



# Bungalow Design

Chris van Uffelen



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8 Preface

12 House on Paros  
Isterni, Greece

18 Refuge  
Belo Horizonte, Brazil

24 Villa AT  
Kristiansand, Norway

30 Klobbudden  
Stockholm, Sweden

36 Mid-Century  
Bungalow  
Cologne, Germany

42 Cork Trees House  
Braga, Portugal

48 Fineway House  
Reutlingen, Germany

54 Casa Prefab  
San José de Maipo,  
Chile

60 Laurel Hills Residence  
Los Angeles, CA, USA

66 Planar House  
Porto Feliz, São Paulo,  
Brazil

72 Examilia House  
Korinthos, Greece

76 Hill Country House  
Wimberley, TX, USA

82 Villa Marie  
Kremsmünster, Austria

88 Folding Roof House  
For Two  
Langenzersdorf,  
Austria

92 House V+M  
Salzgitter, Germany

98 Two Sheds  
Victoria, Australia

104 Holly Water Cabin  
Devon, England

108 Goodtown  
Rochedale, Australia

114 Camelia  
Walnut Creek, CA, USA

120 Sugar Shack  
Residence  
West Lake Hills, TX,  
USA

126 Bungalow Germering  
Germering, Germany

132 Bredeney House  
Essen, Germany

138 Project Ö  
Archipelago National  
Park, Finland

144 accurate and timeless  
Unterbach,  
Switzerland

150 House in  
Huentelauquen  
Huentelauquen Norte,  
Chile

156 Hachi Lily House  
Hue, Vietnam

162 Villa PJMJ  
Bad Kissingen,  
Germany

168 Menlo Park  
Courtyard Residence  
Menlo Park, CA, USA

174 Villa in the Dunes  
Hoek van Holland,  
The Netherlands



# Contents





236 House L  
St. Martin, Italy

242 Salt House  
Pavilosta, Latvia

248 Holiday Home in the  
Dunes  
Schiermonnikoog,  
The Netherlands

254 Tetris Extension  
Melbourne, Australia

260 Bungalow am  
Schaalsee  
Biosphere Reserve  
Schaalsee, Germany

266 Smokewood Garzón  
Rocha, Uruguay

272 House S  
Gütersloh, Germany

278 Constant Springs  
Residence  
Austin, TX, USA

284 Index

286 Picture Credits

180 Haus FX  
Germany

184 Bungalow K  
Hohenems  
Hohenems, Austria

190 Villa CD  
Kosijde, Belgium

196 Weekend House in  
Nové Hamry  
Nové Hamry, Czech  
Republic

202 House in a Park  
Zurich, Switzerland

208 House Form and  
Culture  
Maharashtra, India

212 House Under Eaves  
Point Wells,  
New Zealand

218 Britannia House  
Calgary, Canada

224 Atriumhaus  
Münster, Germany

230 Tamara Villa  
Gujarat, India



# Preface

Bungalows are a place of longing for many people. They are detached dwellings – mostly single-family houses – in which life takes place largely on the first floor. Thus, bungalows often already fulfill important requirements for barrier-free construction. However, the phrase “mostly on the first floor” already shows that there can also be an upper floor, or at least a converted roof. In some places, the generic term “bungalow” has been applied to a specific stylistic form of this type, but the original type and the most common form of bungalow do not have a flat roof. Only in continental

Europe did the building type and post-war modernism arrive simultaneously from the United States, so that the term evokes a ground-floor-only flat-roof building in the mind of, for example, a German-speaker. However, the definition of the bungalow does not limit it to the first floor and flat roof at all.

The bungalow, in its present form, originated as a detached, low-rise residential building in India when British colonial officials there adapted the building type for their summer residences. The word also derives from Indian: in Gujarati *baṅglo* means “Ben-

*gali*”, in Hindi *baṅglā* means the Bengali house. Houses were small, single-story, and detached with a large porch. Enthralled by their simplicity and functionality, British officials imitated the houses, whose rooms were organized around a central parlor. This concept was adopted as exotic and exclusive in England and later in America. There, the term was used in the late 19th century to describe even very large estate or country houses in completely different stylistic manifestations: with columned porticoes and two full stories plus large gable roofs, possibly including decorative gables,

they were much closer to an ancient *villa suburbana* than to the archetype or a post-war bungalow.

