PAVILION LIVING

Architecture, Patronage, and Well-Being

Victor Deupi

Foreword

by Peter Zimmerman

It is always rewarding when clients fully engage in the design process. I believe the design process is a thoughtful collaboration between the architect and client. Julieann and Keven Shanahan were engaged in the process and were essential to the development of the early concept of this multi-stage project. The Shanahans would give us feedback and we would react to it. It was very much the dialogue and the clients' vision that led us to the successful end result. The structures created different worlds for different seasons. From the basement renovation to the pool house, to the cabana, to a winter gathering place – all were creations of cozy family living spaces in very different environments. The one message we received clearly is that the Shanahans enjoy gathering with family and friends. Whether around a table enjoying an al fresco meal prepared in close proximity, gathering around a firepit on a cool summer evening, or a cozy winter night enjoying a warm fire and a spectacular view from a tree house perspective, the essence of all of this was having entertainment spaces appropriate and comfortable for each season that provide their own unique experiences and settings.

Peter Zimmerman Architects first started working with the Shanahans in 2015. They had just purchased the property on Ardrossan – a property that has a personal connection to my wife's side of the family. We were pleased to have the opportunity to be involved in a project that had such a beautiful, natural canvas. Prior to Keven and Julieann moving in, we did substantial reorganization and renovation of the first and second floors. We made the internal circulation work more efficiently creating a bedroom for their son and eliminating an exterior entrance to the second-floor in-law suite. As that project developed, we expanded down to a partially finished basement where we created family living with a kitchen and a bathroom where their children could have their own unique space. Exterior doors led to the outside for the ideal location of a pool and accompanying courtyard.

The next phase of design was the pool and a pool house pavilion. The criteria were to create a summer entertainment space with a focus on the pool where family and guests could cook, make pizza in the pizza oven, sit around a counter, dine at an outdoor dining table, or simply watch television and relax. A firepit and surround seating were created as an additional outside room and used as an active social space.

As we developed the pool house pavilion, there was the thought of creating an alternative space that had a different feeling to it – hence the inception of the cabana located at the opposite end of the pool and at a 90-degree angle to the pool pavilion. The space was totally open with a wonderful swinging day bed found by Julieann from a local vendor. The piece was the perfect selection as it became the focal point of the structure and spoke to the essence of the building which was very calming and gentle. The slight rocking of the daybed lent itself to meditation or a calm place in which to read or think—a passive, quiet space in contrast to the pool pavilion which centers more around poolside activities. The rear of the pavilion overlooks beautiful meadows that lead to an extending woodland area at the corner of the homeowner's property.

The final phase of this property plan is a structure called Ashwood Run. Its inspiration came from a pavilion at Blackberry Farm in Tennessee. This was a space in which I was fortunate enough to spend some time with good friends. We sat around a roaring fire; the food and drink were plentiful – it was the perfect winter entertainment space. Being familiar with that pavilion, I was able to understand what the Shanahans wanted and envisioned. The structure was primarily thought of as an open-air pavilion but with dining that surrounded an over-sized fireplace on two sides and the front. Directly behind the fireplace we located the services: a powder room on the first floor and a catering kitchen on the basement floor below. As we walked the proposed site, we found ourselves up against a woodland where a bank dropped down very steeply to a stream that meandered along the bottom of the hillside. There was a feeling of being surrounded by the tree canopies because the bank declined so precipitously. That feeling started the conversation about adding a loft that would

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Mill Creek Terrace, Peter Zimmerman. Photo courtesy of Tom Crane.

create a treehouse experience that could be enjoyed by both children and adults alike. There is access through a ship's ladder to this wonderful, small space where one can enjoy nature and immediately relax. Through design development, it became clear that because of how the building was going to be used, it needed to be enclosed. We added folding aluminum doors, matching those we used at the pool house pavilion and cabana. When one visits these spaces and opens the doors, it truly feels like living outside. When used later into the season, the doors can be closed, and infrared heating elements allow the space to be used year-round.

Having the close familial connection to this property and working with Keven and Julieann made this a gratifying experience. Being part of what started as a renovation and then organically expanded into this extremely attractive, architecturally appropriate collection of pavilions that reflects three very different experiences, is something of which I am proud.

Prospector, Peter Zimmerman. Photography by Audrey Hall.
(Above and further above)

Setai, Peter Zimmerman. Photo courtesy of Tom Crane.

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