



# A CONCRETE RESONANCE

WANDERING WALLS  
BY XRANGE ARCHITECTS  
Hengchun, Pingtung, Taiwan

With ribbon-like walls that seem to 'wander' and weave on the landscape, this structure intermixes concrete and nature for an interplay that's almost intuitive.

Text by the architects

**O**n an oceanfront-facing mountain top, between tall grasses and acacia forests, walls meander in and out of the wild and windswept landscape to create an eight-room retreat. Rugged, curvaceous concrete walls define the boundaries between architecture and landscape, wandering inside and outside to create public and private spaces. The retreat is thus named *Wandering Walls*, a building where the walls truly wander throughout.

Respecting that acacia trees do not survive migration or disturbance to their root systems, the building hugs the edge of a native crop of acacia trees to gently curve out towards the ocean. The acacia forest, providing essential wind shelter, also creates an ambling forest path as a unique entry experience.

By using a flat slab and bearing wall structural system, the ribbon-like concrete walls can move in and out of the three floor plans independent of each other's plan alignment. Each floor has a different load bearing wall plan configuration dictated by room layouts, views and the need for wind barrier placements.

On the ground floor, the wall cantilevers out of the ground-floor to create an entry court. At the stairs, curve walls fly 4.5m off the second and third-floor floor plates to form a three-storey suspended concrete enclosure. Here, the walls hover above each other but do not touch. Here, the horizon, the juncture of the sky, forest and ocean is revealed. Here, is also an echo chamber where guests are made aware of the sound of acacia leaves rustling in the strong ocean winds as they move through the building.

The walls are entirely cast using flat wooden formwork panels with widths of 40mm, 200mm and 300mm. Along the length of these wandering walls, the retreat's rustic materiality transitions from rough concrete to wood, metal and tiles. The rough cast concrete walls on the windward side have also gradually smoothed out due to their constant exposure to the seasonal winds.

On the roof is an infinity pool with sweeping 360-degree panoramic views of the ocean and the surrounding mountains. An eco pond on the ground floor is privately enjoyed by the largest guest room, while also providing irrigation to the surrounding landscape. Natural fences formed by two-meter tall grasses and the surrounding Miscanthus grasslands are some of the main highlights of the landscape design.

The Wandering Walls nudges guests in and out of the wild landscapes along its curve walls, through constant shifts of light and shadows and the sounds of rustling acacias swaying in the salt-tinged winds; a returning to nature, infinite landscapes and a sense of permanence and grounding with the land. <sup>AM</sup>



Leading towards the entry. Photography: Lorenzo Pierucci



An angled view of the ground floor entry. Photography: Kuo-Min Lee

Rugged, curvaceous concrete walls define the boundaries between architecture and landscape, wandering inside and outside to create public and private spaces.



The Wandering Walls nudges guests in and out of the wild landscapes along its curve walls, through constant shifts of light and shadows and the sounds of rustling acacias swaying in the salt-tinged winds; a returning to nature, infinite landscapes and a sense of permanence and grounding with the land.

