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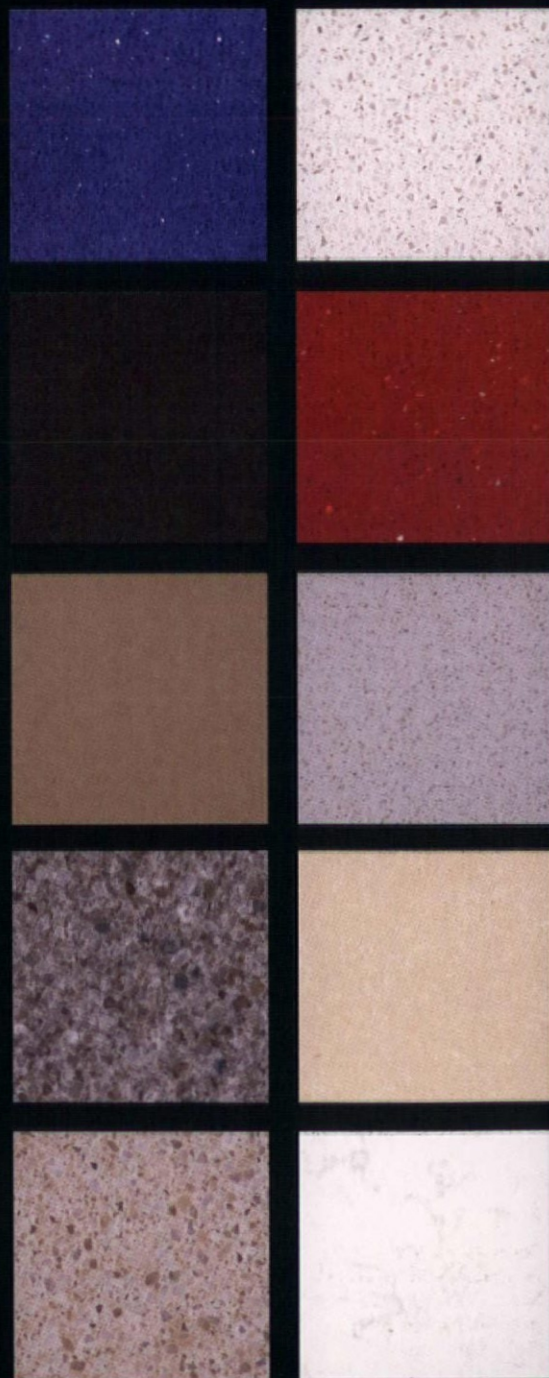
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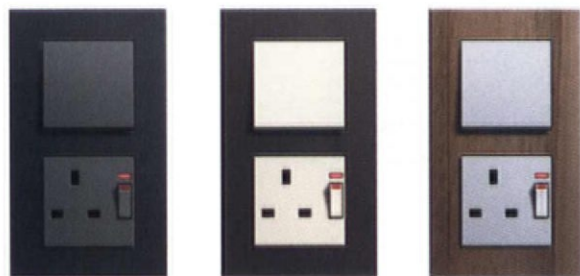
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Gira Esprit

Gira is expanding the material and colour diversity of the Esprit switch range. With the new aluminium black, aluminium brown and walnut-aluminium frame variants, the successful design concept is being pursued consistently: clear forms, carefully selected materials and perfect surfaces. More than 300 functions are available for Gira Esprit.

Fig. from left to right: aluminium black/anthracite, aluminium brown/cream white glossy, walnut-aluminium/colour aluminium



Aluminium black

The natural ground structure of the material remains visible in the frames made of anodised aluminium. Thus, the feel of the surface does justice to its high-quality appearance. The new design variant in matt black is particularly suitable for modern interior design concepts.

Fig.: Gira Esprit, aluminium black with radio energy and weather display



Aluminium brown

Various brown tones are a trend and part of modern colour concepts for sophisticated interior design. Gira adopts this trend in the Gira Esprit switch range with cover frames of anodised aluminium in matt brown.

Fig.: Gira Esprit, aluminium brown/cream white glossy with surface-mounted home station video

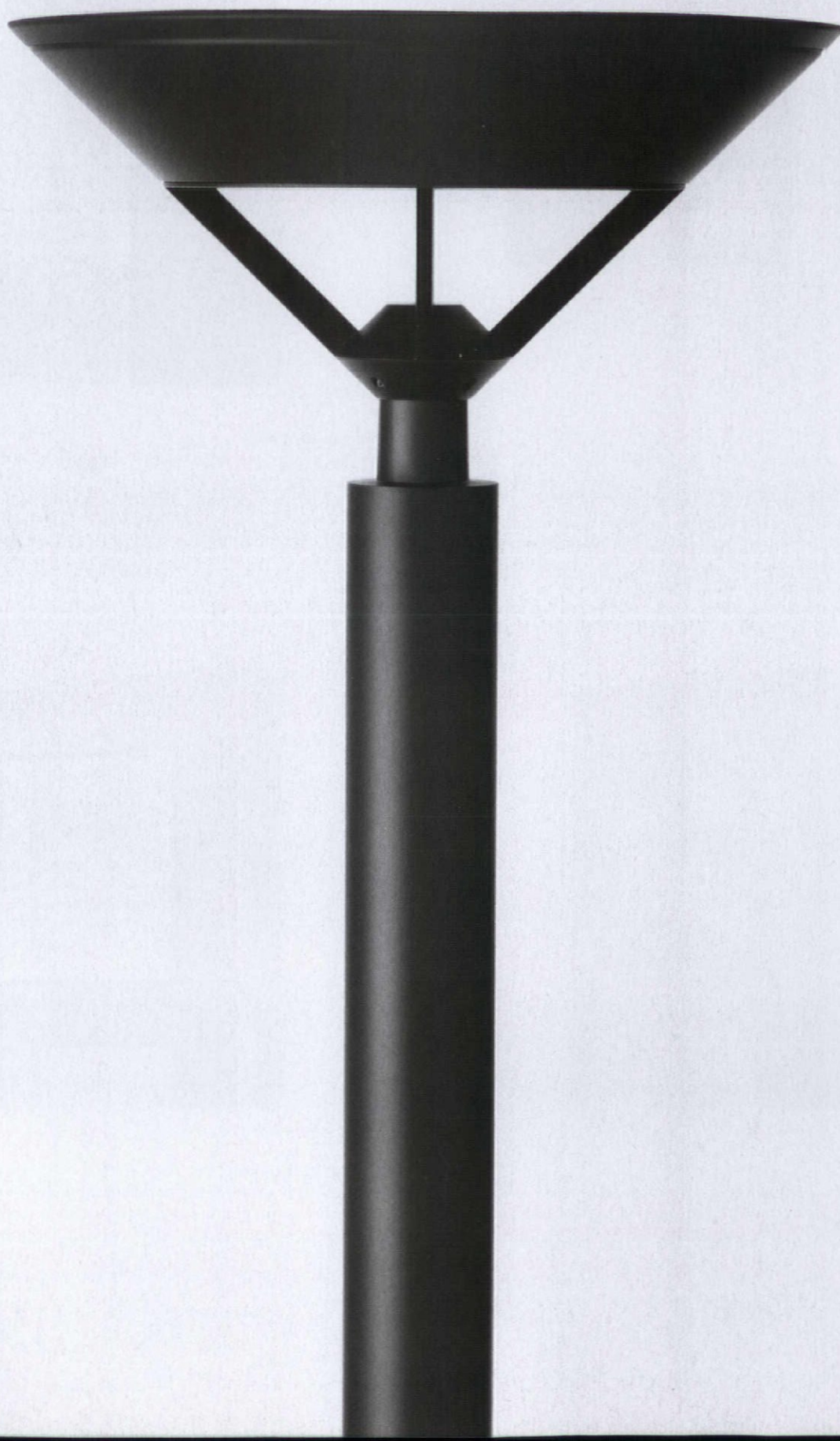


Walnut-aluminium

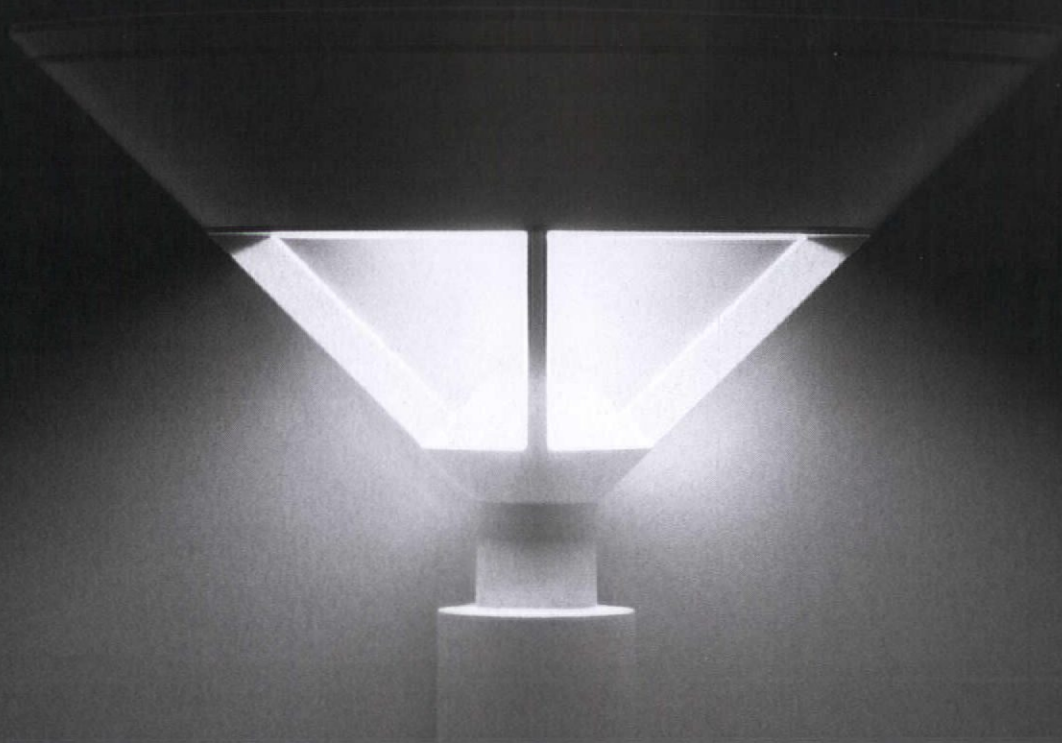
Walnut is one of the most popular woods for manufacturing furniture. The combination with a cover frame made of anodised aluminium gives the new walnut-aluminium design variant an organic and modern appearance.

Fig.: Gira Esprit, walnut-aluminium with Gira push button sensor 3 Plus, 2-gang and Gira push button sensor 3 Comfort, 3-gang

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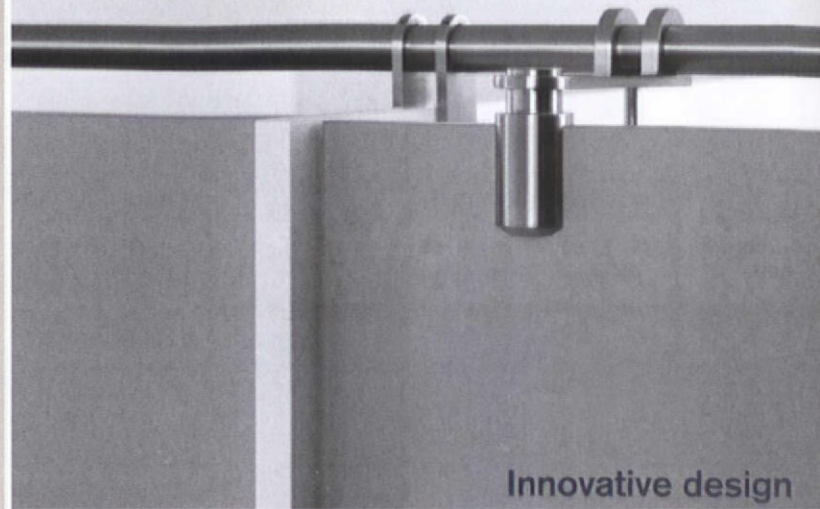
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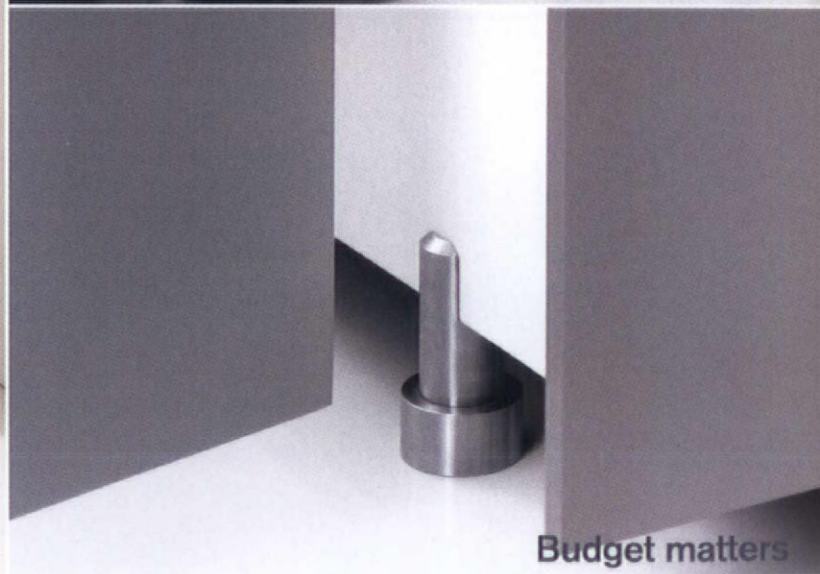
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**THE
ARCHITECTURAL
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**GLOBAL
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GRADUATE
AWARDS**

2012



The Architectural Review is launching the Global Architecture Graduate Awards to celebrate the achievements of the world's finest architecture graduates

The awards seek to identify projects with a critical position that advances the role of architecture in an increasingly fractured yet globalised world

The prize

The winner will receive a £2500 cash prize and have his or her project published in a special edition of the AR in October. A group of up to 10 shortlisted students will receive a year's subscription to the AR and will also have their work featured in the October issue

Architectural criteria

Projects can be any programme or scale, and in any location around the world. We are looking for a strong critical position, and this must also be developed into an architectural proposition. The work should engage with its context, while also being

relevant to larger architectural discussions. Work produced in academia should not mimic practice, and yet principally we are looking for work that could have a positive effect on architectural production

How to submit your work

Each student can submit one project. This must be sent in a single pdf document; it can contain up to five drawings, presented in a horizontal (landscape) format, ready for projection. An accompanying text of 300 words (maximum) elaborating on both the project and its contribution to international architectural discourse should also be submitted in Word format.

The overall file size of your digital submission must not exceed 5MB. Please include all your contact details (email, address and phone number) with your entry. The awards are free to enter

Deadline

All entries must be received by midnight, 17 August, 2012

Final selection

The jury will review the short-listed projects during the first week of September. The winner will be notified thereafter

Where to submit your work

Please submit your entry at the following website address: architectural-review.com/gaga



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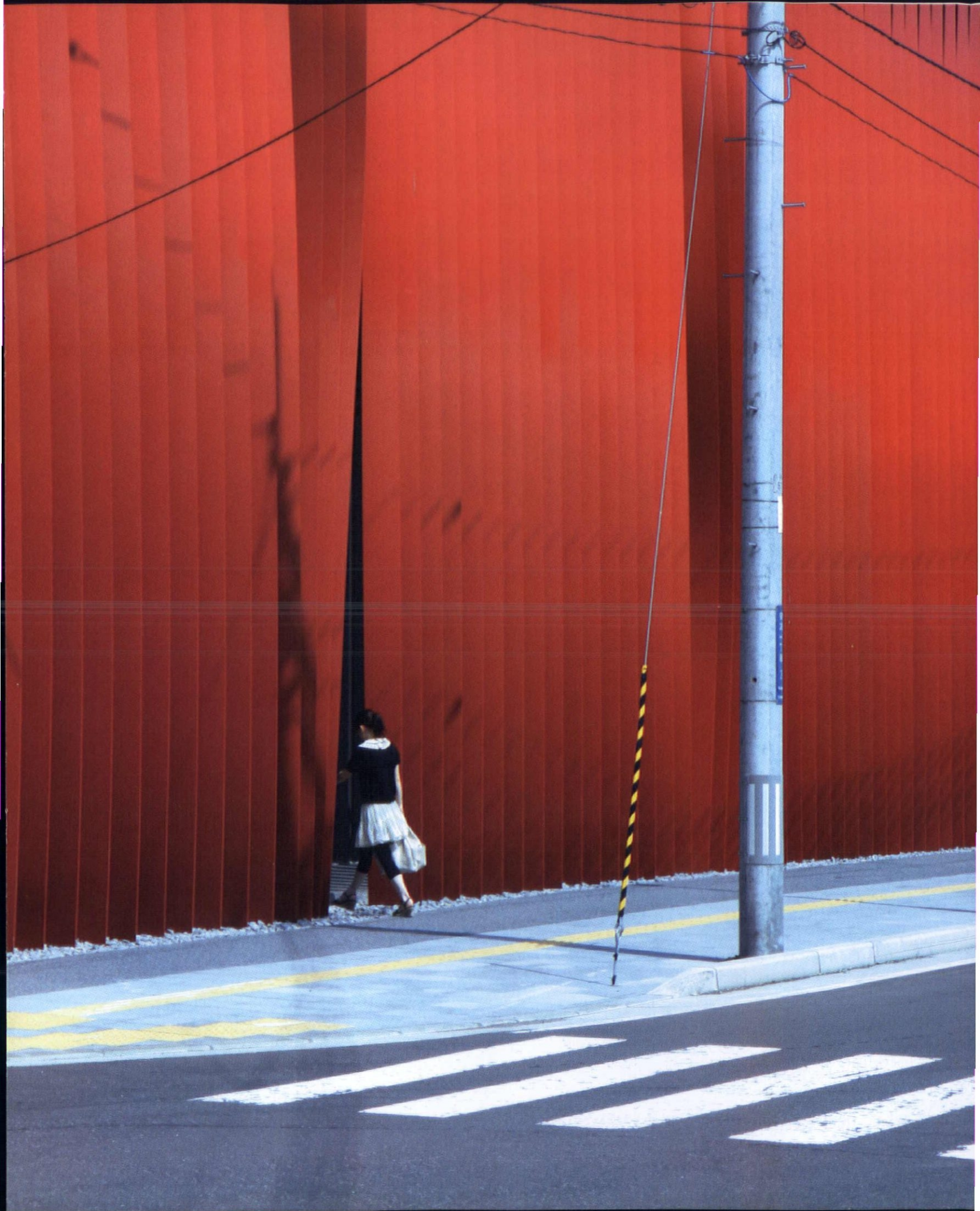
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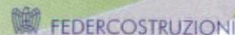
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Editorial view

As a building type deeply rooted in human experience, the house reveals much about the state of society

Mukesh Ambani is an extremely wealthy Indian businessman who will go down in history as the owner of what is believed to be the world's most expensive private house. For the princely sum of \$1 billion you get 27 storeys, three helipads, parking for 160 cars, assorted swimming pools, a gym, a 50-seat cinema and a staff of 600. Towering over its neighbours in Mumbai, it is the ultimate status symbol, executed in a vaguely Super Dutch genre of unevenly stacked floorplates, like a giant and extortionately expensive club sandwich.

At the other end of the spectrum, Vijay Govindarajan, professor at the Tuck School of Business in Dartmouth, New Hampshire, is trying to develop a house that can be built for \$300. Govindarajan, who grew up in India, is aiming to improve conditions of urban slum dwellers worldwide. 'It's not just a house', he says, 'it's a metaphor for a whole slew of services that the poor need. Think about it as a way to deliver health, jobs, education.' His philosophy is simple: allow people to build good homes, and the rest will follow. For the cost of Mr Ambani's Mumbai super pad, you could buy over 3 million \$300 houses.

It's perhaps an unfair comparison. The architectural and social history of the house has been decisively and often dramatically shaped by the enlightened patronage of potentates, aristocrats and businessmen. Yet it does point up the obscene disparity that exists in the provision of such a fundamental human need. As a building type so intimately rooted in human experience, the house tells us

much about ourselves, as well as how we relate to our neighbours and the wider community.

New paradigms of domestic architecture can suggest better ways of doing things, in terms of urban planning and the use of resources. They can also suggest how to respond to changing family structures and how to exploit the potential of technology. In the current era of ecological and economic crises, such investigations assume a new impetus, but genuine innovation is still often confined to clients who are willing to experiment and architects who are equal to the challenge. The average house purveyed by the average volume housebuilder remains relatively untroubled by architectural ingenuity or imagination. Where are the trail blazing Case Study Houses of today?

