

The Concept.

Architectural Concept Study

PROJECT	Henderson Residence
LOCATION	Austin, Texas — 78701
LOT AREA	0.34 acres / 14,810 sq ft
PROGRAM	3,200 sq ft · 4BR · 3BA
BUDGET	\$680,000 — \$750,000
STUDY	Concept Study · Three Directions
DATE	May 2025

This study presents three distinct architectural directions for the Henderson Residence. Each concept has been developed in response to the site conditions, the program brief, and the family's stated priorities — to be used as a starting point for conversations with an architect.

Site Analysis

The lot is positioned on a gentle south-facing slope in East Austin, with mature live oaks along the northern boundary and unobstructed views to the south and west. The 60-foot street frontage creates a modest face to the neighbourhood while the lot deepens to 240 feet — offering significant spatial opportunity at the rear.

ORIENTATION	South-facing primary exposure. Morning light from east, afternoon from southwest.
TOPOGRAPHY	Gentle fall of 4.5 ft north to south across buildable area.
VEGETATION	Three protected live oaks — 18", 24", 30" caliper — northern third of lot.
VIEWS	Long southwesterly views. Austin skyline visible from upper level.
ACCESS	Single curb cut on north frontage. Alley access available at rear.
CONSTRAINTS	25 ft front setback. 5 ft side yards. 30 ft rear setback. 35 ft max height.

The Courtyard House

An introverted plan organized around a central outdoor room.

The Courtyard House takes its organizing principle from the Mexican and Spanish Colonial traditions — the home turns away from the street and finds its life in an internal courtyard. From the outside, the residence reads as a quiet, composed volume. Inside, the courtyard opens the house to sky, weather, and the garden.

The primary living spaces are arranged around three sides of the courtyard, connected by a continuous covered walkway. Bedrooms occupy the upper level, each with a view down into the planted court below. The garage and service spaces anchor the north end, creating a buffer from street noise.

Spatial Character

EXTERIOR	Smooth white plaster. Flat roof with parapet. Minimal openings to street.
INTERIOR	Open plan ground floor. Exposed concrete ceiling. Full-height glazing to courtyard.
LIGHT	Diffuse and even. Reflected off courtyard walls. Deep overhangs filter direct sun.
MATERIALS	White plaster · Concrete · Travertine · Dark bronze hardware

STRENGTHS

- Exceptional privacy and acoustic separation from street
- Strong indoor-outdoor connection suited to Austin climate
- Timeless typology — high resale appeal
- Natural ventilation through courtyard stack effect

CONSIDERATIONS

- Requires careful drainage design for courtyard
- Lower natural light in north-facing ground-floor rooms

— Courtyard maintenance ongoing — planting and water feature

Indicative Budget — Concept A

COMPONENT	ALLOCATION	ESTIMATED RANGE
Structure & Foundation	22%	\$149,600 — \$165,000
Exterior Envelope	18%	\$122,400 — \$135,000
Interior Finishes	28%	\$190,400 — \$210,000
MEP Systems	16%	\$108,800 — \$120,000
Landscaping & Courtyard	8%	\$54,400 — \$60,000
Contingency (8%)	8%	\$54,400 — \$60,000
TOTAL	100%	\$680,000 — \$750,000

The Pavilion House

A light-filled single-storey pavilion that connects to its landscape.

Where Concept A turns inward, the Pavilion House reaches outward. A single, continuous roof plane extends over the full depth of the lot, sheltering a sequence of interior and exterior spaces. The distinction between inside and outside dissolves.

The program is arranged as a series of pavilions connected under the main roof: a public wing to the east (living, kitchen, dining), a private wing to the west (bedrooms), and a transition zone in the centre (entry, study, utility). Full-height glass walls open to the garden along the south edge.

