



RD

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

FOR ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS
OF DISTINCTIVE HOMES

VOL. 2, 2020

The Outdoor Living House



Makani Eka

KONA, HAWAII

WALKER WARNER ARCHITECTS

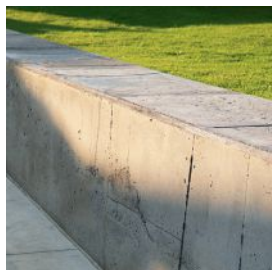
Passing through the low gate from the motor court to the Makani Eka compound on Hawaii's Big Island subtly prepares visitors for what they will find inside. The wood-and-steel gates are utilitarian rectangles, but the inner edge of each side has a canted wedge of wood and a correspondingly canted hardware plate. They strike a jaunty midcentury vibe, coupled with a touch of California's craft-intensive regional modernism. We know immediately that the house beyond is no bland vacation box. And, indeed, it isn't. Those who thrive on right angles and tidy perpendiculars need not venture in.

"This is not your typical resort programmed house," notes Greg Warner, AIA, principal in charge of the project on Hawaii's Kona Coast. "Everything about this project is almost crooked—diagonal lines and trapezoids. If you look at the pattern of the old, indigenous fishing villages here, nothing is square, and the collage of all the elements creates an abstracted mix."

Greg and project architect David Shutt (who has since opened his own firm) scoured the island for inspiration and antecedents for this 1½-acre vaca-



This page and opposite: Wooden gates with angled edge pieces hint at the architectural memes and influences beyond.



This page: To honor the history of an old jeep road down to the ocean, the team cleaved the program into hales, the Hawaiian word for rooms or buildings, to form a compound. The imperfections of rough-hewn basalt and cowboy concrete set the tone for the casual, unfussy lifestyle in paradise.

tion home in a resort-supported enclave. “The house didn’t need to be highly programmed. As a vacation home, it didn’t have to be burdened by a full program. The client spends about 50 percent of his time here and wanted a place where friends and family could come stay. He wanted something different, so we were looking to break the rules a little bit,” Greg explains. “We looked at everything—old dilapidated sugar cane mills and those ancient fishing villages. There’s one that’s been preserved, adjacent to a state park. It’s really just a bunch of lean-tos—just basic shelter. Out of that came some conceptual ideas about creating a little village, a place to be.”



This page: Jaunty angles frame selective views for the buildings. Openings are recessed under deep overhangs for shade from the strong sun. A koi pond brings a water element closer to home.

Layered into the village concept were some images and memories from Greg's past. He grew up in Hawaii before moving to Northern California's Bay area, and attended high school in a building designed by one of the state's most notable architects, Vladimir Ossipoff. Ossipoff's aesthetic was a melting pot of his Russian heritage, time spent in Japan, his education at UC Berkeley, and the modernist wave of the last century. He filtered these influences into dozens of commercial, civic, and residential buildings across the islands during a career that spanned more than 50 active years, from the 1930s through the 1980s.





This page: Living, dining, and kitchen occupy one central building. In a somewhat unusual move, the kitchen is placed at the back to preserve the best views for the living area. Off the kitchen are curated outdoor areas that provide their own pleasing vantage.



This page: A separate building contains the master suite and home office, but, in another turnabout, the office has the prime water views. Steel columns evoke the ancient lean-tos of local fishermen.

Natural Persistence

When Greg and David began the heavy lifting of preparing the site for their village plan, their first order of business was to restore a measure of topography to the land. The developer had flattened it for ease of construction. The team was not interested in the path of least resistance, but in weaving the island's natural beauty and contours into a "rule breaking" building: a casual, durable, flexible house purpose-built for immersion in this paradisiacal place.

An actual path figured into the site planning, as well. An old jeep road once wound down the hill to the water; it was a feature the team wanted to preserve and invoke in a respectful way. "The property was ranch land, and the road led down to the bay below this house,"

says Greg. "There's a tradition here that you can't disturb the path of ancestors. So we decided to leave the middle of the property open where it had been."

The path created a "central spine" that enabled the architects to cleave the program into separate pieces—four in total—all benefiting from their unique positioning. The team calls the separate pieces "hales"—the Hawaiian word for house or building. There's a living hale with dining and kitchen, a combination master bedroom and office hale, another for guests, and one that serves as a recreation space with room for additional overnight visitors.

