

ARCHITECTURE

Independence stay

An increasing desire to house visiting friends and family in privacy has given rise to striking stand-alone spaces that double as anything from a pool house to a music room. Dominic Bradbury reports on a forward-looking generation of guest lodges



APRIL 26 2013
DOMINIC BRADBURY

One of the great pleasures of having a beautifully designed home is sharing it with others, and in an age when friends and family are often spread far and wide, entertaining house guests has attained a special level of importance. Small wonder, then, that architects and their clients are approaching the business of creating inviting spaces for visiting friends and family with new enthusiasm and a fresh eye. And hence the rise of an ambitious generation of guest lodges: self-contained retreats set apart from main residences which have a sense of delight all of their own.

In many cases these are flexible spaces that can be used for other purposes when guests are not staying, and they reflect a growing trend towards a compound way of living, with a number of smaller, carefully considered buildings sharing one site rather than one monster dwelling. The new

SHARE THIS ON...
f t p
EMAIL THIS

Most popular

-  ART NEED TO NOW
Curios and the city
-  ARCHITECTURE
Independence stay
-  INTERIOR DESIGN THE BESPOKESPERSON
Forge ahead
-  ARCHITECTURE
Models of perfection
-  ARCHITECTURE THE BESPOKESPERSON
Rooms with a view: customised glass houses

Apartments from
£900,000 to £15,000,000

FITZROY PLACE
LONDON W1

+44 (0)20 7323 1077
www.fitzroyplace.com

Photo credit: Al Fine - if going to press

how to spend it
FINANCIAL TIMES

GOOD + GREAT
International Polo Series
2013



Enjoy a VIP International Polo Experience

Exclusive offer: two days of insider access and VIP hospitality

Archive choice



sharing one site rather than one monster dwelling. The new breed of guest houses can also offer a golden opportunity to create a unique architectural statement without building an entire home from scratch.

Architect Ewan Cameron was commissioned to design an exquisite guest lodge on a country estate in Kent, owned by television producer Remy Blumenfeld. Capel Manor House was originally the site of a large 19th-century country house, which was taken down in the late 1960s and replaced with a modestly scaled glass pavilion by modernist architect Michael Manser in the early 1970s. Although the main residence has a spare bedroom, privacy was limited, and so the solution was to create a new guest lodge in contemporary style. The guest pavilion designed by Cameron is set well apart from the main house, looking out onto a sculpture garden, and forms a destination or event within a curated journey through the grounds. The lodge has two separate guest suites – with hand-carved baths from Jaipur – divided by an open central walkway. The design was influenced by Japanese temples and gardens, yet also carries echoes of the 1970s Manser building.

“We had the opportunity to create something so unique with this project,” says Cameron. “The enthusiasm of the client gave us the chance to deliver a totally uncompromising building and the incredible site demanded a particular kind of response.”

For Blumenfeld and his partner, photographer Henryk Hetflaisz, the glass pavilion doubles as a spa, with massage tables and easy access to the nearby swimming pool. But it has also served to make Capel Manor House a more flexible and welcoming retreat for both themselves and their guests.

“We love having friends and family to stay, but we also value our own privacy and space – as, I imagine, do they,” says Blumenfeld. “Having a separate pavilion means guests can come and go as they please, or read, have tea, listen to music, watch films or simply rest. This makes for the kind of relaxed house party that is only otherwise possible in a much larger house than ours. The main house is enveloped by glass with a wonderful sense of space and light, but doesn’t offer a completely private space for guests to escape us, or us to escape our guests. So we only ever invited people to stay who we already knew well. The new guest pavilion has allowed us to invite people who we would like to get to know better.”

When architect Charles Barclay was commissioned to reinvent an 1820s house in Blackheath, London, as a 21st-century home, it became an interesting challenge to provide space for guests. The building had once been divided into bedsits but even after it had been turned back into a single family home and extended in contemporary style, it was still somewhat modest in scale when it came to visitors. Barclay’s solution was to replace a single-storey 1960s dwelling in the back garden (built by the previous owner for herself when she converted the main house into flats) with a new L-shaped lodge – a self-sufficient building with two bedrooms and a generous open-plan living area,



Think global, design local
Imparting chic to chalets and boldness to beach houses, second-home designers are deftly melding a sense of place with individual style. Katrina Burroughs reports

