ARNE JACOBSEN'S OWN SUMMERHOUSE



KNARKEN

ARNE JACOBSEN (1902-1971)

1924 Graduated from the Technical School in Copenhagen.

1924-1927 Attended The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts' School

of Architecture in Copenhagen.

1927-1929 Staff employee working at the office of the municipal architect

in Copenhagen.

1956-1965 Professor at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen.

1930-1971 From 1930 up until his death Jacobsen operated his own drawing office.

Arne Jacobsen distinguished himself in a vivid and personal way in Danish design and architecture for more than half a century through many different projects that ranged from constructing buildings to creating furniture and cutlery. An outspoken care for detail is characteristic of Arne Jacobsen's works. Many of Arne Jacobsen's buildings were supplied and fitted with fixtures and articles of furniture designed by the architect himself. Among the central works of architecture by Arne Jacobsen, we find:

Own house at Gotfred Rodes Vej (1929-31)

Bellavista in Klampenborg (1933-34)

Bellevue Theatre (1935-36)

Own Summerhouse in Gudmindrup (1937)

Aarhus Town Hall (in collaboration with Erik Møller) (1939-42)

Søllerød Town Hall (in collaboration with Flemming Lassen) (1940-42)

Søholm linked house-development in Klampenborg (1950-54)

Rødovre Town Hall (1957)

Glostrup Town Hall (1958)

Munkegård School in Copenhagen (1955-59)

SAS Royal Hotel, Copenhagen (1958-1960)

Tom's Chocolate Factory in Ballerup (1961)

Denmark's National Bank (commenced in 1965)

St. Catherine's College in Oxford, England (1960-64)

FORFWORD

Sejrø Bay, below Sjællands Odde, is home to the summerhouse that Arne Jacobsen built for himself and his family in 1937. On the edge of the pine forest, a three-metre high sand dune covered in heather rises up to unveil views across the beach and bay. This is where you will find Jacobsen's summerhouse. The living room rests on the plateau, with its windows positioned to make the most of the pretty views.

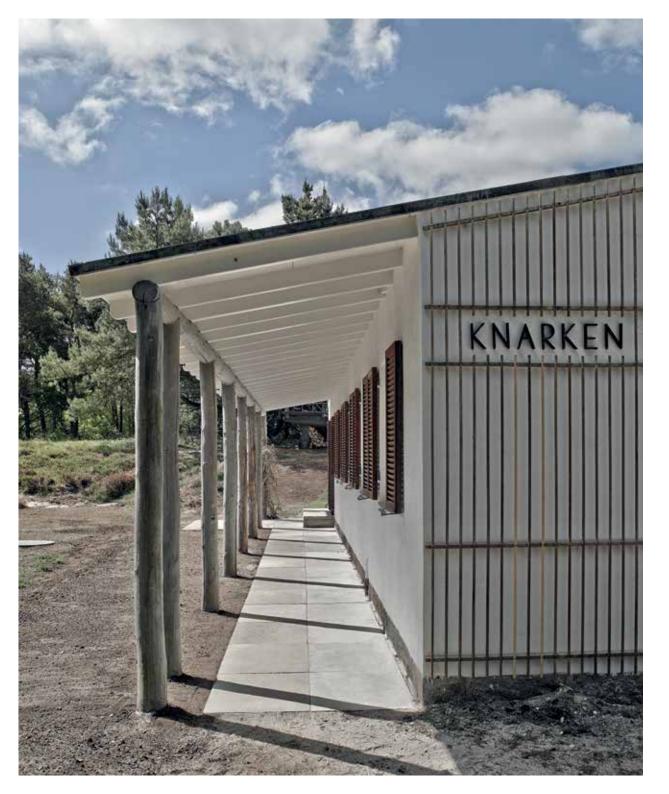
The architecture blends in perfectly with the surrounding landscape and reflects many of the values for which the Nordic interpretation of Modernism has since become famous. Among these is the belief that having sympathetic insight into and caring for the life lived within the architecture is equally as important as the functional aspects of the building, for example.

The distinctive sweeping summerhouse features the white, cubic characteristics found in Arne Jacobsen's own house on Gotfred Rodes Vej 2 (from 1928), while at the same time alluding to the new, future trends in Modernism. The functions of the living room, dining room and square of the house blend together in the central double volume space featuring an elegant staircase leading up to the open-plan room on the first floor. Sixteen years later, Arne Jacobsen replicates the shape of this room in his own home on Strandvejen 413, which, along with the Søholm Row Houses, sparks Arne Jacobsen's international breakthrough.

The summerhouse is culturally and historically significant as a leading example of a new architectural trend which has greatly influenced the 20^{th} -century approach to building homes. It also exemplifies an ambitious Arne Jacobsen who is doing well in his career. With his summerhouse in Gudmindrup Lyng, he creates a comprehensive architectural work of international standing – an icon.

