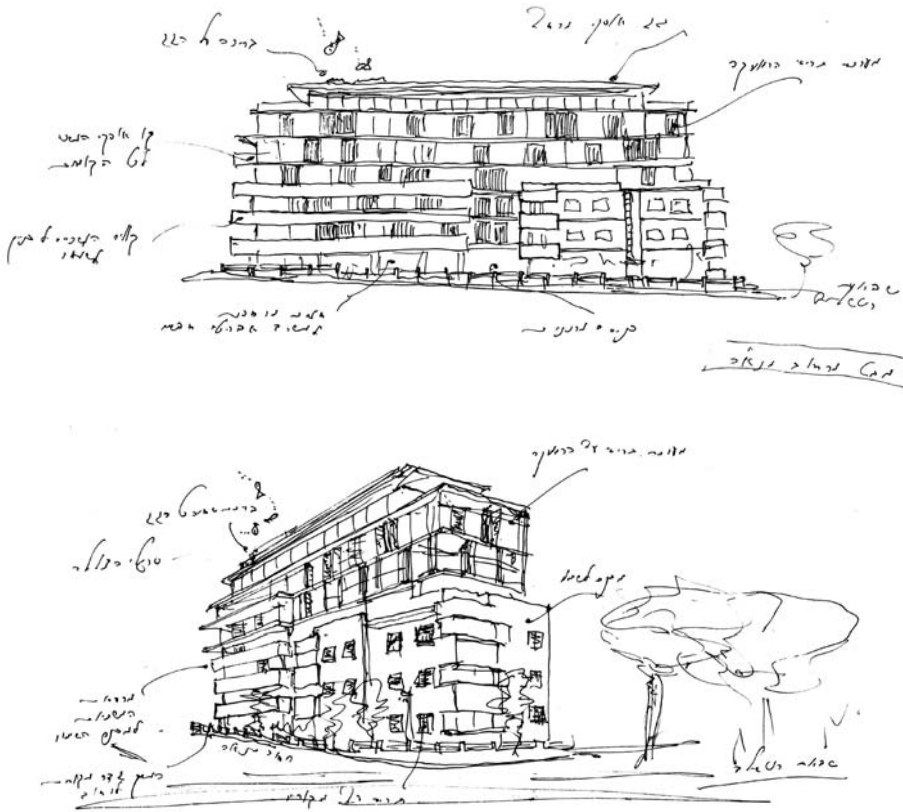


# CONTEXTUAL MINIMALISM

Private Family Spa  
Herzliya



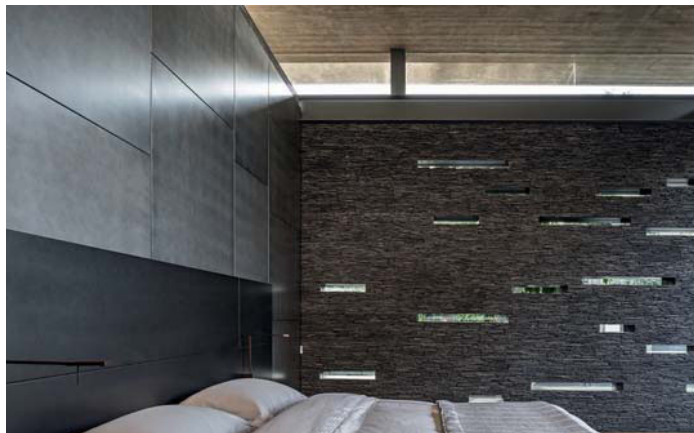
Pavilion House  
Tel Aviv



**Pitsou Kedem  
Architects**

AK House  
Ramat HaSharon





Pitsou Kedem studied for his master's degree under Zaha Hadid and other luminaries at the Architectural Association in London, before returning to Tel Aviv and opening his office there in 2000. Since then, he has enjoyed extraordinary success and, together with his team of ten young women, has won awards in Israel and around the world. The office has realized more than 70 private houses, even as they devote more attention to hotels, commercial projects, multiple housing and interiors. Their language is rigorous and inventive, reinterpreting the basic principles of modernism for a newly affluent and sophisticated roster of clients.