The ground floor which flows directly to nature. Photography: Kuo-Min Lee



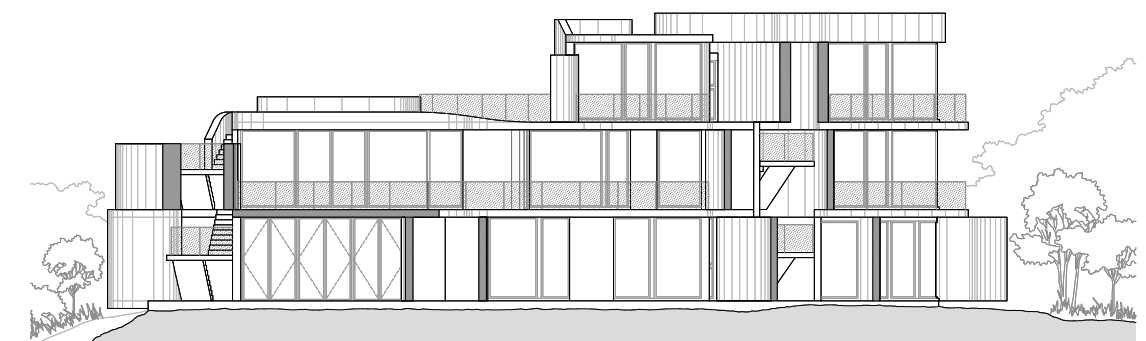
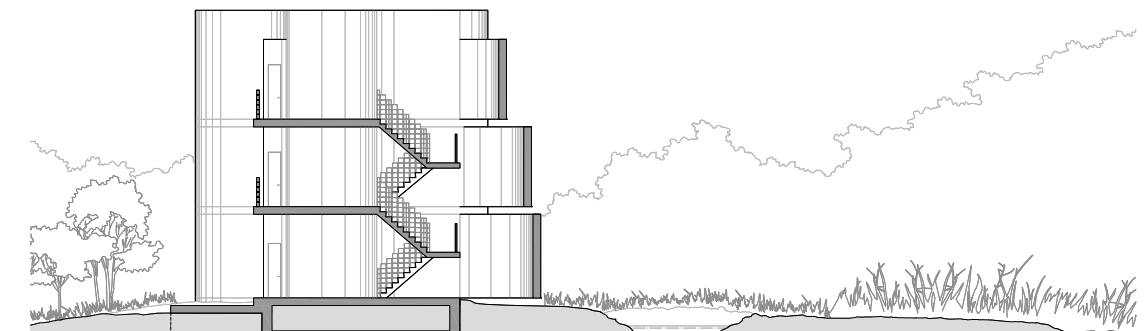
The balcony, which overlooks the natural landscape. Photography: Kuo-Min Lee



The Wandering Walls lines (which seem almost fluid) against the acacia trees. Photography: Lorenzo Pierucci



The rooftop pool with its sweeping vista of the mountains, at sunset. Photography: Lorenzo Pierucci



Elevations



The 'flying walls' at the staircase where the walls are suspended above each other. Photography: Kuo-Min Lee