Through the acquisition and restoration of this one-of-a-kind summerhouse designed by Arne Jacobsen, Realdania Byg wants to conserve, manage and bring this important contribution to Denmark's cultural and architectural heritage into a new era.

Realdania Byg June 2013



ARNE JACOBSEN'S OWN SUMMERHOUSE AT SEJRØ BAY

By Kjeld Vindum

"At Sejrø Bay, between Høve and Tengslemark Lyng, lies a large heath and plantation area known as Gudmindrup Lyng. Here the sea has formed a lake surrounded by meadows. The lake, which links to the sea, has little depth and is restricted by two rows of sand dunes towards the beach and three rows of pine trees towards land. The lake is rich in bird-life and the meadows' plant-life, and it is large and peculiar.

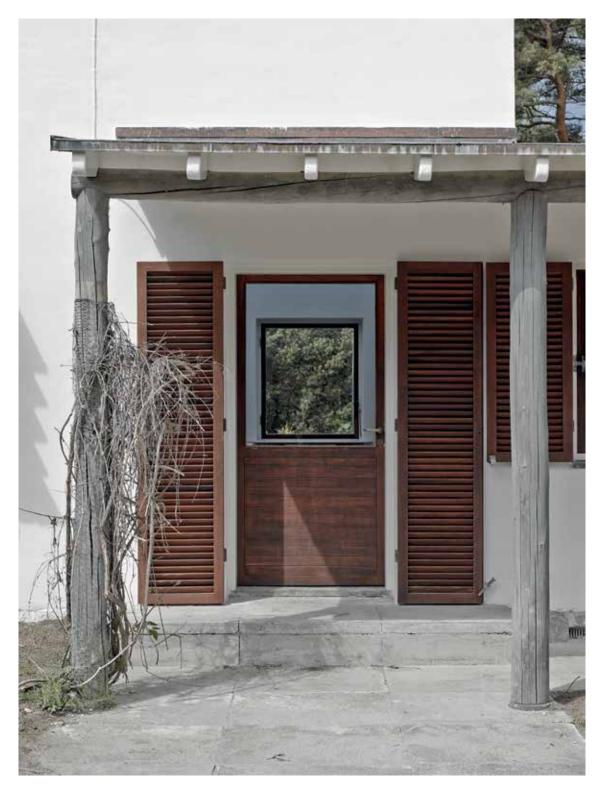
Within this area, on the edge of a little forest, lies an old sand dune covered in heather, which stretches three metres above the otherwise flat landscape and from the top of which there is a phenomenal view across the entire Sejrø Bay. On this plateau, I have placed the living room of the house – positioned to face the two most beautiful views across Lumbsaas and Sjællands Odde to the north-west and across Ordrup Næs to the south-west."

Arne Jacobsen describing his summerhouse in the magazine Arkitekten.*

Finding the summerhouse is not an easy task today, and various other summerhouses have since appeared. You have to change directions four times as you make your way from the motorway to the outstretched, quite densely wooded summerhouse area. You need to travel farther and farther until you cannot get any farther, at which point you will see the house appear on the left, behind a little forecourt. Or rather, what you will see is a little gable. This whitewashed gable sits on what appears to be quite a modest brick house with a low saddle roof. There is a window in the middle of the gable and a garage door appears sort of squeezed in to the right of this. The rest is covered by a thick, vertical trellis adorned by a few creeping plants. As you look to the left, behind the plants, you notice the letters K-N-A-R-K-E-N, which spell out the name of the house. And you can see that the left side of the roof stretches out over the house and gives the impression of depth, revealing a loggia marked by pillars. This leads you along the east side of the house and out towards the landscape behind it.

In the loggia, you move between the row of pillars (bark-stripped logs) and the house's façade featuring a row of windows flanked by shutters.

Upon arrival at Arne
Jacobsen's own
summerhouse you are
met by a modest looking
façade with a loggia on
the left hand side.





Above you see the Northern facade covered by a trellis. Access to the summerhouse is either through a door in the garage or through the door at the end of the loggia, as seen on photo on the opposite page.

We are already half-way into the house. Guided by the step protruding from the right, we reach the door, which features a large window that enables us to look into the house. And beyond this, thanks to the window in the opposite façade, we can see straight through the house and out towards the west-facing landscape. We are standing at a crossroads between the two directions, which, like a compass, has determined the orientation and placement of the house.

