphere was first and foremost for the architects, who included outdoor showers and change areas as a nod to traditional beach facilities.

The design features two timber pavilions and a central landscape courtyard – one for living areas and parents’ retreat above and one for the guests/ children’s bedrooms and car accommodation – linked by a suspended bridge. Between the two pavilions is a sculpturally striking Moreton Bay Ash tree that throws dappled light into the home’s living areas and is inextricably linked to life within the house.

The home perches on the site in a way that creates minimal impact on the ground below, designed to be a visitor to the site rather than a permanent scar. It has simple sustainable design principles to eliminate the need for air conditioning, instead shielding occupants by maximising airflow and shade.

“Windows and doors are strategically positioned to capture the prevailing breezes while roof overhangs are generous in protecting the house from direct sunlight,” architect Stephen Guthrie explains. “Air conditioning has not been installed, nor is it desired. Artificial lighting is also kept to a minimum due to the generous amount and position of glazing, particularly facing north.”

The roof over the master bedroom pavilion rises to the north and contains opening glazed panels, allowing warm air out and enhancing the →

A large Moreton Bay Ash tree creates a beautiful focal point and provides shade and protection.





top The reading nook is the perfect place to curl up with a good book. **bottom** Polycarb sheeting creates a 'light-box' effect inside the home. **opposite** The spacious outdoor area is a favourite feature.

natural cooling process. Polycarbonate sheeting has been used to create a "light-box wall", enhancing the flow of natural light through the rooms and reducing the need for electric lighting at dawn and dusk.

"The polycarb sheeting is fantastic when the light and shadow pattern of the tree filters through it," says Owen. "It does feel a bit like living in a light box and is particularly spectacular at night."

The heart of the home is undoubtedly its deceptively spacious outdoor living area – its cavernous, two-storey proportions with filtered light and shadows through high-level timber screens and sheltered by overhanging eaves.

The simple pavilion structures of the home are made more visually enticing by various alcoves and nooks, including a reading nook which pops out of the wall near the stair landing. It features clever under-seat shelving to store the couple's library close at hand and utilise space efficiently.

In 2008 Owen and Beryl engaged the original architects from Bark to revisit the house to make some alterations and additions to suit their lifestyle, building a new bridge between the pavilions on the ground floor and a pop-out study nook upstairs along with an overall "freshen up".

To achieve consistency through the house as alterations were made, existing materials were re-used where possible. Locally sourced hardwood has also been integrated into flooring, permanent furniture and screening – replacing the polished chipboard that had covered the floors before. Hardwoods have also been used in Owen and Beryl's favourite area of the home: the large teak table that overlooks the garden.

"Without a doubt, being out on the deck at the table is the best thing about this house," says Owen. "I work out there and it's where everybody congregates. We read the papers, have big dinner parties – everything happens there."

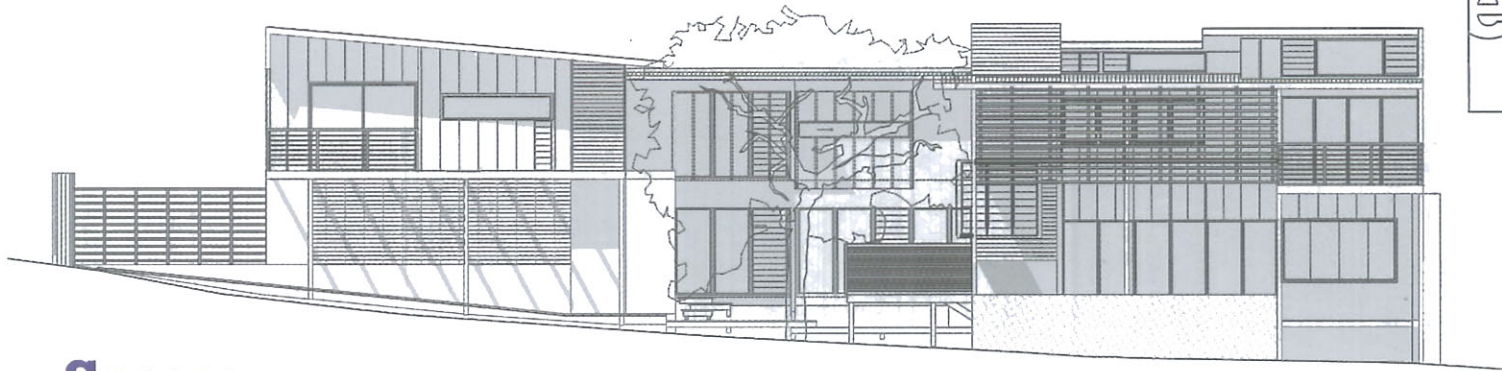
Beyond the table and deck, the lush garden is protected by a perimeter wall covered in vines that provide an acoustic and visual buffer, enhancing the garden's secluded and utopian atmosphere. A swimming pool provides a tranquil visual point that contrasts with the greens of the Moreton Bay Ash tree.

