

C+A Magazine Issue 36, June 2022

# C+A

F Residence  
Guimarães Chapel  
Pearling Path Visitor Centre

C+A Issue 36, June 2022

Publisher

Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia

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#### A note from the Editor

When this magazine was launched in November 2005 – it seems so long ago now – it was unlike any other industry magazine published in Australia at the time.

As the flagship publication of Cement Concrete and Aggregates Australia, C+A's proposition was to be an inspirational (and aspirational) showcase for concrete architecture in Australia and internationally.

It has always been the quality of the architecture, and only that, that has made the cut into the magazine; our premise straightforward: select the best projects locally and internationally and employ highest quality photography, drawings and words to describe the power, grace and poetry that concrete brings to architecture.

Concrete is the building material of choice for those architects, engineers, builders and users, who understand not only its versatility, strength, resilience and thermal qualities, but also concrete's extraordinary potential for shape-making, limited only by the restrictions of formwork and the imagination of its ideators.

Until now, C+A has been available to a privileged audience of subscribers, mainly architects. It is high time we showcased the visual delights of concrete architecture to a wider, sophisticated and well-informed audience.

Joe Rollo, Editor

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# F RESID



F Residence  
Hyogo Japan

Gosize  
Architects

# OPENENCE



Situated in a quiet residential area in the city of Nishinomiya in Hyogo Prefecture of Japan's main island of Honshu, this house is both the home and studio of its architect Go Fujita >



> Fujita's practice, Gosize, excels in creating stripped-back contemporary spaces that draw on Japan's architectural traditions of seeking to reflect a distinctive aesthetic that favours natural materials and finds beauty in simplicity. The intention, Fujita has said, was to create "a serene office-cum-residence that emphasizes plainness and blank spaces within its interior." Set on a site of just 105 square metres, Fujita harnessed the serenity of the area's natural beauty – Nishinomiya is rated as one of Japan's top sites for viewing cherry blossoms – and his signature minimalist style to build an imposing structure made almost entirely of reinforced concrete.

Guided by a personal vision to transform his hectic lifestyle into one that was more relaxed, he found his inspiration in a single Akamatsu tree – a Japanese red pine – growing on the property, "that made me want to create a timeless space." He accomplished this by borrowing from several distinctive Japanese aesthetic cues, seen in the muted color palette, emphasis on negative space and ambiguous boundaries delineating indoor and outdoor spaces. "It is my hope that this residence and office will serve as a place to reconnect with the nature-based wisdom and spiritual culture our ancestors have passed down to us, as well as to quietly re-examine my own life," Fujita says.

Constructed almost entirely of reinforced concrete, save for an imposing street-edge wall of stacked blocks of granite, the house has a neat orthogonal footprint that stretches out to a slightly more jagged form towards the back. Inside, three levels separate the work and living functions, assigning the ground floor to the studio – accessed through a separate internal door – while the second and third floors are devoted to sleeping, dining and living spaces.

A variety of materials adds character to the composition of the building: the palette includes a tiled courtyard upon entrance, a calming water feature, and the natural stone wall base connecting the whole to its wider environment. Large openings upstairs and double height ceilings and skylights help draw sunlight in and open onto external views.

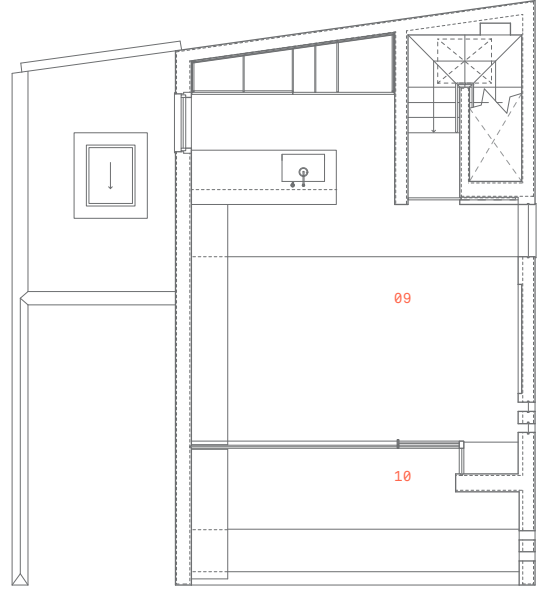
What the house lacks in colour it more than makes up for in texture and mix of materials: like the warmth of the concrete and granite, tile carpeting, vintage oak, tin tile, and silver foil, to create a home that while on the surface appears restrained is, in fact, both complex and dramatic.