From the start, Kedem argued for a minimalist esthetic that was uncommon in Israel at that time and urged his clients to consider new materials. In doing so, he created fresh variations on rectilinear forms that are refined in detail and hide their complexity. His houses may be compared to those of Studio MK27 in Brazil, though those are usually sited on large, lushly planted lots and are shaped by a subtropical climate. Israel is a small country, its habitable areas are crowded, and its hotter months less extreme.

Over the past few decades, Tel Aviv has been transformed by the new wealth of technology and young entrepreneurs. The White City, an enclave of Bauhaus modernism created by Jewish *émigré* architects from Hitler's Germany and neighboring countries, has been gentrified and named a UNESCO World Heritage site. Luxury apartment towers have sprung up around it and in other cities, and historic districts have been given new life. Pitsou Kedem has made a major contribution to that transformation and raised the bar for excellence in a country that formerly had little to show in the way of native architectural talent.

The symbolic and spiritual capital of Jerusalem has been fiercely contested for millennia; Tel Aviv was founded as recently as 1909 as a Jewish settlement alongside the ancient port city of Jaffa and has been spared the burden of history and dissension. It is the commercial capital, home to the most progressive elements of Israeli society. Fertile ground for modernism, it tolerates different forms of expression. "There are still lots of empty plots, providing an opportunity for clients and architects to build and the internet has made Israelis more aware of design", explains Kedem. "There is a strong demand from young people and, as architects, we respond to the climate and the culture of informal, outdoor living".

The mixed-use building at 13 Ahad Ha'Am Street exemplifies those concerns. It occupies an entire block in the White City where local ordinances limit height to six stories. Denied the opportunity to create a tower with high priced penthouses, the developer was persuaded to create a tight-knit complex of affordable apartments, some of which are as small as 40 sq. m, atop a commercial ground floor. The block is cut away to incorporate a patio that brings residents together and provides a visual link between their balconies. Suspended steel tubes support dangling columns of creeper. A swimming pool, customarily banished to the basement of apartment buildings, occupies the roof, along with a community center, enhancing its appeal to young people. The façades are screened by folding white aluminum shutters, pierced like a *mashrabiya* to filter sunlight, and the building is constantly changing its appearance as they are opened and closed.

Innovate is a manufacturer and importer of office furniture, and its 8,270 sq. m-headquarters is located on an exposed site in an industrial zone, 30 km south of Tel Aviv. Pitsou Kedem made it a local landmark, visible from afar, by housing the offices in three

linked blocks that are joined by a bridge on the fourth side. They are elevated on splayed steel columns and enclose a landscaped courtyard. A showroom occupies the fully glazed ground floor. The other façades are screened with custom designed aluminum bars that provide shade and privacy while allowing views out. Subtle shifts of angle animate the composition and the rake of an auditorium above the entry is expressed on the exterior.

The developer of the Ahad Ha'Am apartments commissioned a guest house and spa during the Covid lockdown so that he and his family could continue to enjoy those amenities without leaving their home. A transparent box containing a gym and living room appears to float above peripheral reflecting pools, and it opens up to the garden through pocketing glass sliders. A walkway linking two halves of the garden divides it from a bedroom and spa that are protected from the street by walls of concrete and a screen of vertical metal struts. A slender roof plane hovers over the two halves, adding to the sense of openness and lightness, which is accentuated by watery reflections.

Simplicity is the keynote of the 360-sq. m AK House, which Kedem designed for his brother's family. A flat concrete roof and sidewalls enclose ground-floor living areas and upstairs bedrooms, with family and guest rooms in a basement that is lit from a sunken play area for the children. The house is located to one side of the corner lot, giving every room a view over the garden through glass sliders at ground level and wood louvers on the upper floor. Open tread steel staircases link the three levels and the spare, open-plan ground floor opens onto a patio that is shaded by the projecting roof.

The 300-sq. m Pavilion House is an inspired orchestration of geometries, materials and textures. Steel columns around the periphery support a concrete roof canopy. A steel ring beam separates a clerestory from concrete walls that are clad, outside and in, with a thin layer of slate planks. Horizontal openings animate the walls and cast patterns of light across the wood floors. Glass sliders alternate with the walls and the basement is lit from a central, glass-walled light well. The minimalist interior is a play of sleek metal panels and rough-textured slate, a dialogue enriched by meticulous detailing.