Today, bungalows are one- or one-and-a-half-story detached single-family houses, which usually take up the spatial solutions of apartment floor plans. The upper floor, if any, which extends only partially over the first floor, or the often flat attic, usually contains the washrooms and bedrooms. In most cases, however, these rooms are also on the first floor, which contributes to the living comfort and functionality of this type of building.



The juxtaposition of numerous apartments in a bungalow development is, of course, ecologically questionable, not only in terms of the built-up area, but also in terms of the land occupied by roads and sidewalks in front of and between the individual buildings. The architects are trying to compensate for this with a variety of sustainable strategies, about which this volume also provides information in a separate factual section.

On the other hand, it is precisely the longitudinal extension of the building volume that makes the bungalow aesthetically appealing. One

thinks of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion at the 1929 World's Fair or post-war buildings such as Philip Johnson's Glass House (New Canaan, 1949). The undivided floor plan, the richness of light from floor-to-ceiling windows, and the simple flat roof panel can be combined in countless configurations. These buildings continue to have an impact in many places and at all times to this day. The chancellor's bungalow in Bonn by Sep Ruf (1964) shows that these buildings were also perceived as highly representative – even if it was not used by most chancellors because it was too mod-

ern for them. Whether flat or roofed depends in many places also on the building regulations or the context.

Many of the buildings presented here also use sloping terrain to achieve a flat impression despite the actual larger building volume. But apart from these post-war modernist bungalows, the Indian archetype or American image from the vast suburbia also lives on in modern bungalow construction: The more traditional, single-story longhouse with small windows, gables and chimneys, and wide porch on the street façade lends itself to contemporary reinter-

pretation. Thus, the history of the building type provides numerous opportunities for reinvention – in individual cases as extensions or even the merging of existing bungalows – that further enrich the image of what a bungalow is.

page 9: Singapore. Bungala for European in federated Malay States  
page 11: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion, 1929



# Laurel Hills Residence USA

Architecture: Assembled+  
Interior design: Susan Mitnick Design Studio  
Landscape design: Fiore Landscape Design  
Completion: 2019  
Project address: Los Angeles, CA, USA  
Bedrooms: 5  
Gross floor area: 455 m<sup>2</sup>  
Size of site: 1,675 m<sup>2</sup>





Laurel Hills Residence



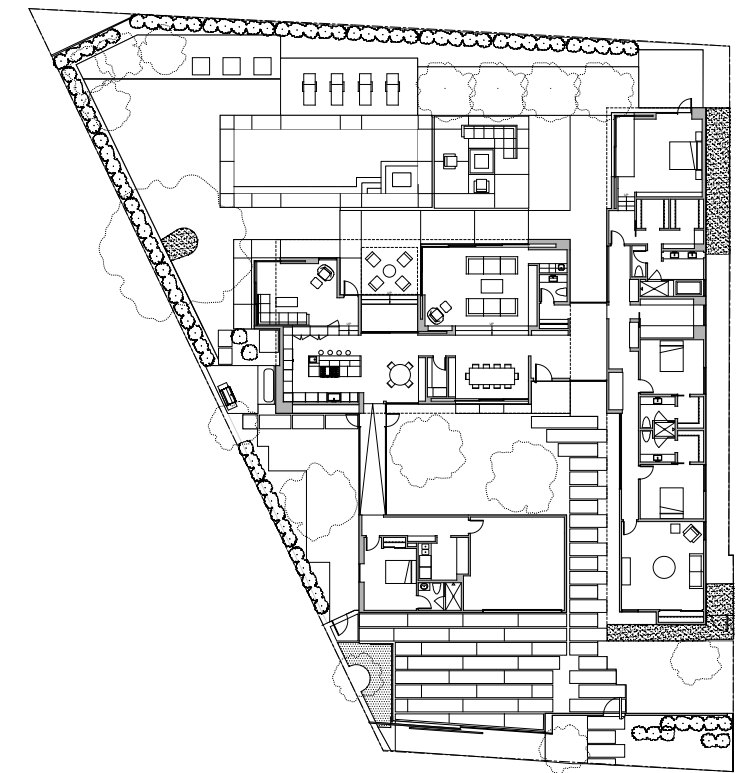
The single-story residence is composed of three pavilions. The living pavilion in the west, the sleeping pavilion in the east, and the guest house/garage pavilion are connected by a series of glass hallways. A walkway of concrete pavers, lined by