Some sense of what might be possible can be discerned in this issue, which is devoted to the winning projects of the annual AR House Award. And while many trophy houses are submitted for consideration (though none on the scale of chez Ambani), this year's winner is the epitome of modesty, a mud brick house set in rural China. Using local materials and reworking a traditional courtyard typology, John Lin's prototypical project explores notions of self-sufficiency and sustainability, with the wider ambition of addressing the decline of Chinese rural life. In its sense of optimism, pragmatism and engagement with society it offers real hope for the future; something that even \$1 billion cannot buy.

Catherine Slessor, Editor

Overview

LONDON, UK

Pomp and circumstance

The shamolic pageantry of the Diamond Jubilee matched the muddle of the architecture on the Thames, observes *William JR Curtis*



The faux-feudal fantasia of Tower Bridge, its span raised in an appropriately functionless salute to the monarch floating beneath

Throughout history cities have served as centres of ritual and representation in which urban spaces and monuments are used to celebrate political events and express the role of the State through public assembly. The recent Diamond Jubilee celebrations in honour of the Queen's 60th anniversary on the throne have combined the frivolous and the deeply serious in a variety of architectural settings which link the present to the past, while touching upon the collective myths which are supposed to hold a nation together. Maintaining the monarchy involves a constant balancing act between continuity and change. Queen Elizabeth II has had to negotiate the transition from post-war victory and post-imperial decline to an era of increasing democratisation in which there is the challenge of a growing republicanism. In the recent events everything possible has been done to communicate the notion of a people's monarch and to leave behind the *annus horribilis* of 1992 when the popularity of the Royal Family reached a low point.

The British Royals and their attendants are on safe ground

when pulling out the usual array of 'set-piece' rituals, whether it be the religious services in St Paul's, the processions of open carriages and horse guards down the Mall, or of course the appearances on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, carefully orchestrated this time to remind us of the succession over two generations to come (albeit with the sad absence of Prince Philip). Axes and classical facades are made for such things, and in the action of representation the monarch recalls and re-enacts past appearances and events. The pomp of military bands and the processions from site to site provide urban theatre at its best and serve to underline the balance between Church and State. On this occasion the overflight of Spitfires and a Lancaster Bomber recalled the solidarity of the Crown with Londoners in the Blitz and with the heroes of the Battle of Britain in what Churchill called the country's 'Finest Hour'.

The idea of using the River Thames for a collective pageant for an 'island nation' was intriguing but the result was shamolic. London has always had an ambivalent relationship to its river, and the progress

downstream past Parliament and St Paul's to Tower Bridge is today marred by shabby office construction and by so-called icons such as the Gherkin and the Shard which compete with Wren's majestic dome even at a distance. The Royal Barge, 'The Spirit of Chartwell', looked like a tourist boat with a kitsch Chinese restaurant decked out in red and gold stuck on top of it. The 'Gloriana' leading the flotilla was a pastiche and pale imitation of the Lord Mayor's Barge portrayed by Canaletto in his view of the Thames of 1745: a retrofitted version of history, clumsy in its overall lines. The sceptic will say: all this talk of 'tradition' is really a sham, that the 'Firm' is in fact a postmodern media show for maintaining a questionable establishment in the era of 'branding', a caricature of its former imperial presence.

Whether you call it propaganda or the theatrical face of power, an event like the Jubilee is a highly orchestrated show in which everything from architecture to clothing and jewellery is involved in the visual communication of themes concerning the status and legitimisation of royalty,

some of them overt and deliberate, others implicit and unconscious. It is like a play in several acts, from the solemnity of St Paul's to the soporific of outmoded pop singers, from the millennial references of regal splendour to the cheap tricks and publicity stunts of the modern advertising culture of 'the society of spectacle'.

Ironically, this homage to the Queen occurs at a time of sharp social divisions and at the very moment that Scotland may pursue independence in defiance of the idea of a United Kingdom. Military valour has been misspent on dubious wars that have left the 'island fortress' less secure. The Church of England is split on key issues. Shrill and insecure assertions of 'Britishness' are made in the face of multiculturalism and post-colonial identities.

Then there is the backdrop of architecture. Many years ago Prince Charles made the glib observation that the National Theatre reminded him of a nuclear power station set down in the centre of London. I wonder if he took time to look at the same building last Sunday as the Royal Barge passed downstream under Waterloo Bridge and the Theatre came into view as did the dome of St Paul's? The terraces of Lasdun's building were teeming with hundreds of people who were thus able to experience the flotilla and the surrounding cityscape as if they were part of a living drama. The architect always thought of the interlocking platforms (or 'strata' as he called them) as pieces of city, both stages and auditoria, on which the very act of visiting the building would take on the character of a theatrical event. On the day of the pageant the ancient and recurrent theme of city as theatre came alive again in a collective celebration involving the present and past of the Thames, and the reciprocal relationship between the people and the symbolic Head of State.

For a fuller version see architectural-review.com/jubilation

BRNO, CZECH REPUBLIC

Mies classic reborn

Michael Webb

Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat, a residential masterpiece located on a hillside overlooking the Czech city of Brno, has been restored to its original state and reopened to the public. In common with Le Corbusier's contemporary Villa Savoye, it has survived seven decades of destruction, neglect, and fumbled attempts to make it whole. Iveta Černá, the enlightened director of the house, supervised the intensive research that preceded the two-year restoration, coordinating the efforts of 35 specialist firms. 'Every beautiful house has its secrets, but even I was surprised by the discoveries we made as work progressed,' she says.

Like so many iconic modern houses, from Rietveld's tiny gem for Truss Schröder to Mies's ill-starred commission from Edith Farnsworth, the Brno villa was initiated by a strong-willed woman. Grete and Fritz Tugendhat were German-speaking heirs to a textile fortune, and she had admired Mies's houses in Stuttgart's Weissenhofsiedlung and Berlin. 'I truly longed for a modern spacious house with clear and simple shapes,' she recalled years later. For the architect, who was working on the German pavilion for the 1929 Barcelona exposition, it was an opportunity to realise a total work of art on a large scale and generous budget. He and his associate, Lilly Reich, designed every detail, from the innovative mechanical systems to the steel-framed furniture that has become a familiar classic.

For the Tugendhats and their three children, the idyll was brief. As Jews, they were fortunate to escape to Switzerland in May 1938. During the Nazi occupation, the aircraft designer Walter Messerschmidt lived here while directing work on the first jet

engines in a local factory. Soviet troops subsequently smashed everything and used the house as a stable. Patched together, it became a dance school and later a rehab centre for handicapped children, but it continued to deteriorate. Restoration was undertaken in the early 1980s, but the communist authorities lacked the funds to import authentic materials. Brno City Museum took charge in 1994, and resolved an ownership dispute with surviving members of the family. Černá was put in charge of the city's rich legacy of Modernism, and launched a programme of research to restore the house soon after she was appointed its director in 2003.

A committee of international experts assembled a treasury of vintage photographs, including family snapshots, along with oral testimony from people who had lived or worked in the house. The Mies Archives at the Museum of Modern Art in New York supplied copies of 250 plans and working drawings. Traces of original colours and materials were found concealed in vents, and a fragment of the window glass that was blown out during an Allied air raid in 1944 was discovered on the terrace. A study and documentation centre was established in 2005 and over the past three years it has been creating a digitised database, and preserving vintage fragments for exhibition.

The quest for authenticity vied with an urgent need for structural

repairs. Cracks were appearing in the white stucco walls as the foundations were eroded by water from blocked drains. When restoration began in 2010, the first task was to support the steel-framed house on a platform while caissons were driven to a depth of eight metres to provide secure support. Plaster, tiles, glass, metal, linoleum, terrace pavers and every other element were refurbished or fabricated – sometimes by the same company that made the original. Funds from the European Union covered most of the £5 million project.

From the street, visitors see only a low range of bedrooms and a concealed entry – a deceptively modest prelude to the lofty living areas that open up to the garden and a view over the city as you descend a spiral stair. Two of the huge plate glass windows are motorised and recede into the ground, opening the living room to a terrace. Cruciform chromed steel columns support the upper floor. An onyx screen wall divides the sitting area from the library, and a curved wood screen veneered in ebony encloses the dining area. This is the original, looted by the Gestapo in 1943, and rediscovered in a nearby canteen in 2011.

The Tugendhats helped to make the new republic of Czechoslovakia a beacon of prosperity and progress in the years between the two world wars, and their house is the brightest star in a constellation of modern buildings. In Brno, you should



Grecian purity with all mod cons: Villa Tugendhat and its motorised retractable windows

check out Hall A of the busy Trade Fair, as well as the newly restored Masaryk School and Era Café. A local map will guide you to these and other landmarks, and you should travel on to see the model town of Zlín, founded by the shoe manufacturer Tomáš Bat'a (AR March 2008). Like the Czech people, these visions of a brave new world survived the darkest days of the past century and flourish anew.

☛ **For information and tour reservations:** www.tugendhat.eu.
And see: architectural-review.com/tugendhat

DUBLIN, IRELAND

A matter of life and death

Kevin Donovan

Joseph Gandy famously imagined Soane's Bank of England in ruins, presumably in the expectation of the building outliving them both. For many architects, ruins release the imagination, dissolve the conventional fixtures of building and allow them to dream of interconnected space and time. Stripped of function but harbouring fragments of lives lived, decaying structure is ripe for poetic unpicking. This is, however, to suppose that decrepit architecture is always layered with life, has supported successive inhabitation, is old. What, then, of new buildings, buildings that have not yet known completion or occupation but find themselves under threat of demise? How might we value these?

McCullough Mulvin's new Mortuary for Dublin and Offices for the Irish State Pathologist (AR September 2011) is a project concerned with the life of death. Located to the north of the city, the scheme replaces with efficient grace the temporary buildings currently housing these functions. In the proposal, the unpredictable grief associated with identifying the remains of a loved one is carefully accommodated with the clinical

investigations of the forensic pathologist and the precise recording of the archivist in a series of carefully tuned suites, each separately accessed and all relieved by release into a walled garden. Behind a composed, two-storey facade, back and front of house are honourably combined. The heavy, complex technical and servicing requirements of post-mortem examination discreetly support the bereaved relative as well as those for whom the building is a workplace. The walled garden in which the building sits is an abstracted version of the facade, attending equally to the various users. For those emotionally attuned to the allusion, its paving slabs softly evoke the grave, its recessed planting a sinking into earth, while to the worker in need of relief it offers light, air and a green view. The ground floor is punctured by a tree, a strong sign of life deep in the plan.

As well as providing its function and order, however, death shadows this project in a troubling way. After the contractor went into receivership in 2010, work on the site ceased. A prominent victim of the economy's dwindling resources, the nascent building's funding has been withdrawn, and its concrete skeleton, considerably advanced, lies quarantined behind a protective fence.

Despite a quarter of the budget having been spent and the soundness of the scheme, there is unfortunately talk of demolition in favour of retrofitting other accommodation nearby.

The abandonment or postponement of construction projects in Ireland due to lack of finance is by now old news. Many of these are developments whose sustainability might in retrospect be questionable. Ill-conceived housing estates, hotels and retail parks with poor connection to their hinterland and for which there is often little real demand have attracted untenable loans and have contributed to the corrosion of the Irish financial



McCullough Mulvin's abandoned mortuary, an unintended memorial to the Irish economy

ALICE CLANCY

system. Their environmental, social and cultural cost is also problematic. With resources so tight and investment so hard won, however, ought not the buildings that survive to reflect the principles of economy, value and sustainability by which we now seek to define ourselves?

McCullough Mulvin's project is integrated into its landscape, environmentally considered, carefully judged in terms of space, material and adjacency; it has value. It fulfils a function for which there is a sustained and demonstrable need. Documents have been prepared for re-tender. Culturally and socially it is defensible and, most critically, it is already half built. It makes no sense to offer up this building on the altar of false economy.

Ruin is, of course, a synonym for financial insolvency. McCullough Mulvin's project is sited in former parkland, once the demesne of James Caulfield, the first Earl of Charlemont. As the fortunes of the Irish Ascendancy waned, so too did the integrity of the earl's estate. A Victorian school was followed by a 1920s garden suburb and a fire brigade training centre until all that remained was a small ingeniously designed garden pavilion, the Casino, near which the morgue project is sensitively placed. Ravaged by years of neglect, the Casino was eventually recognised as the finest Neo-Classical building in Ireland, taken into

state ownership and, in a time of widespread hardship, restored. Though we again live in an age when the image of Gandy's ruined Bank of England is uncomfortably prescient, we can still hope that the value of McCullough Mulvin's scheme will ensure its longevity.

AR COMPETITION

The AR launches global student prize

Will Hunter

In this issue, the AR is launching the Global Architecture Graduate Awards. Where we would like the AR's new programme to differ from other existing awards is in not simply evaluating a student project as a complete work, but as an indication of the future direction of architectural production. For an increasingly globalised architectural culture (and where problems are themselves increasingly globalised) we would like to create an international platform to discuss the value that academic rigour and thought can bring to the future role of the architect.

The winner will receive a £2,500 cash prize, and their work will be published in the AR in October, alongside the ten runners up. All entries must be received by midnight, 17 August, 2012.

☛ **For full details on criteria and how to enter see** architectural-review.com/gaga



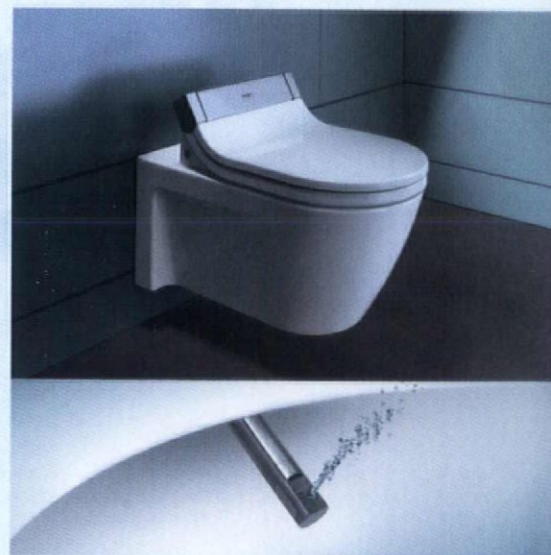
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Broader view

Love thy neighbour

Emily Cockayne
peers through the lace curtains to discover that, while well-designed houses can foster a sense of community, thoughtless design can be more divisive than an overgrown leylandii

Architecture cannot determine whether a spirit of neighbourliness exists in a place but it has a strong influence. The materials used, the spaces between dwellings and the configuration of living arrangements all affect the ways that people are accessible, audible and visible to neighbours. The thickness and density of walls and the positioning of doorways can enhance or suppress neighbour noises. Glazing can obscure or reveal views into and out of buildings – and on occasion has dazzled neighbours opposite. A well-designed building must not only complement the street aesthetically but also help occupants to forge a healthy relationship with their neighbours by minimising sensory nuisances and enabling them to elect to be sociable or private.

Designing houses involves creating neighbours. Build one house and you might create the conditions for as few as one or two new relationships between existing and new residents in a street. If you build flats or a housing estate then myriad relationships will be formed. These can be between people moving into the new development or between them and people who already live in the neighbourhood. These relationships also change over time and can mature well or badly. Each permutation is sensitive and poses a unique design challenge.

'From "belonging" – identity – comes the enriching sense of neighbourliness. The short narrow street of the slum succeeds where spacious redevelopment frequently fails', noted Alison and Peter Smithson in 1953, in their response to the CIAM VIII report. This hint of architectural humility recognised the need for caution when experimenting with new models of housing, especially for the poor; an insight they perhaps forgot when designing Robin Hood Gardens in Poplar, London.

The basic desire for privacy and sanctuary was relegated in the design of Robin Hood Gardens. Not so in the work of Walter Segal. He thought privacy was 'to be able to live one's own life without one's neighbours voluntarily or involuntarily taking a part of it', and he designed houses that helped to protect 'those little domestic secrets which the neighbour is so keen to discover'. In 1948, he argued that bedrooms should not be placed on either side of a party wall without sufficient insulation. 'Neighbourly feelings', Segal explains, 'are not enforced by a kind of planning which allows the windows and balconies of one flat to be overlooked by those neighbouring.' Segal also pushed for separate private accesses in newly built flats, to avoid conversations at doors being overheard.

The construction of walls directly influences neighbourly experiences. Medieval partitions were often thin and pockmarked with peepholes. Similarly, walls between many 1920s-built 'Homes for Heroes' were so thin that 'one could almost hear one's neighbour change his mind'. Modern volume house builders are sometimes criticised for their flimsy build quality. Householders whose privacy within the home has been compromised are unlikely to greet their neighbours warmly in the street.

In 1953, the same year the Smithsons were writing, sociologist Leo Kuper published a study of Thimble Road, a neighbourhood of houses built around greens on the edge of Coventry. He aimed to discover something about the 'potential contribution of the town planner to more intimate relations between neighbours, through his control of the physical environment'. The steel frames of these houses allowed noises to permeate neighbouring properties. One heard 'the neighbour's wife scratching at her grate with a poker', which was remarkable given that the

fireplaces were not located on party walls. Others heard water cisterns refilling. The open arrangement of the plots, which lacked demarcation between gardens and led to uninterrupted surveillance between the houses, conflicted with the growing desire for domestic privacy at the time. These factors conspired to create 'an awareness of neighbours even within the inner sanctum'.

A person living in a terraced house or flat has more neighbours than a person living in a detached house and needs to show more consideration. Some types of property are less conducive to easy neighbouring than others. Not all families could cope with the tiptoeing needed to remain cordial in Coventry's steel houses. Detached houses give inhabitants more freedom to be noisy without intruding on the lives of others.

In the 20th century, the semi became the most desirable type of home for people on middle incomes. New plan variations were introduced. One design partnered the two front doors in the middle with the stairs ascending the party wall, with only two rooms adjoining the neighbouring house, thereby exposing the occupants to less noise. Alternatively, having the doors at the ends removed the need to exchange pleasantries with the neighbours when fumbling for a house key and it was this design that had kerbside appeal.

Opportunities to bump into the neighbours declined in the 20th century. Until the end of the 19th century most neighbours shared water supplies. In 1951, 21 per cent of the population still shared a lavatory with a neighbour. Women doing laundry would often 'hang out' together in shared yards. Houses were eventually connected directly to systems of water and sewerage, and there was less need for communal facilities like water pumps, wc blocks and waste containers. Life became increasingly self-contained.



CORBIS

In 1944 two opposing plans were drawn up for the Woodchurch Estate in Birkenhead. The Borough Engineer's plan allowed the estate's residents 'to keep away from each other as much as possible'. Separate houses sat on curving roads in a garden suburb arrangement. In contrast, a design by Charles Reilly clustered houses around 44 greens, to mimic a necklace of villages, and included communal features designed to foster 'neighbourly living', such as a shared hot water system. Reilly rejected suburban layouts, with their houses that 'look away from each other and so do the people'. The Conservative-run council selected the isolationist plan of their Borough Engineer.

The later Thimble Road development did have some of the characteristics of the Reilly plan, but there was too much unwanted involvement with the neighbours and this often resulted in discord rather than cooperation.

Architectural theory and practice is one of many factors that have changed the ways that neighbours interact. Rising affluence, changing patterns of work and a proliferation of cars are strong influences on planning and architecture. Architects are in an unusually privileged position of being able to help to ameliorate the decline of neighbourliness by creating homes that accommodate modern requirements without isolating people in hermetic boxes. Sensitive architecture allows occupants to regulate their privacy – sometimes cultivating relations with people living nearby and at other times allowing retreat. When neighbours can meet each other casually and routinely in the street or glimpse each other in less private parts of the house, friendly familiarity can flourish. The architecture of neighbourliness would allow us to watch our neighbours, but only out of the corner of one eye.