The Floating Roof House is one of the team's most ambitious projects: a linear residence of 1,400 sq. m located in a quiet residential neighborhood of Tel Aviv. The architects' great achievement is to break up the mass of the house with angular geometries and a play of light and reflection. A house with a frontage of 76 m could easily have been overpowering or merely monotonous, but this residence has a human scale and a capacity to surprise at every turn. An aluminum screen with diamond-shaped openings conceals the house from the street and casts a kaleidoscope of light and shade over the concrete wall, plantings and a sunken lap pool that is accessed from the basement spa. The roof hovers over the walls: a three-dimensional composition supported on steel columns and pierced with 47 chamfered skylights that cast an even light throughout the house, to balance the light from the fully-glazed garden façade. A concrete causeway that penetrates the screen and bridges the sunken courtyard is the main point of entry. An airy pool house, set at right angles to the house extends the composition into the expansive garden. It is a model of understatement and elegance; luxury achieved by subtracting the superfluous and focusing on a few bold themes.

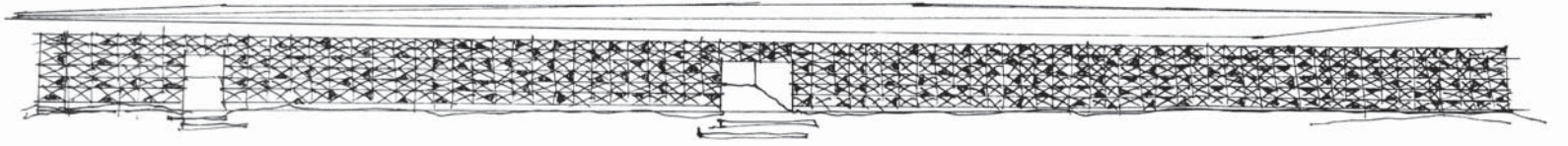


↑ Innovate Headquarters and Showroom, Tel Aviv



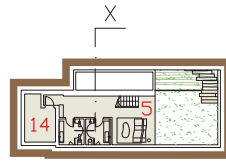
↓ Ahad Ha'Am 13, Mixed-Use Building, Tel Aviv





