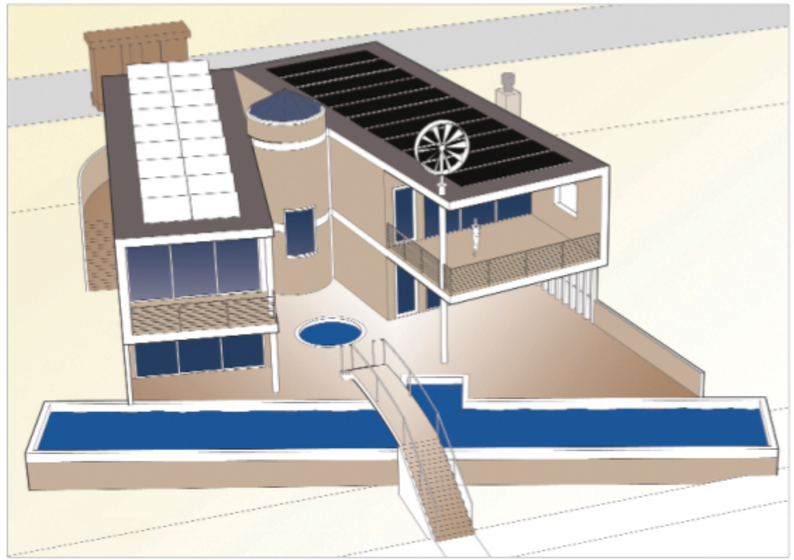
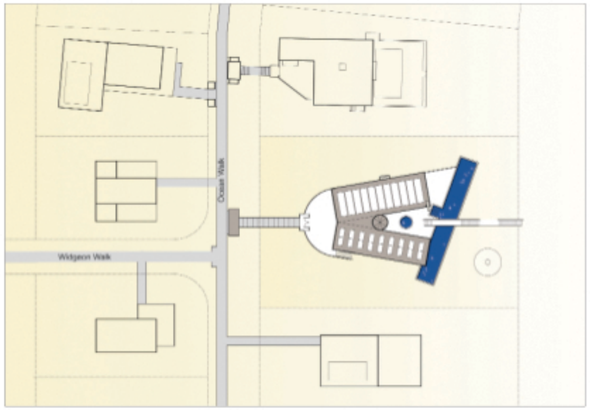
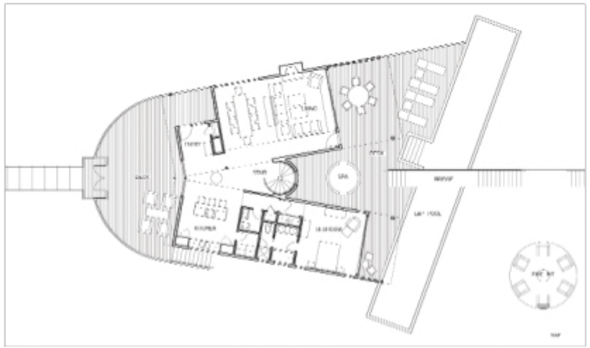


ABOVE: A small entryway at Ocean Walk (far left, above) allows for garbage collection and sheltered deliveries. A bridge walkway continues towards the house. Energy is provided by both an array of solar panels, and a Honeywell wind turbine to capture ocean breezes.

LEFT: The two wings of the home open up to the ocean-front at a 20-degree angle to each other, pivoting off the central stair tower. Pool water is heated through solar panels on the widest wing of the house, and rainwater runoff is captured in a cistern located below the decking.





Ocean Walk House
Fire Island Pines, New York

For the Esplanade magazine charrette, I selected a site adjacent to a house I designed two years ago for clients with an ocean-front property on Fire Island. Not limited by budget, a small lot, or pre-existing construction, I began to design an idealized version of the same house. The end result, however, was something very different.

Fire Island is a barrier island on the south coast of Long Island in New York, 26-miles long but only a quarter mile wide. Fire Island Pines, like other communities on the island, is accessible only by passenger ferry, and has a network of pedestrian boardwalks but no cars. It is mostly a summer community, although there is limited year-round ferry service.

The Ocean Walk House is roughly 2,500 gross square feet, with an equivalent amount of exterior areas, including the 10-foot by 75-foot lap pool. There are a variety of spaces for different activities at different times of day, where one can be alone or social. The two wings of the house pivot off the stair 20 degrees to each other, giving separation to the private and public areas of the house. Weathered gray cedar siding and cedar shingles with white stained trim relate to the local vernacular of beach houses and boardwalks.

The house incorporates sustainable features into the design itself. Passive solar energy is captured by the large south-oriented windows that are shaded with large overhangs from summer sun but bring in low winter sun. The portion of the roof which is oriented most directly south contains 18 solar panels to generate electricity for the house and contribute to the community electric grid when the house is not in use. In addition, a Honeywell wind turbine uses the gearless Blade Tip Power System to quietly generate electricity from the frequent ocean breezes. Pool water is heated by being pumped though solar panels on the house's largest roof. Roof rainwater run-off is captured in a cistern below the deck and used for drip irrigation of the draught-resistant landscaping.

All windows use laminated glass for protection from storm-driven projectiles. In addition, automatic metal roll-down hurricane shutters are incorporated into the structure of the veranda for the large ocean-facing windows.

The Ocean Walk House celebrates its oceanfront site and the natural glories of a barrier island in an ecologically responsible way. It also provides a warm and comfortable domestic environment in a contextual, modern design.

David Gauld, AIA
New York, New York
DavidGauldArchitect.com