Traveling upwards in the three-level home, each floor allots greater and greater access to the outdoors. While the ground floor workspace has little outlook beyond the enclosed water feature, double height ceilings in the doma, the traditional Japanese stone-tiled entryway, flood the space with natural light. The back wall is made up of two tiers of glass with a private courtyard and soothing water feature. The quiet sound of water and the shifting sounds of the natural world beyond, as it changes over the seasons, are created to impart an awareness of time.

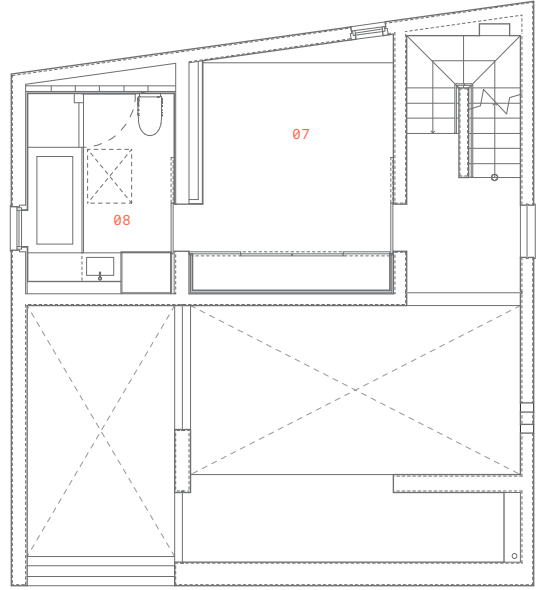
A second and third floor hold private quarters, accessed via a separate internal door. Here, spacious rooms, like the living area, have entire walls that open up to the outdoors, accompanied by an array of skylights drawing-in soft light. Joe Rollo

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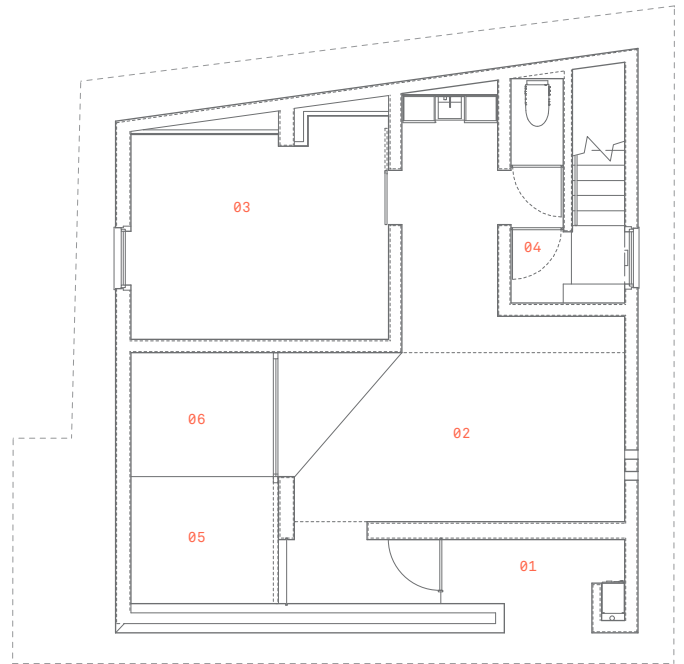




Third Floor



Second Floor



First Floor



- 01 Entrance
- 02 Doma
- 03 Office
- 04 Inner Entrance
- 05 Pond
- 06 Courtyard
- 07 Bedroom
- 08 Bathroom
- 09 Living
- 10 Terrace





double height ceilings and skylights help draw-in sunlight and open onto external views, creating an open and generous interior