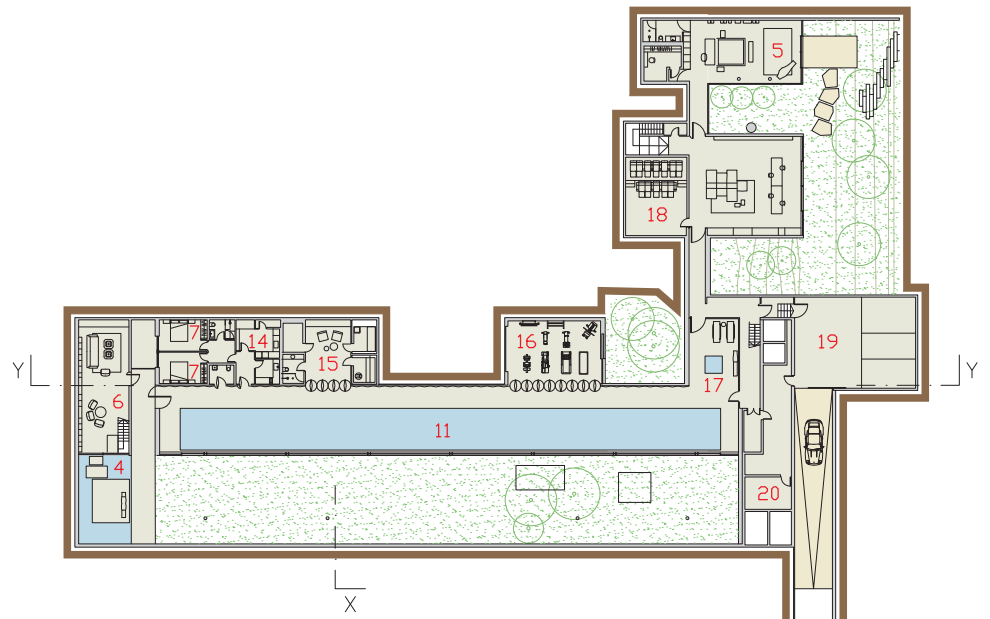
# FLOATING ROOF HOUSE

## TEL AVIV, ISRAEL

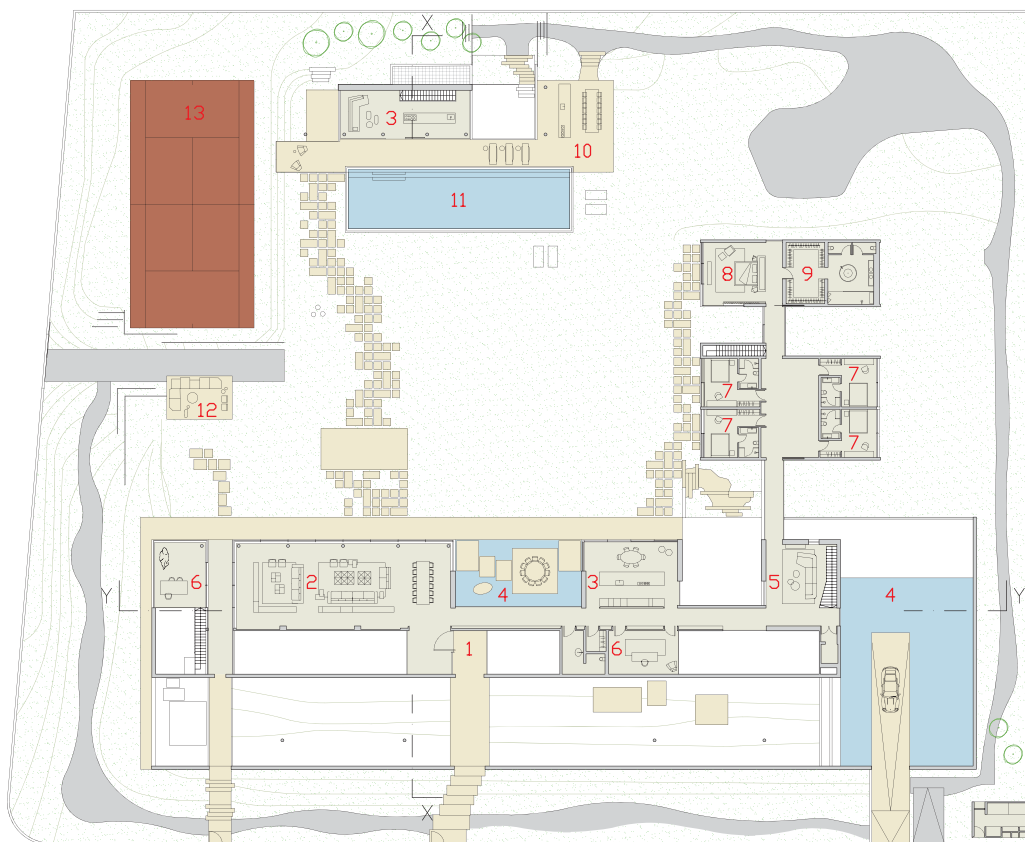


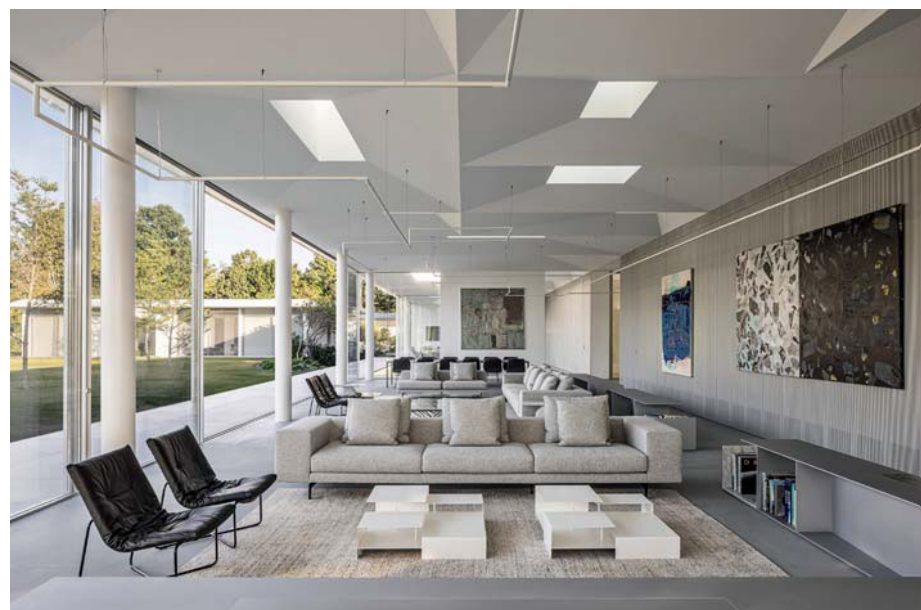
Lower level plan  
Scale 1:700

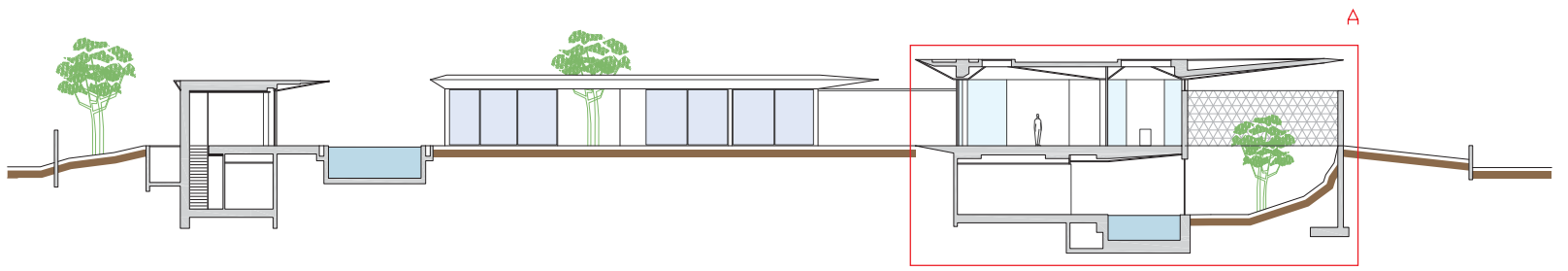
- 1- Entrance
- 2- Living room
- 3- Kitchen
- 4- Reflection pool
- 5- Family room
- 6- Office
- 7- Bedroom
- 8- Master bedroom
- 9- Walk-in closet
- 10- Outdoor kitchen
- 11- Swimming pool
- 12- Outdoor sitting area
- 13- Tennis court
- 14- Laundry
- 15- Spa
- 16- Gym
- 17- Hot tub area
- 18- Home theater
- 19- Garage
- 20- Technical room