For Owen and Beryl, the peaceful atmosphere of their home – and its excellent location – are the perfect incentive to entice family for visits. The couple have four sons between them, scattered across the globe, but all enjoy gathering there whenever possible.

"The house is a great incentive for the family to visit. They fly in for Christmas and relax here. It's definitely an excuse for them all to come to the beach," says Owen. "I've lived in a lot of places in my life but this is absolutely my favourite."

"I also have a history of leaving homes too quickly, but my wife has said this is the one we're staying in now."





Side elevation

Specs:

Architect

Bark Design Architects
www.barkdesign.com.au

Roofing

Zincalume Custom Orb corrugated iron.

External Walls

Corrugated Opal polycarbonate, flat zincalume sheet, Stack Bonded masonry walls, 6mm FC sheet cladding with zincalume horizontal flashings and timber cover battens.

Internal Walls

Stack Bonded masonry walls, square set plasterboard, Corrugated Opal polycarbonate, exposed bracing plywood, timber veneer and plywood joinery.

Windows

Black powdercoated aluminium, Corrugated Opal polycarbonate.

Doors

Black powdercoated aluminium.

Flooring

Spotted Gum hardwood shot edge decking, polished Blackbutt T & G flooring, natural Sisal.

Kitchen

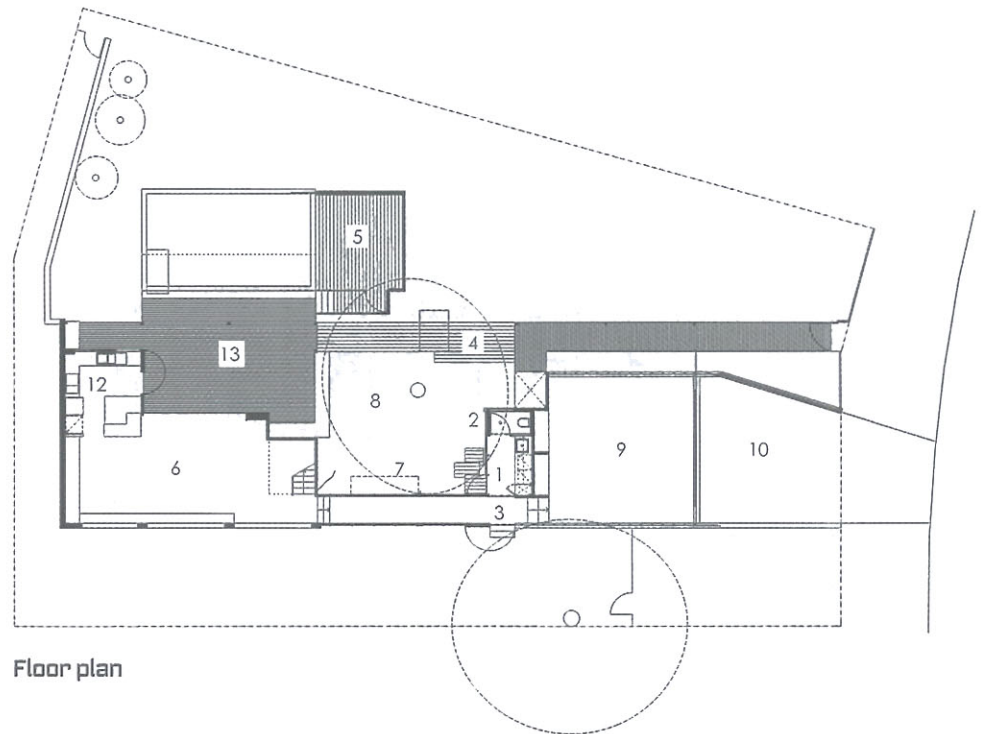
'Ebony' plywood and white and silver laminate joinery.

Bathroom

Chocolate terracotta floor tiles, white porcelain wall tiles, white and silver laminate joinery.

External Elements

'Ebony' stained Spotted Gum hardwood screens, pergola, and exposed structure. Brushwood fence panels, FC Clad 'sound wall' fence, recycled timber sleepers, Spotted Gum hardwood shot edge decking and platforms, rendered masonry pool.



Floor plan



1/ Laundry

2/ WC

3/ Bridge Link

4/ Entry Platform

5/ Pool Deck

6/ Living/Dining

7/ Study

8/ Courtyard

9/ Garage

10/ Driveway

12/ Kitchen

13/ Outdoor Living