Project Statement

This is the combined residence and office of the project's architect. Located in a beautiful natural setting selected as one of Japan's top one hundred sites for viewing cherry blossoms, the building's exterior features a natural stone base intended to blend in with the environment. Seeking to reflect a distinctive Japanese aesthetic that favors natural materials and finds beauty in simplicity, the design emphasizes plainness and blank spaces in the interior. Because the boundary between these interior spaces and the outside world is ambiguous, a wealth of connections and depths arise, resulting in a high-quality living and working environment that leaves lingering impressions. The doma, a tiled area on the first floor that can be walked on without removing shoes, has a double-height ceiling and opens inward onto a private courtyard and water feature where subtle seasonal changes in the plants and the sound of water prompt a keen awareness of time. The spaces become increasingly open to the outside world as you move upwards, offering a chance to come into sync with nature and open oneself to the surrounding landscape. GOSIZE Architects

Project F Residence

Location Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan

Architect Go Fujita, GOSIZE Co. Ltd

Photographs Akiyoshi Fukuzawa, Nacasa & Partners



# GUJIMA

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# CHA



Guimarães Chapel  
Portugal

Studio Nicholas Burns

# GUIMARÃES



a sinuous chapel of in situ concrete and a  
meditation room; the two set on a knoll amongst  
granite boulders and dense forest



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A chance encounter with his client – a wealthy industrialist – provided Australian architect Nicholas Burns with a rare opportunity to design this chapel and meditation room on the businessman's family estate at Guimarães, a heavily wooded region in the north of Portugal, not far from where the country was founded in 1143.

Set within 35 hectares of gardens and vineyards in a forest located southeast of the town, across the Ave River, on land owned by the family for three generations, the initial idea was for a small building to serve as a meditation room for individual prayer and reflection, collective family celebrations and worship.

The requirement to house a large, rare 18th Century carved timber and gilded reredos, an ornamental screen usually placed behind an altar, changed the brief and led to the design of a two-part ensemble: a sinuous chapel of in situ concrete and a meditation room made of stacked stone; the two set on a knoll amongst granite boulders and dense forest.

The chapel, with seating for 60 people, is shoehorned between the boulders, its cast-concrete surfaces curving and rising monumentally to the height of the forest canopy outside.

The intention is that in time both the chapel and meditation room will be absorbed into the landscape.

In a rare privilege Burns, who is based in Bali, was given free rein to locate the chapel anywhere on the site. The result is an assemblage of sculptural volumes in a composition of monumental, curving surfaces and highly controlled lighting conditions, casting dappled patterns as the sun is filtered through the canopy. Enclosure and prospect and the sounds of water flow are the hallmarks of this work.

“The volumes of the various spaces were constrained by the location of the boulders and trees on the site,” Nicholas Burns explains. “The height was determined by the height of the trees growing in a few years and becoming taller, eventually concealing the highest point of the buildings.”

Entry to the chapel is marked by a protruding weathered-steel box that echoes to the sounds of visitors' footsteps. Raised slightly above the ground, the steel box leads into a triangular porch opening into a luminous vertical volume with a baptismal font. Shallow limestone stairs lined with stone candleholders lead to the chapel and the altarpiece, softly lit by slim windows and candlelight.

The meditation room is reached across a paved courtyard and a series of reflective water pools. Constructed of stacked shale, in contrast to the concrete surfaces of the chapel this room, says Burns, “was made deliberately rough, more like a landscape wall than a building.” Inside, it is clad in dark timber. Designed with very few windows to provide visitors with a feeling of “abstraction”, the only areas of glazing throughout both buildings are tall and narrow, positioned so as to allow early morning and late afternoon sun to enter, while framing specific views of the building's natural surroundings. Both buildings are furnished with minimalist furniture pieces, including light wood chairs designed by Burns's studio.