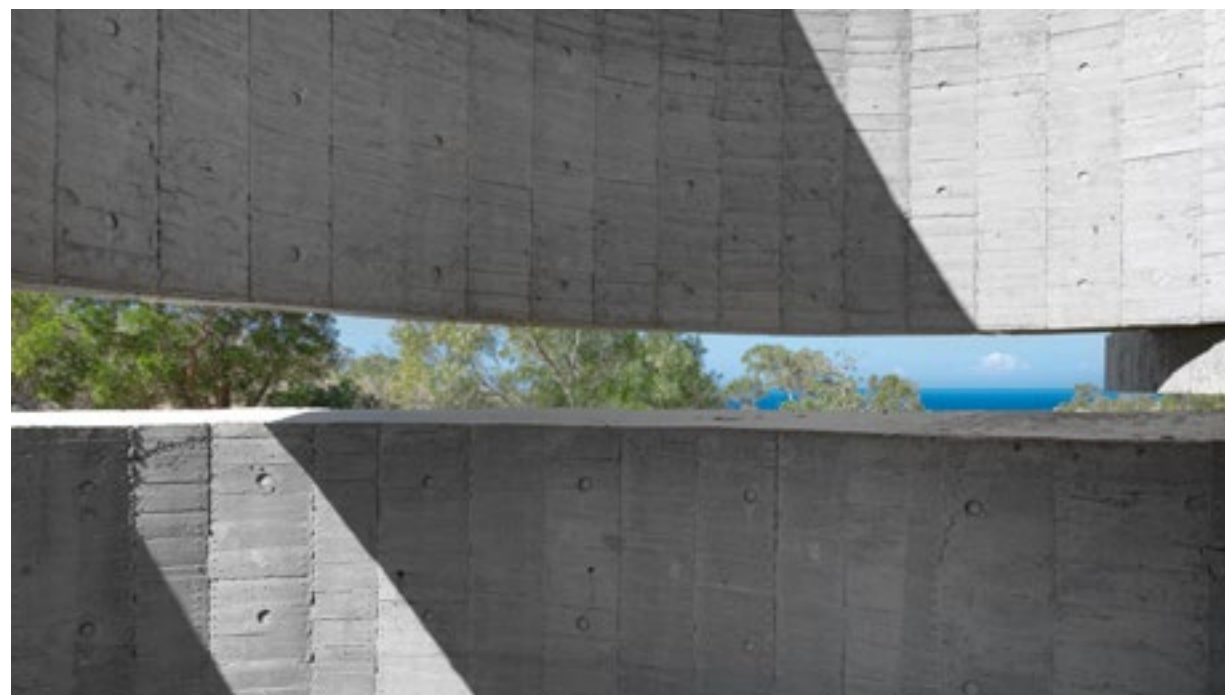


A look into the interior where outside meets in. Photography: Kuo-Min Lee



The entryway. Photography: Kuo-Min Lee

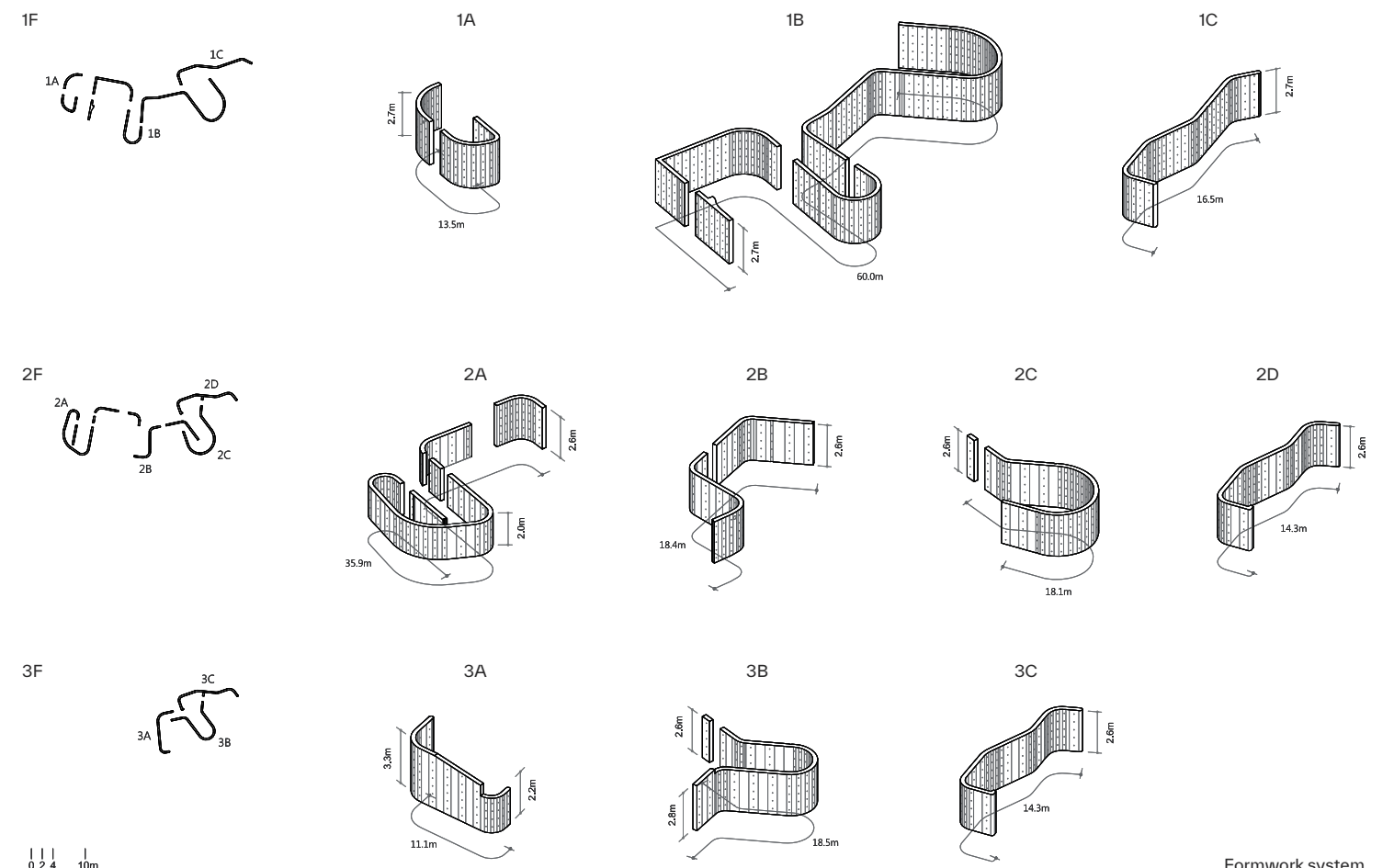
Each floor has a different load bearing wall plan configuration dictated by room layouts, views and the need for wind barrier placements.



