

DESIGN AND
BUILD WITH
CONFIDENCE

McAnally House: concrete shines under the Queensland sun

Background

The McAnally House harnesses concrete's strength, durability and aesthetics to make a stunning architectural statement on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The Challenge

A sloping site exposed to the elements in a sensitive coastal environment.

AT A GLANCE...

Project: McAnally House

Main concrete elements:

Off-form concrete walls (internal and external),
off-form ceiling

Designer: Maddock

Builder: GVE Construction

Photographer: Scott Burrows





Solution/Outcome

Designed by Gavin Maddock, the McAnally House comprises three levels - master suite on the top level, three guest suites on the lower, and living areas in the middle opening onto an expansive concrete terrace and cantilevered pool.

Overlooking Sunshine Beach, the home is positioned and designed to take full advantage of sweeping ocean views, natural light and coastal breezes.

From the beach below, it presents as a series of wide concrete platforms nestled into the rising dune - a deliberate nod to the natural rock platforms and caves found in the nearby headland.

Conversely, from the street it holds its cards close to its chest. Entry is via a street-level vestibule that connects - via descending steps behind a low wall - to the double-height pivoting front door.

The doorway is framed by off-form concrete walls that angle back and into the voluminous lobby. (Continuing the analogy, it's not unlike squeezing through a narrow entrance into a cave.)

The lobby, in turn, expands into a circulatory, concrete-framed spine that connects the three levels. (The landing and stair to the garage and the bridge to the study are polished concrete.)

From the lobby, a welcoming shaft of natural light illuminates the top of stairs that descend to the main living area. The ceiling of this main living area is off-form concrete and features a central glazed void that bathes the interior in even more natural light.

The exposed off-form concrete walling and the tiled flooring is balanced with sections of Tallowwood flooring and walling. Indeed, this juxtaposition of concrete and timber is a continuing theme and feature of the interior spaces.

“The two work well together, with the timber ‘softening’ the concrete,” Maddock says.

“The off-form concrete, in particular, adds a wonderful textural component - both visually and to the touch. “One of the exciting aspects of working with this material is that until the formwork comes off, you actually don’t know what you’re getting.

“We were pretty particular about keeping the forms clean and the joints aligned to get the best possible result. And kudos to the guys - they got a great result.”

There is no doubting the sense of solidity and permanence that concrete gives the McAnally House. But more than that, it imparts a unique character that’s reflected in the forms and finishes.

“The wonderful thing about concrete is its pliability,” Maddock says. “There is no other material we could have used that would have allowed us to be as expressive as we have been.”

BENEFITS OF USING CONCRETE

Strength and durability

Flexibility in design

Aesthetics