BUSINESS AND LEISURE

The summerhouse was completed in 1937. Arne Jacobsen was 36 years old and had been married to Marie – with whom he had two sons – for eleven years. In the ten years since building his first house for himself and his family (the modern funkis villa on Gotfred Rodes Vej 2 in Charlottenlund, near Copenhagen), he had established himself as Denmark's leading modern architect. He had already made a name for himself in 1929 when he designed the temporary show house, Fremtidens Hus (House of the Future), which he designed together with Flemming Lassen. This was followed by a number of more or less fashionable houses,

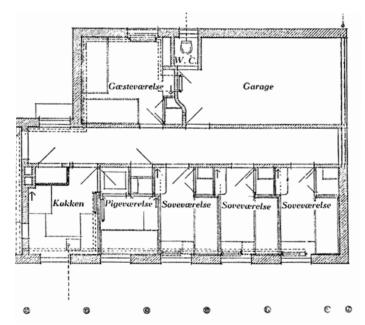


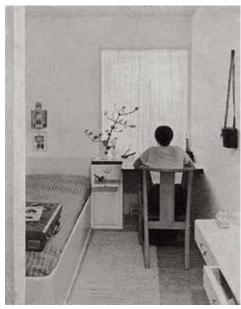
such as Rothenborgs Hus (Rothenborg's House) (1930), and Th. Petersens Hus (Th. Petersens Hus) (1933), and larger buildings such as the housing complex Bellavista (1931-34), the controversial Stellings Hus (Stelling's House) (1934-37) and Bellevue Teatret (Bellevue Theatre) (1935-37). And in the preceding year, he had won his first significant monumental assignment – Aarhus Rådhus (Aarhus Town Hall). Jacobsen was well underway, and he needed a place to unwind with his family.

ARRIVAL

When the family arrived at the house by car, they probably found it easiest to enter the house via the garage. Coincidentally, the only original toilet in the house can be found in the right corner of this garage. A door on the opposite side leads into a hallway featuring more doors. A door on the right leads to the large bedroom, which extends behind the garage, and the next door has a window facing the west-facing terrace. On the opposite side of the hallway, five doors lead to the three small bedrooms, the maid's room and the kitchen – all of which have windows facing the loggia. To the far right, at the end of the hallway, there is another door leading you farther into the house. The hallway is the backbone of the

Arne Jacobsen's own house in Charlottenlund (1929-31), built by Arne Jacobsen as his private residence. An extension was added in 1931 to house a private studio. The house was Arne Jacobsen's first house inspired by international functionalism.





Left: A section of the floor plan for the summerhouse.
Right: Photo from Arne Jacobsen's presentation of the house in the magazine Arkitekten. All of the rooms are fitted with built-in furniture designed especially for the house.

house, along which the kitchen and bedrooms are positioned. Jacobsen even planned for the possibility of expansion by eventually converting the garage into yet another two bedrooms with west-facing windows. The garage door would then presumably be bricked up, which could have had a positive impact on the façade encountered on arrival. Jacobsen never got around to realising those plans, however.

THE LOWER WING

All the rooms are fitted with furniture specially designed for the house. A built-in wardrobe and bed with a floor-level bed frame have been fitted to the left of the door in each of the small rooms. At the end of the room, a desk with drawers and a low-level pull-out shelf unit, which functions as a bedside table, has been built into the space below the window. To the right of the door, across from the cupboard, a writing shelf with drawers has been built in an alcove created by the difference in depth between the wardrobe and bed in the neighbouring room. Much of the built-in furniture is characterised by numerous curves, as are the window and door frames. All of the wood has been whitewashed. The only free-standing piece of furniture in the rooms is a chair origi-





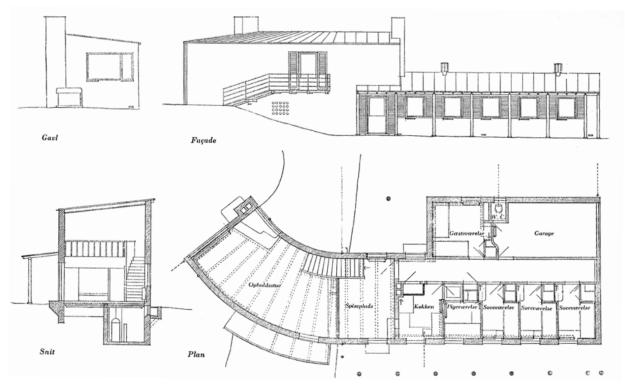
nally designed by Jacobsen for Fritz Hansen. This dining chair was also used in Bellevue Theatre's restaurant, among other places.