Between the 'flying walls', in this void, you are able to see a sliver of the view. Photography: Lorenzo Pierucci



An aerial shot of Wandering Walls. Photography: Lorenzo Pierucci



Formwork system

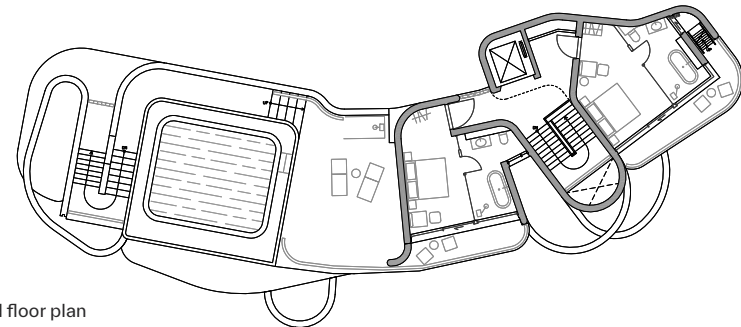


The staircase, and where different shapes make form. Photography: Kuo-Min Lee

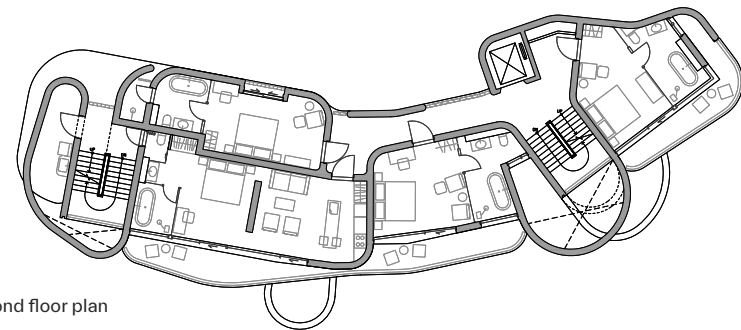
Along the length of these wandering walls, the retreat's rustic materiality transitions from rough concrete to wood, metal and tiles.



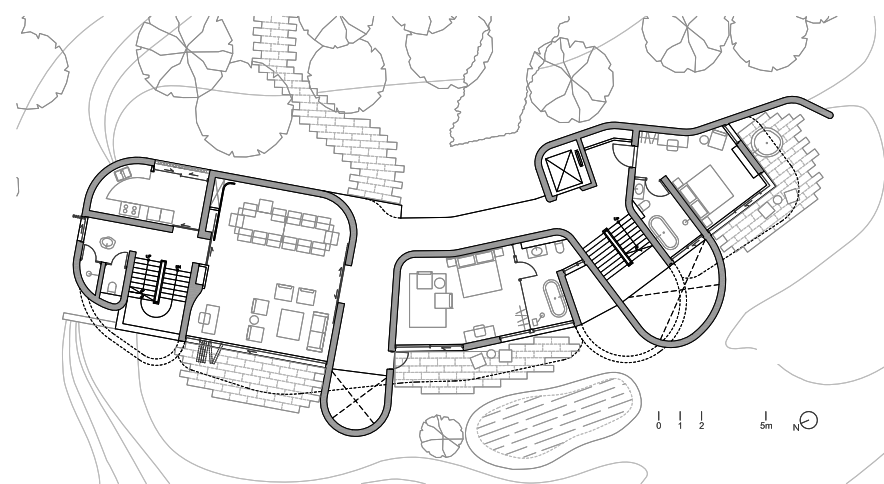
A bedroom's layout. Photography: Lorenzo Pierucci



