

a5 LOS ANGELES

Architecture, Interiors, Lifestyle



STUDIO PALI FEKETE ARCHITECTS

SPF:a

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Zoltan Pali and Judit Fekete

Studio Pali Fekete architects (SPF:a) was started by Zoltan Pali in 1988, joined in 1990 by partner Judit Fekete. Since that time, the studio has methodically grown and matured with the skill sets to handle most any project. Houses, apartments, condominiums, offices, schools, museums and theatres exemplify the studio's work.

SPF:a approaches each project differently depending on the situation at hand. Mostly the work is characterized by the need to balance simplicity and elegance with the desire to keep the complexity of construction minimized. However, as the quantity and quality of their commissions has increased, complexity of construction has tended to follow suit. It is against this complexity that SPF:a naturally holds the line.

Of course, that is not to say that invention is out the door; however, SPF:a does not pursue innovation for innovation's sake. They do, rather, continually re-invent, re-tool, and re-think—all the while balancing the new with the tried and true. Beautiful and responsible projects have come to fruition through this process. There is a propensity for singularity, not quantity. Mass production, prototype, prefab and tract development are words that are carefully considered before used in the studio's vocabulary.

The Studio tends towards a near obsessive level of detailing—just shy of being fussy and trite. There is a vigil against fashions fads and formalism with a penchant for honesty, integrity and morality. Their buildings are responsible, efficient and watertight.

SPF:a's view is that architecture is not a lofty profession with gods and masters to be revered and sanctified but that architecture itself comes from the basic human need to build— as if it were imprinted in the millions of years of our evolution. There is no agenda [political nor social] besides allowing the beauty of each project to emerge as its own.

Contributions of talented individuals such as Gregory Fischer, Greg Stutheit, Sandra Hutchings, Kyle Pfister, Frank Lopez, and Damon Surfas, Michael Lindell, Michael Zahin and Siddhartha Majumdar are key to the studio's success.

CAVERHILL RESIDENCE

362

SPF:ia

YEAR OF COMPLETION 2009

LOCATION Beverly Hills, California

SIZE 4,500 square feet

PHOTOGRAPHY John Edward Linden



With a long, narrow span of angled "fins" lining its sleek façade from the street, the Caverhill house looks monumental, albeit a stealth monument. Entering beneath the canopy of the carport, one is transported into the main living space, is full of air and light. The fins provide privacy from the street, while playfully welcoming and diffusing narrow strips of light onto the home's interior surfaces. The result is a beautiful dance of sunshine that changes throughout the day.

The home replaced a smaller house on the difficult hillside lot, maximizing both the narrow footprint and the spectacular views of the Los Angeles basin. A hillside building ordinance and a desire to keep the previous structure's footprint made the project a challenge – as a result, the plan is a modified wedge, one end of the house almost twice as wide as the other.

The main entrance is on the second of three levels, where the living room flows openly into the kitchen and dining area. These communal spaces and the bedrooms on the upper level are punctuated on each end by over 1,000 square feet of generous covered terraces and balconies. Each cove is protected from the sun and wind but still open to views.

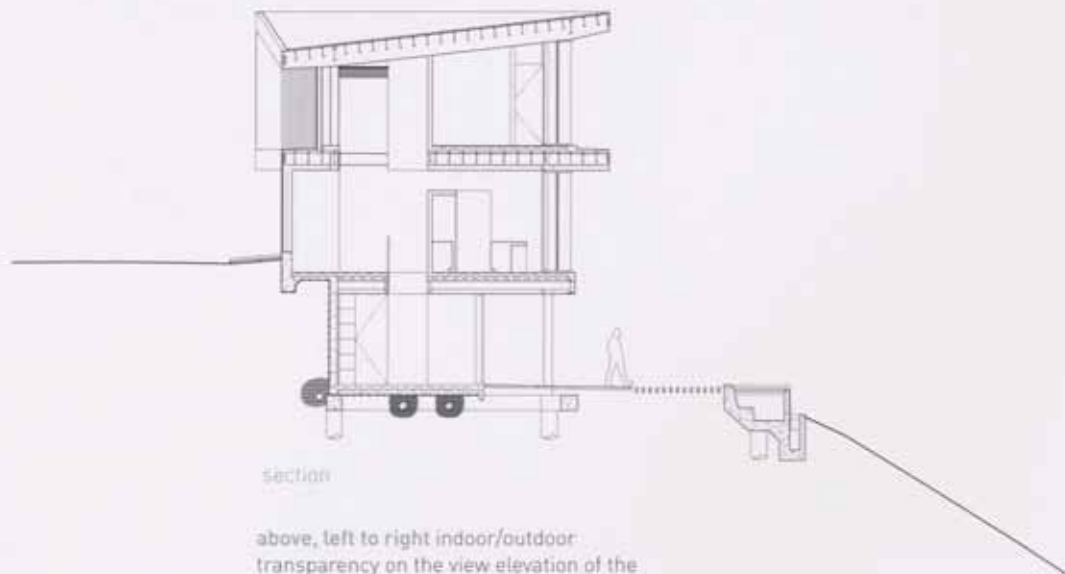
Simplicity was the goal of both the architect and the client. Steel framing allowed for a fully-open plan, free from interior walls or vertical supports obstructing the views. The result is a clean viewing angle of the exterior from almost any spot in the house. All of the house controls – heating, cooling, lighting, window shades, security and more – are contained within a control panel near the front door. Ductwork was eliminated by the use of an Airfloor System, which heats or cools



rooms through a series of dome-like structures beneath the micro-finished concrete floor surface. The upper level can be accessed either through the interior stair, or through exterior staircases located on either end of the house, incorporating the terraces into the main circulation flow of the home. Bathroom vanities float above the floor, the electrical outlets tucked below, out of sight.

"In Japanese painting you have one brush stroke that gets branch, leaves and flowers," says owner, Don Caverhill. "That's what we were hoping for -- to have less things do a whole lot more."

The lowest level of the house, set on the slope below street level, contains two guest rooms, a lawn and a patio with a long fire pit running toward an infinity pool.



section

above, left to right indoor/outdoor transparency on the view elevation of the home; facade detail over the carport.