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### Folly's Jetty House re-examines coastal construction

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Like the beachfront jetties for which it is named, a Folly Beach home designed by three young architects stretches in a slim, linear block toward the ocean and seems to defy wind and sea.

The Jetty House has an edge that creates a stark separation from some of its neighbors. On this densely vegetated island that dubs itself "The Edge of America," there is still an ample supply of simple wooden beach cottages, survivors from a time when most inhabitants came to camp out for a season and didn't live there year-round.

While the Jetty House may not be for every taste, it is an eye-catching example of how space, structure and light can be used to create a prototype for coastal construction.

The architects' main challenge and their major accomplishment in building the Jetty House was creating ocean views from a second-row beach lot that faces two oceanfront homes.

"If your home has a view of the water versus a view of the house in front of it, that's obviously going to increase the value of the home," said Jason Hart, one of the founding architects of CUBE Design + Research LLC.

Hart and his partners, Aaron Malnarick and Chris Johns, decided to position the house so it faced the gap between the two houses across the street, taking advantage of the approximately 20 feet of unobstructed view on the 70-foot lot. They also built the house tall, so someone standing on the rooftop deck would have an ocean view unobstructed by the roofs of the opposite homes.

Hart and his partners, who studied architecture together at the University of Florida and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, designed the home for Hart's father, Jack Hart, a landscape architect. Jack Hart was the general contractor for the project, with consulting provided by Blue Line Construction.

Jack Hart said his favorite part of the house is what his son refers to as its "spine."

"It's where the movement is and where the views are accentuated," he said. "It's all the way to one side of the house. You go up the stairs and you're looking into the ocean."

The stairs have open-slat steps that allow for the passage of light and view availability. Windows were also strategically placed through the house to capture light and view in a narrow, box-like structure.

"What we did was essentially identify windows as a view window or a light window, so our windows on the south side are mainly about view, because you want to look at the ocean," Hart said. "Your windows on the (other) sides are mainly about bringing light into the house, so they'd be smaller, there would be fewer of them and we basically wanted to retain privacy."

There are few glimpses of the homes on either side of the Jetty House from its interior. Windows at the back of the house are set to frame the lushly vegetated lot and to restrict views of homes on the row behind the house.

"We envisioned the house in a way that could be an experience, sort of a path that you move through," said Malnarick. "You strategize the location of those windows so you maximize the view outward. It allows you to view Folly Beach from a different perspective and I think all that culminates on the roof. It's almost an aerial view for

such a low-lying beach community, which is unusual.”

The team also wanted to make the space underneath the house useable. Many beach houses that must be built off the ground are perched on tight rows of columns, Hart said, which prevents parking a car or even walking under the house.

Placing wider support beams under the floor allowed for fewer columns and freed up space for parking beneath the house. The home is accessed by an open staircase rising to the front door.

Bearing coastal challenges in mind, the architectural team chose to collapse the structure's views, recessing the front doorway, its large sliding glass door panel and the balcony off the living area into the structure of the home.

“We actually created a language of carving,” Hart said. “We carved out the decks and we carved out the entry. This allows the deck itself to be part of the structure of the home and it also gives added protection to windows and sun shading.”

Johns dealt a great deal with the exterior detailing of the house and the challenges of being one row off the ocean.

“It's a bit of a harsh climate being right there at the ocean, with the extreme heat in the summer and it does get a little chilly there,” Johns said. “I learned quite a lot just detailing it to be durable and as maintenance-free as possible.”

Some of the materials used in the four-bedroom, 3,100-square-foot home, such as the large sliding glass panels on the front, were more expensive than those typically found in more traditional homes.

“We had to pick our battles, and there were some things with the exterior that we had to compromise on in the end,” Johns said. “But the views and the experience I don't think were compromised. We want to make people happy and open their eyes to other ways of living in space and with the landscape.”

The Jetty House got a good deal of attention in the nine months it took to build, including a truck driver who ran into a utility pole while gawking at the house.

“What was always interesting, especially during initial construction, was to sit out on the deck and the balcony and watch people as they go by on a bike or walking or driving,” Hart said. “They would all kind of yell up their comments. Some people would give you a thumbs-up and say, ‘This house is beautiful.’ Some would say, ‘This is the ugliest house on Folly.’ Some would say, ‘This is the coolest house on Folly.’ One guy walked by with a surfboard and said, ‘The house is really ugly but I bet it's really nice on the inside.’”

Allen Kinter, an architect and member of the Design Review Board on Folly Beach, said the home's contemporary design actually dates back to the 1920s.

“My attitude towards modernesque construction, specifically on Folly Beach, is that we have kind of an eclectic mix of structure down here,” Kinter said. “We've got a saying at the DRB: ‘Keep Folly Funky.’”

Folly Beach requires design reviews only for commercial structures, not for residential buildings.

“It is contemporary and it's not the norm out there,” Hart said. “What's interesting is, it kind of gets people thinking about what a house is and what it can be.”

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