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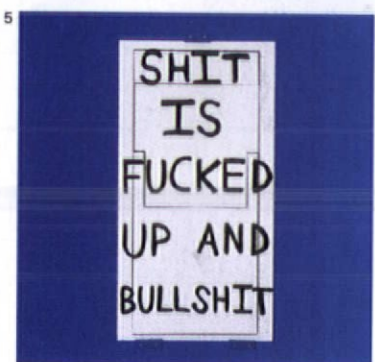
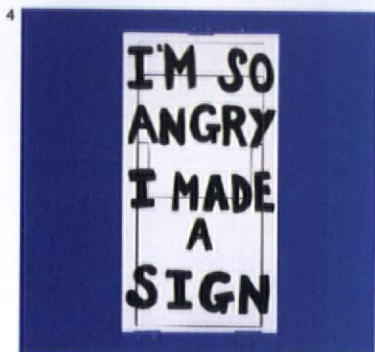
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Design review

Miami/Basel

Though last month's Design Miami/Basel caters mostly for rich collectors, it also serves up a rich source of ideas that wittily play with craft and concept, says *Will Hunter*

1. This year the creative think tank Be Open launched its Inside the Academy awards platform. An international jury, including Ron Arad, chose the Sandberg Institute Amsterdam as the winner, from which this Chewing Gum Wallpaper by Manon von Trier is chosen 2,3,4 & 5. Represented by Cristina Grajales Gallery in New York, the artist Sebastian Errazuriz has developed the art-furniture collection Occupy Chairs: a dozen chairs for use at protests for both sitting on and as placards. The messages have been taken from those used by protesters in the Occupy Wall Street Movement 6 & 7. From the Galerie Pierre Marie Giraud in Brussels, these mixed media *objets* are by artist Ron Nagle



8



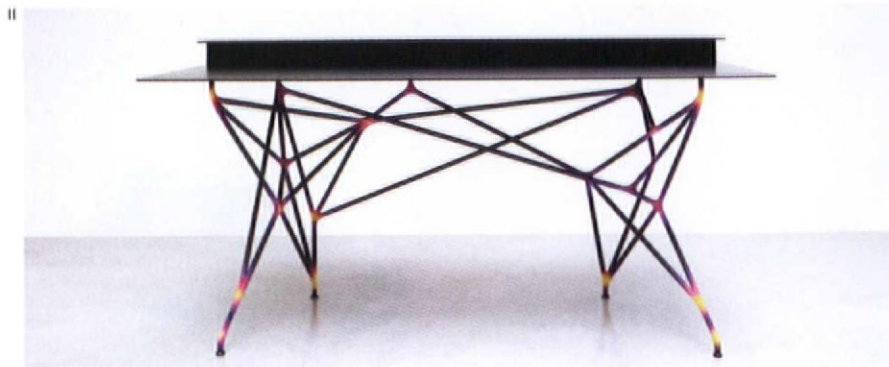
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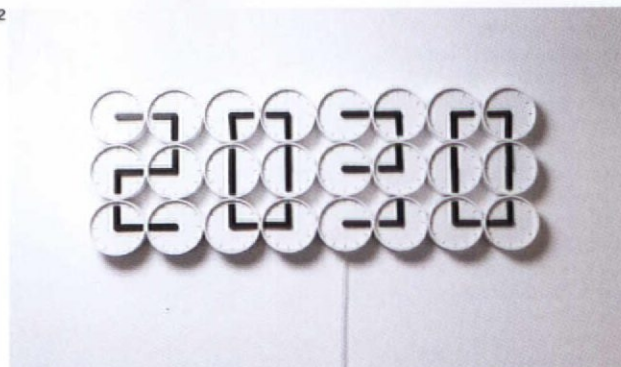
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8. Casulo Areba in imbuia wood, by Hugo França, from R 20th Century in New York
9. Shown by Galleria O in Rome, Humberto and Fernando Campana's Lupa Chair from their Brazilian Baroque Collection
10 & 11. Hot Rocks cabinet by Bethan Laura Wood and Escritoire by Weisshaar and Kram, both from Milan's Galleria Nilufar
12. The Clock Clock White by Humans Since 1982 with David Cox, shown by Victor Hunt



12



Vorsprung durch Technik

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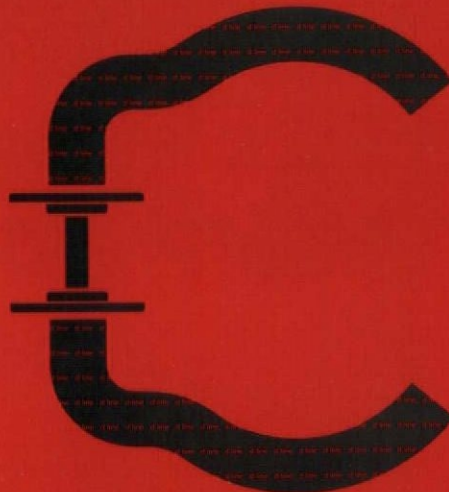


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View from...



Impelled by the effects of global warming, lethal bush fires are growing in frequency and intensity. Their capacity for destruction is amplified by Australia's current laissez-faire approach to urban development

DAVID GRAY / REUTERS / CORBIS

Sydney, Australia

With more to lose than most other developed countries, Australia is failing to respond to the environmental and economic challenges brought about by climate change, reports *Chris Abel*

Think of Australian architecture and most architects probably think of one of Glenn Murcutt's exquisite houses set amid a forest of tall eucalyptus trees on the fringes of Sydney. However, much has happened in recent years to fracture the Great Australian Dream of owning a detached family house, whether in the bush or in the suburbs.

Most worrying is the gathering evidence of the effects of climate change. According to the first Garnaut Climate Change Review commissioned by the Australian Federal Government and published in February 2008: 'Australia would be a big loser – possibly the biggest loser among developed countries – from unmitigated climate change.' One year later catastrophic bush fires in the state of Victoria claimed 173 lives in one day, transforming a potential impact into a tragic reality. One of a series of so-called 'megafires' in the country, they have become more frequent and intensified in the last decade, the result of a deadly combination of extended droughts and rising temperatures. Sadly, while there was a debate in the media at the time about the wisdom of building homes in 'flammable forests', there was no public reaction at all from the leaders of the architectural profession. Worse, neither have there been any concrete moves since to regulate or restrict further residential developments that might place dwellers at risk

of fires. On the contrary, the survivors of the worst hit towns in Victoria have been encouraged to rebuild their homes in the same vulnerable locations.

The recent series of devastating floods in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria reflects much the same pattern of official neglect. Many of the townships and new suburbs affected by the repeated floods in Queensland, for example, were built on low ground and were therefore especially susceptible to sustained heavy rainfalls.

Despite the rosy picture painted abroad by Australia's leaders, the domestic scene offers little comfort. After having been elected on a programme to address climate change, the Labour government of Kevin Rudd subsequently backed down under pressure from powerful industrial lobbies and a well-publicised chorus of climate-change scepticism, resulting in a change of leadership and concessions for a minimal carbon price. Disillusioned voters have since apparently given up on the prospect of any major actions being taken to counteract its effects and are increasingly distracted by economic problems, including astronomical house prices, a two-speed economy overly dependent on coal and iron ore exports to China, and the prospect of ever higher fuel costs as world demand outstrips diminishing supplies.

Australia of course is not the only country to be sleepwalking towards environmental disaster, nor are its citizens alone in being distracted by economic problems, but it is among those with most to lose. This despite active and vocal environmentalists like Tim Flannery, who offer positive solutions as well as dire warnings about the dangers of 'business as usual'. Australia's greatest Modernist of the last century, the late Harry Seidler, was also among the first architects to recognise the real dangers of unlimited, low-density urban expansion dependent upon private transportation.

Following Seidler, a number of practices like Allen Jack+Cottier, Cox Architecture, Jackson Teece and Alex Popov are showing the way forward with modern, high-density residential and mixed-use projects. Both Foster + Partners' masterplan for Central Park, a major, high-density development close to Central Station in Sydney, and Rouse Hill, a compact new town situated in the north-west of Sydney designed by Allen Jack+Cottier, also reduce the need for private transport. However, for the majority of families who can only afford the cheapest houses in Australia's outlying and car-dependent suburbs, the outlook remains more bleak, circumscribed by the consequences of a steeply rising cost of living as well as rising temperatures.

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Viewpoints



WILLIAM JR CURTIS

How Viagra urbanism wreaks havoc on our cities

Architecture in the days leading up to the present economic crisis often degenerated into a game played with computer generated images as designers and clients attracted attention to themselves with so-called 'iconic' buildings. Everything was done for quick effect to seduce politicians and investors with sensationalist gestures attuned to the free market, privatisation, the transient interests of globalised capitalism and the 'society of spectacle'. Seductive virtual images were used to sell high-rise projects which were really vertical packages of investment serving the interests of an international plutocracy without any real sense of responsibility towards local communities and civic space.

These grandiose schemes for prestigious towers often clashed brutally with the urban context and trivialised the past, but were promoted as if bringing 'identity' to this or that city, an absurd claim in places centuries old. Jean Nouvel's phallic tower in Barcelona was supposed to be 'echoing' Gaudí's Sagrada Família and the sacred mountains of Montserrat, while in fact vulgarising the skyline with a sensationalist gesture. Herzog & de Meuron's (mercifully unbuilt for the moment) Tour Triangle for the southern edge of Paris, was compared in official propaganda to Pei's pyramid at the Louvre, although it was roughly eight times taller and a private operation not a public monument. Computer-generated images of this 180 metre high monolith were tricked out to make it look transparent against the sky.

A new sort of pulp fiction emerged on the web, a pornography of eroticised skylines. In a tower project for Moscow (which might have come from Dubai or Shanghai), RMJM claimed to have achieved a 'sexy organic form', a building 'deeply rooted in its place'. Their Gazprom tower project in St Petersburg was 396 metres tall and had all the look of an unfortunate exercise in technokitsch, Viagra urbanism and political megalomania. But it was marketed as the latest addition to the 'city of spires', its polygonal plan being traced to a historic Swedish fortress nearby. The banter of contextualism was thus used cynically to persuade local populations and dignitaries that the big money was really thinking about them and their heritage. Citizens of St Petersburg were not so easily duped and took to the streets to defend one of the world's most beautiful Neo-Classical cities. The situation is now repeating itself in Seville where César Pelli has designed an ungainly shaft, the Cajasol skyscraper (178 metres high), which competes disastrously with the historic Giralda tower by the Cathedral.

London has emerged as the epicentre of double-speak in politics and finance, particularly in the confusion between private wealth and public interest (under New Labour and Conservatives). The soul of the city has been sold off to the highest bidder. Renzo Piano's Shard is yet one more pile of luxury accommodation and foreign investment promoted as if 'giving' something to civic life.

A preposterous website asserts that this crushing and profiteering monster is inspired by historical church spires and the split masts of ships shown in Canaletto's views of the Thames. The pilings under the building are compared with Nelson's column. In fact the Shard competes with St Paul's at a distance as does Foster's Gherkin (once hilariously compared to Wren's unbuilt pine-cone for the dome). Sometimes tall stories sink low and turn into caricatures.

Sometimes they pretend to express social concern. The 140 metre tall Coin Street luxury condominium tower by Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands was 'sold' as a supposed contribution to 'community', despite its negative impact upon a truly civic building, the National Theatre. In London in recent years, with its bank bailouts and expenses scams, it has been socialism for the rich and laissez-faire for the poor. Or as JK Galbraith might have put it: 'private wealth and public squalor'. Which brings us back to that preposterous plutocrat's plaything, the ArcelorMittal Orbit at the site of the Olympic Games (see *Outrage*, AR May 2010). If ever there was a monument to excess, this pile-up of red steel girders designed by Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond must be it. Like a giant piece of fairground equipment gone berserk, the Orbit is an unintended funeral marker over the steel industries in Europe. At a time of factory closures and de-localisations, it is a sad symptom of social inequality rather than a worthy monument to the Olympic ideal.

LAST WORDS

'The North American continent abounds in striking proof that a pile of king-size statistics do not add up to a metropolis ...'

@ReynerBanhamSaid, a twitter account dedicated to publishing quotations of the late architecture critic, *Twitter*, 18 June

'Essentially the built environment is a clash of infrastructures, a geometrically conceived, object-centred human one and a complex, restlessly creative natural one.'

Rachel Armstrong, *The Times*, 8 June

'The place is already rather nice. Why bother to embellish it? Our project is to do nothing.'

Anne Lacaton discussing a scheme for a square in Bordeaux at the Architecture University Research Society, Barcelona, 13 June

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Aesthetics and acoustics with a system

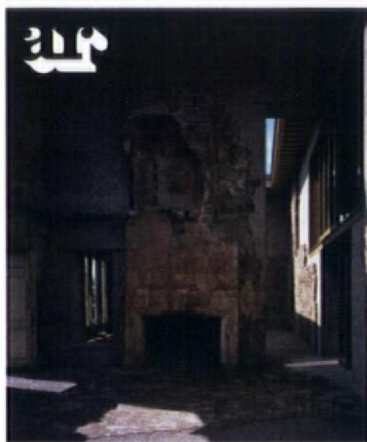
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WORLD WIDE WEAVE

Your views



Emergency alarm: is it ever too late to be a new architect?

I qualified as an architect in 2011, 35 years after enrolling on my first degree. As I scanned the students in the University of Westminster's lecture theatre, there must have been a dozen who were in their 40s or older. Were we just those who had worked in practices for years, without getting round to qualifying? Some perhaps, but several I met had, like me, switched to architecture from other careers.

My purpose in writing is to challenge the Emerging Architecture Awards' eligibility age limit of 45 and to propose that it be dropped, on the following grounds:

1. It is arbitrary. Why 45? Emergence itself is not connected to age.
2. It is against the spirit of age discrimination legislation, if not the letter. The phrase regardless of age speaks for itself. When I decided to change to architecture at 35, I was aware that many well-known architects were still producing their best work into their 70s and 80s. Given that the Default Retirement Age was scrapped in 2011, why would the AR, or the profession, want to discriminate on the grounds of age?
3. It is restrictive. To limit eligibility by age is both unfair and anti-competitive. Surely emerging architecture needs all the help it can get.
4. It is irritating. You might wonder why I should be so bothered; I have no particular ambition to apply for awards. I am simply irritated by the narrow-mindedness that an age limit implies. Our leading architecture publications should be celebrating the breadth of the profession through these and other awards – they should be seen to be inclusive, not exclusive.

So what's in a word? The call for entries in the current issue of AR states: 'The ar+d Awards are the world's most popular and prestigious awards for young architects, giving emerging practices an invaluable trajectory

to wider stardom'. The simple substitution of 'new', for the word 'young', would put the emphasis where it belongs – on emergence not age. If the aim is to reward new talent, perhaps you could replace the age limit with a maximum number of years since qualifying, and/or setting up a practice.

Clare Richards, London

What would Pugin say?

Since its foundation *The Architectural Review* has been the house journal for the Puginites, and so I thought I might add a few words to William JR Curtis's article on the reputation of AWN Pugin himself (AR June 2012).

You've been asking your readers to contribute to *The Big Rethink*, and the first thing to say is that Pugin made the architectural rethink of the early 19th century so influential that it has come to dominate Western architecture ever since. He did a number of things that were entirely new.

A simple example is that up to Pugin, almost every new detached house in England looked pretty much the same; after Pugin, almost every one looked different, usually through the use of devices that Pugin had invented himself. His Grange in Ramsgate, which Curtis remembers from his childhood, with its dynamic pinwheel plan, its central stair hall, its curious ceremonial layout and its absolutely coherent set of architectural details, issued forth blasts of seeds like those of a dandelion, spreading very fast right across the whole of the country. When you approach, say, the entrance elevation of Pugin's major houses you see an extraordinary kind of functional architecture – with, for example, a blank kitchen wall, a service stair and a water closet window directly in your face as you approach the front door – which

has nothing much in common with historical medieval Gothic design and a great deal to do with thinking out basic architectural problems entirely afresh. It's also a kind of architecture which was so bizarre, so apparently brutal, so utterly original, that for the first half of the 20th-century critics found it hard to take it in when they came face to face with it.

Pugin was an inspiration for architects because he devised an architectural language that exactly suited the problems that architects faced every day, and which also suited the mood and the discoveries of the time. The first problem – identified by your *Big Rethink* author as true again today – was that architects were fast losing status and prestige compared with other building professionals. Pugin made the architect a more important person, by putting him (it was then of course almost always 'him') in charge of a great deal more than putting up some walls and roofs. From now on it was the architect, not convention, who resolved building details; it was the architect, not convention, who devised the plan on the basis of how people lived. It was the architect who understood why buildings were important and what they could do not just for life but for the imagery of life; it was the architect who championed the symbolic role of buildings. It was the architect who reigned over the applied arts, the purpose of the entire field of which was to play subservient roles within a building. It was the architect who was in control of, and not cowed by, the technological developments in kitchens, bathrooms, heating, ventilation and drainage. It was the architect who sought the joy of life and creation through the putting together of a building, in part by inventing details that spoke of the natural qualities of the materials and the work of those that made them.

This is a rational, positivistic approach to design – hierarchical,

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A page from Pugin's pioneering pro-Medieval polemic *Contrasts* (1836)

logical, exclusive, very much in the mainstream of early Victorian thought – and it rescued the English architectural profession from withering away. It made sense within a society that was, unusually for England, growing in religious consciousness, because it could be explained in simple moral language, and also because it provided a vivid, assertive, collaborative type of architecture for churches. It also built on the fact that, thanks to the astonishingly high standard of architectural antiquarianism at the time, it was possible for the first time to know what England's medieval buildings had been like and to learn from them. So the best message from Pugin to the modern designer is that Pugin made it possible for the architect to feel good again, to take his place in history, and to expand enormously his field of operations.

Much of the story of this historical episode got lost somewhere down the line. It is extraordinary that if you look at most references to Pugin up to, say, the 1990s you find a lot of nonsense about a romantic, Catholic nutcase. It is very odd that this happened and it seems to be something to do with the disconnect between designers who can't communicate in words, and writers, who are enormously

privileged over designers by modern culture, who look for literal rather than visual messages.

Pugin was, however, the only architect mentioned with praise by the Gothic Revivalists of the High Victorian period and the Arts and Crafts architects who were among the AR's first readers. It was a series of beautifully illustrated articles by Paul Waterhouse in this magazine in 1897-98 that first laid out Pugin's record, and it was a piece by Nikolaus Pevsner in 1943 – a 'Short Pugin Florilegium' – that marks the beginning of the modern appreciation of Pugin. Peter Davey, himself a scholar of the Arts and Crafts Movement and a champion of architecture made and designed by and for real people, used to ask those who proposed some new building or another for inclusion here: 'What would Pugin say?' – a pretty good question I ask my own students. Pugin is the architect's architect, and we shouldn't forget it. He created the professional world that gives you the status and significance that you have. The AR has a proud record in championing Pugin's life and works, and it is a reputation I hope you will hang on to.

Timothy Brittain-Catlin,
Kent School of Architecture

Undecorated shed

Reading the April issue of AR left me puzzled. In the editorial view prefaced 'If we are to reconceptualise architecture, we need to re-evaluate what sort of lives we want to lead,' Catherine Slessor states that only when we know who we want to be can we begin to conceive of what our environment might be. She adds that redefining who we want to be takes conventional notions of sustainability beyond objective technical performance, and that architecture then ceases to be about frivolous self-expression and the vacuous quest for 'new' forms or fashionable theories that currently preoccupy many practitioners.

You might expect to find these ideas repeated in the rest of the issue. And yet in the first article (*Criticism*), David Cohn writes about El Batel Auditorium and Congress Centre by Selgas Cano, in Cartagena, Spain and in the first few sentences says: 'Queen Sofia inaugurated the Batel Auditorium (...), the moiré patterns thrown off by the thin stripes of her suit played a nice riff against the backlit translucent plastic walls and lime-white rubber floors of the building. (...) the building's luminous abstract surfaces put everyone on stage, transforming their moving figures into a stately pop ballet'; and so on. Can this introduction of the criticism of the building have any connection to the editorial view? Looking at the photos of the building, it seems that the interior is to be praised by all means, but the exterior? What about its urbanity, its scale and relation to the existing buildings in the vicinity, its character and identity, and what does it bring to the inhabitants of town beside 'translucent planes that elevate cheap materials into a rich experience'?

Višnja Kukoč, architect, University of Split, Croatia

Not floating but falling

It seems pretty obvious to me that Joel Shapiro's sculpture is jumping suicidally from an upper storey of Eric Parry's new development on Savile Row (AR June 2012), not floating like a helium filled balloon, as developer Doris Lockhart would have us believe (the obvious reference here, I guess, would be to St Andrew bursting through the pediment over the altar in Bernini's church on the Quirinale). And who can blame Shapiro's welded stick man for wanting to end it all? The building from which it leaps is in carbuncular classical mode, fully Prince Charles compliant and calculated not to frighten the horses as they duck into Hunstman for new pinks (the best that can be said of it is that it is no clumsier than its sub-Holden neo-Mannerist predecessor). Unlike Gormley's more ambiguous rooftop figures, which elicited calls to the emergency services from concerned passers-by in São Paulo, this figure is definitely mid plummet. Perhaps the artist is making a critical reference to the spate of banker suicides after the 2008 crash; more troublingly, it stirs ineradicable memories of figures falling from the Twin Towers. A strange and gloomy ornament indeed.

