



Oak Pass Residence
in Beverly Hills, USA

Description

Gerhard Heusch's framework for balancing innovative design with the natural environment

Via v2com

Gerhard Heusch, founder of **Heusch Inc.** has unveiled a 1,500 sq. ft underground office addition to his innovative **Oak Pass residence** in Beverly Hills, California. The office space continues to advance the innovative design solutions employed by the architect in building his 3,500 sq. ft. home, completed in 2006 on an empty parcel of abundantly natural land overlooking Benedict Canyon.



Gerhard Heusch developed the architectural concept for this home in 2000, when he purchased an acre of land and decided to incorporate his design. With a hillside to the east and a panoramic view of Benedict Canyon to the west, he integrated his home into the landscape in harmony with the abundant nature present.

This additional office space successfully blends into its surroundings, in full harmony with the natural beauty of the area.

The plan he put forward was to build 10 steel columns to support an elevated house, which he successfully argued would mitigate any landslide threats to the built environment. The innovative solution allowed him to forgo the 15-foot setback by building a much smaller, less obtrusive retaining wall into a natural cut in the property. The design plan provided a platform that would enable him to build his spacious, modernist home into the treeline of the embracing hillside.

A minimalist treehouse

With 10-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows, Heusch's open floorplan ensures that every room of the seamlessly flowing living space has a spectacular view. To further ensure unobstructed flow, Heusch embedded much of the house's infrastructure, including roof drainage, plumbing, and electricity, into the support columns. As a result, upon entering the front door, unobstructed views carry through to a glass wall at the rear of the house, revealing a beautiful oak tree backdrop that emphasizes the seamless connection between the natural surroundings and his built environment.



The interior of the single-level layout is framed by natural stucco walls and Brazilian walnut floors, with custom-designed furniture, cabinets, fittings, and profiles that further embody Heusch's minimalist vision.

There are three bedrooms, including two guest bedrooms that can be linked together courtesy of a sliding wall. Spanish marble anoints the guest bathrooms, while the master bathroom is accented by Portuguese limestone, including a soaking tub that was hand-carved from a single block.

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In order to accommodate an additional regulation requiring a second exit, based on the home's total floor space, Heusch made another innovative architectural tweak. To meet the requirement, he built a small bridge and staircase exiting the elevated master bedroom, which leads down from the hillside to a pool area and adjacent Zen-style garden.

The daily commute

After completing the house in 2006, Heusch spent the next few years living in Argentina, where he was commissioned to work on a hotel project. After returning to California in 2010, he found that his heart lay with the idea of working from the same inspirational environment that he was living in. It was time to build his new office, with a fresh underground design that wouldn't disturb his floating treehouse.



Heusch decided that he would build his office beneath the pad of the Zen-like garden, a process which began with the excavation of 80 truckloads of dirt in front of the retaining wall. The adjacent pool area was left completely intact, and he carefully avoided disturbances to the main support columns of the house. However, in the end, one of the existing support columns was incorporated. With the help of a local sub-contractor, Heusch erected the walls of the concrete structure, welding custom fixtures to the rebar reinforcements before pouring the cement in order to accommodate electrical and other wiring needs as he had done for the house.

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He cut a window out of the existing retaining wall, as well as an entrance in a new concrete wall. To descend from the main entrance into the office space, he built a staircase, with its cantilevered treads also welded to the rebar. Once the structure was built, Heusch sealed the space with a concrete ceiling. He then reintroduced the sand and pavers of the former garden space above and added strategically-placed boulders extracted from the dig, as well as two panels of new glass flooring.



“I am pleased to have been able to replicate the process of harmonizing the built environment with its natural surroundings,” concludes Heusch. “I now have the most serene office commute that I could have ever imagined.”

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Completed in 2017, the office addition took Heusch 10 months to build and has renewed international attention to an architectural project that innovates at every turn. At a point in history when the delicate balance between nature and the built environment has exponentially grown in importance, Heusch’s Oak Pass aesthetic and structural innovation has garnered tremendous interest from architectural circles as a model for future projects.

“There is a definite professional advantage to living within the built environment that I have created,” concludes Heusch. “The success of the project, and the natural beauty of my surroundings, inspire new ideas every day for advancing the integration of architectural design into the natural environment.”



Oak Pass

Architects: Heusch Inc
Area of project:: 320m2 House 150m2 Studio Addition

About Heusch Inc. Architecture & Design

Born in Germany, and a graduate of the Academy of Beaux Arts in Munich, Gerhard Heusch began honing his architectural skills at Atelier Canal in Paris before earning a Master's degree in Architecture from the University of California, Los Angeles. After working with Dworsky & Associates in Los Angeles, as well as on hotel projects in the South Pacific, he founded the Heusch Inc studio in Los Angeles in 1991, whose portfolio of projects in Europe, Asia, West Africa and the Americas ranges from furniture design to residential and commercial projects.

Images: Frederico Zignani, Gerhard Heusch – Courtesy of Heusch Inc.

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