



OUTSIDE IN

Robert Weir of Weir Architecture's design for this unique and striking coastal home was inspired by the beach-loving lifestyle of the owners and the challenging conditions of the dramatic location among the dunes of Waimairi Beach.

WORDS ANNA SCAIFE PHOTOGRAPHY MICK STEPHENSON



EXTERIOR

The highly thermally efficient Cocoon Precast Concrete panel system from Lanyon and Le Compte is pre-coloured for a low-maintenance finish.



Taking in panoramic views of the Canterbury coastline and as far as the Kaikōura ranges, a three-storey tower in dramatic black cuts a striking figure against the skyline. The tower, a unique feature designed to capture the views, contains the bedroom block of this thoroughly modern beachside home. Designed for homeowners who relish the proximity to the beach, two sprawling single-level wings extend from each side of the tower, providing a grounding connection to the landscape and complementing the tower form.

The homeowners' desire to create a seamless connection with the outdoor living and the waves beyond, informed the decision to sacrifice views from the communal areas in favour of an effortless flow from the open plan living to two separate outdoor zones, each positioned for maximum sun and protection from the wind.

Primarily constructed from sealed coloured precast concrete panels, the structure of the building is robust as well as resistant to the constant onslaught of the sea air.

Built using highly thermally efficient Cocoon Precast Concrete, the system provides a high-rated thermal envelope that maintains a comfortable room temperature requiring less heating. The insulating effect is further enhanced by the passive heat gains from the exposed coloured concrete floors during winter.

Having lived in the area for some time, the owners had a solid feel for the environment and knew they wanted to work with concrete construction. The decision to engage Weir Architecture was based on



the company's extensive knowledge of working with precast systems.

"We wanted a concrete house, and we knew that Robert Weir had done that in the past, so it seemed like a good fit. We had met him previously, and he's very easy to talk to. Initially, he sketched the tower, and we fell in love with that. We never really deviated much from that first drawing," the owner says.

Basing his design around the strength of the tower form, a key anchor for the home, Robert Weir took into account his detailed discussions with the clients about their lifestyle; how they socialise and how the rooms needed to relate to each other. The resulting floorplan creates a clear delineation between family zones and private areas with transitional areas kept to a minimum to avoid loss of space.



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OUTDOOR FEATURES

The inground swimming pool construction and tiling along with the hard landscaping were completed by Lanyon and Le Compte, experts in concrete construction.

Comfort and energy efficiency were also critical factors in the design. Robert remarks, “I strongly believe you need to over-insulate. A high-rated building envelope is key to comfort and keeping running costs low.”

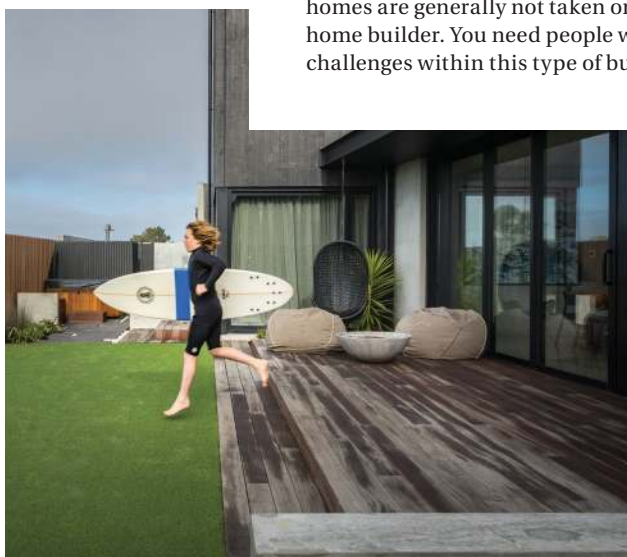
Selected for their expertise in concrete construction, builders and precast specialists Lanyon and Le Compte Construction project managed the build process from start to finish. The Christchurch-based company chooses not to subcontract any part of the concrete works, from manufacture to installation. Working from the Weir Architecture’s drawings, the company produces the shop drawings for each precast item, manufactures the panels and utilises in-house transport and crane divisions for delivery and installation.

Due to its thermal properties, sustainability and reduced need for maintenance, the clients chose to use Lanyon and Le Compte’s Cocoon System precast concrete panels. The product allows for a fast and flexible build and is designed to keep houses warm in winter and cool in summer while lowering energy costs; creating a home environment that’s quiet, healthy and secure.