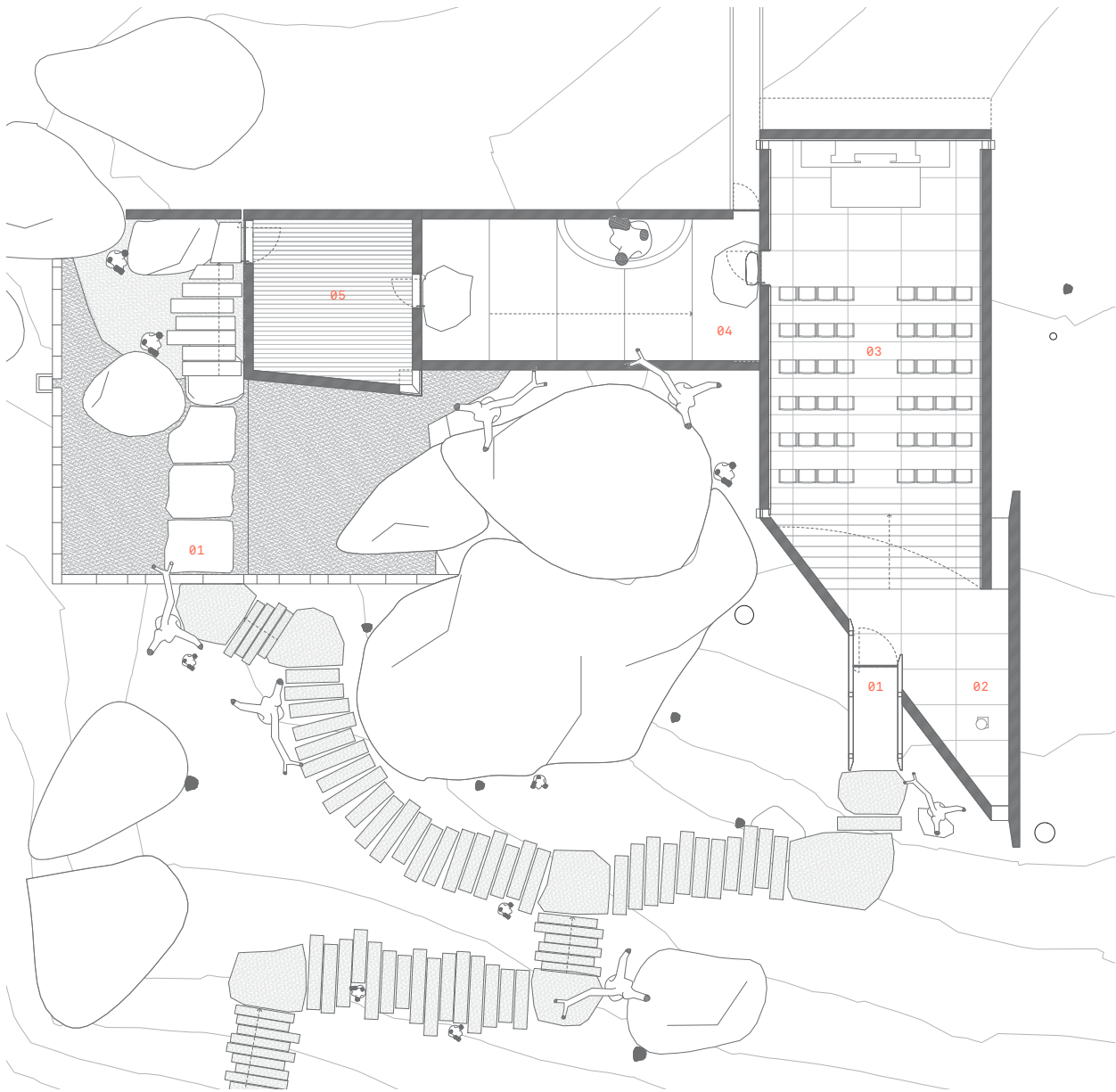
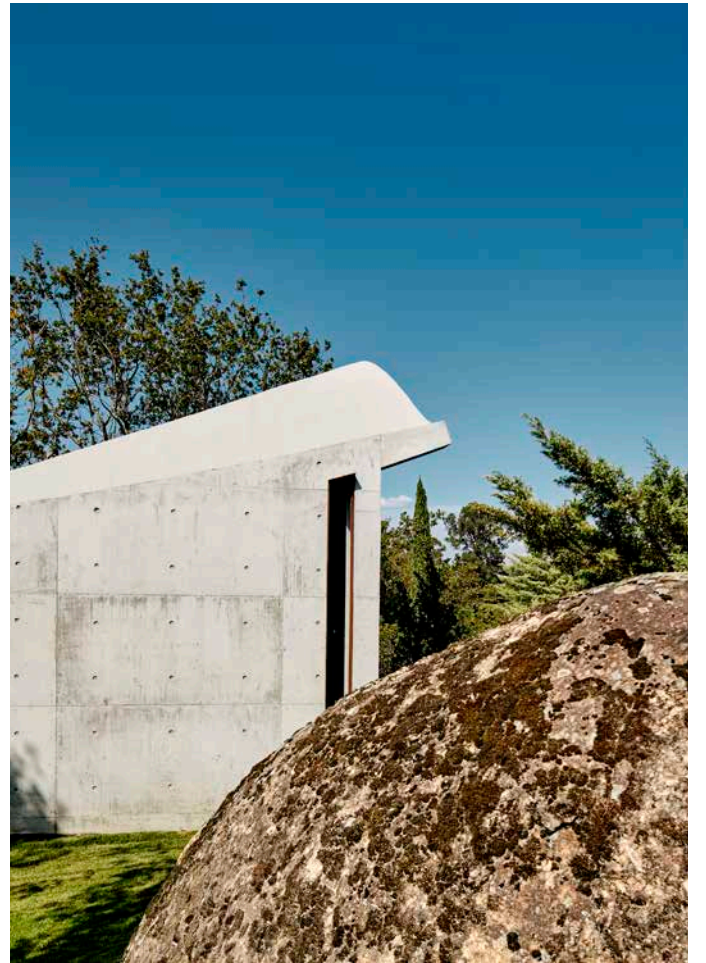
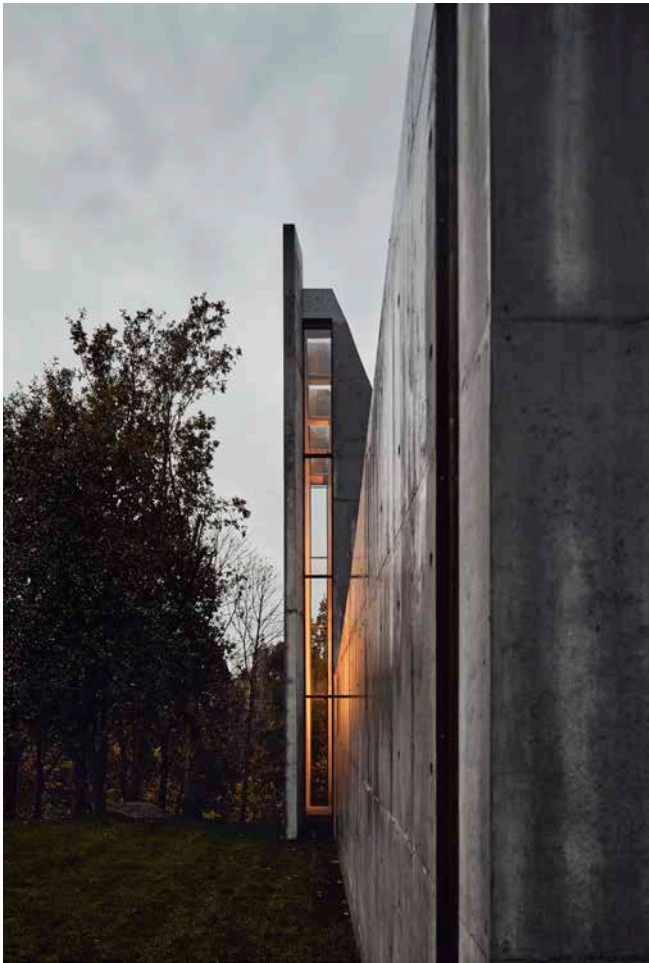
Nicholas Burns is currently working on a number of projects for the whole estate: a pool house has been completed, a winery and lake are in construction, while a residence, biological garden and other structures are still in design stage. **Joe Rollo**