Upper level plan  
Scale 1:700

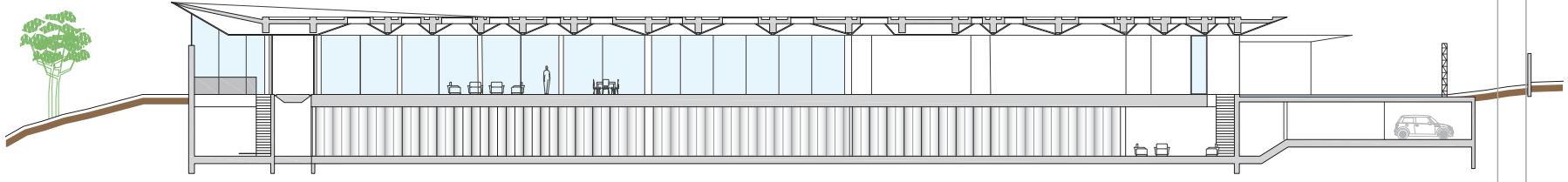






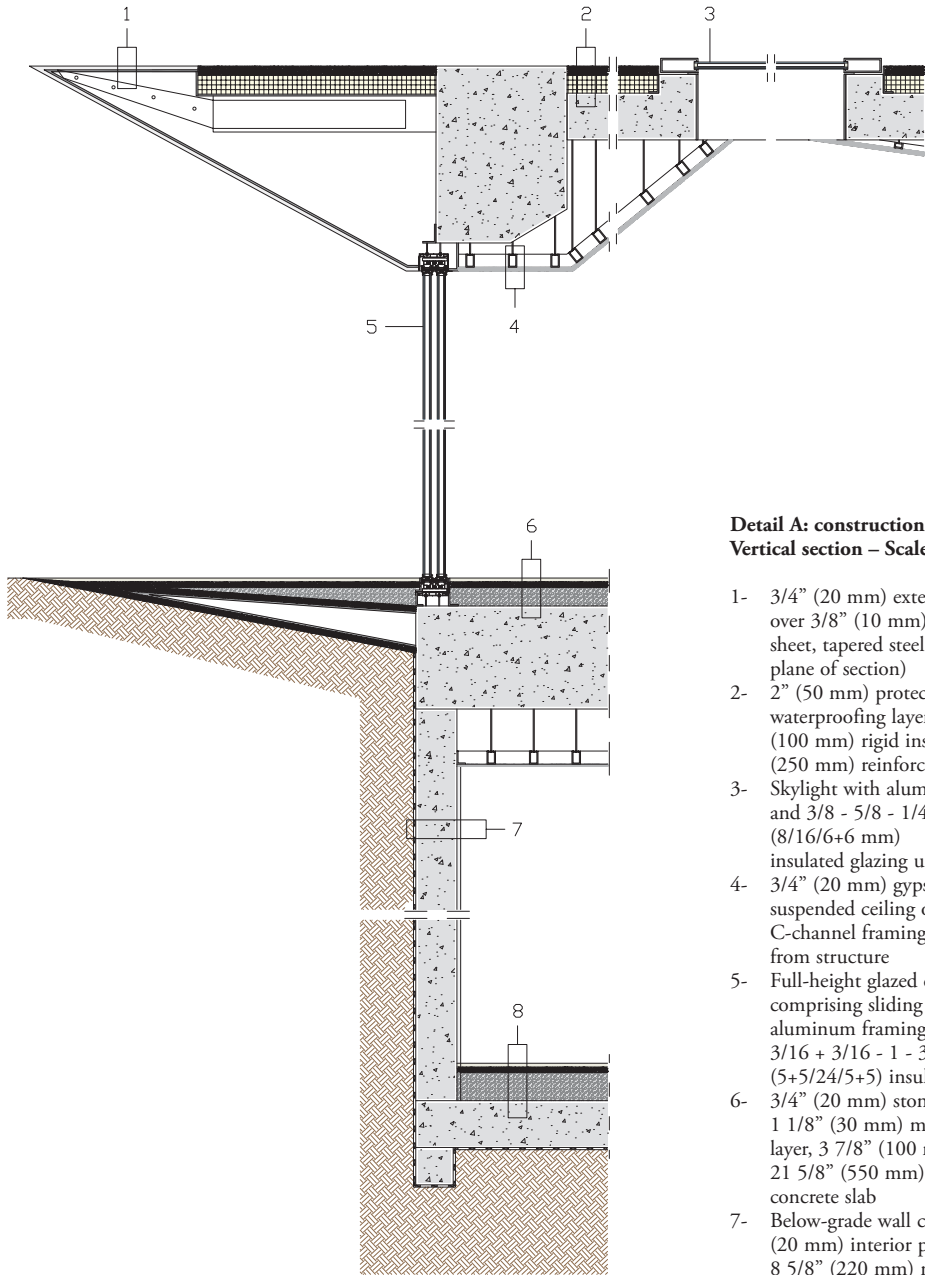