Apartments from
£900,000 to £15,000,000

FITZROY PLACE
LONDON W1

+44 (0)20 7323 1077
www.fitzroyplace.com

Photo credit: Al Fine - if going to press

owner for herself when she converted the main house into flats) with a new L-shaped lodge – a self-sufficient building with two bedrooms and a generous open-plan living area, including a woodburning stove and a hideaway galley kitchen. Brick boundary walls connect the lodge to the original Georgian house, forming a walled garden; while transparent glass walls front and back mean that the newly landscaped garden appears to flow through the guest pavilion. There's also a green planted roof, which softens the outline of the "Outback" (the name that the previous owner gave to the building in the garden, which has been passed on to the lodge), especially when viewed from the upper storeys of the main house.

"The walled garden between the house and pavilion was conceived as a giant outdoor room," says Barclay. "The sequence of interior and exterior spaces gives a touch of grandness to the setting. The Outback also provides a focal point from the main house in what would otherwise be an overly long garden. I love the fact that the Outback has become *the* social space of the house and not just a forgotten appendage."

The Outback suits a whole range of uses, including that of a centre point for entertaining, particularly in the summer, when the pavilion opens up to the garden.

"It works brilliantly," says Barclay's client. "The main house is the perfect size for me as I'm not rattling around in too much space, and then the bedrooms in the garden pavilion can be opened up as required. It's entirely self-sufficient, so friends with young children can be as independent as they wish. I also have a grand piano in there, which I play daily, so it connects me to the pavilion on a regular basis. We have had some marvellous musical soirées with professional singers and musicians there, and I also use it for private yoga sessions."

For Suzanne and Brooks Kelley, flexibility was also a key aspect of the design of their new guest house – by Gray Organschi Architecture – on their rural property in Guilford, Connecticut. The guest lodge was designed to replace a dilapidated cottage set apart from the main residence, and they had a number of other uses in mind for the space apart from simply serving as an idyllic place for visitors to stay, with views out across Long Island Sound. A historian, writer and curator, Brooks Kelley needed more space for his books, while Suzanne uses the new guest lodge for daytime and evening bridge games with friends. At the same time, the lodge design was underpinned with the idea that it could house home help or carers if they were ever needed in years to come – although the Kelleys love the new cabin so much that the home help could find themselves in the main house.

The size of the building itself was restricted by planning codes, leading to a compact, jewel-box cabin that is also highly sustainable, with a sedum roof, ground-source heat pump, cedar cladding on the outside and bamboo walls inside. The design was a very particular response to the site, context and views. It's one of a number of guest houses that Gray Organschi has designed over the years.

"We find that many of our clients enjoy these small buildings for their intimacy and their direct connection to a site," says architect Elizabeth Gray. "Those qualities can be achieved in a larger building, of course, but there's something about being in a small building, surrounded by nature and perhaps separated from the busyness of a larger house, that people really like."

Architect Peter Gluck's inverted-guest-house project in Lake George, New York State, was also a specific response to a beautiful rural site – and a very particular brief. Gluck's client wanted space for guests on the family's summer property, but also a large garage for cars and storage. Gluck's solution was to create a large, sculptural garage, with dramatic bi-fold copper doors, bookended by two separate two-storey, two-bedroom apartments. One has its own self-contained living area on an upper level, while the other inverts the arrangement and has its living space at ground level.

"Guests like the apartments because they are spacious – 1,600sq ft each – as well as comfortable and they are nestled in the woods," says Gluck's client. "But they are also close enough for a short stroll to the main house or the boat dock. It gives both us and our guests privacy, and friends who would not ordinarily stay in our home enthusiastically reserve the private guest quarters."

"In this family compound," says Gluck, "both guest apartments are not only separated from each other, but are remote from the host house. I advise all our clients to think about separating structures, thus breaking down scale and creating exterior spaces between the elements."

The creation of a family compound also lay at the heart of Allied Works Architecture's project for clients with a 350-acre farm in Dutchess County, New York. Designed by architect Brad Cloepfil, the plan included a main residence, private art gallery and a guest house, which was completed first. The single-storey building is a sublime contemporary cabin in the woods, with a steel frame – which projects outwards and partially wraps around terraces at either end of the structure – and walls of glass and mahogany. Its two bedrooms and generous living room look out into woodland of oak, birch and hickory.

