



Propelling the plan forward

Organising the space planning within three 'blades' radiating from a central node was just one of the innovative features that ensured this home met all of the owner's requirements

When architects SPF:a were first approached to create a home for this Bel Air hilltop site, it wasn't immediately clear what direction the design would take.

Principal Zoltan E Pali says that given its prominent position above a relatively developed neighbourhood, the home needed to meld into its surrounding, while at the same time making the most of sweeping views of the Los Angeles Basin from the Getty Center to Long Beach.

But it also had to meet some very specific requirements from the owner.

"She wanted a luxurious house in which she could put on large events and host her extended family," says Pali.

"Yet she also wanted it to feel warm and welcoming."

Balancing scale, views and comfort would prove to be the biggest challenge in the design of the 1675m² home. And to meet that challenge, SPF:a came up with an innovative layout.

"To meet all these demands, we needed the home's spaces to flow into one another with ease. Our answer was to organise the

***Above:** To make the most of unobstructed views of the Los Angeles basin from the Getty Center to Long Beach, architect SPF:a designed this three-storey home with a Y- or propeller-shaped plan. This also helped break up the mass of the 1675m² home, creating a welcoming feel despite its overall size. Shown here are the ground and first floor levels, with the basement burrowed into the hill below. The top floor is dedicated to the home's private spaces and is wrapped in a glass curtain wall comprising panels of varying widths and opacity.*



Above: As well as providing access to the different views from the site, the Y-shaped plan also created three different outdoor spaces – the entry courtyard to the right, the pool and outdoor living areas to the left, and a more private, garden courtyard behind.

Facing page: Visitors encounter the dynamic glass and steel staircase when they first enter the home. This sits at the loci of the Y plan, giving a clear sense of how the house is organised.

plan across three ‘blades’ that radiate from a central node.”

The result is a three-storey structure in the shape of a Y or three-winged propeller, with a dynamic glass and steel staircase extending through the core.

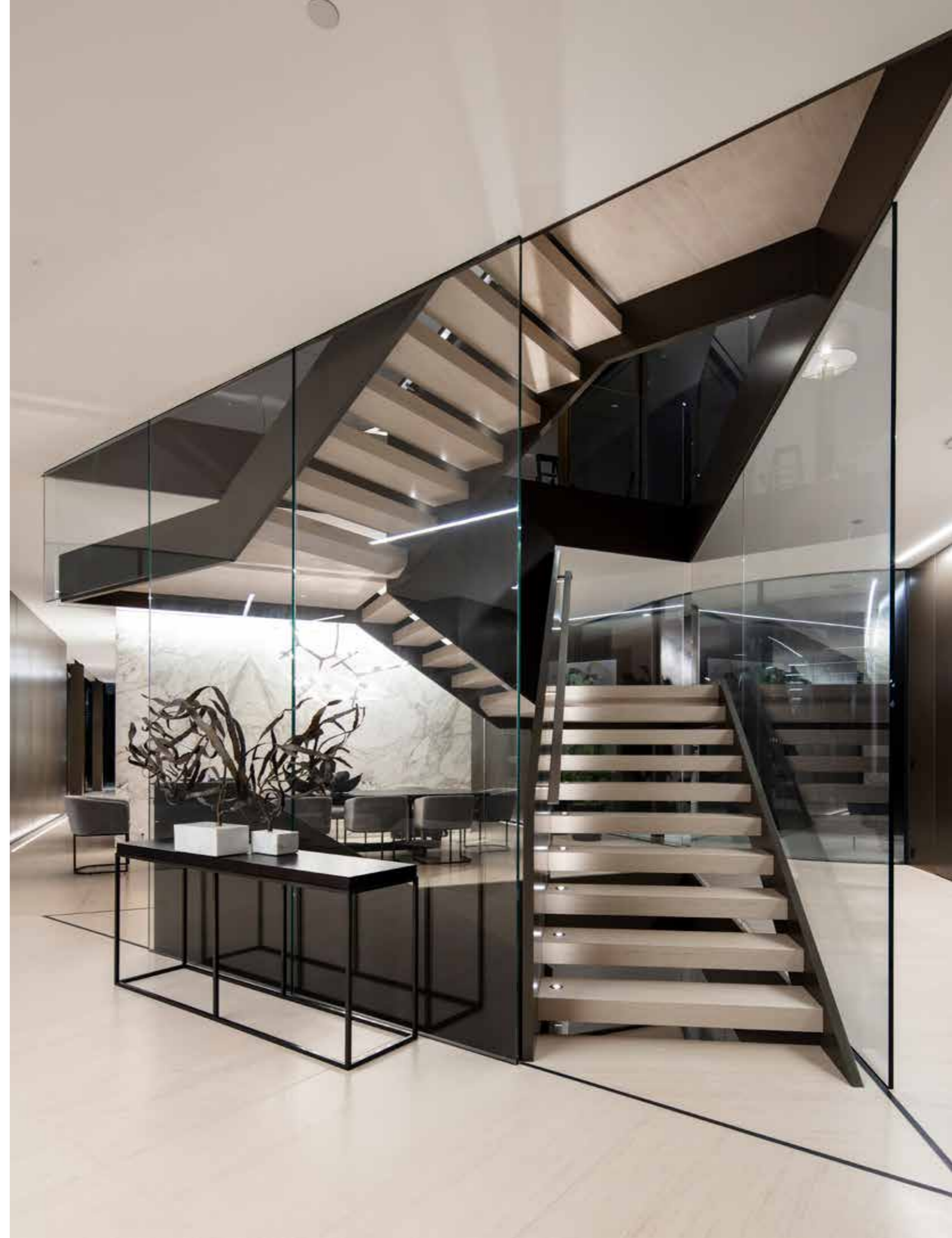
“The staircase provides a very straightforward guide to the vast home’s circulation, while at the same time it visually joins what would otherwise be disparate areas in one’s line of sight.”