XX section – Scale 1:400





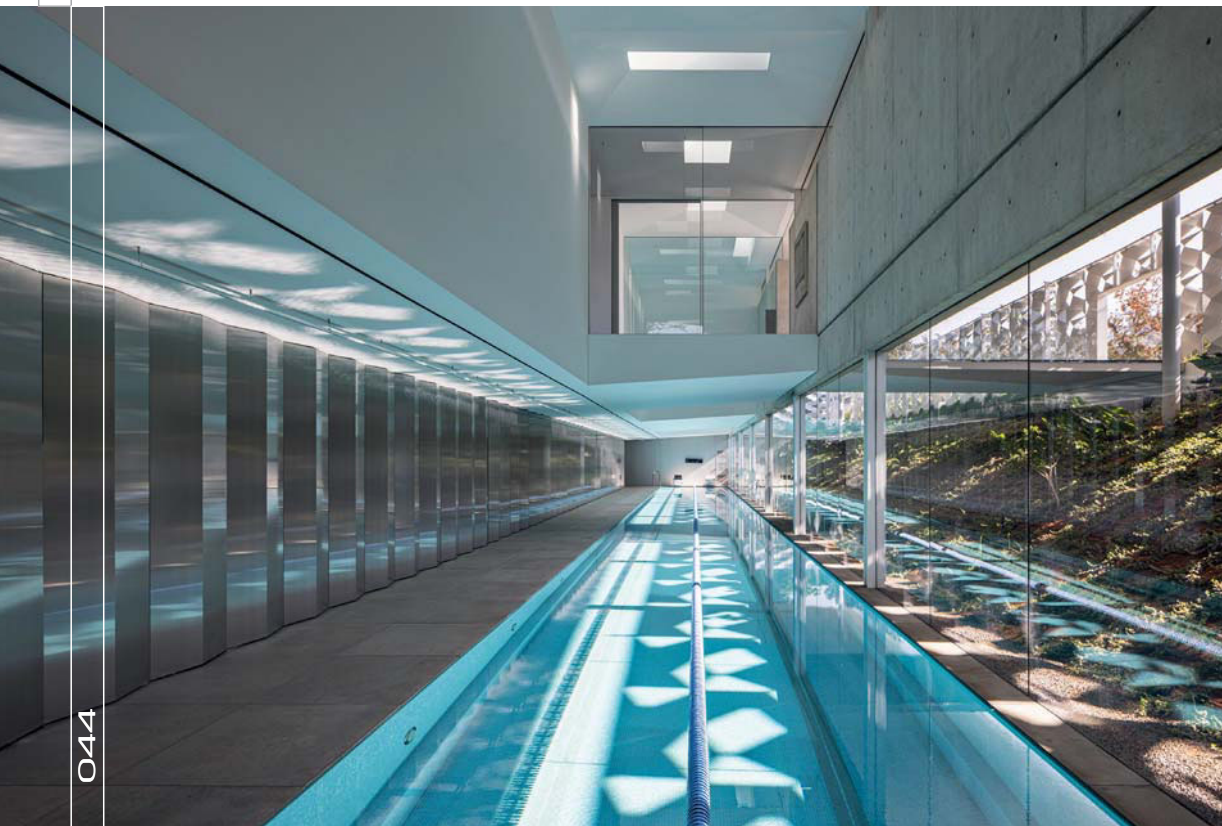
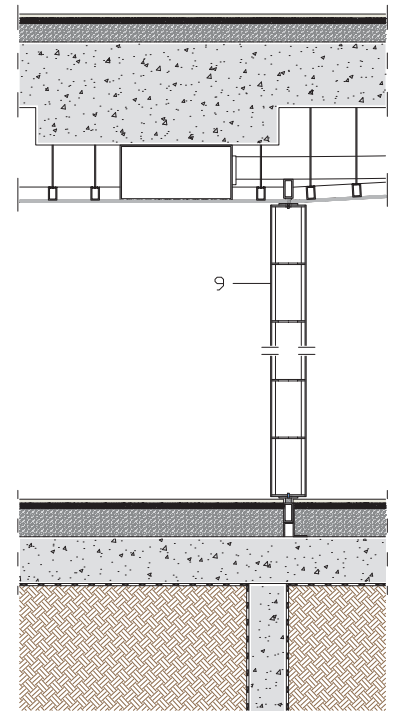
YY section – Scale 1:400