As promised by those front gates, these structures defy resort convention. Each building torques to capture views for prime areas and to channel





This page: Although the master suite offers only glimpses of ocean view, the master bathroom is a private oasis with a sheltered outdoor soaking tub.

precious trade winds. Roofs bend and bow for shade and privacy, and support columns splay like those fishing lean-tos—or the popular coconut trees everyone plants in their yards here. The intellectual exercise of architectural appropriation morphs into something vibrant and seemingly organic. The house becomes as alive and dynamic as the landscape around it. Like the lava flows that formed the ground below, movement is frozen into a static state of motion.

“The two most important forces on the island are sun and wind,” says Greg. “Pulling apart the plan allows every part to benefit from them. Here, the central spine has no buildings, so our

challenge—or opportunity—was to create connectivity among the buildings.”

Swaths of concrete flooring and paths are the new connective tissue, serving as de facto hallways among “rooms,” despite the fact that they move indoors and outside. Exterior spaces are curated into destinations of their own—a built-in dining banquette, the de rigueur koi pond, an outdoor bathing pavilion off the master, multiple spaces for covered dining and lounging, a pool and spa, a bocce court. There are myriad areas for advance and retreat in response to the daily course of nature. These spaces descend the hill into the view, allowing each elevation its own artful frame of ocean, mountains, greenery.





Deep overhangs provide shelter from the sun for outdoor lounging. Concrete flooring indoors and outdoors connects the spaces in a continuous flow. The old jeep trail is now a central spine that organizes and links the compound's buildings.



“The client wanted something different, so we were looking to break the rules a little bit.”

—Greg Warner, AIA

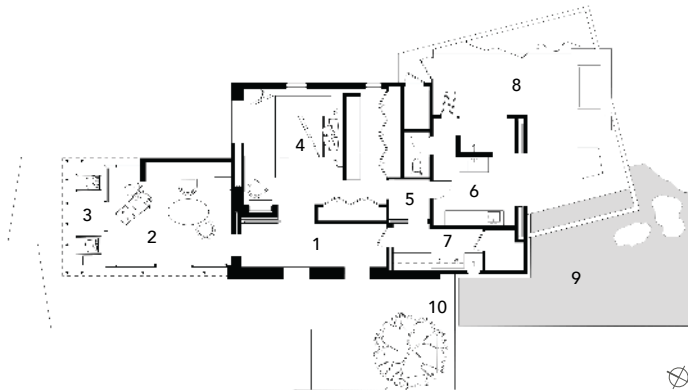
Pulling apart the buildings was one key to reinventing the stereotypical vacation home program, another was removing the obligation of certain rooms to deliver showstopping views. For instance, the kitchen gains its glimpse of ocean only through the living room. And the master bedroom has just a “shotgun” slice of ocean prospect, so the client’s office can occupy the prime spot. “What that does is activate other spaces,” says Greg. “The living hall and the lanai get the premier seat on the view. The kitchen is in the back, but that activates the spaces behind it—the dining area and the courtyard.”

Delight can derive from vignettes of nature and ephemeral slivers of beauty—a tease of something precious is sometimes more powerful than a full display, front and center. There’s a thrill in the discovery of the small, savory morsel.

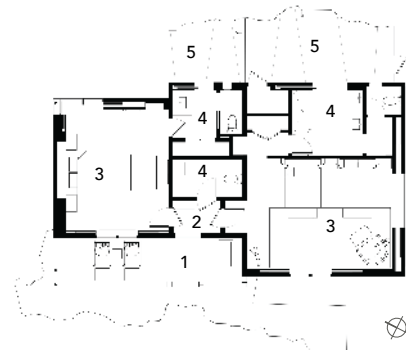
Desirable locations are often harsh as well, and this one is no exception.



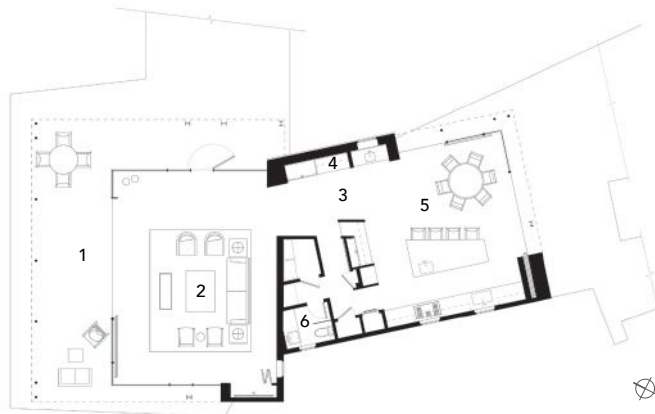
This page: The pulled apart program gives water views to spaces that would otherwise stay landlocked, such as the guest house and recreation building that front the roadside of the property. The recreation building has flexibility to handle overflow guests.