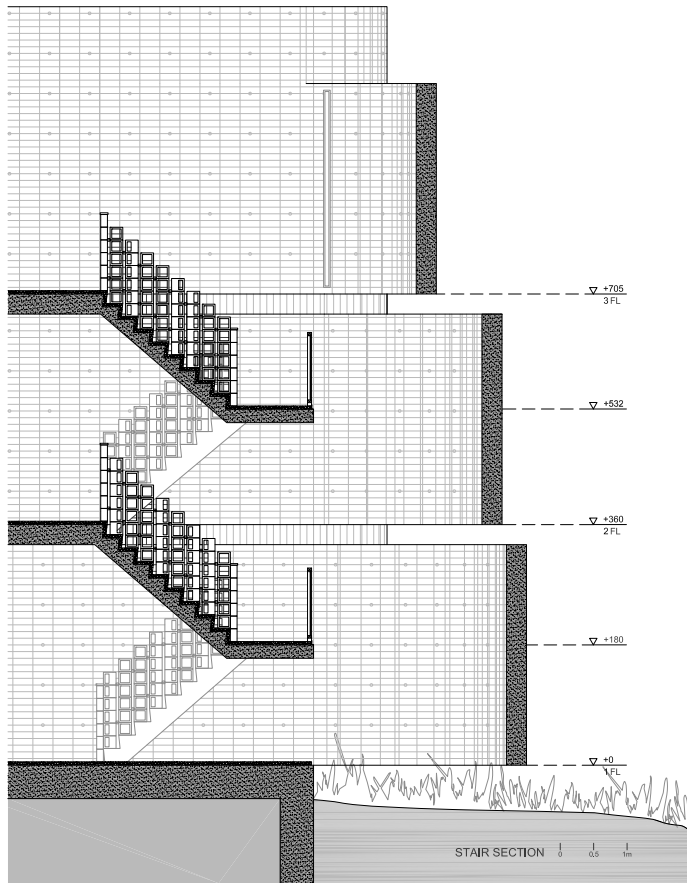
Third floor plan



Second floor plan



First floor plan



Stair section



A distinct corner of the exterior of Wandering Walls. Photography: Lorenzo Pierucci



<b>LOCATION</b> Hengchun, Pingtung, Taiwan
<b>CLIENT</b> Gavin Chiu
<b>PRINCIPAL USE</b> Hospitality
<b>ARCHITECT</b> XRANGE Architects
<b>PROJECT PRINCIPAL</b> Grace Cheung
<b>PROJECT TEAM</b> Emily Lin, Jason Chen, Miriam Park, Peihuan Hsu, Sonia Pan, Beatrice Cordella, Edgar Navarrete
<b>DESIGN PERIOD</b> 2013-2015
<b>CONSTRUCTION PERIOD</b> 2016-2019
<b>DATE OF COMPLETION</b> June 2019
<b>SITE AREA</b> 2,800sqm
<b>FLOOR AREA</b> 450sqm
<b>LIGHTING</b> Unolai Lighting Design & Associates
<b>LANDSCAPING</b> XRANGE Architects
<b>OTHER BUILDING CONSULTANTS</b> Top Technic Engineering Consultants Co. Ltd. (Structural engineers)
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b> Kuo-Min Lee, Lorenzo Pierucci



**GRACE CHEUNG**  
FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT OF XRANGE

Holding a Master of Architecture from Columbia University, Grace Cheung is a USA licensed architect living and practicing in Taipei. Prior to co-founding XRANGE with Royce YC Hong, Cheung gained work experience at Patkau Architects in Vancouver, Bernard Tschumi Architects in New York and OMA (Office for Metropolitan Architecture) in Hong Kong and Rotterdam. Born and raised in Sandakan, Sabah, she relocated from Malaysia to Canada in her teens. Cheung has lived, studied and worked in three continents; America, Europe and Asia. Seeing herself as a front-line worker in the challenging urban context of developing Asia, she uses her cultural fluency and international background to steer XRANGE towards a broad critical point of view with the methods and materials of architecture. Equally passionate about art, she is also the founder and Creative Director of Project Seek, a non-profit creative platform founded 2014 for emerging artists in Taiwan.