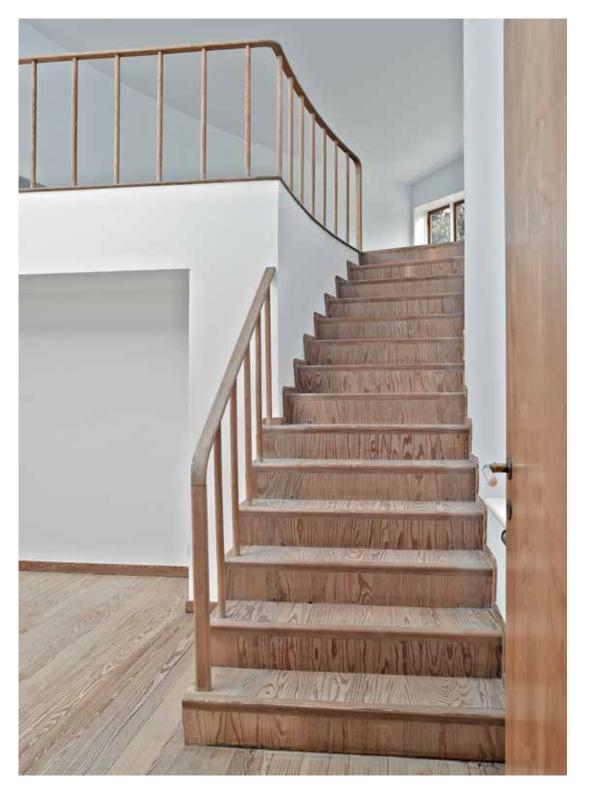
The Bellevue Theatre building has a characteristic curve. In general, curves and curvatures were valued features of modern architecture – not least Jacobsen's. In the case of Bellevue Theatre, which was completed approximately a year before the summerhouse, the side wing is curved back from the theatre building in a soft arch. NOVO's laboratory (1935) in Frederiksberg, in Copenhagen, has a similar feature. Bellevista features rounded balconies and a rounded corner, as does Stelling's House, which also featured an interior filled with rounded corners and curvatures. The House of the Future was one big round building, while Aarhus Town Hall, which Jacobsen worked on while he designed and had his summerhouse built, is full of rounded corners. And, as we shall see as we make our way farther into the house and pass the door at the end of the above-mentioned door, the curves are not restricted to the interior: from the door onwards, Jacobsen's summerhouse is one big bend.

This side: Desk, drawers and door handles are all designed by Arne Jacobsen.
Opposite page, top left: A look down the hall towards the living room.
Opposite page, top right: NOVO laboratory, designed by Arne Jacobsen in 1935.
Opposite page, bottom: The characteristic bend of the summerhouse is clear on the floor plan.















THE CENTER OF THE SUMMERHOUSE

As we step out of the hallway, we find ourselves between what we could call the front door (the east-facing door with the window that we looked into from the loggia) and the west-facing window opposite. Here, you can clearly see how the two openings mark an axis across the house, which visually connects the east-facing loggia to the west-facing terrace. The terrace is actually connected via the hallway and is therefore offset in relation to the cross axis. This has presumably been designed to avoid any unwanted interference or draught.

We are now standing at the crossroads between the two main directions of the house. In one direction, the cross axis indicates the division between the two parts of the house: the low, wide part with the small rooms and the high, narrow part with the large room. In the other direction, the long axis connects the two sections of the house, and, as we shall see, opens it up towards the landscape.

We have left the low, wide part of the house containing the small rooms arranged around the central hallway. From this point on, the Left: You can exit the central room through the door leading to the loggia. Right: The kitchen has been updated to meet modern standards – under care for the architectural heritage.

Previous page: The staircase connecting the two parts of the summerhouse.





Left: The only toilet used to be in the garage. This has been supplied by a new toilet and shower.

Right: The door in the niche leading to the new toilet and shower.

house becomes narrower and takes on a completely different feel from a spatial perspective. But the direction continues: an open staircase leads farther into the house and upstairs – continuing on from the hallway, but in a bend. This is the central and clearly expressed movement sequence of the house: hallway-staircase – its backbone.

But what is this new aspect that seems to be taking shape in relation to the hallway, the rooms and the little kitchen behind us? Indeed, spatially, it seems almost like an explosion. The room opens up to more than double volume and stretches out to the full width of the house, while at the same time extending farther on a new, higher level. The room also bends around to the right in a soft arch. The extent of the room is suggested, but the difference in levels and the bend prevent us from seeing the whole room. If we want to move beyond speculation, we will have to walk up the stairs.

Spatial sequences that develop unexpectedly in character and scale are a well-known architectural device, which Jacobsen seemed to be particularly fond of using – not least in connection with arrival situations. When you arrive at Aarhus Town Hall, for example, you have to go through an



arrival area (below the council hall) which has a relatively low ceiling, before you get to the actual lobby with the high ceiling. The entrance of Rødovre Town Hall (1952-56) has a very low ceiling that almost pushes the visitor down. An even more extreme example is Nationalbanken (The National Bank) (1961-78), where the ceiling in the large lobby is approximately ten times higher than the ceiling in the small porch through which you access the lobby. Another one of the many examples of this is the ground floor of the SAS hotel (1955-60), where Jacobsen has played significantly on the different scales of the rooms.

Before moving on, it is worth having a look around this room, which is the highest room in the house. An alcove has been built into the wall up towards the higher level, and you can see a discreet door on the left side of it. This opens into a washroom/bathroom, which also provides access to a small boiler room. In the opposite wall, next to the east-facing door, a service hatch connects to the kitchen behind it. The room functioned as

Rødovre townhall by Arne Jacobsen in 1952-56. The low entrance area almost pushes the visitor towards the ground.