The company employs a knowledgeable team with the experience to put the build together quickly and efficiently. Director, Shane Le Compte says, “Concrete homes are generally not taken on by the standard home builder. You need people who understand the challenges within this type of build.” The unique

OUTDOOR LIVING

Designed by Kamo Marsh Landscape Architects, the outdoor area combines technology, concrete structure and coastal planting, to create a fabulous sheltered space for entertaining.



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design posed some challenges, but Shane says any complexities encountered were quickly resolved by drawing on the depth of experience that comes with 30 years in the industry.

The homeowners agree that the experienced team did a great job, making the project as smooth as possible for them, "We really enjoyed the process of working with Weir Architecture and Lanyon and Le Compte; nothing was a problem."

To consult on the structure of the build, Robert Weir worked alongside leading engineering design consultancy, HFC Group Civil and Structural Engineers. Shane Simmonds of HFC Group says, "Careful consideration of the foundations was necessary due to geotechnical conditions and the heavy nature of the construction." Backed by more than 20 years in the industry, HFC was able to draw on their vast experience designing high-end architectural houses throughout New Zealand, utilising precast concrete.

Navigating tricky site access and the complexities of the architectural design were some of the challenges presented to the highly-skilled team from VIP Steel. The company joined the project to manufacture and install the full structural steel and main metalwork package for the site, including the roof louvre system and internal staircase structure. VIP Steel completed site measures and worked closely with Weir Architecture and the engineer on-site to solve any design issues before completing the manufacture, installation and finishing of the steel structure. Rory from VIP Steel says that working with the company means you're getting, "... steelwork hand built by truly qualified steel tradespeople".



STAIRWELL Feature Brokis Muffin floor lamp from ECC in smoke grey glass. Custom-steel, frameless glass and laminated American oak staircase.

BATHROOM The boys' bathroom has Tondo rectangular Vessel basins in matte black with Buddy wall-mounted mixers in aged iron. The custom vanity is finished in Dusky Elm with benchtop in Caesarstone Raven.

BEDROOM The master bedroom has custom recessed joinery headboard and floating wall-hung side tables in Baroque Wilderness and prime laminate in black velvet super matte.

Inside this stunning family home, the open plan living, dining and kitchen area features full-height glazing on either side, providing uninterrupted views through the house and across to the dunes. Adding an intimate, cosy retreat where the family can relax and unwind, the media room is a comfortable space, tucked away for a cosier feel.



Capitalising on the sensational sea views from the upper floor of the tower is the sanctuary-like master suite with stunning private bathroom. The owners have no regrets about choosing to take in the view from their bedroom, and comment that the sunrises are incredible. Down a floor, two bedrooms for the owners' teenage boys are linked by a shared bathroom.

Trusted subcontractors to Lanyon and Le Compte, Straight Cut Painting, were engaged to complete the interior and exterior painting and decorating for the project, including the precision wallpapering required in the powder room. To achieve the low sheen yet resilient interior paint finish, Liam from Straight Cut Painting used SpaceCote Velvet and Low Sheen products from Resene which he highly recommends for a smooth

effect. Of working alongside the builder on this home, Liam says, "It was a great project to be a part of, it ran really smoothly."

With the freedom and space to enjoy outdoor living a critical aspect of the clients' brief, Kamo Marsh Landscape Architects came on board to design the outdoor spaces. A pool and spa were must-haves, and as the family loves to socialise, they needed sheltered areas for groups to gather.

The resulting garden and outdoor living combine concrete structure and texture that echoes the architecture, with extensive planting of salt-loving species. State-of-the-art entertaining areas encompass a custom-designed cantilevered barbecue bench, a Beefeater benchtop barbecue and a Living Flame outdoor strip burner.