B Blasko, Lugoj, Romania

Romancing the phone

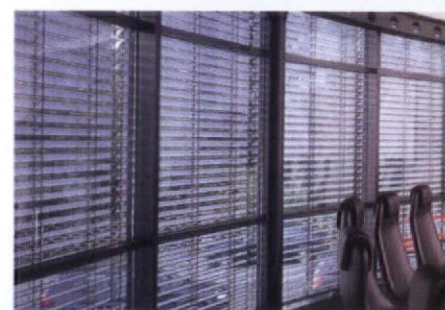
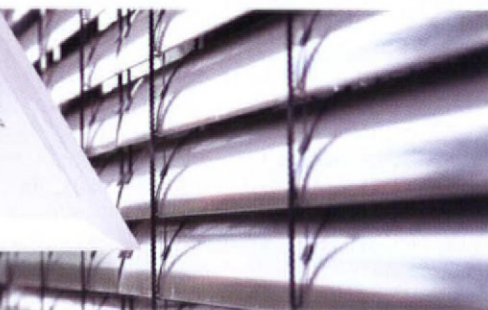
It is not possible to accept the naïve, *Sex and the City* vision of tomorrow set out in *Technology* (AR May 2012). Surely now we can assign such utopian fantasies to an environmentally safe landfill and begin to deal with the inconvenient truth that we can't crap in our iPhones and thereby make it (the crap) disappear.

Michael L St Hill, architect, St Lucia, comment on AR website

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elam
kitchen system

Model by John Lim,
winner of this year's AR
House Award, showing
permutations of courtyard
forms for his House for
All Seasons in Shaanxi
Province, China, which
reinterprets vernacular
precedents to create
a prototype for a modern
rural, self-sufficient house

AR HOUSE 2012



THE HOUSE ANCIENT ROOTS NEW PARADIGMS

Intimately anchored in human experience, the house is a powerful archetype in architectural and cultural imagination. Yet it also suggests new paradigms for how we might live more in balance with ourselves and the wider planet

CATHERINE SLESSOR

Inaugurated in 2010 with a prize fund of £10,000, AR House is an annual awards programme for the best one-off house. This year, an international jury of Sofia von Ellrichshausen from Chile, Brian MacKay-Lyons from Canada, Peter Salter from the UK and AR Editor Catherine Slessor assessed nearly 200 submissions and chose a group of 12 winning projects. All are shown in this issue, and are also illustrated here in figure ground plans at a scale of 1:500 for constructive comparison of different space standards and layouts.

This award would not be possible without the generous and imaginative support of Laufen, now in its second cycle of sponsorship. We look forward to welcoming both the winners and our sponsor partner to a prizegiving reception to be staged in London at the end of June. (See architectural-review.com for further details.)

Despite AR House being an award for a single building type, the jury were confronted with a great range of projects that spanned different locales, budgets, sites and programmes. Among the group of winners, the settings range from the Malaysian rainforest to a beach in New Zealand. Yet the jury agreed on certain criteria, prioritising issues such as response to site and context, an alertness to the potential of materials, technology and sustainability, how the experiential quality of space and light were choreographed, and how imaginatively each house was conceived as a setting for the rituals and intimacies of modern domestic life.

As a building type, the house continues to exude a powerful hold on architectural and cultural imagination. Especially during the 20th century, a series of canonical houses have been turning points in the development of modern architecture, yet by rendering domestic routine the subject of dehumanising technical or formal

abstraction, it often becomes removed from any semblance of life as commonly experienced, or severs its inhabitants from psychologically meaningful connections with wider elemental forces, as Peter Buchanan has persuasively argued in his series of texts for the AR's *Big Rethink* (which will return to its usual slot next month).

One of Buchanan's key themes is the importance of vernacular wisdom and precedents, which were marginalised, if not swept away entirely, by the universalising technological zeal of Modernism. Now, however, they are slowly being rediscovered and applied anew. This year's overall winner is a project for a site in rural China by John Lin working with students from the Department of Architecture at the University of Hong Kong. Set against the wider backdrop of rural privation and depopulation impacting on communities that were formerly self-reliant, it reworks and updates the traditional courtyard house on a standard plot using techniques of vernacular construction.

Unselfconsciously, it integrates many aspects of self-sufficient, sustainable living and environmental control, such as rainwater harvesting, use of thermal mass, natural ventilation, the cultivation of gardens for food, and a biogas system fuelled by pig waste. Lin sees it as a prototype: a generic solution that can be adapted by different users, with the larger ambition of attempting to rebalance Chinese rural life, which is in a state of dangerous flux as people migrate to the cities and the countryside languishes. The jury found it a highly impressive project, both as a template for rural self-reliance that impinges very lightly on materials and energy, but also as a formal and experiential proposition.

Many of this year's winners are in rural settings as object buildings in the landscape, such as Steve Larkin Architects' subtle, sober House at Bogwest in County Wexford (p58), constructed within the armature of a former farmstead, and Hurst Song Architekten's exquisitely stripped-down version of an Alpine chalet (p64). Japanese houses are again well represented, exhibiting perpetually inventive responses to the challenge of making experientially rich dwellings within the unforgiving context of crazily congested cityscapes.

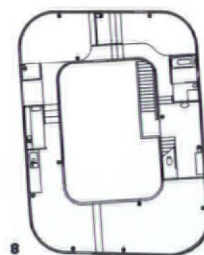
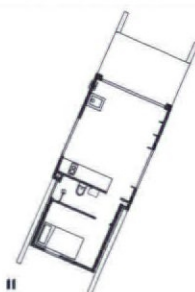
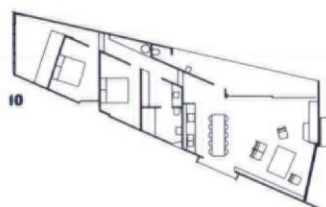
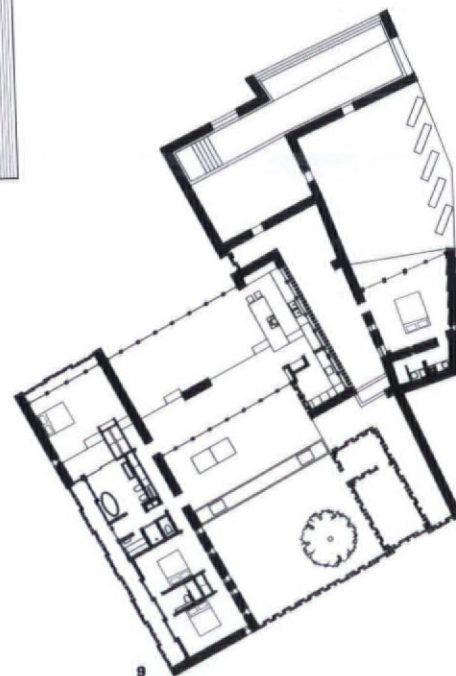
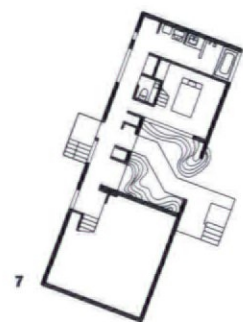
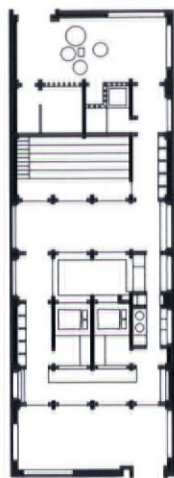
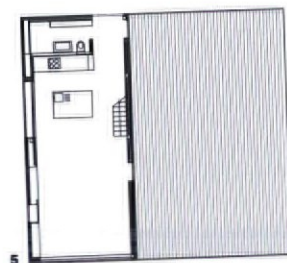
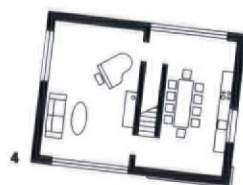
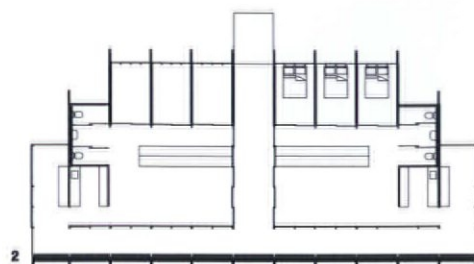
It remains the case, however, that one-off houses still tend to be the preserve of relatively wealthy clients, who are apt to regard them as lifestyle trophies, while the great mass of 'ordinary' dwellings created by developers and volume housebuilders remains lamentably untouched by architectural imagination or ambition.

In the search for new paradigms of domestic architecture that explore and try to make sense of the vast territory between bauble and production line, the current economic crisis and the growing threat to the planet's ecology provide a timely impetus for reassessing how we might re-evaluate and reconceptualise the archetype of the house. The projects shown here offer a compelling snapshot of possibilities.

1. House for All Seasons, China, John Lin (winner)
 2. Shelter@Rainforest, Malaysia, Marra + Yeh
 3. House at Bogwest, Ireland, Steve Larkin
 4. Holzkristall, Switzerland, Hurst Song

5. Garoza House, Spain, Herreros Arquitectos
 6. Outside In House, Japan, Takeshi Hosaka
 7. Nest House, Japan, UID Architects
 8. Toda House, Japan, Kimihiko Okada

9. Stone House, France, Carl Fredrik Svenstedt
 10. Shearers' Quarters, Australia, John Wardle
 11. Sled Hut, New Zealand, Crosson Clarke Carnachan
 12. Dig in the Sky House, Japan, Alphaville

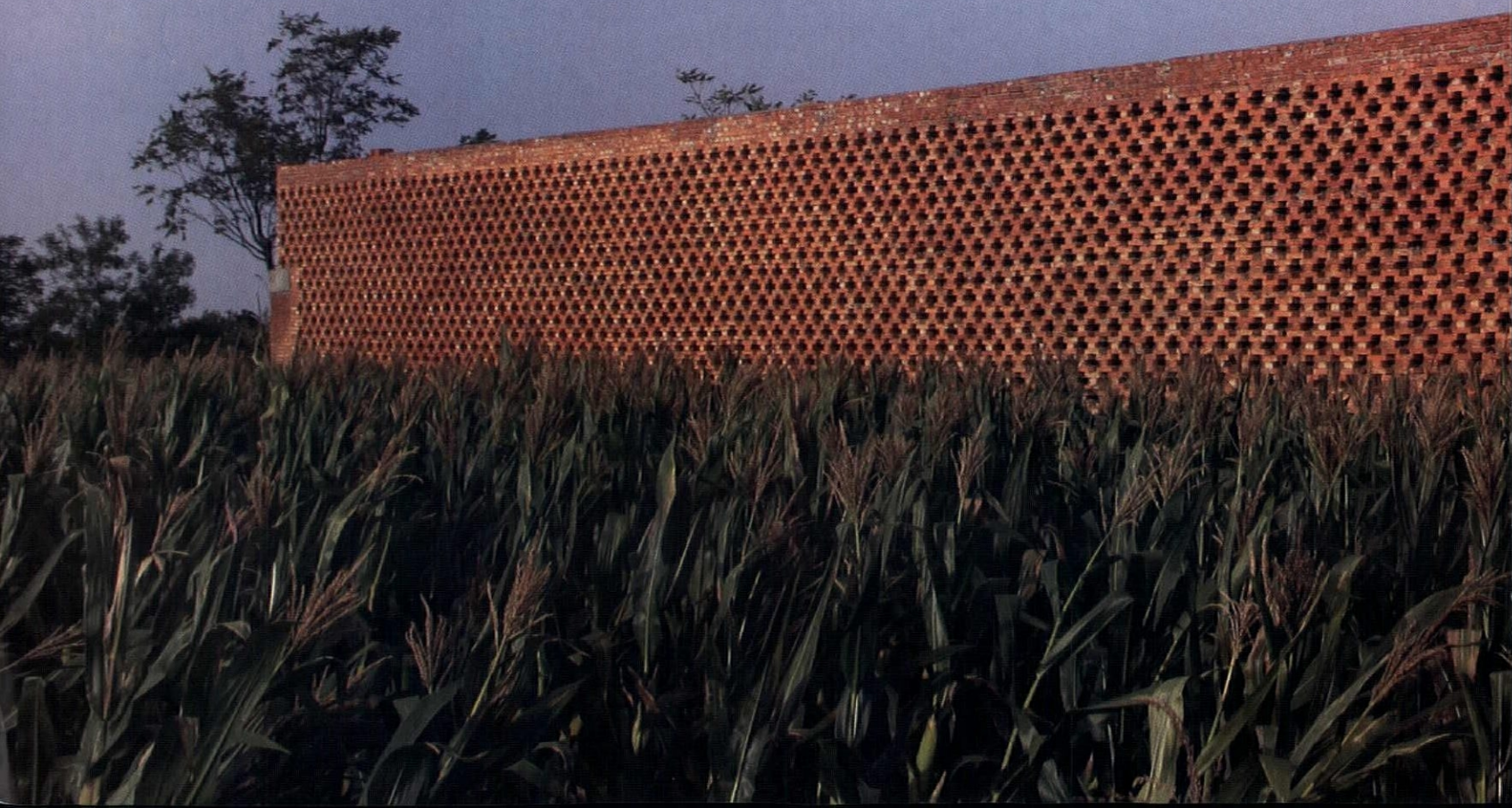


WINNER

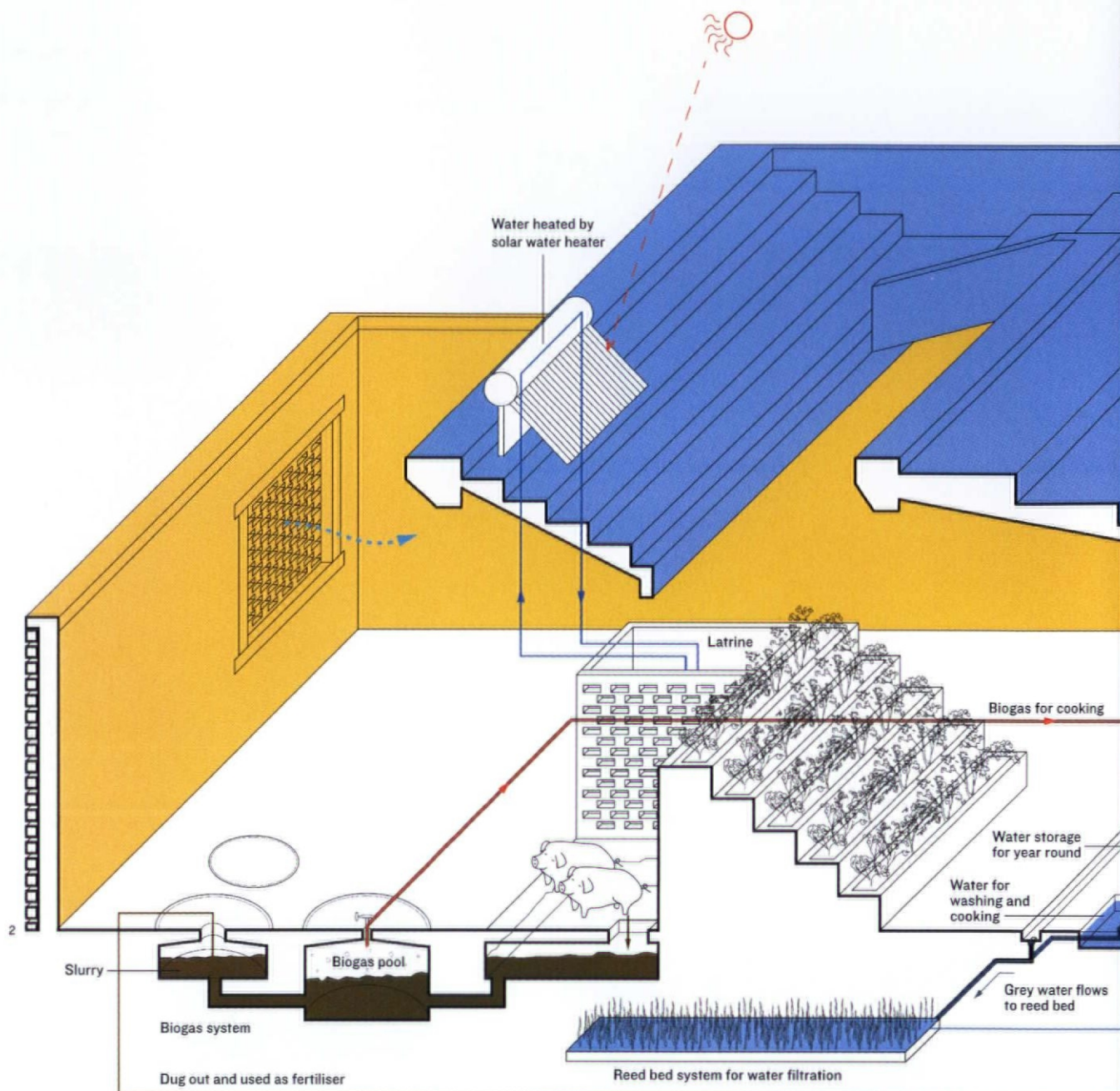
HOUSE FOR ALL SEASONS

JOHN LIN

SHAANXI PROVINCE, CHINA







CRITICISM

AUSTIN WILLIAMS

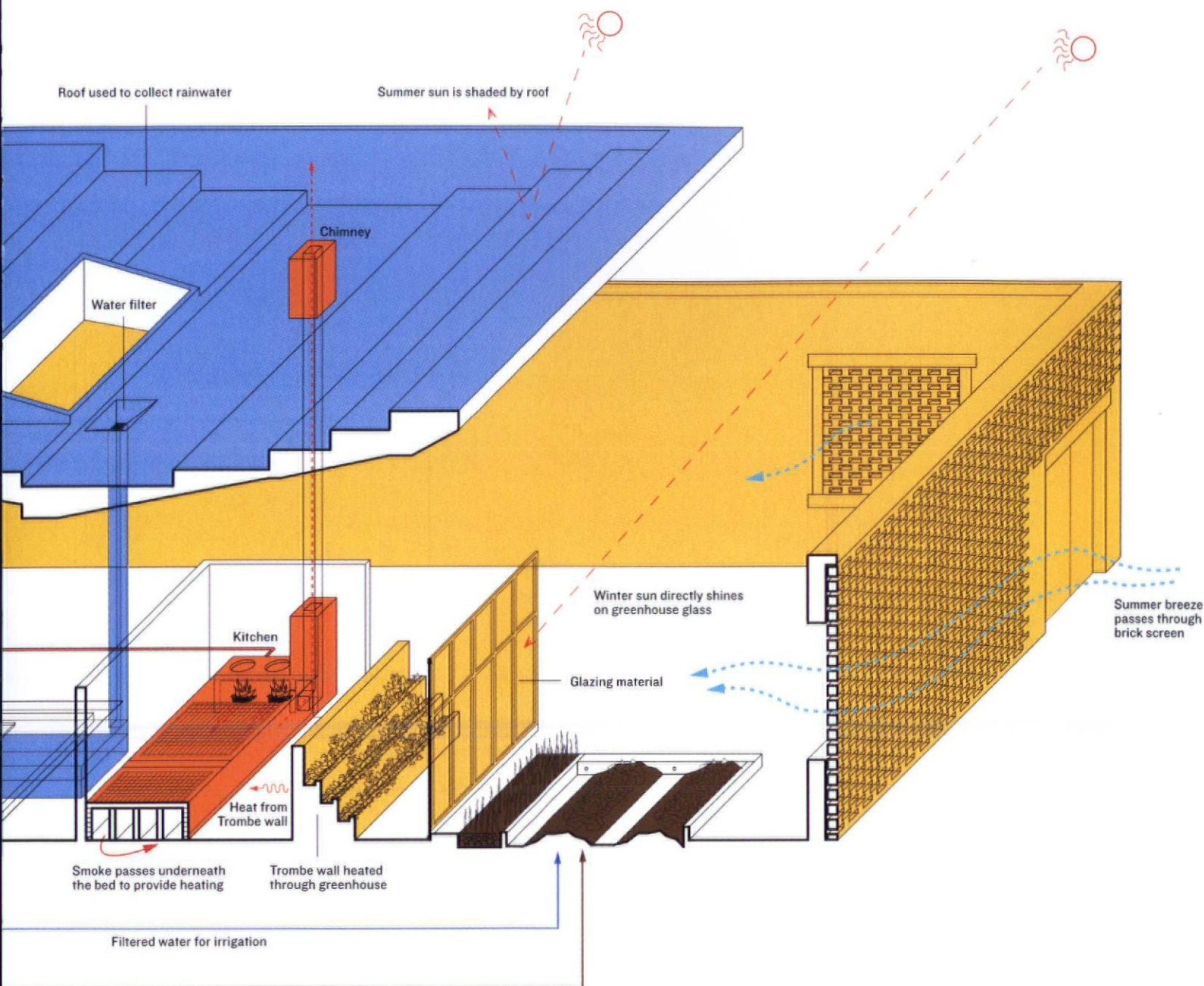
China's decree that 350 million of its remaining rural population will be urbanised by 2030 seems to sum up the forceful socio-economic dynamics of the modern Chinese state. With 50 per cent of the total population already living in cities, the authorities have promised to build a further 20 cities a year until around 2025. Admittedly, as author James Palmer points out, Chinese statistics are questionable (or, in some instances, downright wrong) but even so, it is reasonably understandable that China's long march to an urban future is carrying on apace.