Left: The central room with the high ceiling and the elegant open stairways leading to the upper part of the house. Right: In 1951 Arne Jacobsen reuses the design of the central room in the house he is builds for himself at Strandvejen 413.

the dining room with the dining table placed facing the alcove to enable unhindered movement between the east-facing door and the hallway with the door opening onto the west-facing terrace – and thus also between the two outside living areas. This is the heart of the house – its square.

But it is also a spacious arrangement, which resonates in other homes designed by Arne Jacobsen, not least in the Søholm I terraced houses near Klampenborg from 1946-50, where he also lived at one stage. Here, the basic arrangement is the same, although the long axis is now offset in that the staircase follows the opposite outer wall and the room has grown lengthways, providing space for a round dining table in the middle of the room. Incidentally, studies of photographs from that time reveal that the 15 framed botanical prints which hung in the alcove in the summerhouse were later brought into the dining room of the Søholm house, where they were simply hung on the opposite wall and in a different sequence.





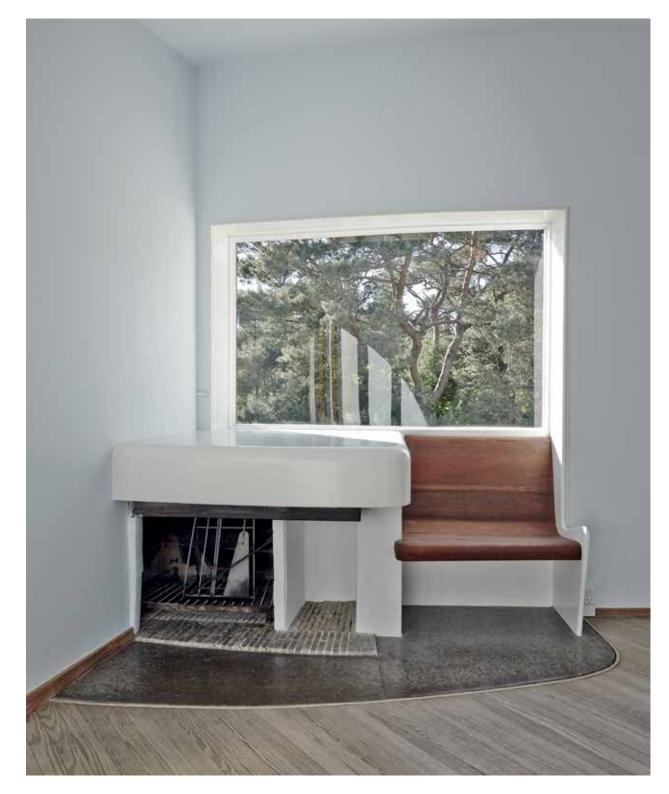
THE LIVING ROOM

As we make our way up the stairs, the living room gradually reveals itself to us. And just as we cannot see the top level from the bottom level, we also cannot see the bottom level from up here. The two parts of the large room, the dining room and the living room, interact dynamically – with the difference in height dividing the two. The two sections nevertheless blend into one room due to the visual connection between the two levels, the effect of which depends on where you position yourself and how you move.

Moving up the stairs and into the living room also represents a movement towards the view. The anticipation of this view, which is awakened by the large window in the gable wall, practically pulls you up the stairs and around the arch, where you are then confronted with yet another large window at the end of the arched wall, up towards the corner.

Built into the corner is a somewhat strange feature: a low fireplace with a whitewashed top in line with the window sill. Next to the fireplace, there is a short, built-in bench with a gable that seems to emerge from the light coming from the right side of the window. Below all of this lies a sunken Terrazzo plank with a curved contour. While it may look pleasant and quaint to have a place to sit below the window, by the fireplace, there is something imposing and compromising about this arrangement – as if the various elements haven't quite fallen into place. A photograph of the interior from 1938 reveals that a reading chair was placed in front of the fireplace, which may also indicate that the arrangement was problematic for other reasons. (See p. 15)

The two windows in the living room are the central vantage points of the house. The fireplace and the built-in bench are placed on a rounded terrazzo plank.





The floor plan also shows that Jacobsen originally imagined that the terrazzo plank was cut more straight and in parallel with a more diagonal angle for the fireplace and a recess where the bench is now, which would have allowed you to stand closer to the window. Why this solution was never implemented is unknown.

The two windows work together and open up the corner in a culmination of the bend, revealing the view across the landscape – the existence of which we have only been able to sense up until now. This is what the encounter with the big room has alluded to and prepared you for.

Today, the trees surrounding the house have grown taller and the experience is not the same as it would have been in 1938. Back then, as Jacobsen indicated in the introductory quote, you could see the beach and the entire Sejrø Bay, as well as both Ordrup Næs and Sjællands Odde. Thanks in part to the turn, you can imagine having almost experienced being slung through one window and then through the other, out towards the horizon, like a graph against its tangent.

The window in the Southern gable provides a superb view over the landscape of the Sejrø Bay.





Left: The open door leads to the eastern side of the house via a wooden ramp. Right: Detail from the bench at the fireplace – notice the curved surfaces.