enclosure and prospect and  
the sounds of flowing water  
are the hallmarks of this work





First Floor



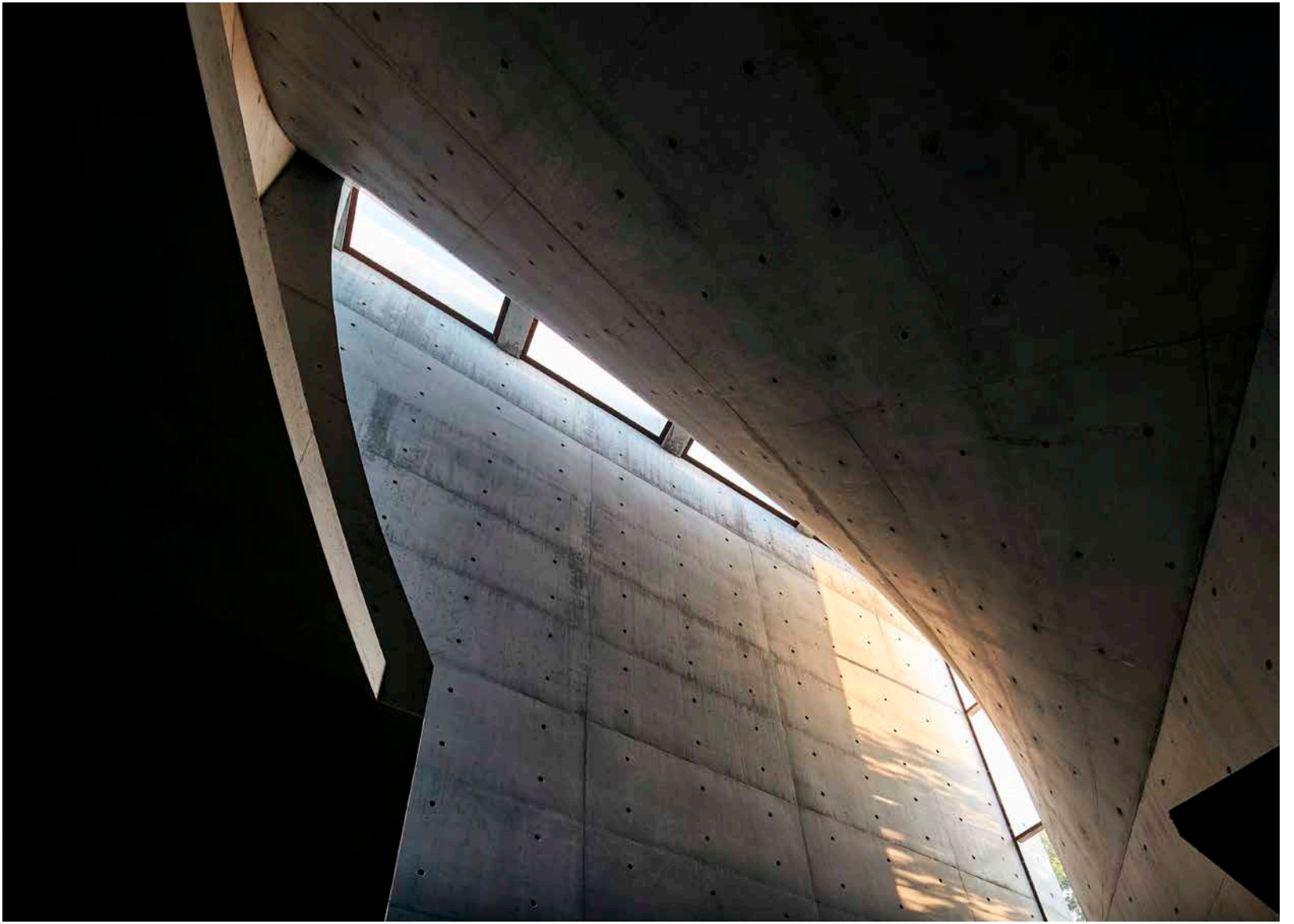
- 01 Entrance
- 02 Light room
- 03 Candle room
- 04 Atrium
- 05 Meditation room





an assemblage of sculptural volumes  
in a composition of monumental, curving  
surfaces and highly controlled lighting  
conditions







Project Guimarães Chapel, Portugal  
Architect Studio Nicholas Burns  
Project Team Nicolas Burns, Tiago Reis  
Structural Engineer Marco Beza Vieira  
Construction MCA Group  
Photographs Peter Bennetts



PEAR

PATH

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# PEARLING

Pearling Path  
Visitor Centre  
Muharraq Bahrain  
Valerio Olgiati



Bahrain's Pearling Path is a 3.5 kilometre trail that connects a series of destinations significant to the country's pearling industry >

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- › Located on Muharraq Island, the path connects three oyster beds, a seashore site and several clusters of historic significance, comprising a total of 17 architectural structures. Though the pearling economy of the region subsided in the 1930s, the route was designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 2012. Amid this historic milieu, Swiss architect Valerio Olgiati has designed the trail's visitor and experience centre.