The flow of people and the concomitant growth of urban conurbations are reminiscent – although on a much bigger scale – of

Victorian Britain. Equally redolent of 19th-century London, are the living conditions for some of the less well off in 21st-century Beijing and Shanghai. Meagre floor areas, mean workhouses and airborne miasma. As the country urbanises, there are definitely winners and losers. The question: 'where will the people go?' still exercises the mind as much today as it did for Ebenezer Howard. In *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, the lone liberal voice arguing for better planning symbolised a society in transition.

Admittedly, Howard's Victorian/Edwardian millenarianism (tinged with a dose of Social Darwinism) is thankfully absent from the contemporary Chinese condition, but there is a growing recognition that the success story of development should be tempered with expressions of concern for those less

1. (Previous pages) the prototypical house is a compact compound of courtyards and internal spaces, wrapped in a protective brick wall, perforated to admit light, air and views
2. Exploded projection showing principles of self-sufficiency and environmental control



fortunate. Philanthropy (ironically by the wealthy rather than the Chinese state) is central to the latest Five-Year Plan, for example. It is also undeniable that, like Howard, a fear of rural instability underlies much of the official debate in China.

Step forward John Lin, one person who has turned his attention to this dilemma. Lin is the winner of this year's AR House Award for his contemporary take on a vernacular village house. Educated in New York, he is now assistant professor at the University of Hong Kong where he and his students are involved in an 'experiential learning workshop' that focuses on Chinese 'lifestyles in transition'. By examining, measuring and documenting traditional village courtyard house typologies – specifically in Shijia Village near Xi'an in Shaanxi Province – Lin and his team have

sought to give a new twist to an old and successful vernacular format. This, he says, is an evolution of an existing form, rather than an architectural imposition. It is a particular design intervention that recognises the absence of a skilled construction workforce, the lack of a defined client and the fact that historically, such buildings have been created without an architect.

Currently, says Lin, there are only two types of building: traditional mud brick or 'generic concrete and brick with ceramic tiles ... there is nothing in between'. Attempting to provide a notional organic development of this typology, Lin now proposes a conscious design transformation that attempts to be as hands-off as possible. It is a prototype only: a generic solution that can be adapted by real users. This way,

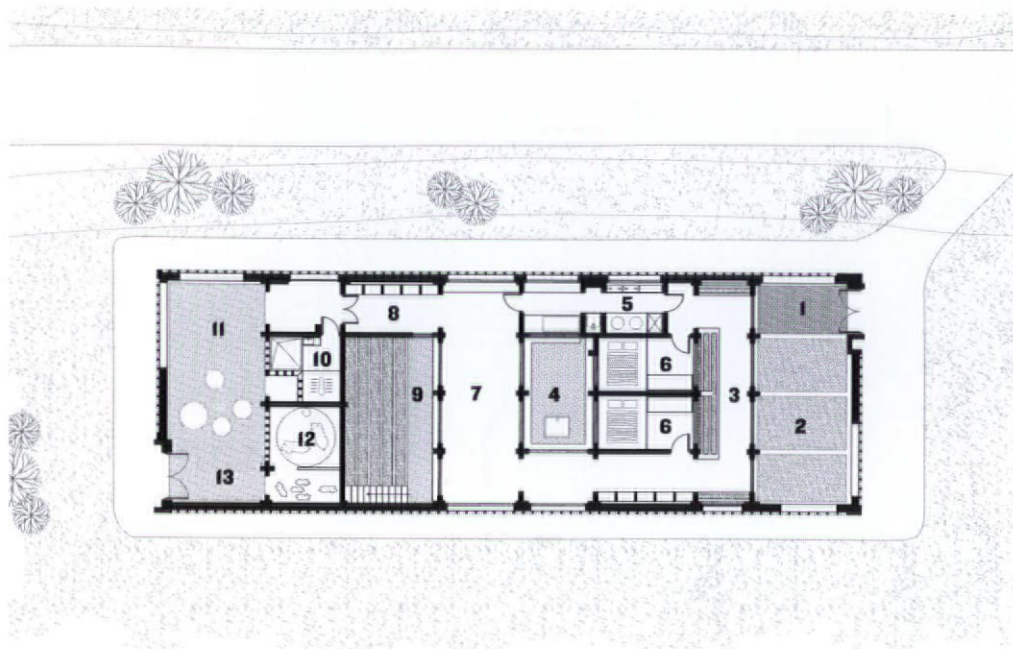
he says, it is an 'efficient framework for the simulacrum of self-expression'.

All the houses in Shijia are 10m x 30m and constructed of mud and brick with the courtyard as the dominant feature. Lin's new variant has four courtyards which are 'inserted throughout the house' and connect the main internal spaces with the external livestock areas. The project was funded by the Luke Him Sau Charitable Trust and the costs were kept down with the help of the Shaanxi Women's Federation who helped coordinate much of the work and managed to navigate what Lin calls 'the political complexities' of the project.

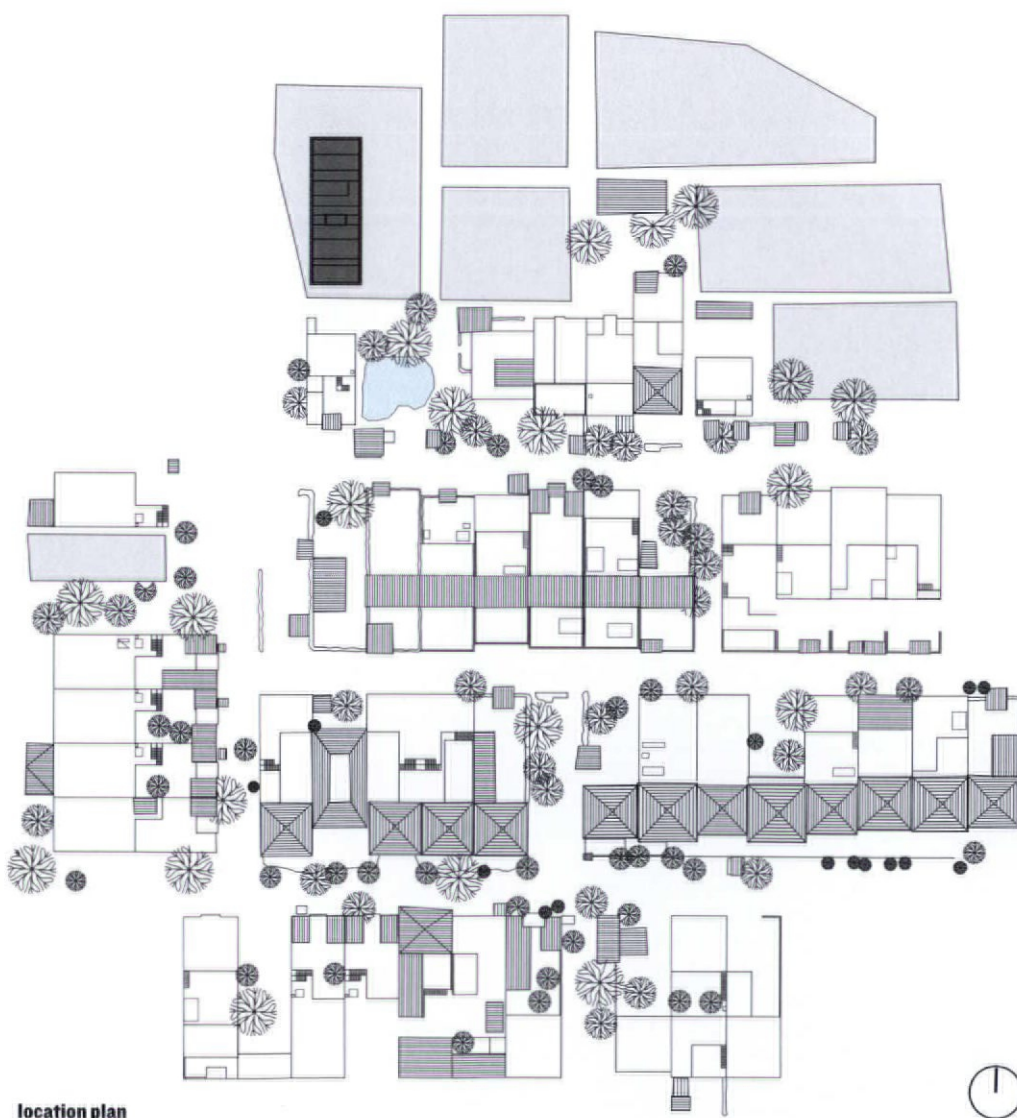
The roof profile is designed to collect water. The stepped cross-section provides access from the ground floor to a large area used to dry crops (corn, seeds, etc). The steps can also act as high-level seating area set

**3. Models illustrating
different permutations
of house and courtyard**

- 1 front entrance
- 2 front courtyard
- 3 greenhouse
- 4 washing courtyard
- 5 kitchen
- 6 bedroom
- 7 living
- 8 storage
- 9 planting courtyard
- 10 latrine
- 11 rear courtyard
- 12 pig pen
- 13 rear entrance



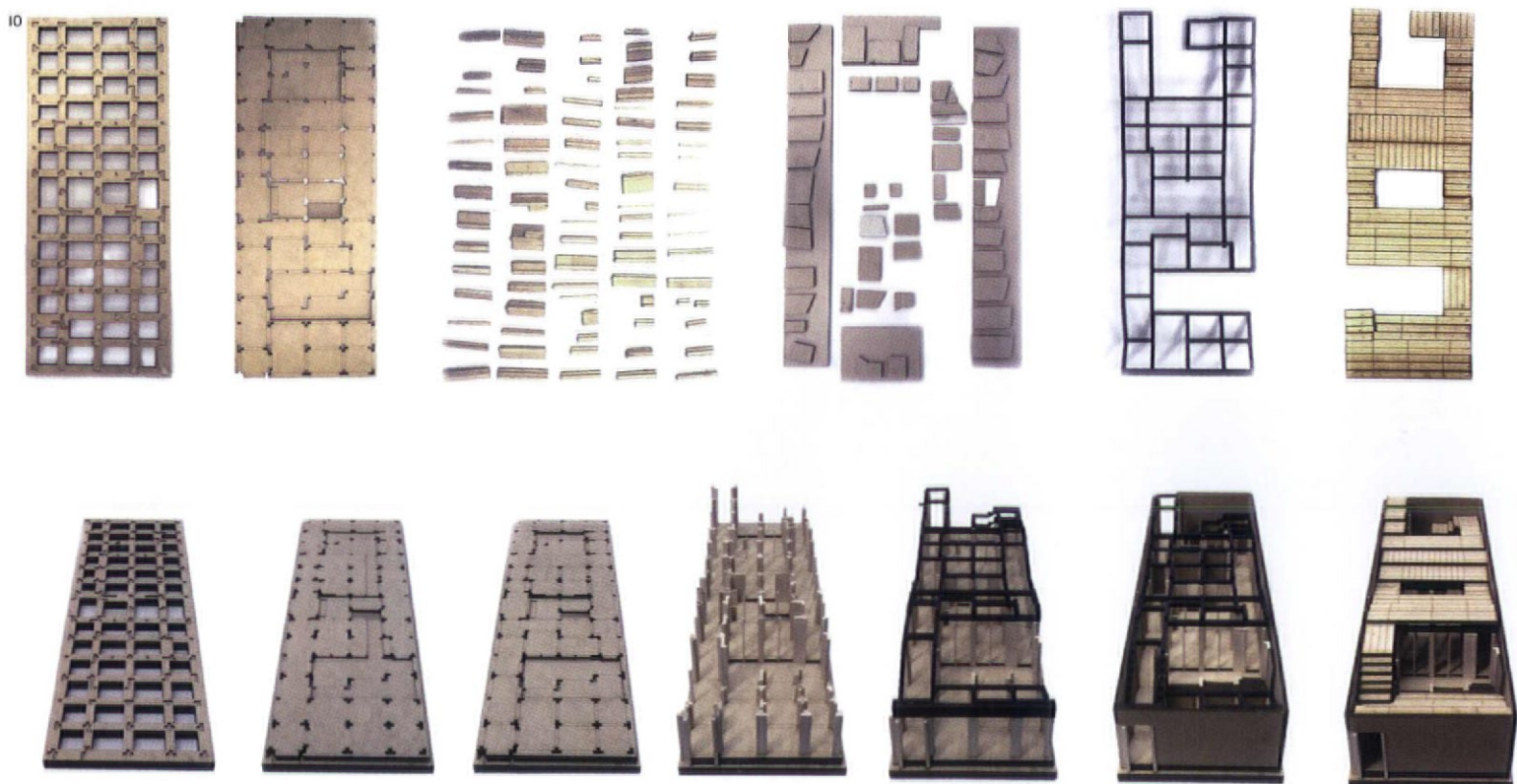
ground floor plan

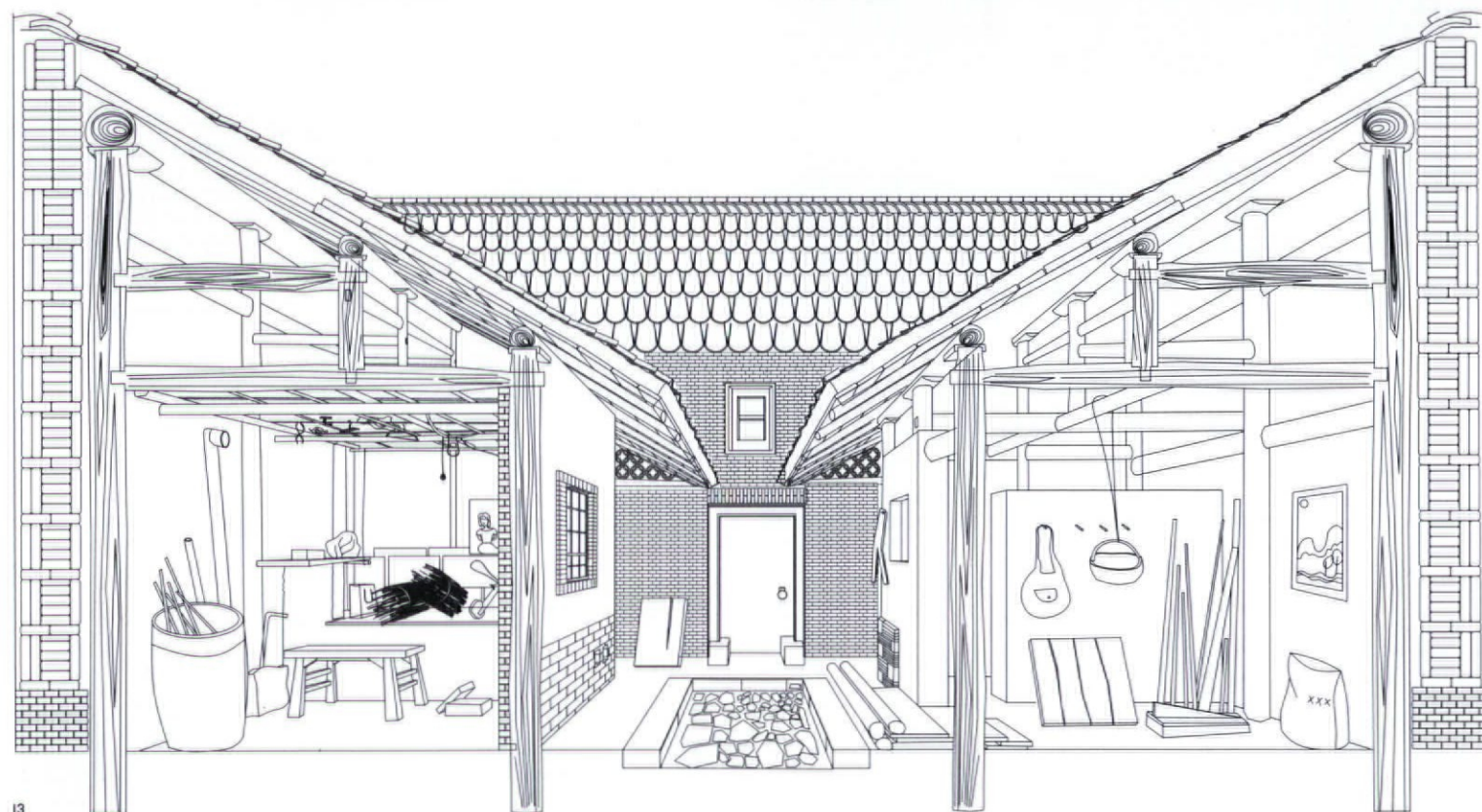


location plan



4. Excavating the pits for the house's biogas system, which runs on pig manure
5, 6. Mud bricks being mixed, moulded and drying in the sun. The house uses a simple, vernacular building technology, but where such houses would usually be built by locals, rural depopulation has altered a culture of traditional self-reliance with the introduction of hired labour and materials
7. The unclad concrete frame shows the angular roof profile. The roof acts as a terrace and also collects rainwater for use in washing, cooking and garden irrigation
8. Walls of mud brick are gradually added
9. The completed house
10. Models showing construction sequence





'By examining, measuring and documenting traditional village courtyard house typologies, Lin seeks to give a new twist to an old and successful vernacular format'

against a spectacular backdrop of mountains. Lin describes the roof as an alternative to the pitched roofs of the traditional mud housing and the completely flat roofs of new concrete buildings. The structure is a combination of concrete columns (earthquake resistant) and mud brick (thermal insulation). 'We hope,' he says, 'to modernise the mud brick building rather than completely abandoning it.'

As well as water collection (during the small number of rainy days in the region), the finished building contains a pig-effluent biogas pit that feeds the methane cooker; a Trombe wall; a bed warmed by flue gases; and a bog-standard solar thermal collector.

Self-sufficiency is key to the design and, by implication, is a fundamental aspect of the rural lifestyle that Lin wants to maintain. For him self-sufficiency is merely a pragmatic way

of resisting the decline that would confront these villages if left to their own devices.

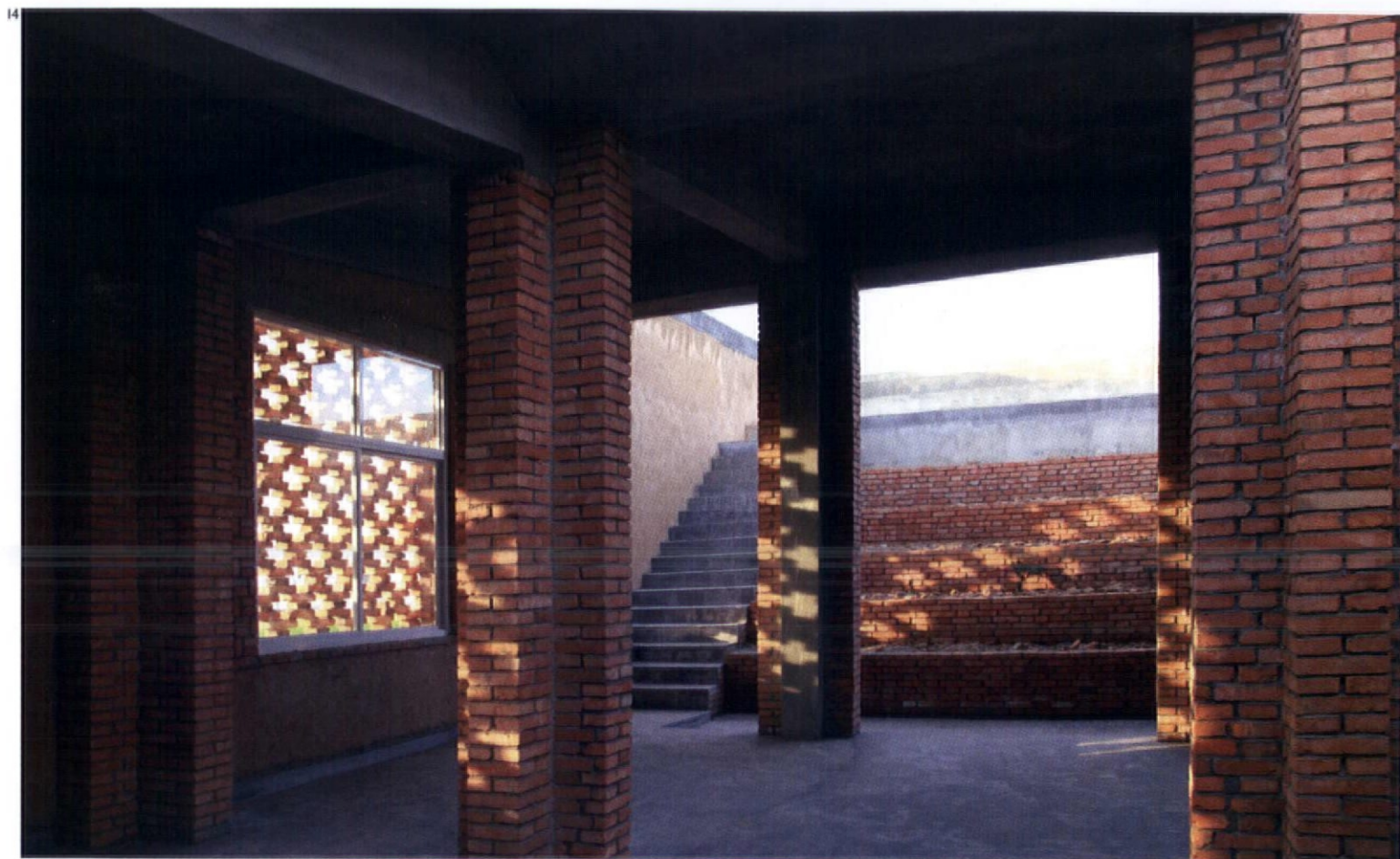
'The reliance on a migrant economy,' he tells me, 'is not creating a livable environment. Ironically, as villagers leave to work in cities they continue to send money back home, and floor areas will dramatically increase. What they are building begins to look like a ghetto. Most of these villages have become garbage dumps and there is a slow breakdown of the economy, social and community relationships, politics and the environment.'

