

PROJECT

# 03 *Spring Creek* HOUSE by Arthouse Architecture

• BLENHEIM •









## Brendon Monk of Arthouse Architecture employs a modern pavilion plan to create a house in Blenheim that is of place, but also of global influences.

Words by *Peta Nichols*

Photography by *Simon Devitt*

**O**ften, the modern New Zealand house comprises a series of connected regular boxes. The model enables the construction of simple forms, if you discount the connection detailing, and offers a constant connection with the outside, a feature that most Kiwis would place at the top of their dream house wish list.


Spring Creek House, designed by Brendon Monk of Arthouse Architecture, is another house that employs this type. The brief called for a house that would respond to the creek (which is the size of, and has the water pressure of, something more akin to a river), the vineyard and the robustness of a young family in a farm-type environment. The clients wanted the house to feel “natural and modern, dynamic yet unobtrusive,” explains Monk. So, with a location sitting within a Marlborough vineyard bounded on the north by a creek, Monk’s solution was to design a house that takes

the form of a series of interconnecting pavilions.

To respond to the creek, the pavilions fan out, splaying around the fork in the creek and creating a welcoming form for the house’s approach. The decision to create a series of pavilions also granted the clients’ wishes of a low-lying form, and with its cedar cladding that will silver over time, the house is relatively unimposing on the landscape.

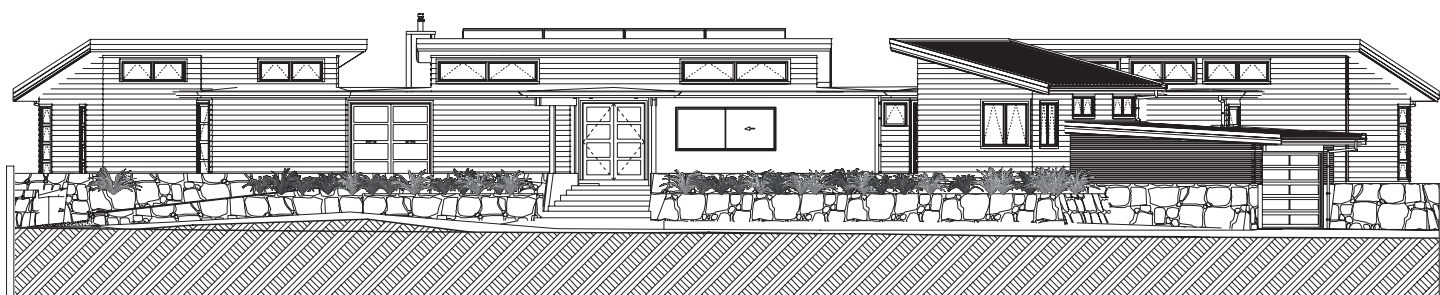
Although the pavilion is very much a form employed by modern New Zealand residential architecture, the house also takes cues from traditional Japanese architecture, which Monk was influenced by after living in the country for five years. The rock base of the house is part of this influence, as well as the way in which Monk has manipulated many of the interior spaces. The main living space is large and open in plan, but sliding doors and variations in ceiling heights distinguish spaces and establish an intimacy within the rooms.

Intimacy and the connection with its landscape are continued through the house’s material palette, which is made up of natural timber and exposed concrete. This affinity is also sustained through the house’s dependant relationship to its climate; the concrete floors act as a heat sink and there are solar hot water panels placed on the roof.

The effect of employing the pavilion, in this instance, has meant that Monk has created a house that is very much New Zealand, yet also of global influences. It is also a house individual to the personalities of the owners and depicts characteristics of contemporary thinking and living. 

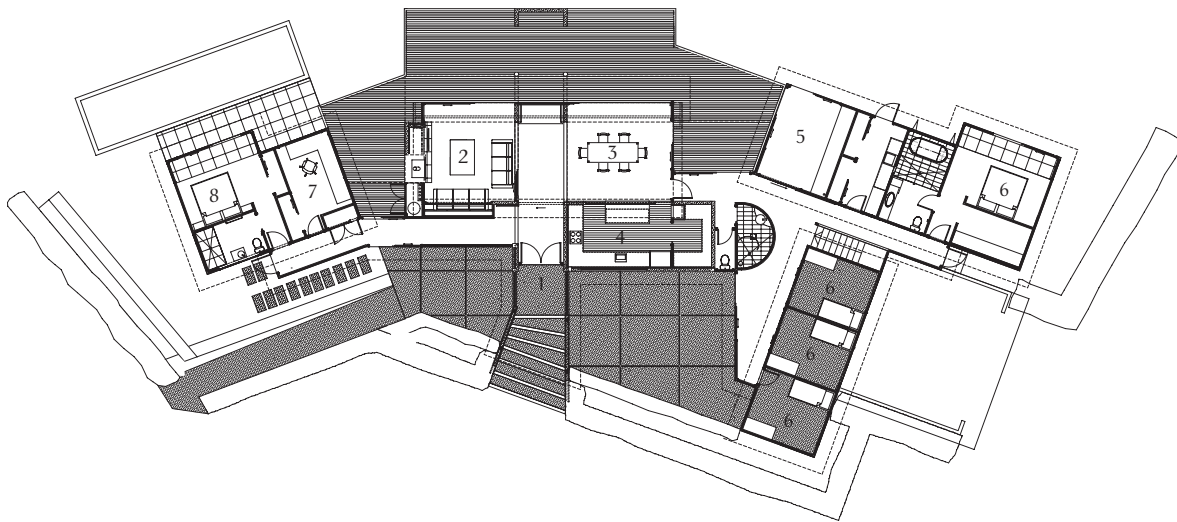


- 01 Overlooking the creek to the Spring Creek House designed by Brendon Monk of Arthouse Architecture.
- 02 The low-lying form of the house means it is relatively unimposing on the landscape.
- 03 The vineyard on the site of the Spring Creek House.



**South elevation**





**Floor plan**

- 1 Entry
- 2 Living
- 3 Dining
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Games room
- 6 Bedroom
- 7 Office
- 8 Guest suite

05



06



- 04 Monk has used sliding doors to give the owners the option of creating intimate spaces if need be, or opening up to make larger living areas.
- 05 Shifts in ceiling heights and a complementary material palette are used to distinguish spaces.
- 06 The kids' playroom. As well as the house being designed to respond to its site, it also needed to be robust enough for young children.







**07** Many of the features in the living spaces continue through to the bathroom: the material palette, open spaces and a connection to the outdoors.

**08** The house plan was arranged so that the majority of the rooms looked out to the creek.

#### Architect

##### Arthouse Architecture

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#### Practice profile

Arthouse Architecture is an architecture and interior design practice seeking to create responsive buildings embedded in their environments that connect people to place.

#### Project team

Brendon Monk, Caroline Marshall

#### Consultants

**Structural engineer:** CDT Consultants

#### Builder

Wayne Flynn, Carl Wilkinson

#### Products

**Roofing:** Colorsteel; Butynol

**External walls:** Precast concrete panels; Western red cedar weatherboards; Resene paint

**Internal walls:** Precast concrete panels; oak; Gib®; Resene paint

**Windows and doors:** Aluminium Systems Architectural and Residential Series

**Flooring:** Exposed concrete with dark oxide in mix

**Climate control:** Natural ventilation; in-slab heating via solar hot water panels

**Lighting:** Concealed fluorescent uplights; recessed downlights

**Hard landscaping:** Local rock retaining walls; paving stones

#### Time schedule

**Design and planning:**

12 months

**Construction:** 12 months

#### Project areas

**Site size:** 24 hectares

**Building area:** 350m²