One of the side-effects of this architectural device, which leads you to climb the sand dune and reach the view as you make your way through the house, is that the living room is separated from the outside areas of the house. In this case, there is no attempt to align the indoor and outdoor levels – something which modern architecture otherwise strove to achieve.

But Jacobsen sought to compensate for the separation by giving the living room its own access to the terrain. At the back of the living room, in the corner opposite the large windows, a door with a window leads to an east-facing balcony and wooden ramp and farther on to a terrace in front of the gable, at the top of the sand dune. When you are facing this balcony, with your back to the view, your eye is drawn to the window at the top of the room's opposite end wall, the dining room's high north-facing wall, which draws your eye back inland. It feels like a memento. We then change direction again and make our way down the ramp towards the sand dune, landscape and horizon.



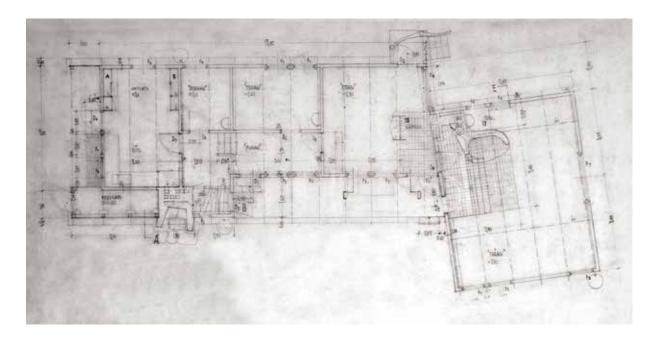


ARNE JACOBSEN AND GUNNAR ASPLUND

At the same time as Jacobsen was designing his summerhouse, the well-known Swedish architect, Erik Gunnar Asplund, was also in the process of designing a summerhouse for himself and his family in Stennäs, south of Stockholm. Jacobsen knew and admired Asplund, whom he visited regularly and felt closely connected to professionally. There is therefore reason to believe that Jacobsen knew his role model was working on his summerhouse at the same time as Jacobsen was working on his own.

The two houses certainly also share some noticeable features, and both are highly influenced by their relationship with the two very different landscapes surrounding them. Both are divided in two and positioned to face a view with the living room stretching farthest towards the view. Both change direction in relation to the view, with Asplund's changing angles while Jacobsen's curves. Both incorporate split levels: two-three smaller levels in Asplund's house and one large level in Jacobsen's. Both place the main entrance within the loggia and both have a cross axis with doors on opposing sides opening out into the open. They both have similar-sized windows exposing views to the

The acclaimed
Swedish architect
Gunnar Asplund built
a summerhouse for
himself and his family
in 1937. Arne Jacobsen
was most likely inspired
by this house.
Left: the Asplund
house seen from above.
Right: Interior from
the living room of the
Asplund house.



Floor plan of Asplund's house from 1937. The house is split in two parts; where one part is angled to create the best vantage point.

south; both have an indoor and an outdoor fireplace; and both are predominantly white with low-pitched roofs.

First and foremost, the two summerhouses share the notion of an architecture that reflects the dream of having a very relaxed, informal leisure life. This is most evident from the interior of Asplund's house and from the exterior of Jacobsen's house, in its interaction with the landscape.

Asplund's house, for example, has something as exceptionally surprising as an eat-in kitchen and work areas that have been incorporated into the primary living area. Asplund's house is clearly the one that challenges both the traditional upper-middle class division between the different spheres of life and the modernistic focus on individual functions – by allowing the dining room to merge with the kitchen and the living room to merge with the office. The same applies to the relationship between the inside and outside environments, in that Asplund's kitchen has an outdoor section in the form of an adjoining alcove with an extra kitchen table. The layout of Asplund's house is also more unrestricted, just as the division between rooms/bedrooms and dining rooms/living rooms is less defined and clear-cut than in Jacobsen's home.





Opposite page:
The terrace at the
Eastern gable with a
small fireplace.
Above: An original photo
from Arne Jacobsen's
presentation of the
house in the magazine
Arkitekten in 1938
– notice the beach
umbrellas.

LEISURE TIME

In Jacobsen's house, the notion of a relaxed, informal leisure life is most clearly expressed in the exterior environment and in relation to the surrounding sand dune landscape. Unlike Asplund's house, Jacobsen's has no garden or lawn, but the landscape does not lend itself to this either and it would have been difficult to construct. Indeed, Jacobsen also restricts his gentle encroachment on the sand dune to three areas where he has laid tiles, namely in the loggia on the eastern side of the house; at the top of the hill in front of the south gable with the outdoor fireplace; and to the west in the hollow of the sand dune up against the west-facing alcove created by the curved wall. These are the three main outdoor areas, designed to accommodate different sun, wind and weather conditions, and, in the case of the south terrace, to offer views and warmth from the fire. However, if you look at the photographs included in a presentation of the house published in the magazine, Arkitekten (The Archtect)*, it is obvious that the entire surrounding landscape is regarded as belonging to the house. The photographs also reveal deckchairs and parasols (presumably included as a demonstration) in various areas,