Rather than self-sufficiency accentuating isolation, Lin suggests that it works the other way around. He describes self-sufficiency as 'villages reducing their dependency on outside goods and services'. By 'evolving' rather than 'preserving', he says, 'we're actually working to prevent a rural ghetto.'

11, 12. Examples of existing village houses, which are evolving from the basic courtyard model into more complex constructions, reflecting wider social change
13. Sectional perspective through a traditional courtyard house, which acted as a template for the new dwelling

14. Light filters through the perforated brick screen that wraps around the exterior. The staircase leads to the roof, which is used as a terrace
15. The rear courtyard, a sheltered inside/outside enclave, with veiled views
16. The family who will occupy the house, seen in their original dwelling

Architect
John Lin /
The University of Hong Kong
Project team
Huang Zhiyun
Kwan Kwok Ying
Maggie Ma
Qian Kun
Katja Lam
Li Bin
Photographs
Courtesy of the architect



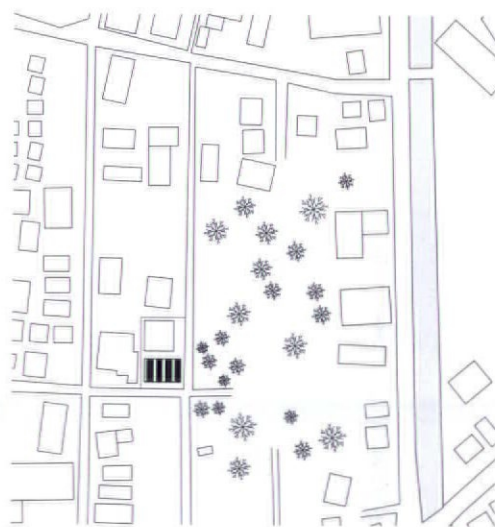




RUNNER UP

OUTSIDE IN HOUSE TAKESHI HOSAKA ARCHITECTS

YAMANASHI, JAPAN



location plan

Takeshi Hosaka's Daylight House on a congested site in Yokohama was a runner up in last year's AR House Awards (AR August 2011), impressing the jury with its imaginative response to a chaotic urban milieu. This year, his Outside In House in Yamanashi attracted comparable acclaim, and though the contexts are very different – in this case a low-rise suburban site – there are recognisable similarities in how both the houses are conceived as toplit volumes, sculpted and defined by their roofscapes.

With its gently serrated roof profile and hermetic concrete walls, the compact, single-storey structure does not immediately intimate a sense of domesticity, resembling more an industrial shed or workshop. However, the south end of the structure is fully glazed and dissolves physically by means of doors that fold back like an accordion to reveal a planted terrace and living area beyond. Hosaka's aim was to connect the inhabitants with nature and light, and this is especially so in the summer, when the end wall opens up so that cooling breezes can circulate. The house is bathed in a soft luminance, both from the glazed end wall and



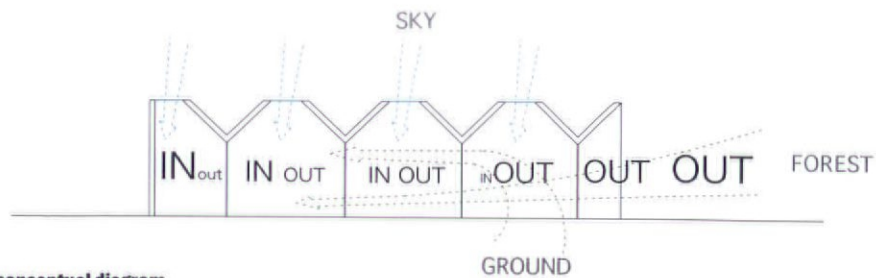
clear acrylic panels set between the V-beams, which funnel natural light into the interior, subtly transforming the atmosphere of the house throughout the day.

The serrated roof structure divides the plan into a series of broad strips that run across the 8-metre width of the house. The regular rhythm of the strips dictates the sequence and relationship of functions. The rearmost strip, which contains a study and washing facilities, abuts a bedroom zone. This in turn flanks the main living and kitchen space, while dining is conducted on the landscaped zone of the terrace.

Though each space is efficiently accounted for and compactly planned, there is also a generosity and surprising fluidity about the spatial relationships. For instance, the children's beds are fixed bunks screened by curtains, rather like being on a ship. The bunks face directly into the living area, so, for better or worse, the children are always part of the domestic dynamic, rather than isolated in individual rooms. Together with his nuanced handling of light and materials, Hosaka's imaginative approach to planning impressed the jury.

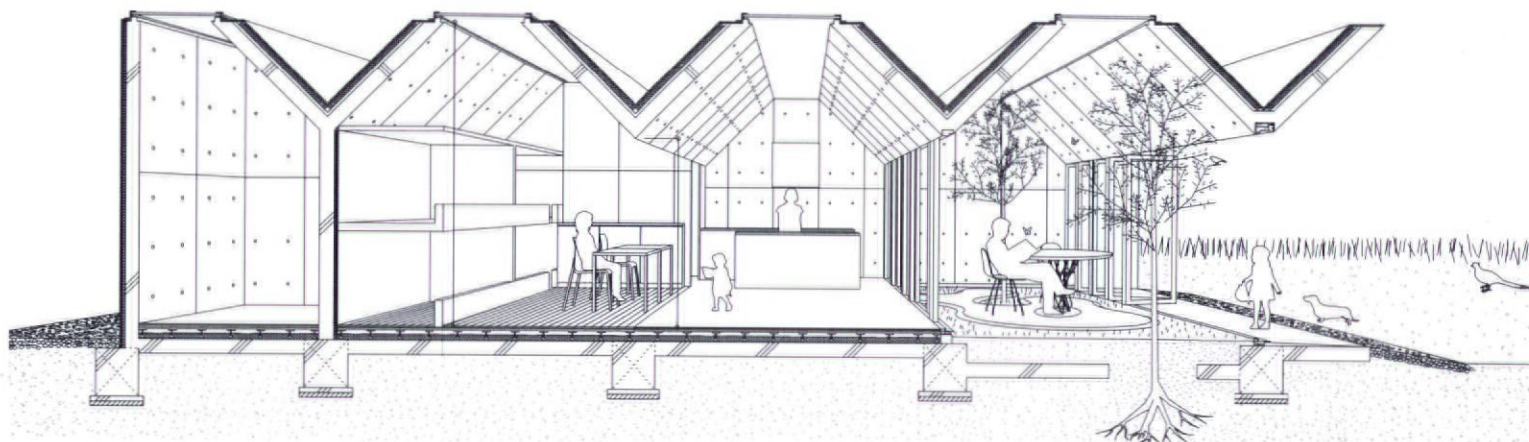
1. (Previous pages) on a suburban site, the compact volume of the house is powerfully defined by its serrated roof structure
2. Fluid planning integrates the living, cooking and children's domains in a single space. The V-beam structure articulates the interior
3. Dining takes place on a green terrace, while the glazed end wall opens up to connect the family with nature





conceptual diagram

Architect
Takeshi Hosaka Architects
Photographs
Koji Fujii/Nacasa & Partners



sectional perspective



ground floor plan

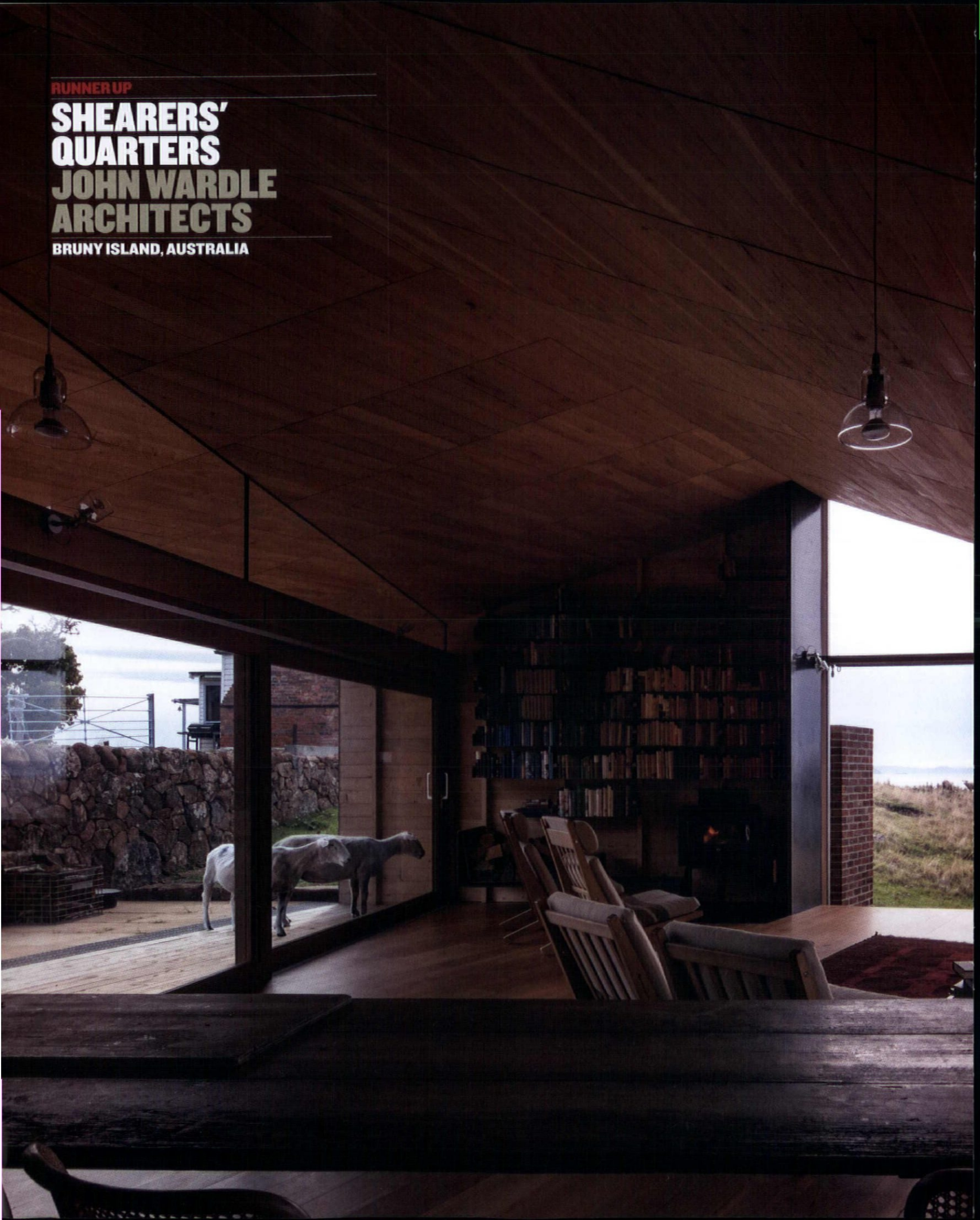
- | | |
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| 1 porch | 5 children's space |
| 2 dining terrace | 6 bedroom |
| 3 living | 7 study |
| 4 kitchen | 8 bathroom |



RUNNER UP

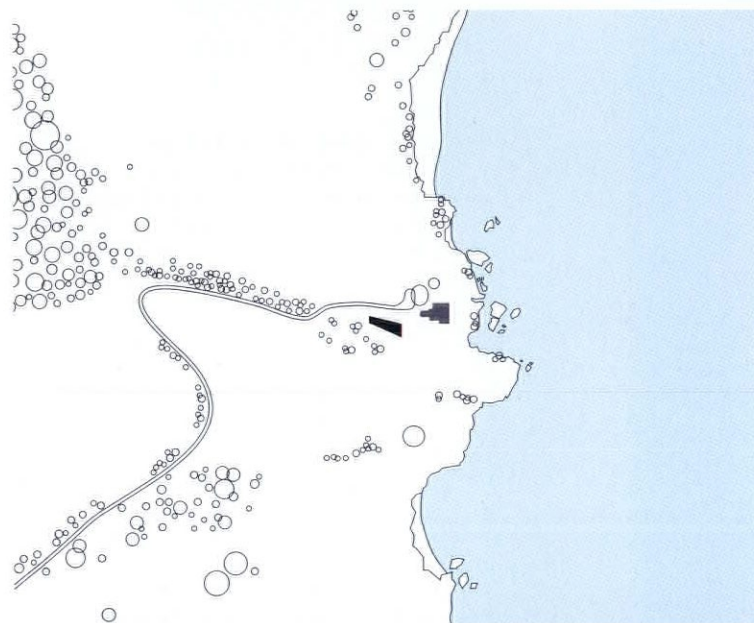
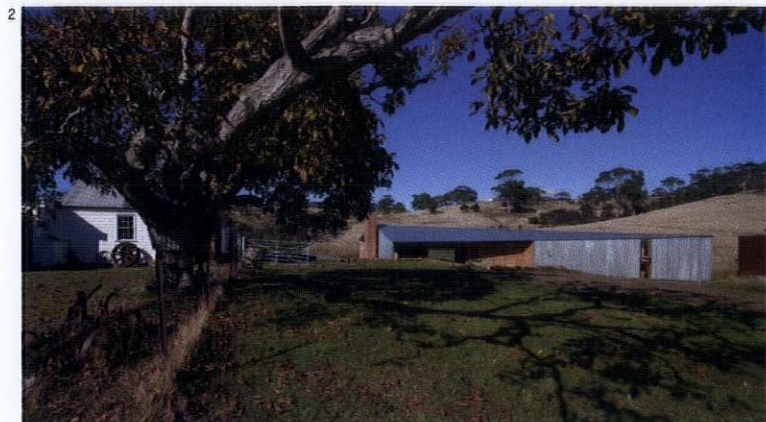
SHEARERS' QUARTERS JOHN WARDLE ARCHITECTS

BRUNY ISLAND, AUSTRALIA





1. (Previous pages) the living room fans out to embrace the coastal views. The sheep (left) are real; the site is still a working sheep farm
2. The new house lies next to an existing historic cottage
3. With its ribbed cladding and low slung form, the house explores the robust language of local agricultural buildings
4. The pine-lined interior opens up to the landscape to capture evening light

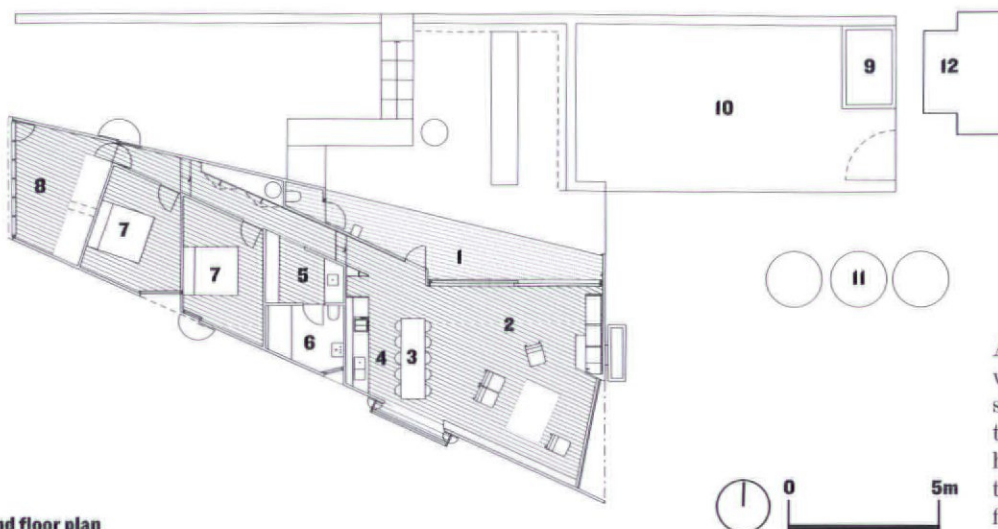


site plan

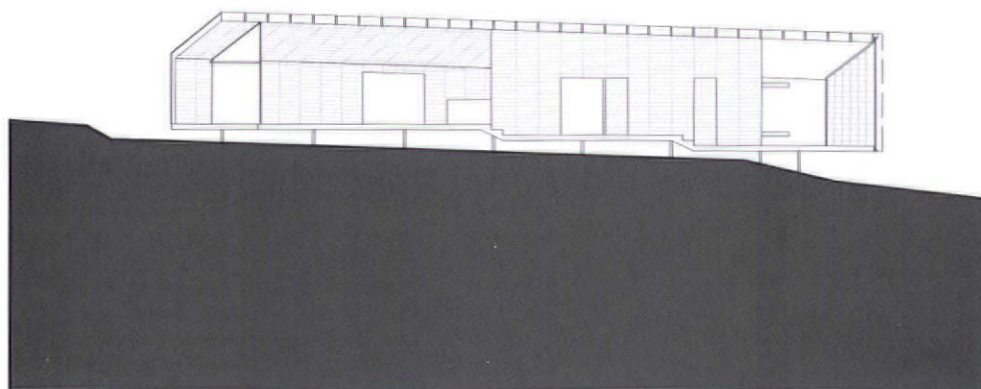


- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 entry | 7 bedroom |
| 2 living | 8 bunk room |
| 3 dining | 9 chicken sheds |
| 4 kitchen | 10 kitchen garden |
| 5 laundry/scullery | 11 water tanks |
| 6 bathroom | 12 original cottage |

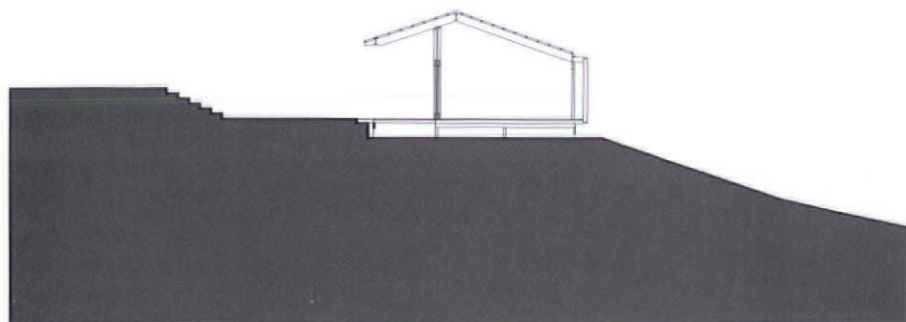
Architect
John Wardle Architects
Interior designer
Jeff Arnold
Kitchen appliances
Smeg
Bathroom fittings
Zucchetti
Photographs
Trevor Mein



ground floor plan



long section



cross section

Among the many submissions for rural or vacation houses, Shearers' Quarters, on the southernmost tip of Tasmania, clearly caught the jury's eye. Set on a working sheep farm, however, this is no romantic idyll. Built on the site of an old shearing shed destroyed by fire in the 1980s, the new house overlooks a coastal panorama and sits as a companion to an existing historic cottage constructed by the original landowner, Captain James Kelly, who acquired the property in 1840. The land is now owned and worked by the Wardle family and the new house is intended to host shearers and rural contractors, as well as family, friends and staff of John Wardle Architects.