Spatial Character

EXTERIOR	Raw steel and glass. Overhanging flat roof on steel columns. Expressed structure.
INTERIOR	White oak floors throughout. 11 ft ceilings. Continuous south-facing glazing.
LIGHT	Abundant and directional. South sun filtered by deep roof overhang.
MATERIALS	Weathered steel · White oak · Concrete slab · Clear glass

STRENGTHS

- Exceptional connection to garden and landscape
- Single-level living — accessible and efficient
- Lower construction cost (no staircase, simpler structure)
- Maximum southern light exposure year-round

CONSIDERATIONS

- Larger footprint requires careful landscape design
 - Less privacy from neighbours without screening
 - Single storey limits views to Austin skyline
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Indicative Budget — Concept B

COMPONENT	ALLOCATION	ESTIMATED RANGE
Structure & Foundation	20%	\$136,000 — \$150,000
Exterior Envelope	22%	\$149,600 — \$165,000
Interior Finishes	26%	\$176,800 — \$195,000
MEP Systems	15%	\$102,000 — \$112,500
Landscaping & Garden	10%	\$68,000 — \$75,000
Contingency (7%)	7%	\$47,600 — \$52,500
TOTAL	100%	\$680,000 — \$750,000

The Tower House

A compact vertical home that maximises views and minimises footprint.

The Tower House takes the opposite approach — instead of spreading across the lot, it rises above it. A compact three-storey volume preserves the majority of the site as garden, while the upper levels capture the Austin skyline views that a low building would miss entirely.

The ground floor is compressed: entry, garage, utility, and a guest suite. The main living level occupies the second floor — kitchen, dining, and living wrapped in glass, elevated above the garden. The private realm occupies the third floor, with a rooftop terrace above.

Spatial Character

EXTERIOR	Board-formed concrete base. Dark zinc upper floors. Large punched openings framing views.
INTERIOR	Open staircase as central spine. Polished concrete ground floor. White oak upper floors.
LIGHT	Dynamic and directional. East morning light to living. Rooftop terrace catches afternoon sun.
MATERIALS	Board-formed concrete · Dark zinc · White oak · Polished concrete

STRENGTHS

- Austin skyline views from upper levels and rooftop
- Maximum garden area preserved on the lot
- Compact footprint — lower foundation and roof costs
- Rooftop terrace as additional outdoor living space

CONSIDERATIONS

- Three levels of circulation — staircase is central experience
- Higher structural cost (concrete + zinc cladding)

— Less suitable if mobility is a long-term consideration

Indicative Budget — Concept C

COMPONENT	ALLOCATION	ESTIMATED RANGE
Structure & Foundation	26%	\$176,800 — \$195,000
Exterior Envelope	20%	\$136,000 — \$150,000
Interior Finishes	25%	\$170,000 — \$187,500
MEP Systems	16%	\$108,800 — \$120,000
Rooftop & Landscaping	6%	\$40,800 — \$45,000
Contingency (7%)	7%	\$47,600 — \$52,500
TOTAL	100%	\$680,000 — \$750,000

Concepts at a Glance

	A COURTYARD	B PAVILION	C TOWER
Stories	2	1	3
Footprint	Medium	Large	Small
Garden Area	Medium	Large	Maximum
Views	Internal / Sky	Garden	Skyline + Roof
Privacy	Maximum	Needs screening	Good above 2F
Natural Light	Diffuse	Abundant	Directional
Construction Cost	Mid	Low-Mid	Mid-High
Est. Budget	\$680K–\$750K	\$680K–\$750K	\$680K–\$750K

From Concept to Design

01

Select a concept direction

Review this study with your household. The concept you select need not be final — it is a starting position for design development.

02

Engage a licensed architect

Bring this document to initial meetings. Budget \$15,000–\$30,000 for schematic design through construction documents in Austin.

03

Commission site survey and soils report

Topographic survey (\$1,500–\$2,500) and geotechnical report (\$2,000–\$4,000) before schematic design begins.

04

Confirm regulatory requirements

Verify current zoning with Austin Development Services. Confirm tree protection requirements with a certified arborist.

05

Early contractor conversations

Invite 2–3 custom home builders to review the concept. Early cost feedback prevents expensive design changes later.

CORNERSTONE

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This study was prepared exclusively for the Henderson Residence project. The concepts, budget estimates, and recommendations contained herein are for preliminary planning purposes only and do not constitute architectural drawings, engineering specifications, or construction documents.

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