wild grasses, leads to the front door, passing a tranquil courtyard with olive trees. The entry to the house is located within a glass hallway, connecting the sleeping and the living pavilion. Large windows, skylights, and pocketing doors in-

fuse the home with natural light, reflecting off wooden floors and marble countertops. The fluidity between the kitchen, breakfast room and family room, designed for uninterrupted entertainment, creates a harmony of transparency and lightness.

Outside, the 12-meter pool and ample space create a series of outdoor rooms. The surrounding trees and hills are taken to be the building envelope and the exterior walls of the house are reconceived as a series of partition walls.





**Main materials:** western red cedar; painted cement board; glass  
**Ecological aspects:** low massing to utilize shading from surrounding trees with large roof for solar; overhangs to south; reflective roof surfaces; LED lighting; high efficiency HVAC systems; rainwater collection; drought-tolerant landscaping

# Index

**Abendroth Architekten**  
www.abendroth.at  
88–91

**alterstudio architecture LLP**  
www.alterstudio.net  
120–125, 278–283

**Arnold / Werner**  
www.arnoldwerner.com  
126–131

**Assembledge+**  
www.assembledge.com  
60–65

**Atelier Shantanu Autade**  
www.shantanuautade.com  
208–211

**Baran Studio Architecture**  
www.baranstudio.com  
114–119

**Alexander Brenner  
Architekten**  
www.alexanderbrenner.de  
48–53, 132–137

**BUB architekten**  
www.bub-architekten.de  
162–167, 260–265

**Alexandra Buchanan  
Architecture**  
www.alexandrabuchanan.com  
108–113

**Iwan Bühler Architekten  
GmbH**  
www.iwanbuehler.ch  
12–17

**Brigita Bula arhitekti**  
www.bula.lv  
242–247

**Crosshatch Pty Ltd**  
www.crosshat.ch  
254–259

**De Zwarte Hond**  
www.dezwartehond.nl  
174–179, 248–253

**DREAMER**  
www.dreamerlab.com.au  
98–103

**Dumican Mosey Architects**  
www.dumicanmosey.com  
168–173

**DX Arquitectos**  
www.dx.cl  
54–59

**Fuchs, Wacker. Architekten  
BDA**  
www.fuchswacker.de  
180–183

**Gisler Architektur und  
Bauplanung AG**  
www.gisler-architektur.ch  
144–149

**Architektur Jürgen Hagspiel**  
www.architektur-hagspiel.com  
184–189

**Aleksi Hautamäki**  
www.project-o.fi  
138–143

**MAPA Architects**  
www.mapaarq.com  
266–271

**Miró Rivera Architects**  
www.mirorivera.com  
76–81

**MRTN Architects**  
www.mrtn.com.au  
212–217

**Roger Nelson**  
www.nharchitecture.net  
98–103

**NEW HOW architects**  
www.newhow.archi  
196–201

**John Robert Nilsson  
Arkitektkontor**  
www.jrn.se  
30–35

**OOA | Office O architects**  
www.ooa.works  
190–195

**Out of the Valley**  
www.outofthevalley.co.uk  
104–107

**Piacesi Arquitetos  
Associados**  
www.piacesi.com  
18–23

**Plasma Studio**  
www.plasmastudio.com  
236–241

**Platter Architekten BDA**  
www.platter-architekten.de  
92–97

**Pablo Saric Arquitectos**  
www.pablosaric.com  
150–155

**Saunders Architecture**  
www.saunders.no  
24–29

**Shugarman Architecture +  
Design Inc.**  
www.shugarmanarchitecture.com  
218–223

**SILAA**  
www.facebook.com/Silaaarchitects  
156–161

**Architekten Spiekermann**  
www.architekten-spiekermann.de  
224–229, 272–277

**Studio MK27**  
www.studiomk27.com  
66–71

**Superfuturegroup**  
www.superfuturegroup.com  
82–87

**Think Architecture AG**  
www.thinkarchitecture.ch  
202–207