The plan transforms along its length, shifting its profile from that of a slender skillion at its western end, to a broad gable at its east end. This exposition of two primary forms of vernacular agricultural structures allows the plan to align exactly with both the fall of the land to the south and the line of the original residence along its north side. The inset veranda on the north edge shifts alignment with the ridge to line up exactly with the veranda of the original house. This transformation also allows the building to broaden at its eastern corner to encompass the living area, which flares out and opens up to the ocean views.

Alluding to the agricultural context, corrugated galvanised iron is used for the cladding and timber (notably pine) for the interior. Many materials are recycled; bedrooms, for instance, are lined with old applebox crates. A responsive approach to environmental issues is manifest throughout, from the siting of the house (sheltered from prevailing winds), to openable louvres and vents for natural ventilation. Rainwater is harvested for drinking, lavatories and showers, and waste water is treated on site and used to irrigate a small native plantation. The jury admired the innate sense of poetic rusticity coupled with a beautifully precise approach to detailing and materials.

1. Wrapped in a gleaming skin of ribbed metal, the Garoza House is a prototype for an economic, expandable dwelling that can be set down lightly and rapidly in the landscape
2. (Opposite) all building systems are integrated within prefabricated modules. Walls are lined with functional flakeboard



RUNNER UP

GAROZA HOUSE HERREROS ARQUITECTOS

ÁVILA, SPAIN

Second homes on rural sites are usually conceived as experiential counterpoints to the dislocation and sensory overload of city life. Yet though the notion of the restorative idyll is seductively pervasive, this compact house, placed lightly and quickly in the landscape of central Spain, represents a contrary view: that nature is not necessarily in opposition to the city, but orchestrates different sorts of stimuli, no less intense and varied than the urban milieu.

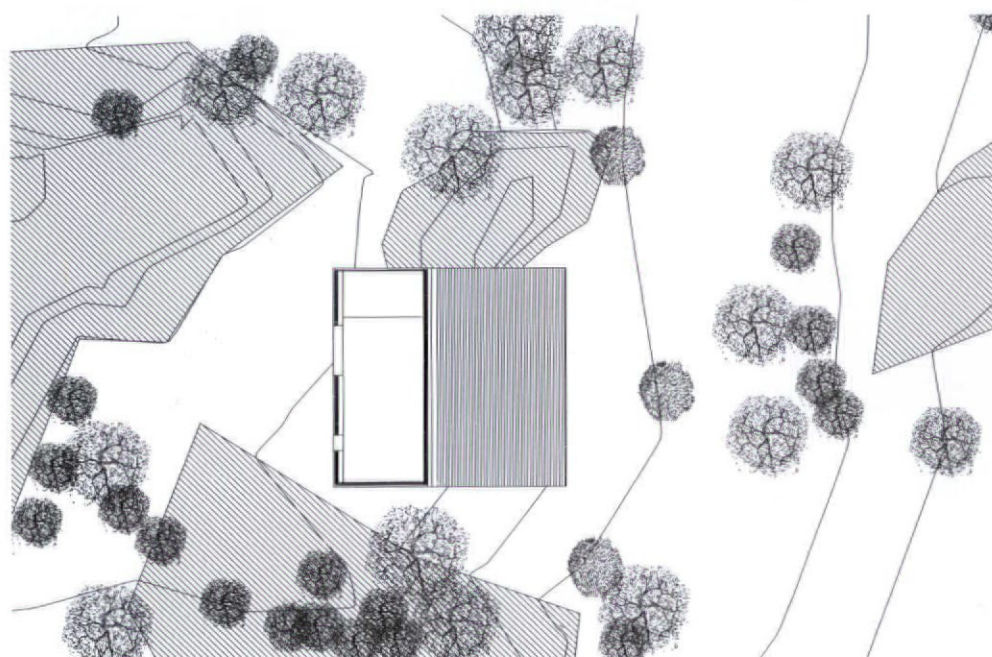
Designed by Madrid-based Herreros Arquitectos, the Garoza House rises up from the ground on a raft supported by pilotis, creating a distinct artificial datum in the rocky terrain. Rather than being an embedded structure with its roots implanted in the

earth, it disturbs the site as little as possible and squarely confronts the horizon, both as viewing platform and functional shelter. Here, architecture is efficiently distilled to a metal skinned, quasi-industrial object in the landscape; a simple and economic armature for experiencing the elements, rather than a means of keeping them at a distance.

Capable of expanding to meet its users' needs and interests, the Garoza House is an industrialised, modular prototype. This first phase is designed around a large double-height volume that functions as a living, dining and cooking space. Corners, mezzanines and transition spaces become places for storage, working and sleeping. At 3m wide, the size of the basic module is dictated by the limits of road transport. All the building systems, as well as fixed furniture and internal partitions, are integrated into the prefabricated modules. These simply slot together on site and are finished by an external layer of ribbed metal cladding, while internal walls are lined with flakeboard. The entire construction process takes a mere 12 hours and the structure can be removed equally quickly, with negligible impact on its surroundings.

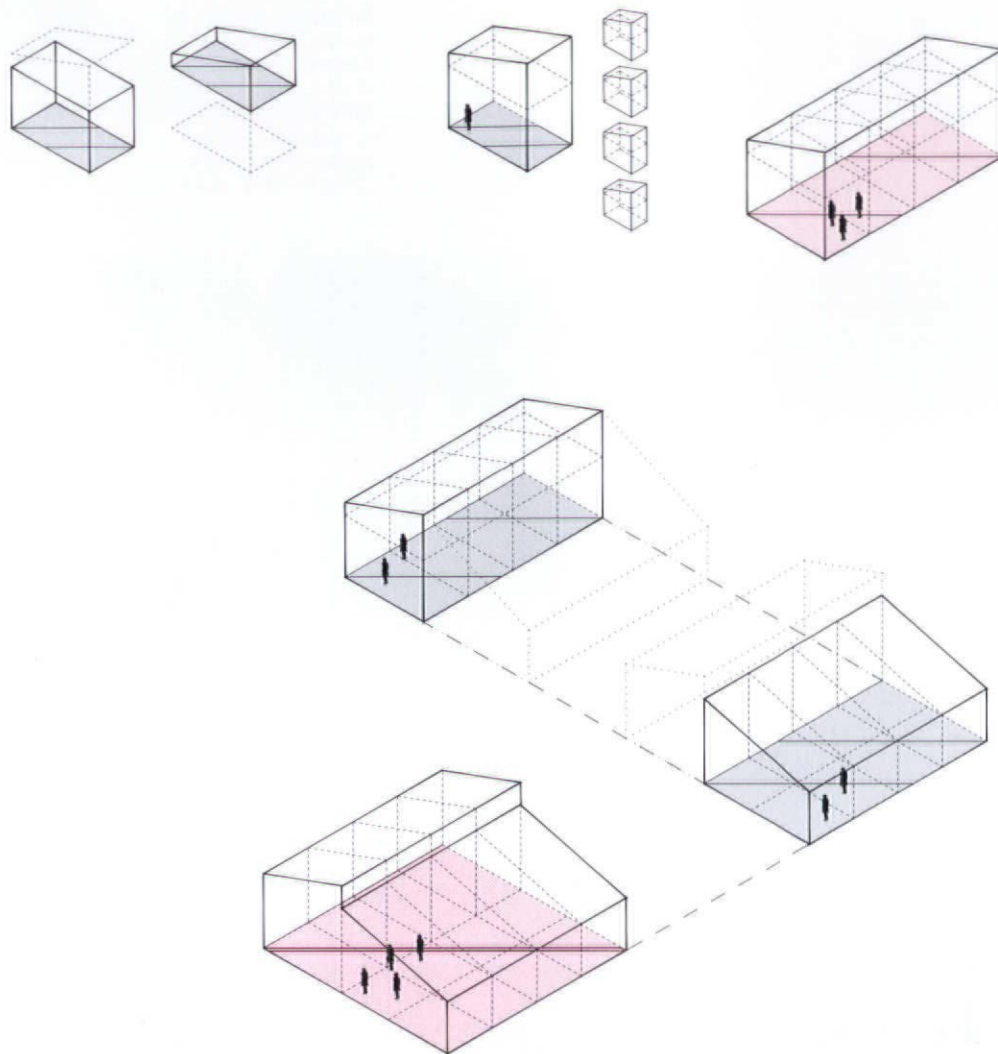
In its reliance on increasingly sophisticated techniques of prefabrication, there are clear overtones of the pioneering Californian Case Study Houses, which took domestic systems building into an optimistic new era. But the project is also informed by contemporary notions of sustainability, and the challenge of how to impinge lightly on the earth. The jury admired its elegant economy, the evident quality of its execution, and how it established a clear eyed and admirably unsentimental relationship with nature.

Watch the construction video at architectural-review.com/herreros



site plan





3. Construction sequence.
Impinging lightly on the landscape, modules are craned in to rest on stilt foundations
4. Modules are 3m wide,
the maximum size capable of being transported by road
5. Roof modules are
craned into position
6. The structure is
finished and clad in
ribbed metal sheeting.
Construction takes
only 12 hours

diagram of the modular system



3



4

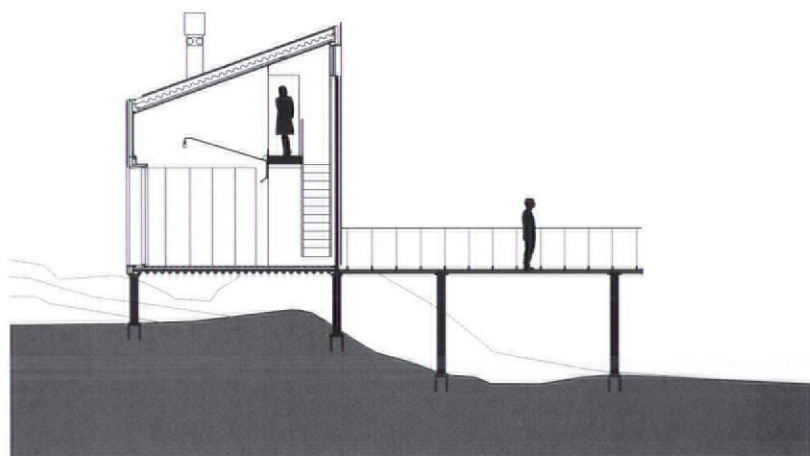


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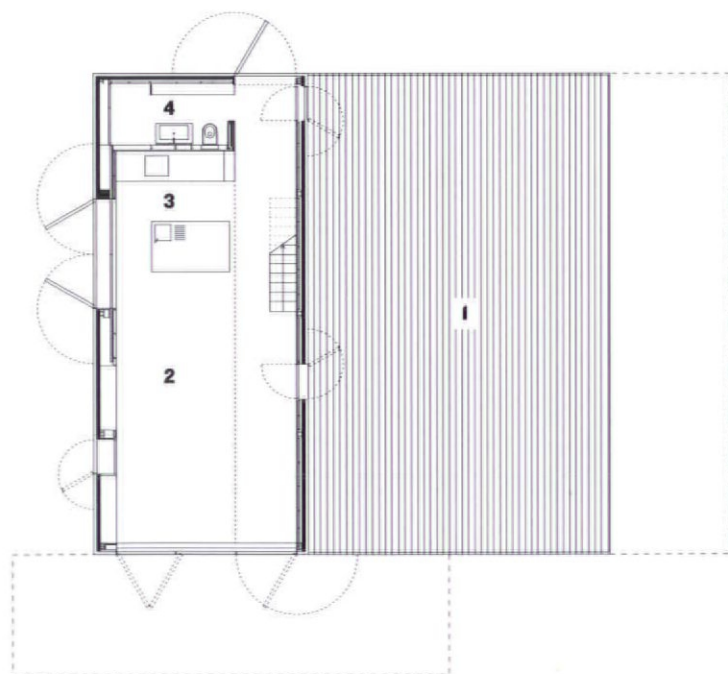


6

- 1 terrace deck
- 2 living
- 3 kitchen
- 4 bathroom
- 5 gallery
- 6 bedroom
- 7 storage



cross section



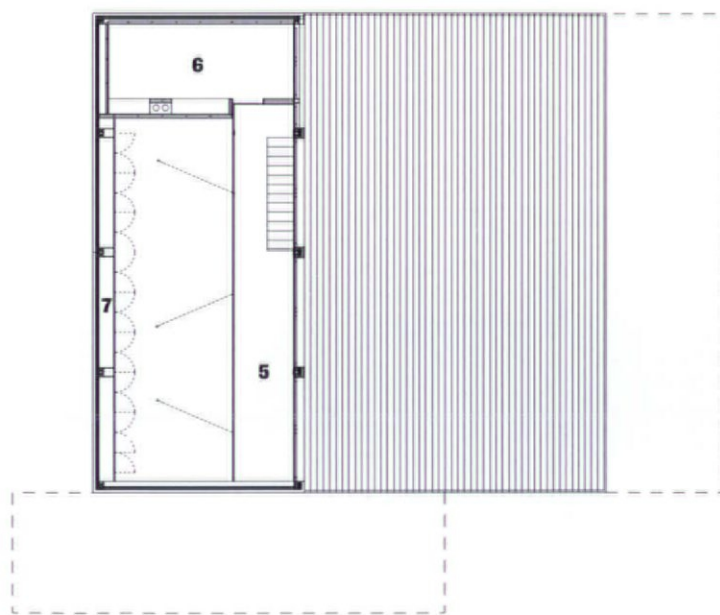
ground floor plan

7. Confronting the horizon, the terrace deck forms a powerful datum in the landscape. The house can be easily extended or dismantled entirely, depending on client requirements

Architect
Herreros Arquitectos
Structure/facade
Arval – ArcelorMittal
Aluminium frames
Alumafel
Photographs and video
Javier Callejas Sevilla



7



first floor plan



RUNNER UP

HOUSE AT BOGWEST STEVE LARKIN ARCHITECTS

COUNTY WEXFORD, IRELAND

This rural house explores a contemporary response to the contextual tradition of object in the landscape, as historically manifest by the farm dwellings and mid-sized houses of County Wexford in south-east Ireland. The site, a former farmstead, is enclosed by rough, low walls of random rubble. Now restored, these eloquent, archaeological fragments define a new walled garden that formed the starting point for the project.

The house is set within the orthogonal embrace of the walls and garden, which will eventually be planted as an orchard. Carefully negotiating levels, thresholds, privacy and orientation, it eases into the site. A slightly sunken entrance courtyard leads to the lower floor containing a trio of bedrooms overlooking a paved terrace, pool and the walled garden beyond. The boundary walls establish and sustain an intimate relationship between house and garden.

The *piano nobile* first floor, which contains living, dining and kitchen spaces in a single fluid volume, is supported above the datum of the garden walls and enjoys the privilege of its elevated position with views of the wider landscape. This response is developed in section. The roof is split into four parts, two of which rise to an oculus. Zenithal light illuminates the two floor levels, percolating sensuously through openings, stairs and voids. Vertical space is stacked through the section and punctuates horizontal space opening up to the landscape.

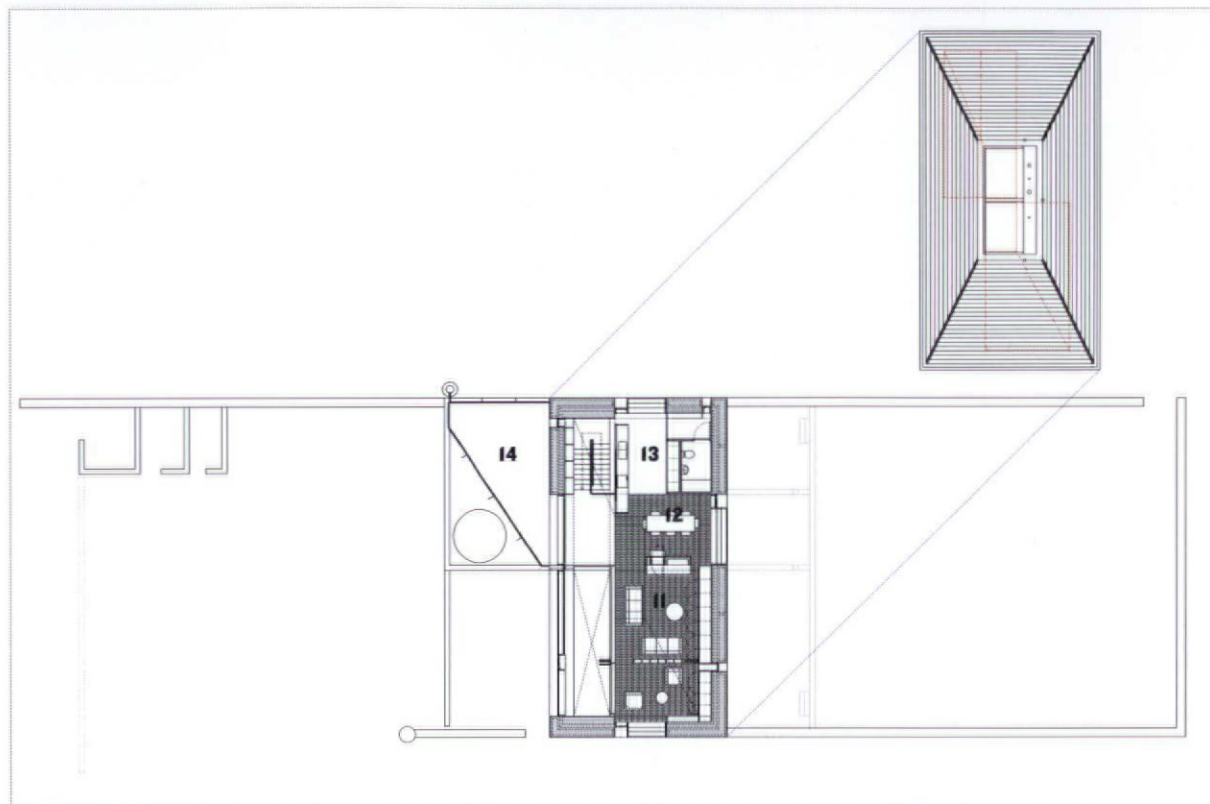
Services and storage are embedded in thick external walls. Deep timber frames support glazing at the outer section of the wall to form intimate window spaces and allow unimpeded views over terraces, garden and landscape. Furniture and lighting are employed to divide and cross internal spatial boundaries, defining and amplifying active and still spaces. The jury was struck by the sobriety and clarity of the architecture, as well as the thoughtful relationship of object to site and the handling of light.