The centre, which also serves as an entry point into the Pearling Path, is defined externally by a series of concrete elements that serve as a new reference point within Muharraq's densely populated centre. Inside, the site's ruins are displayed beneath a vast rust-coloured concrete canopy at the scale of an urban park. Raised on a forest of rust-coloured concrete columns and wind towers, the canopy, 155 metres long and of almost 7,000 square metres, hovers ten metres above ground, punctured by a patchwork of pentagonal openings casting shafts of light into the space below in ever shifting patterns as the hot sun traverses the sky throughout the day. A small auditorium, exhibition room and cafe, in the form of a concrete cube tilted on its side sit beneath the canopy.

The centre is part of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities' efforts to preserve parts of the historic heart of Muharraq while also commissioning notable works by international architects. It is Olgiati's second project outside Europe and his most ambitious civic project yet. (Dutch architect Studio Anne Holtrop has designed an art collection storage and archive nearby – the Green Corner Building – made of monumental sand-cast concrete structural elements assembled like prehistoric stone structures.)

As one crosses the bridge from Bahrain's capital, Manama, into Muharraq, the centre's tall triangular wind towers loom over their neighbors, signaling arrival in the historic city. The visitor centre stands as a singular architectural gesture, its large roof plane raised on concrete columns over the ruins of a historic structure called an amara—a combination warehouse, factory, and market. Olgiati describes the project as “an act of urban generosity...a public foyer” within a concrete wall that encircles the site.

To enter, visitors step through the gates and under the roof, where the amara dock once stood. The most dramatic space is the outdoor hypostyle hall, raised on its concrete stilts, with its fenestrated roof plane, with dappled shadow and light washing over various parts of the old amara; the storage areas, the madbasas, where date honey was made; and the eastern gate through which visitors entered the market.

The rotation and changing direction of the openings allow the roof to be read not as a plane with a single vector, but as a patchwork of different trajectories. The varied widths of the columns and the moments they pierce through the roof to become wind towers give the roof plane a sense of lightness and movement, as if it had floated down and settled at the top of the triangular points of the columns.

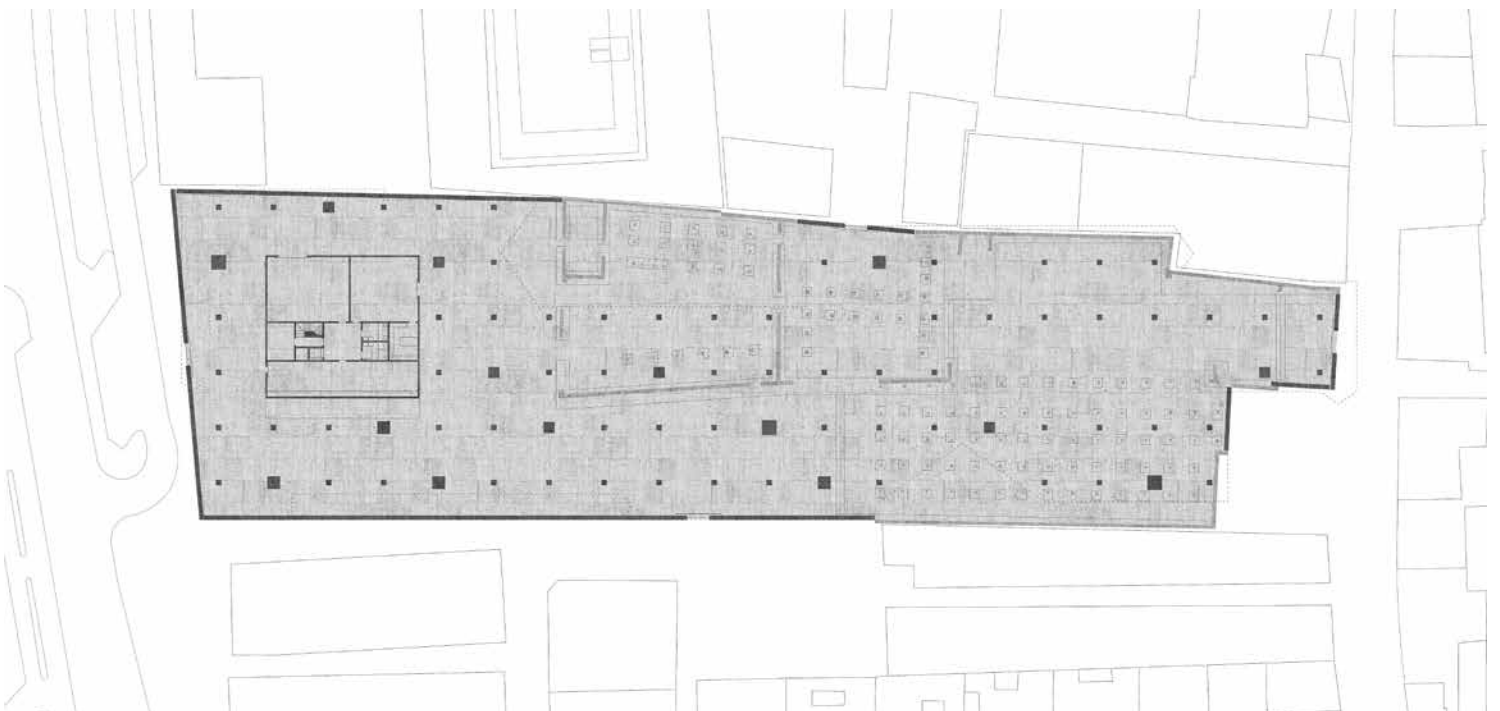
The building borrows few visual cues from its surroundings—the pitched roof/pyramidal motif is foreign to the Bahraini context but, rather, is part of the architect's pursuit of a new formal language, evident in other recent works such as his Céline flagship store in Miami (2018) and an office building currently under construction in Basel. As project architect Sofia Albrigo puts it, “The building makes an effort to rid itself of semantic associations.”

