

Essential element

“The relationship between architecture and the environment is crucial to the success of any project – the siting of a house will always be determined by its setting, just as the elements within that setting will in turn determine the design of the house.”

Noel Lane NZIA DINZ, Noel Lane Architects





Quid pro quo

Creating a home that is in agreement with its environment is essential to our physical and emotional well-being

How a building will relate to its surroundings plays an important role not only in the eventual design of the house, but also in how the occupants will interact with both. A harmonious relationship between the built and natural environments will permeate all levels.

But, achieving a harmonious relationship isn't reliant upon the conformity of one

environment to the other – quite disparate elements can be brought together to create a unified whole, much like the house featured on these pages, designed by architect Noel Lane.

“Disparity does not necessarily lead to conflict. The lineal nature of this house serves to make you even more aware of its free-flowing surroundings, and vice versa.”



Preceding pages and above: Horizontal lines, texture and colour, as well as an unobtrusive roof line, all work in accord to create a seamless relationship between this house and its immediate surroundings.

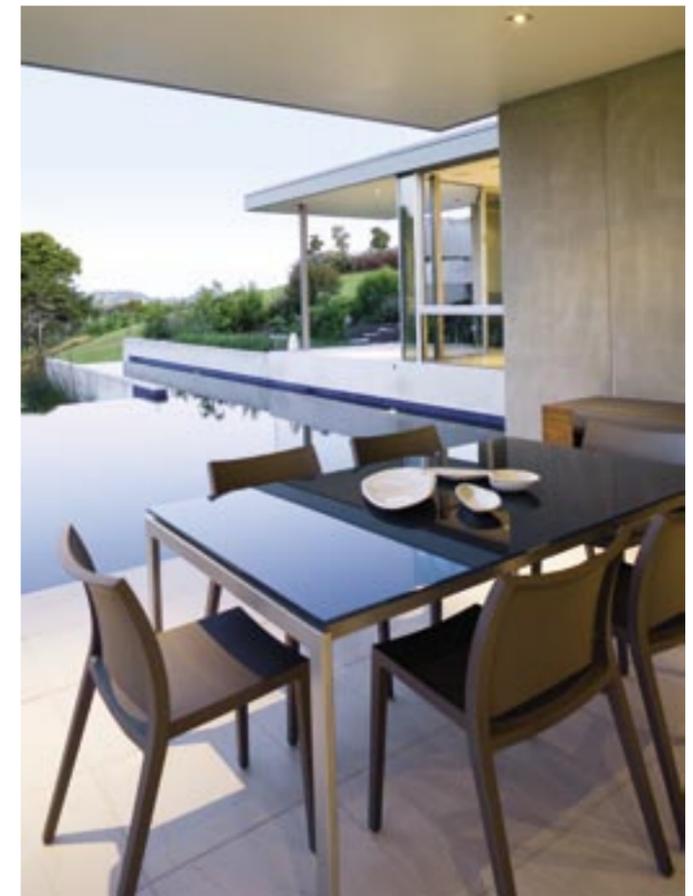
Left: Minimal information about the setting and interior detailing is provided to visitors on their arrival. Instead, architect Noel Lane chose to unveil these aspects only after guests enter the house.



Top: The house is a series of relationships – between built and natural environment, public and private, and lightness and solidity – the latter being expressed via a visual axis.

Above: The extended vertical lines of the stairway are in direct contrast to the horizontal nature of the home.

Right: Horizontal lines are carried through to the internal aesthetic, as is the notion of using light to both frame and accentuate.



Above: The close proximity of each room to the outside reinforces the harmonious relationship that exists between the built and natural environments.

Right: Elements that juxtapose solidity and lightness are used as a way of challenging accepted perceptions of space. Internal references reinforce the concrete and glass shell of the home.



“The formal relationship between the house and surroundings is heightened by the fact that architecture is as much about straight lines as it is the wider context of setting and spatiality,” says Lane.

The setting however, cannot be ignored and has a more intrinsic role that just that of providing a nice view.

It is also a linking element contributing to the relationship

on a subtle level. In this instance it is the incorporation of water into the built environment that sustains the harmony.

Just as water plays an important visual role in the identity of the house, so too does light, with its ever-changing, almost physical manifestation.

“Allowing the light to carve up the spaces means you never get the same sense of the house

on a day-to-day – or even on a minute-to-minute – basis. Each person’s experience of, and relationship to, the house is unique.”