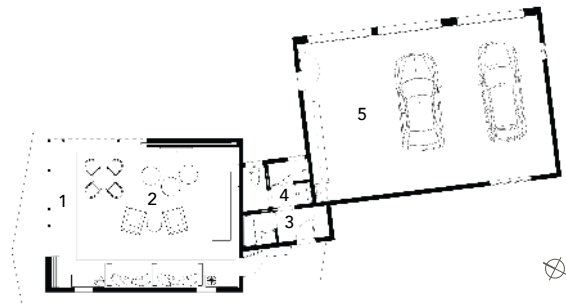
MASTER BEDROOM HALE FLOOR PLAN | 1. Entry Vestibule | 2. Library/Office
3. Lanai | 4. Bedroom | 5. Hall | 6. Master Bath | 7. Utility/Storage
8. Private Garden/Outdoor Bathtub | 9. Koi Pond | 10. Monkey Pod Tree



GUEST HALE FLOOR PLAN | 1. Lanai | 2. Vestibule | 3. Bedroom
4. Bathroom | 5. Private Garden/Outdoor Shower



LIVING HALE FLOOR PLAN | 1. Lanai | 2. Living Room | 3. Hall | 4. Wet Bar
5. Kitchen/Dining | 6. Powder Room



RECREATION HALE & GARAGE FLOOR PLAN | 1. Lanai | 2. Recreation Room
3. Dressing Room | 4. Bathroom | 5. Garage



SITE PLAN | 1. Driveway | 2. Auto Court | 3. Outdoor Dining & Kitchen | 4. Koi Pond | 5. Axial Monkeypod Tree | 6. Activity Lawn With Ocean View
7. Pool/Spa | 8. Fire Pit | 9. Bocce Court | 10. Lava Field | 11. Garage/Recreation Room | 12. Living Hale | 13. Master Bedroom Hale | 14. Guest Hale



So the team carefully selected materials for their ability to weather and age with dignity. Cedar, steel, locally sourced basalt, “cowboy” concrete revel in roughness—their imperfections mirroring the frayed beauty of the natural world. “The pattern in wood is not regular, nor is it in stone,” says Greg. “That gives everything and everyone the freedom to be more relaxed. It’s a vacation home, you shouldn’t have to worry about it.”

All the worry happened behind the scenes, with David Shutt doing yeoman’s work on the modeling, perfecting the improvisational look of the architecture. “That’s the artistry and brilliance of David’s designs,” says Greg. “He worked extremely closely on the project from concept through completion.”

It takes a village to evoke a village, and there were many talented contributors to this project from architecture to interiors, landscape, engineering and construction. Nonetheless, the resulting house appears effortless, humble, exuberant. It dances lightly across the site, borrowing and returning its small measure of paradise. —*S. Claire Conroy*



Opposite and this page: The site steps down toward the ocean, a feature the architects mined for more outdoor destinations—a fire pit, a bocce court, and a pool below. You can almost hear the old jeeps motoring down the hill for a fire and cookout on the beach.

Makani Eka

Kona, Hawaii

ARCHITECT: Greg Warner, AIA, principal in charge; David Shutt, senior project manager/architect; Rob Campodonico, Rina Wiedenhoef, Anja Hämäläinen, job captains; Boyce Postma, designer, Walker Warner Architects, San Francisco

CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT

ADMINISTRATION: David Shutt Architecture, East Bay, California

BUILDER: Oakes Management, Hawi, Hawaii

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Philpotts Interiors, Honolulu, Hawaii

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: David Y. Tamura Associates, Hilo, Hawaii

LIGHTING CONSULTANT: Lighting & Engineering Integrated, Honolulu

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Hayes Structural Design, Honolulu

MECHANICAL ENGINEER: Mark Morrison Mechanical Engineering, Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

CIVIL ENGINEER: Kona Wai Engineering, Kailua-Kona

WOODWORK: Arc Wood & Timbers, San Rafael, California; Na Kalai La’au Woodshop, Kailua-Kona

PROJECT SIZE: 4,800 square feet

SITE SIZE: 1.5 acres

PHOTOGRAPHY: Michael Millman Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

COOKTOP: Wolf

ENTRY DOORS: Sun Valley Bronze

EXTERIOR DOORS: Quantum, Tradewind Door

EXTERIOR LIGHTING: Beachside Lighting

INTERIOR DOORS: Western Pacific Building Materials

Ovens: Miele

PAINT: Benjamin Moore

ROOFING: Western red cedar shingles

TUB: Concrete Works

WINDOWS/WINDOW SYSTEMS: Quantum, Caoba Doors