Yet the columns and wind towers are more contextual: they read as abstractions of the amara's repetitive rectilinear structure and as a visual reference to the minarets and wind towers of Muharraq. The wind towers here open at the bottom to allow airflow and create seating, while several also conceal pipes for drainage on the rare rainy day. **Joe Rollo**





there is a sense of lightness and movement here, as if the roof had floated down and settled at the top of the triangular points of the columns







### Project Statement

The site contains ruins that form part of the UNESCO Pearling Path. The entire building functions as the entrance to the cultural heritage and the foyer for the medina. It is an urban room for the people of Muharraq with the scale of a public park. Concrete elements are placed along the property boundary to form a new locus in the dense city. A large space is created in which a forest of columns and wind towers hold a horizontal plate ten metres above ground. A roof, understood as an archaic gesture, donates vital shadows for the people of Muharraq in this very hot climate and produces a new and unique situation through its different scale. Slightly set back in the shadow is an enigmatic house in which the museum of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage is located. As a totality the building creates a universe in itself that is the entrance for the Pearling Path and the city beyond. Valerio Olgiati

Project Pearling Path Visitor Centre

Location Muharraq, Bahrain

Architect Valerio Olgiati

Collaborators Sofia Albrigo (project manager), Anthony Bonnici

Local architect Emaar Engineering

General contractor Almoayyed Contracting Group

Photographs Archive Olgiati



Shell House, Melbourne  
Harry Seidler & Associates, 1989

# REARVIEW

Shell House, Harry Seidler's only commercial tower in Melbourne, at the corner of Spring and Flinders Streets, is arguably as impressive as his earlier Sydney masterworks, MLC Centre and Australia Square.

Dominating its position at one extreme corner of the city's Hoddle Grid, the 28-storey tower faces open space and extensive parklands, with distant views of the Dandenong Ranges and Port Phillip Bay.

The plan of the building places the core on the off-view northern side, enabling office floors to wrap around, maximising the sweep of the façade toward the full panorama outside its windows. The building's shell-like form avoids railway tunnels beneath the corner, while its end walls are extended to the boundaries of the site at plaza level and step back as the tower rises at levels corresponding to the heights of adjacent buildings. These walls incorporate air intake and exhaust risers to basement car parks. The high lobby space contains a porcelain mural by Arthur Boyd and an outdoor sculpture by Charles Perry.

Photograph: John Gollings



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