Two of the storeys sit above ground, while the basement floor burrows into

the hill below. On the ground floor are the entry and communal spaces – living, dining, kitchen, pool and outdoor areas – while the top floor is dedicated to the home’s private spaces.

Dividing the house into its three wings also effectively reduces the scale of the building, and allows nearly all rooms to access the range of views.

“The upper southwest and southeast wings hold the master and a ‘mini master’ for guests, both of which have 270° views of the city and ocean due to their slim profile.





Above: Ground floor living areas – both indoor and outdoor – make the most of the sweeping view.

Right: As well as a cinema, sauna, massage and exercise areas, the lower level contains this small lounge, next to a 1000 bottle wine cellar.

Facing page, top: The family room sits at the opposite end of the ground floor to the more formal seating area, and takes in views to the west.

Facing page, lower: The dining space is at the centre of the Y plan, at which point the glass panels are curved.



In contrast, two smaller bedrooms in the northern wing look out onto the hillside and rear garden and have an intimate feel – like being in a treehouse.”

All this access to views is enhanced by the large expanses of glass on the ground and first floor, which are the result of further innovative approaches.

SPF:a creative director Judit M Fakete says the light in Los Angeles can be both calming and energising.

“As the house is high above the city with almost no visual impediments, we



wanted to capture the spirit of these two qualities,” she says.

“The huge panes of glass provide the inhabitants with a strong connection to nature and the daily rhythm of light.”

The glass curtain wall wrapping all the top floor is a highly sophisticated system, custom developed in part with Swiss company Sky-frame.

It consists of five different widths of glass, which were produced with four levels of opacity – clear, reflective, translucent and opaque – achieved by specialised

films that were laminated into the panels.

As a result, the upper level achieves varying levels of privacy despite being fully glazed, and also provides an ever-changing, shimmering facade.

“At times, the upper level seems to disappear into reflections of the sky,” says Pali.

In another innovation, the dramatic bends in the facade at the centre of the home were formed from three curved glass panels, and include motorised, curved glass doors.

The ground floor outdoor area has its own kitchen, two firepits and an LED-lit pool. All roof, balcony and hardscape water is directed into a 26,500 litre underground tank for landscape irrigation.

On the other side of the house, the garage is also a multi-use space – it can convert to an event space that completely opens on two sides to allow through views.

Meanwhile, the basement contains a home theatre, gym, spa, cedar sauna and a wine room big enough for 1000 bottles.

A service kitchen on this level acts

as a commercial kitchen for caterers to use when the owner is entertaining. For transfer of prepared plates, a dumb waiter connects it to the pantry behind the main kitchen on the ground floor.

For Pali, the success of the project lies in the way the plan kept the spaces intimate despite it being a large home.

“The plan organises the site into three different areas of usage,” he says. “Once the organisational principle was established, it pretty much designed itself – everything just fell into place.”



Above, left: At one end of the first floor sits the master suite, with large sliding glass panels that open up to the shaded balcony. At the other end is the cantilevered ‘mini master’ – the perfect suite for guests.

Above and left: The ensuite for the ‘mini master’ enjoys a direct view to the Getty Center on the hill in the distance.



Architect: SPF:a, Zoltan E Pali, Judit M Fakete
Builder: ??????????????
Roofing: Sarnafil PVC roofing system
Doors and windows: Sliding doors – Sky-Frame, Metal Window Corporation; fixed windows – Schuco/ Glasbox
Decking: Kebony
Air conditioning: Premium Mitsubishi VRF
Lighting: Lutron Homeworks QS
Home automation: . Sony 4K HDR Projector, Dolby Atmos sound system using Wisdom speakers/ subwoofers and Lab Gruppen amplifiers
Home theatre: Crestron
Veneer: Rift Sawn White Oak cabinets, doors, and panelling
Main level flooring: Moca Cream Dark Limestone
Master bathroom: Fantini faucets, Neorest toilets, Antonio Lupi bathtub
Guest bathrooms: Fantini faucets, BluStone bathtubs
Appliances: Sub-Zero, Wolf, Miele, U-Line.
Surface materials: Natural stone, Corian, Silestone, Italian porcelain tile

Story by Paul Taylor
Photography by Matthew Momberg



Left: The outdoor area is a complete entertaining zone, with an LED-lit pool, a kitchen, outdoor dining and lounge settings, and two firepits.

Above: All roof, balcony and hardscape water is directed to a 26,500 litre underground storage tank for use landscape irrigation.

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