Another relationship, that between private and public spaces, was formed due to the property needing to fulfil the requirements of a family home and boutique lodge accommodation.

Lane says the eventual

design resulted from the requirement for a greater separation of public and private areas than would be needed in a usual home. The result is two distinct buildings that are linked via a stairway. The main building houses the living areas and master bedroom, the other the guest suites.

The benefit of this intended segregation is the main building acts as a self-contained home

Above: While acting as a physical barrier, disrupting the relationship between the living area and bedroom of the main building, the pool is an important visual link to the internal and external relationship.



Above: The underlying theme of the house is the reinterpretation of public and private spaces. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the master bedroom. Its intimate immediacy to the outdoors is designed to break down the day-to-day hesitancy usually associated with private spaces.



when the owners are there by themselves, says Lane.

The division also gave the architect the opportunity to play with the expected norms surrounding the spatial relationship between public and private spaces, and between internal and external environments.

“The desire to give the house a more intimate relationship with its surroundings raised point-of-arrival issues

for its role as a lodge and the need for privacy. The solution was to reinterpret the expectations of visitors. Unlike the more typical open-plan arrival points of visitor accommodation, the public areas of this guest building are sheltered and enclosed. On the other hand, the private areas – the suites themselves – have been opened up to interact with the natural environment.”

This means the full extent of the relationship between the house and its setting is unveiled only once the guests enter their room.

“This aspect of the house was used to strengthen the sense of arrival. I wanted to make sure that everything wasn’t laid out in front of the guests,” says Lane.

For the main building though, the opposite is true, as

it is practically laid bare to the elements.

“Every room opens directly to the outdoors. Even the decks and terraces that constitute the outdoor living areas flow straight onto the lawn and down to the water’s edge or into the swimming pool.

“The whole front of the house is basically one large veranda, so you get the feeling that you are standing on the

Above: The master ensuite continues the idea of challenging notions of privacy by blurring the lines between indoors and outdoors.

Far left: The swivelling panel in the concrete wall is another visual element that juxtaposes solidity and lightness. This effect is further enhanced through the reflection in the bathroom mirror.



Above and right: At night the separate elements of the house become clearly defined, lending a different interpretation to the whole structure. The swimming pool has been intentionally incorporated as part of the home, rather than being annexed from it.

Photography by Kallan McLeod



edge of the lawn, regardless of which room you are in," says Lane.

The idea of constantly being on the edge of nature strengthens the harmonious relationship that has already been visually reiterated through the extensive use of glass.

It is the amount of glass used that made it possible to construct the house from concrete, says Lane.

"When I started designing the house to feature large sheets of glass and minimal shelter, it became important to counter that with the emotional weighting that a building material such as pre-cast concrete provides. This sheltering element was then warmed up through the introduction of timber – again in a series of lineal features – that are in harmony with the overall aesthetic."

Architect: Noel Lane NZIA DINZ, Noel Lane Architects
Contractors: Jennian Homes; Oakland Construction
Pool designer: Jon Martin
Kitchen designer: Noel Lane
Kitchen manufacturer: Designer Cabinets
Outdoor furniture: CMP Ironcraft, ECC
Deck: NZ blackbutt, kwila
Garage door: Zinc steel
Doors and windows: Miller Joinery
Window and door hardware: Sopers
Cladding: Cedar louvres and weather boards, pre-cast concrete

Roofing: Nuplex Soprasun
Flooring: Polished concrete, Moleanos limestone from Trethewey, American oak
Paints and varnishes: Resene
Lighting: ECC
Heating: Radtech
Guest room side tables: Rose & Heather
Guest room arm chairs: Perfect Pieces
Occasional tables: Bolier & Co from Cavit & Co
Dining table and chairs: Barbara Barry for Maguire from Cavit & Co
Guest seating area and lodge entry: Rose Schwarz; Paradigm Design

Audiovisual: Aletro
Kitchen appliance: Gaggenau; Miele
Benchtops: Honed granite
Taps: Dornbracht Meta
Ventilation: Gaggenau
Blinds: NZ Windowshades
Bedding: Signoria de Firenze by White Linen
Bathroom vanity: Trethewey
Shower fittings and taps: Vola
Bath: Vaio by Kaldewai
Basin: Bacino from Duravit
Tile flooring: Artedomus
Bidet: Stark 2 from Duravit