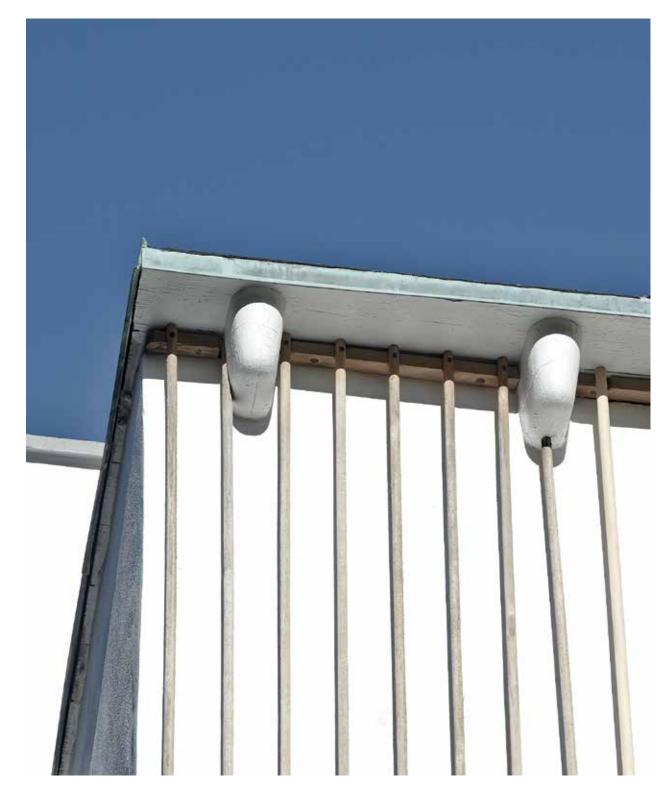


including: by the north-facing driveway, next to the loggia, on the balcony by the east-facing ramp, in front of the corner below the ramp, on the south-facing terrace, and out in the south-facing sand dune.

A RELAXED ARCHITECTURE

As far as the architectural design is concerned, we notice a more liberal attitude than in Jacobsen's previous houses designed in the modern white style. The summerhouse has fewer sharp lines and is less box-like than his own house on Gotfred Rodes Vej and than Rothenborg's house. It is also more beautifully modelled in its overall design with the curve and slightly sloping roof surfaces with eaves, truss ends and gutters. As with Jacobsen's brick houses, this one also includes shutters. And as with his earliest traditional, romantic houses, it has trellises. This applies not only to the north gable, but also to the whole west façade, including the high curved wall. In addition, thin, vertical wires were mounted onto the north gable and the curved east-facing wall, for the creeping plants to cling onto as they wound their way up the façades. All in all, it seems inevitable that the house would become more green than white over time. The wooden balcony and east-facing ramp also point towards a relaxed, unpretentious way of living.

Above: An original photo from Arne Jacobsen's presentation of the house in the magazine Arkitekten in 1938. Right: With an espalier covering both the South- and West Side of the house, Arne Jacobsen set out for a considerable greening of the house.