The beckoning surf is a constant lure for the

BATHROOM

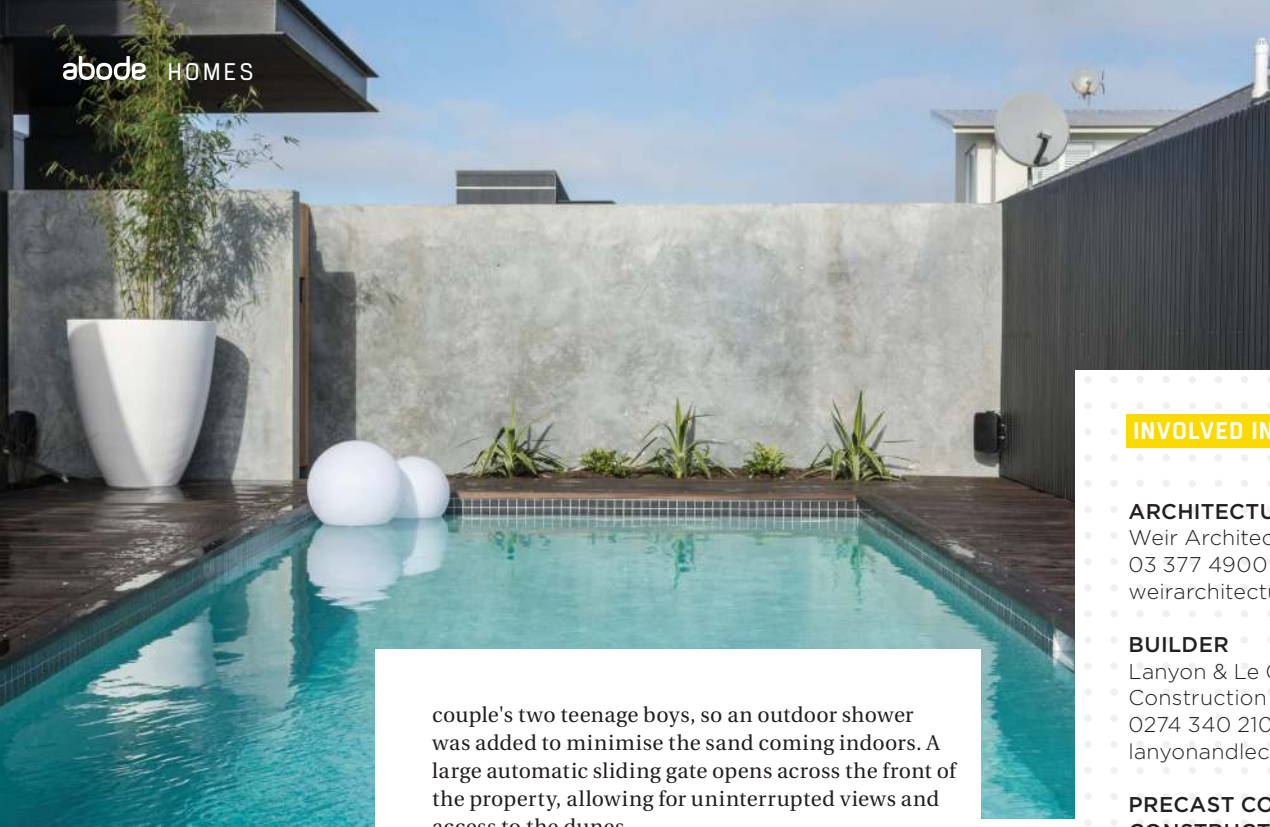
The ensuite bathroom features exquisite timber-look tiles to provide a connection with the timber used in the bedroom and wardrobe furniture.



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couple's two teenage boys, so an outdoor shower was added to minimise the sand coming indoors. A large automatic sliding gate opens across the front of the property, allowing for uninterrupted views and access to the dunes.

Landscape Architect, Emily Hastie, of Kamo Marsh says, "The garden is now an extension to the house and its living spaces. It reflects the beachside feel of the area and provides the family with a fun place to hang out and socialise."

Having moved in recently, the owners have not yet enjoyed a summer in their new home, but they are already delighted with what the team has been able to achieve saying, "We love the fact that the house is sitting on the dunes. It has really embraced the beachfront. It's just a lovely space to be in."

Robert Weir is a firm convert to concrete construction, having built his own home, which won the national architectural award in 2015, using the same system. He is pleased to have been able to create a home for his clients that enhances their lifestyle and provides a sanctuary that offers comfort and energy efficiency. Starting with the demands of the outdoor environment and working inwards, Robert has delivered on the clients' dream. "The key skill is listening and creating that relationship. I have been around for a drink since the family moved in, and I'm pleased to say they are over the moon with the house."

INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT

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