"If I had known how much I was going to enjoy the guest house, then I'm not sure I would have built the main house," says Cloepfil's client. "Everybody loves it and people really like staying there. My children, who are in their 20s now, don't want to stay in the main house – they want to stay in the guest house as they love the seclusion and intimacy of being in the woods."

"Many years ago we stayed at a friend's guest house and loved the fact that it was so private and in the morning there were muffins waiting for us in the kitchen. We thought it was such a nice thing to do for guests."

In Kenwood, California, architect Robert Edmonds' clients wanted to establish a more direct relationship between the main residence and guest house at their Summerhill compound home. As a result, the two buildings share a

common architectural language and aesthetic, with the guest house forming a small-scale version of the host house and both sitting around a swimming pool and terraces. The guest lodge doubles as a pool house and a catering base for parties. There's also a garage nearby clad in the same red cedar used on the other two structures.

"The success of this project lies in the interaction of the three architectural pieces on the site, with the pool being

"The success of this project lies in the interaction of the three architectural pieces on the site, with the pool being the centre point that ties everything together," says Edmonds, of Edmonds + Lee Architects. "We love the fact that the main house and guest house kind of 'talk' to one another through their glass façades. The guest house was designed as a miniature one-bedroom house property and is fully functional on its own; there is a bathroom with a soaking tub big enough for two, and a kitchenette within the living room."

In some respects, the design echoes elements of the great mid-century Californian houses – such as Richard Neutra's Kaufmann House in Palm Springs – which played with the compound idea, offering dedicated guest wings or pavilions. As at Summerhill, these modernist houses used separate component parts to make the house more accessible and friendly in scale and volume.

Prefabrication is also being used as a way of expanding a home and creating dedicated guest lodges within a compound formation. Linda Taalman's client in Saratoga, California, opted for the prefabricated IT House across the driveway from his main residence. The building has one bedroom, living space and a kitchen, plus another separate room used as a gym, as well as serving as a home office. It was important to the client that the house be low maintenance, flexible in terms of use and that it offered a discreet presence in a setting of great beauty.

"Everyone would like to have a compound and room for guests to visit," says Taalman of Taalman Koch Architecture, creators of the IT House concept. "Guest houses and accessory structures can accommodate multigenerational families living on the same site. The way we live is changing – we work from home, live to be older, our kids hang around longer – and so there is no longer a one-size-fits-all model."

Back in the UK, architect Richard Found has developed his own original twist on the idea of compound living at his own home in the Cotswolds. He bought a former gamekeeper's cottage in a hidden valley, initially intending to replace it with a completely new and contemporary home. When the planning authorities decided that the cottage needed to be preserved, Found turned the situation to his advantage and designed a new family home folded into the landscape behind the original house. The cottage, which dates back to 1730, was modernised and now serves as a stand-alone space for guests, with two bedrooms and its own living space.

“We totally started again inside the cottage while keeping the original room layout. Now I and my family use the new parts of the house and guests have use of the cottage,” says Found, of Found Associates. “So our visitors have discrete accommodation, with their own kitchen and dining room. Our guests have liked the fact that it is so completely different in scale and aesthetic from the main house. And they really enjoy that dialogue between the two styles.”

Allied Works Architecture, 12 West 27th Street, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10001 (+1212-431 9476; www.alliedworks.com). **Charles Barclay Architects**, 74 Josephine Avenue, London SW2 (020-8674 0037; www.cbarchitects.co.uk). **Edmonds + Lee Architects**, 2601 Mission Street, Suite 400A, San Francisco, CA 94110 (+1415-285 1300; www.edmondslee.com). **Ewan Cameron Architects**, The Lighthouse, 11 Mitchell Lane, Glasgow G1 3NU (01412-440 183; www.ewancameronarchitects.com). **Found Associates**, 14-16 Great Pulteney Street, London W1 (020-7734 8400; www.foundassociates.com). **Gluck+**, 423 West 127 Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10027 (+1212-690 4950; www.gluckplus.com). **Gray Organschi Architecture**, 35 Crown Street, New Haven, CT 06510 (+1203-777 7794; www.grayorganschi.com). **Peter Gluck**, see **Gluck+**. **Taalman Koch Architecture**, 1570 La Brea Avenue, Unit A, Los Angeles, CA 90028 (+1213-380 1060; www.taalmankoch.com).

See also

Guest Lodges