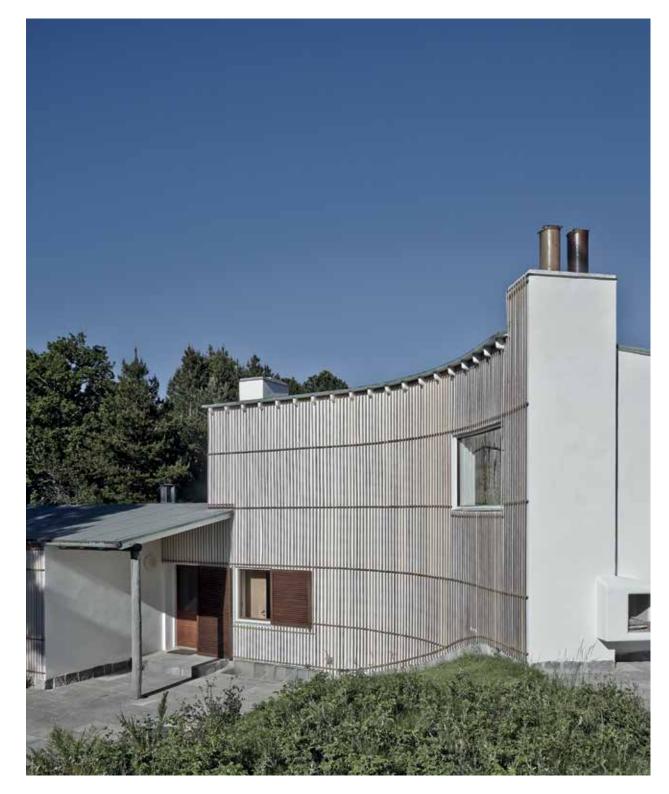


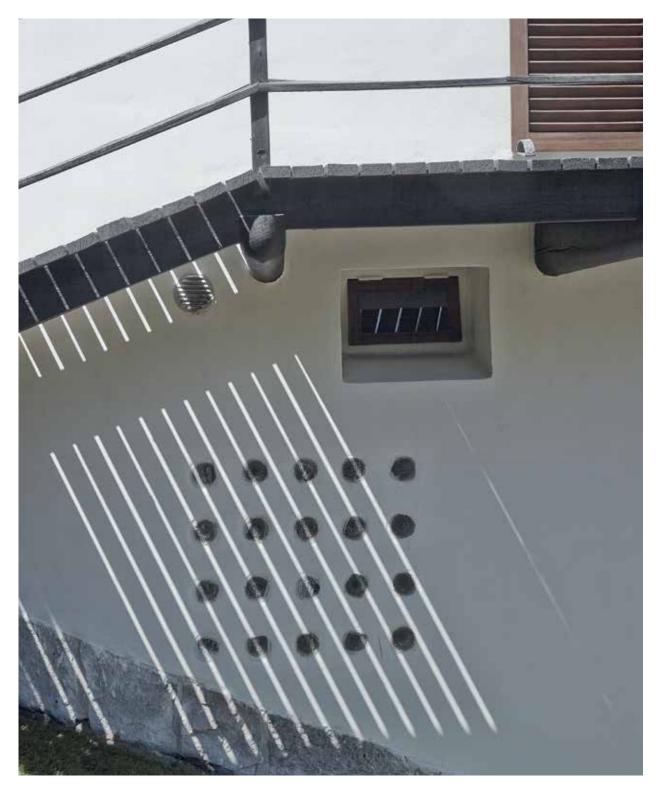
THE SUMMERHOUSE AND NORDIC MODERNISM

These architectural features are interesting and important because they reflect Jacobsen's care and consideration for the life in and around the house. They also suggest a specific notion of what constitutes leisure and of the close relationship between the house and the surrounding landscape and nature. Although such notions are fundamental to modern architecture internationally, at this point in time, they were often still expressed in quite a programmatic and demonstrative way.

What architects such as Asplund and Jacobsen (particularly in relation to this house) contribute in this regard are the qualities which

Opposite: The facade with the loggia and the wooden ramp leading to the living room.





Left: Below the ramp, two windows provide for both light and privacy in the new bathroom. Right: The bathroom window with the small frosted glasses seen from the inside.



have since come to characterise a highly complex set of values which are now clearly associated with the Nordic interpretation of Modernism. Today, these values remain pivotal to the current seemingly growing international interest in certain aspects of Danish and Nordic architecture from the 1950s and 1960s in particular. Briefly put, these values are based on the notion that the care and sympathetic insight into the life being shaped by the architect (both inside and outside) – and the consideration for the overall atmosphere being created by the architecture – are at least equally as important as the formal aspects and functional parameters associated with building houses.



THE SUMMERHOUSE AND THE SURROUNDINGS

The relationship between architecture and landscape is often particularly important in relation to summerhouses. In this regard, one of the important lessons to be gained from Jacobsen's summerhouse is that the relationship between the inside and the outside is not merely a question of having large window sections and enabling the house to be opened up. In some cases, the relationship may be far more complex and require a careful reading of the landscape in various weather conditions. In such cases, the architecture strives to meet and open itself up to this relationship in different ways.

Above: The ramp allows you to exit straight to the terrace on the southern side of the house.
Right: Detail from the outside fire place.





Arne Jacobsen's summerhouse reads the landscape brilliantly – a landscape which it identifies with and strongly responds to all at the same time. The hill, sand dune and shift from the low, overgrown heath landscape to the more open sand dune landscape are made visible through the curve and changing height of the house. This transition has been translated into the architecture of the house, also through its internal spatial sequence as previously described. This happens in such a way that the house also conveys the transition between the rooms we associate with everyday life and work (which are often narrowly separated in time and subject to rules) and the outstretched, more spontaneous and potentially more fluid and open rooms associated with holidays, as manifested in how the house meets the horizon.

The summerhouse architecture relates to the surroundings, and the house rises with the dune.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kjeld Vindum is an architect and associate professor at The School of Architecture at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. He is the author of a variety of articles and books on architecture and design, among others the most comprehensive published work on Arne Jacobsen, "Arne Jacobsen" (1998), in collaboration with Carsten Thau (Published in English in 2001 and German in 2002). Furthermore, Kjeld Vindum was the editor of the Danish architectural magazines "SKALA – Magasin for Arkitektur og Kunst" in 1985-94 and "Arkitekten" in 2008-2011.

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Cover photo: The summerhouse seen from the coastal side

(Kira Krøis Ursem).

Backside photo: Arne Jacobsen named the house "Knarken"

(Kira Krøis Ursem).