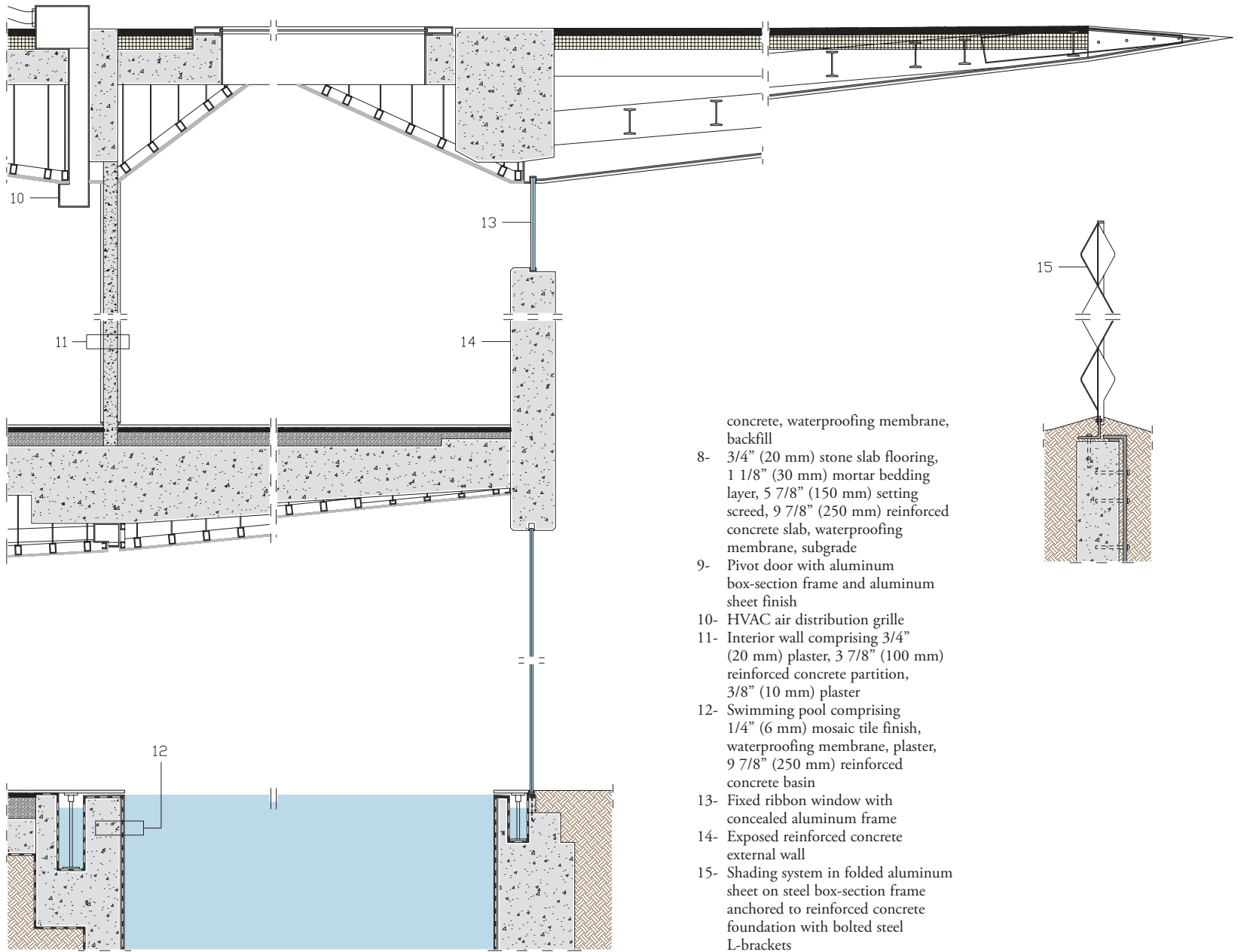




**Detail A: construction system**  
**Vertical section – Scale 1:40**

- 1- 3/4" (20 mm) exterior plaster finish over 3/8" (10 mm) folded steel sheet, tapered steel beam (parallel to plane of section)
- 2- 2" (50 mm) protective and waterproofing layer, 3 7/8" (100 mm) rigid insulation, 9 7/8" (250 mm) reinforced concrete slab
- 3- Skylight with aluminum frame and 3/8" - 5/8" - 1/4" + 1/4" (8/16/6+6 mm) insulated glazing unit
- 4- 3/4" (20 mm) gypsum board suspended ceiling on aluminum C-channel framing suspended from structure
- 5- Full-height glazed curtain wall comprising sliding doors, aluminum framing, and 3/16 + 3/16 - 1 - 3/16 + 3/16" (5+5/24/5+5) insulated glazing unit
- 6- 3/4" (20 mm) stone slab flooring, 1 1/8" (30 mm) mortar bedding layer, 3 7/8" (100 mm) screed, 21 5/8" (550 mm) reinforced concrete slab
- 7- Below-grade wall comprising 3/4" (20 mm) interior plaster finish, 8 5/8" (220 mm) reinforced









## CREDITS

**Location:** Tel Aviv, Israel – **Completion:** 2023 – **Site Area:** 8,000 m<sup>2</sup> – **Gross Floor Area:** 1,400 m<sup>2</sup> – **Architect:** Pitsou Kedem Architects – **Project Leader:** Shirley Marco – **Design Team:** Shirley Marco, Pitsou Kedem, Irene Goldberg

### Consultants

**Project Management:** Asaf A. Lupo  
**Lighting:** Orly Avron Alkabes  
**Landscape:** Haim Kohen – **Structural:** Sayag-Mizrachi Civil Engineers – **MEP:** Mizug Plus

**Photography:** Amit Geron, courtesy of Pitsou Kedem Architects