**Kurt Tillich**  
www.tillicharchitektur.de  
126–131

**TRAMA Arquitetos**  
www.tramaarquitetos.com  
42–47

**Corneille Uedingslohmann  
Architekten**  
www.cue-architekten.de  
36–41

**Katerina Valsamaki  
Architects**  
www.katerinavalsamaki.gr  
72–75

**VPA Architects**  
www.vpaarchitects.in  
230–235

**Winckler Arquitectos**  
www.waa.cl  
150–155

# Picture Credits

**Archmospheres**  
www.archmospheres.com  
139–143

**b-and**  
www.alexanderbrenner.de  
137

**Anthony Basheer**  
www.anthonymbasheer.com  
213–217

**David Birri**  
www.davidbirri.com  
5, 145–149

**Pablo Blanco**  
www.pabloblanco.net  
55–69

**Boo Yeah**  
www.boo-yearh.de  
129–131

**Andreas Bormann**  
93–97

**Simone Bossi**  
www.simonebossi.it  
202–207

**Jomar Bragança**  
www.jomarbraganca.com.br  
4 I., 19

**Zoey Braun**  
www.zoeybraun.de  
49–53, 133–136

**Alexandra Bub**  
www.bub-architekten.de  
163–167, 261–265

**Harry Cock**  
www.harrycock.nl  
6 r., 249–203

**Jaime Diaz-Berrio**  
www.jaimediazberrio.com  
7 I., 255–259

**Casey Dunn**  
www.caseydunn.net  
7 r., 121–125, 279–282,  
283 I.

**Paul Finkel**  
www.pistondesign.com  
77–81

**Leonid Furmansky**  
www.leonidfurmansky.com  
283 r.

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www.rory-gardiner.com  
99–103

**Fernando Guerra**  
www.ultimasreportagens.com  
67–71

**Marcel Hagen**  
www.studio22.at  
185–189

**Reinis Hofmanis**  
www.reinishofmanis.lv  
243–246, 247 I.

**Inclined Studio**  
www.inclinedstudio.com  
231–235

**Attila Karpati**  
www.attilakarpati.at  
89, 90 a., 91

**Tali Kimelman**  
www.talikingelman.com  
268, 269 b. I., 270

**Luis Zeno Kuhn**  
www.luiszkuhn.de  
127–128

**Aldo Lanzi**  
www.aldolanzi.com  
267, 269 a. I. + r., b. r., 271

**Benedicte Lassalle**  
www.benedictelassalle.com  
115–119

**Hoang Le**  
157–161

**John Edward Linden**  
www.johnlindenphotographs.com  
172–173

**Åke E:son Lindman**  
www.lindmanphotography.com  
31–35

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www.philography.ch  
13–17

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105–107

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109–113

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61–65

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43–47

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37–41

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83–87

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209, 210, 211 I.

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www.cristobalpalma.com  
151–155

**Michael Pezzei**  
www.mpezzei.it  
237–241

**Petr Polák Photo**  
www.petrpolak.photo  
197–201

**Ashley Pomeroy**  
10

**Mariko Reed**  
www.marikoreed.com  
169–171

**Christian Richters**  
175–179

**Rajeshwar Singh**  
www.shantanuautade.com  
211 r.

**Bent René Synnevåg**  
www.notbent.com  
4 r., 25–29

**Tek Bau GmbH**  
www.tekbau.eu  
90 b.

**Konstantinos Thomopoulos**  
73–75

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www.troyerimages.com  
219–223

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www.tvdv.be  
6 I., 191–195

**Valters Videnieks**  
247 r.

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225–229, 273–277

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181–183

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21–23

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