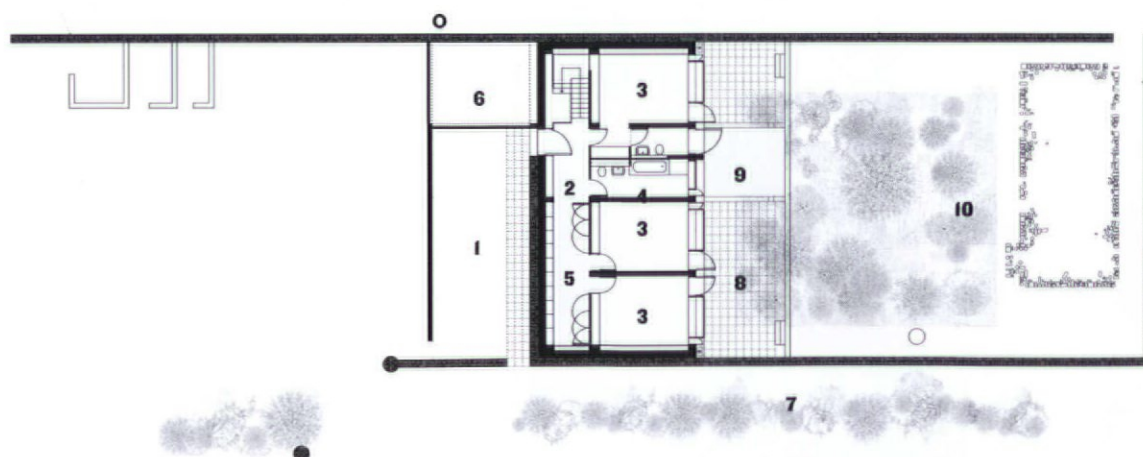




cross section



first floor and roof plan



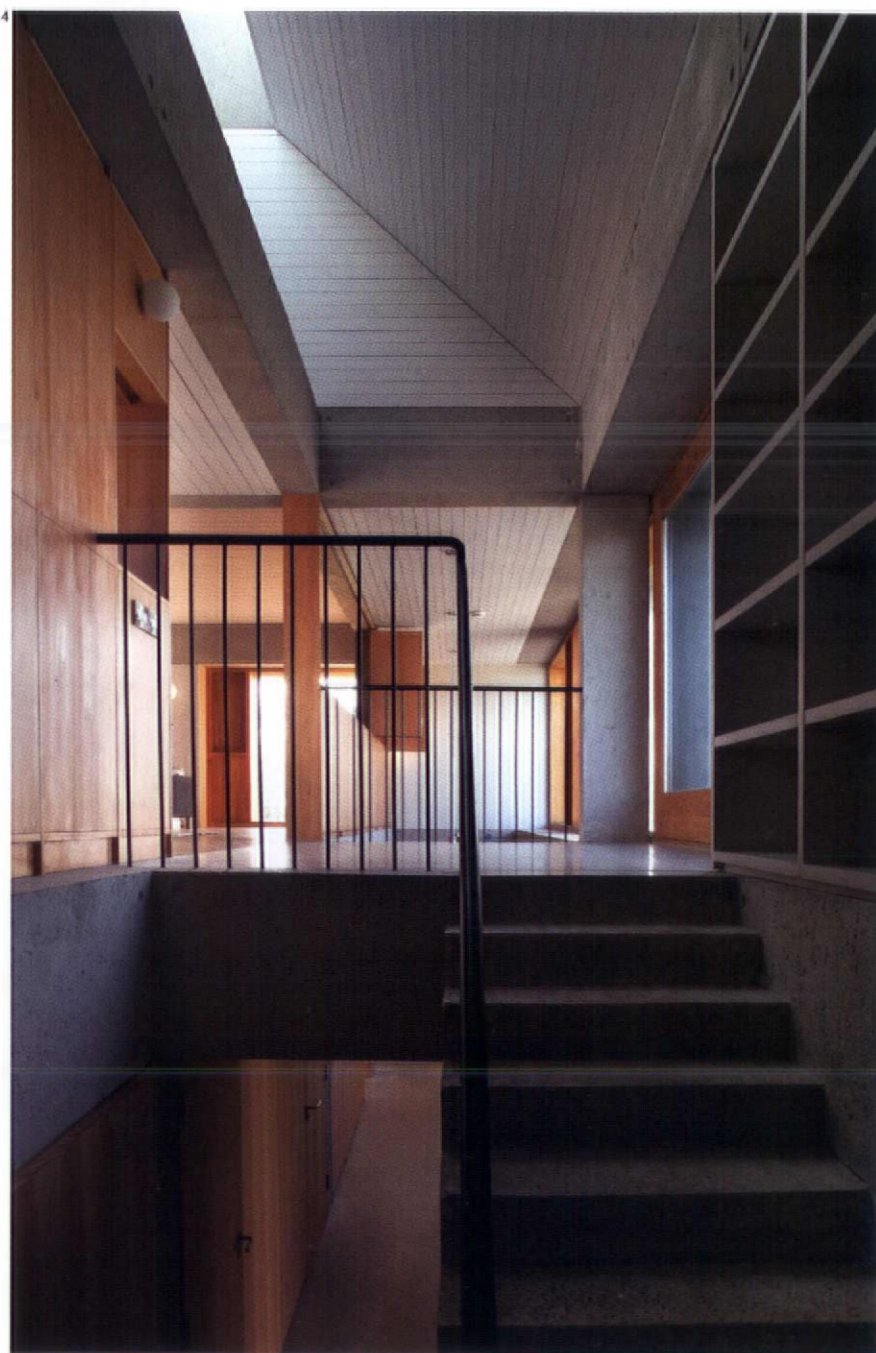
ground floor plan



- 1 entrance courtyard
- 2 entrance hall
- 3 bedroom
- 4 bathroom
- 5 play area
- 6 garage
- 7 laneway
- 8 terrace
- 9 pool
- 10 walled garden
- 11 living
- 12 dining
- 13 kitchen
- 14 balcony



1. (Previous pages) the *piano nobile* upper level rises above the rough walls, fragments from an old farmhouse that now define a walled garden
 2. Bedrooms at lower level address a pool and terrace
 3. The fluid volume of the main living space
 4. Light percolates down through a slot in the roof



Architect
 Steve Larkin Architects
Sanitaryware
 Duravit, Bette
Wall lights
 Artemide
Ironmongery
 Karcher Design
Photographs
 Alice Clancy

RUNNER UP

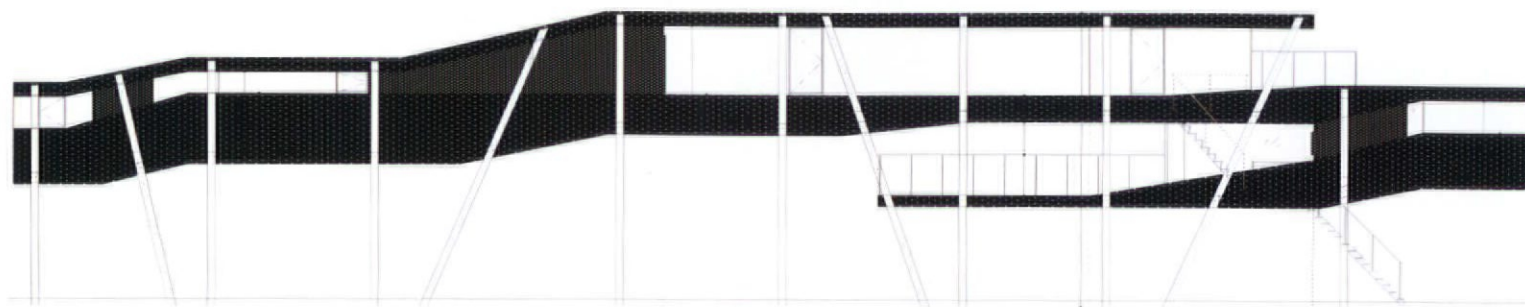
TODA HOUSE KIMIHIKO OKADA

HIROSHIMA, JAPAN



1. The house in its suburban context
2. The interior is a continuous promenade
3. Different functions are denoted by changes in level and variations in the floor texture

Architect
Kimihiro Okada
Taps
Grohe
Basins
Agape
Photographs
Toshiyuki Yano



'unwrapped' elevation

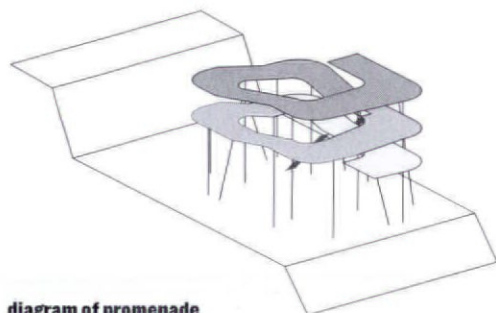


diagram of promenade

Hoisted aloft on a cluster of slender pilotis, the Toda House (AR April 2012) pops periscopically up over the heads of its neighbours in suburban Hiroshima to survey the coastal landscape and the flat horizon of the sea beyond. Its evident otherness might easily be dismissed as yet another unorthodox Japanese house, but as the jury discovered on closer consideration, it offers a radical reconceptualisation of domestic life. All quotidian activities – living, sleeping, eating,

washing, working – are arrayed and staged in a continuous loop of space that winds gently upwards to culminate in a roof terrace with a commanding ship's bridge panorama of its surroundings. The liberated terrain at ground level becomes a precious garden, implanted with both real trees and an artificial glade of slim metal columns.

The experience of working for Ryue Nishizawa had given Kimihiro Okada, architect of the Toda House, a heightened sense of possibilities. This experimental proclivity found a fertile reciprocity in Okada's clients, a young couple with a daughter, who initially posited the audacious notion of a house that could float in mid air. An entrance staircase brings you up from the garden to the first floor entrance hall, and from there the space gradually unspools upwards in a gentle, almost cinematic sweep. As you promenade upwards, you are teased and beguiled by constantly changing vistas, both out to the wider world, as well as more intimate cross views of the house itself. Individual functions are denoted by subtle changes in level and different floor finishes – carpet for the bedrooms, bamboo for the kitchen and parquet for the living room. Okada claims that if you are constantly circulating, it inculcates feelings of spatial generosity and expansiveness compared with a more conventional square plan.

Clearly, to inhabit such an eccentric set of spaces on a day to day basis makes some demands of the occupants, but they appear perfectly content with the outcome. And ultimately the jury were also persuaded of the scheme's thoughtfulness in reworking the idea of the suburban 'house on a plot' into an uplifting (both physically and metaphorically) meditation on the changing and fluid nature of contemporary domestic life.







COMMENDED

HOLZKRISTALL HURST SONG ARCHITEKTEN

LUMBREIN, SWITZERLAND

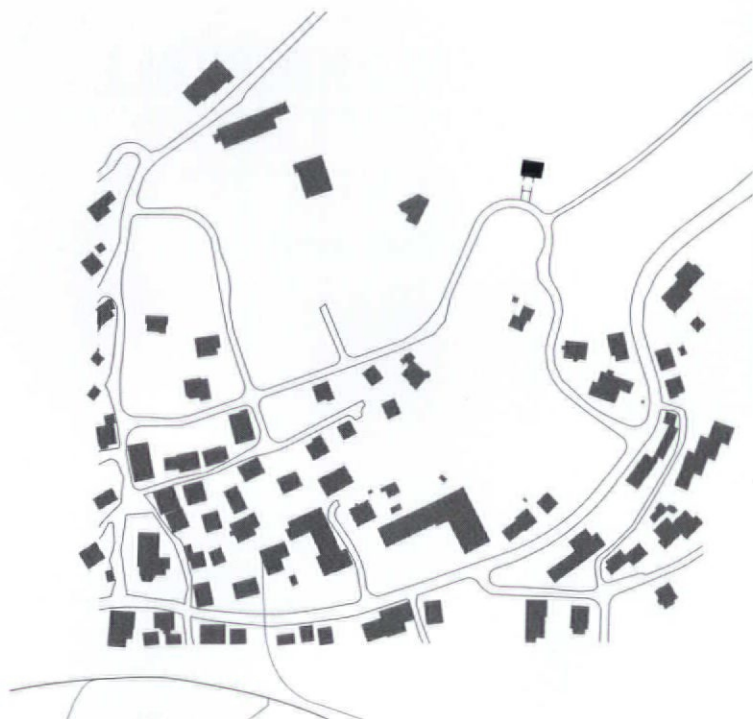
Around the village of Lumbrein in the eastern Swiss canton of Graubünden (made famous by Peter Zumthor), the Alpine landscape is picture perfect. You half expect to encounter Julie Andrews racing down a hillside trilling 'The Hills are Alive'. On to this bracingly pristine backdrop, the young, Zurich-based partnership of Hurst Song Architekten have grafted a new holiday house for a family. Poised on a verdant slope on the edge of the village, it exhibits the same scale and proportions of a traditional Alpine chalet, but its suspiciously crisp geometry and creepy, black stained cladding give it an otherworldly intensity, as if it were a habitable version of the obelisk from *Space Odyssey*.

The house is partially embedded in its sloping site. One means of entry is by a staircase leading up from a subterranean garage, which emerges from the hillside to connect with a curving access road. Alternatively, you can walk a short distance up the hill to the main entrance, denoted by a pale concrete frame precisely inserted into the funereal wall planes.

The gabled roof is oriented perpendicular to the hill, in the manner of the region's chalets and farm buildings. The vertical timber cladding, with its dark weatherproof coating, is another allusion to the sober yet sensuous materiality of ancient Alpine barns.

The building volume is rotated slightly to face the road and optimise views, setting up a crystalline geometry that emphasises the dynamic relationship of house to landscape. This reading is enhanced by the lack of roof eaves. The copper roof will eventually weather to the same treacly hue as the walls.

Interiors are a sharply articulated dialogue between concrete and spruce. The surfaces interlock and graduate in proportion from cellar to attic, moving upwards from heavy to light. The bedrooms are airy spruce cabinets, with beds that fold down from the walls. The central staircase is formed from simple spruce planks spanning the concrete partition walls, enabling light to filter down to lower levels. The jury was impressed by the project's formal and material rigour and how this was enhanced by immaculate craftsmanship.



location plan

1. (Previous pages) the new house is a crisply honed abstraction of traditional Alpine structures
2. The pitch black cladding recalls the weathered exteriors of ancient barns

3. Main living space with dark concrete floor and spruce-lined walls
4. Bedrooms at the top of the house have a lighter sense of materiality
5. The simple central stair



2

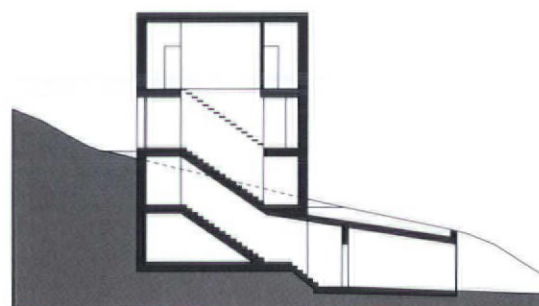


3

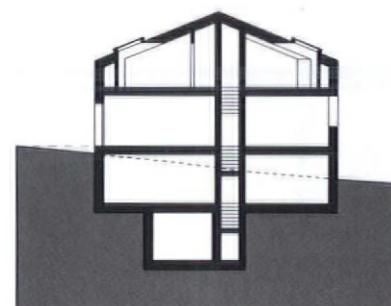


Architect
Hurst Song Architekten
Ironmongery
d line
Kitchen appliances
V-Zug
Photographs
Richard Powers

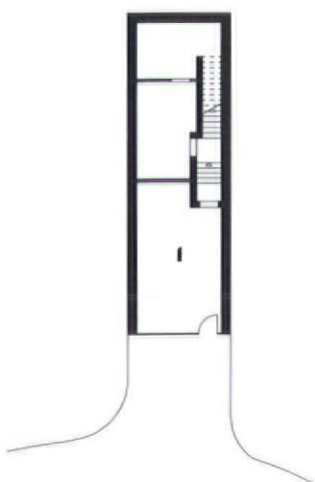
- 1 garage
- 2 main entrance
- 3 guest bedroom
- 4 bathroom
- 5 living
- 6 dining/kitchen
- 7 bedroom



cross section



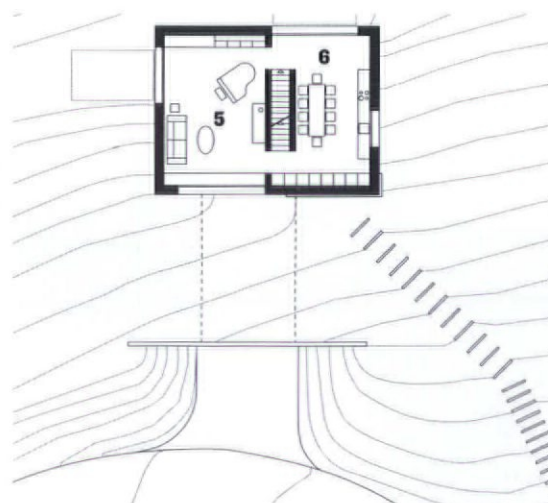
long section



lower ground floor plan



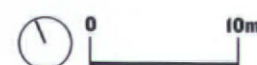
ground floor plan



first floor plan



second floor plan



COMMENDED

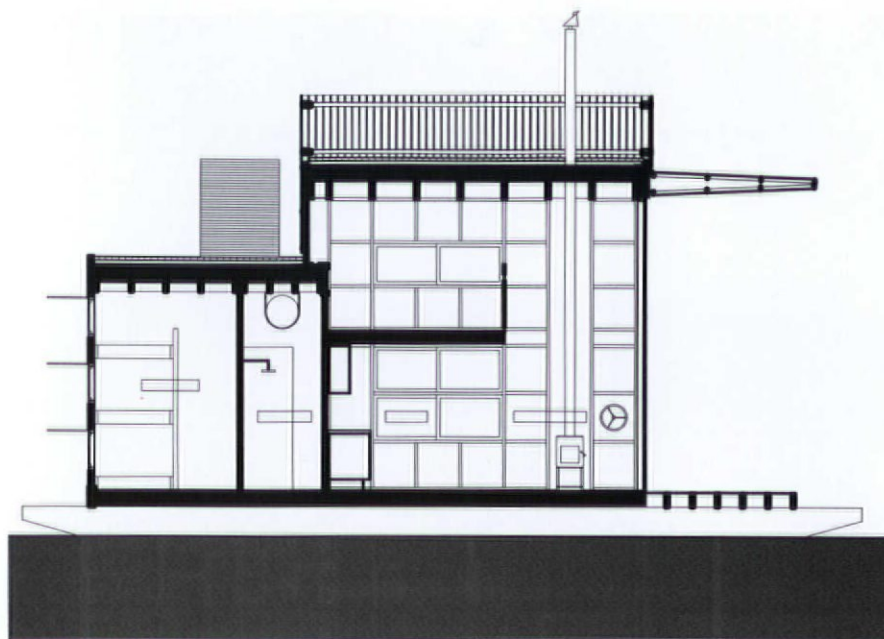
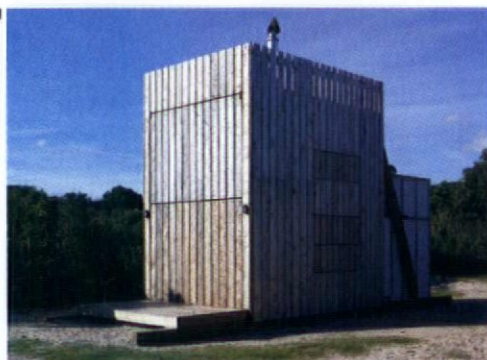
HUT ON SLEDS

CROSSON CLARKE CARNACHAN ARCHITECTS

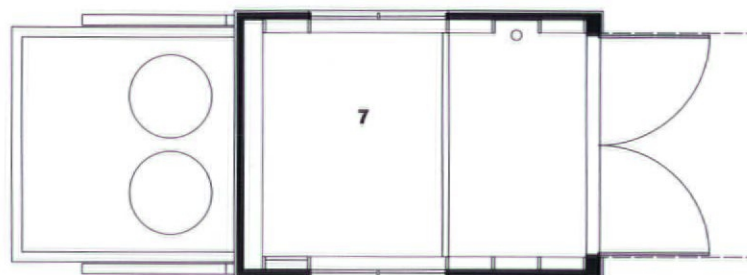
WHANGAPOUA, NEW ZEALAND

This modern version of a traditional seaside hut sits on the edge of a beach on the Coromandel Peninsula, on New Zealand's North Island. As the site lies within a coastal erosion zone, all buildings and structures must be removable. The house/hut sits on a pair of thick timber sleds to enable it to be towed back up the site or across the beach.

The simple form and raw materials recall beachside artefacts such as a lifeguard observation tower or fishing hut. Mechanisms and fittings are unapologetically industrial, the structure gutsy and exposed. The holiday retreat, which can accommodate a family of five, is like a large cabinet, designed to close up against the elements when not in use. When shuttered, the rough macrocarpa cladding blends into the landscape. The rear is clad in 'flat sheet', a cheap metal cladding used in local holiday homes. A double-height shutter winches up like a concertina to form an awning, shading the efficiently planned interior. The jury liked the project's modesty, economy and response to context.



long section



mezzanine level plan



ground floor plan

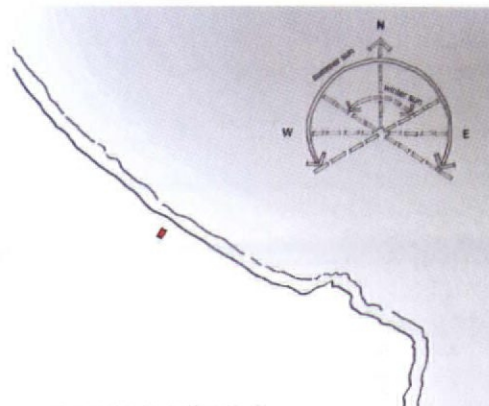
- 1 timber deck
- 2 living
- 3 dining
- 4 kitchen
- 5 bathroom
- 6 bunk room
- 7 mezzanine bedroom





1. The house closed up in fully shuttered mode
 2. The timber facade winches open to create a protective awning
 3. Steel-framed doors open up to the landscape, connecting the rituals of everyday life with nature
 4. The compactly planned interior slots together like a well-crafted cabinet

Architect
 Crosson Clarke
 Carnachan Architects
Kitchen
 Customtone Kitchens
Door closers
 Dorma
Photographs
 Jackie Meiring



site plan and orientation study





1. Encased in a striated skin of plywood panels, the house lies on the edge of a forest
2. (Opposite) slender Japanese maples rise up through the house from a sunken landscaped courtyard

COMMENDED

NEST HOUSE UID ARCHITECTS

ONOMICHI CITY, JAPAN

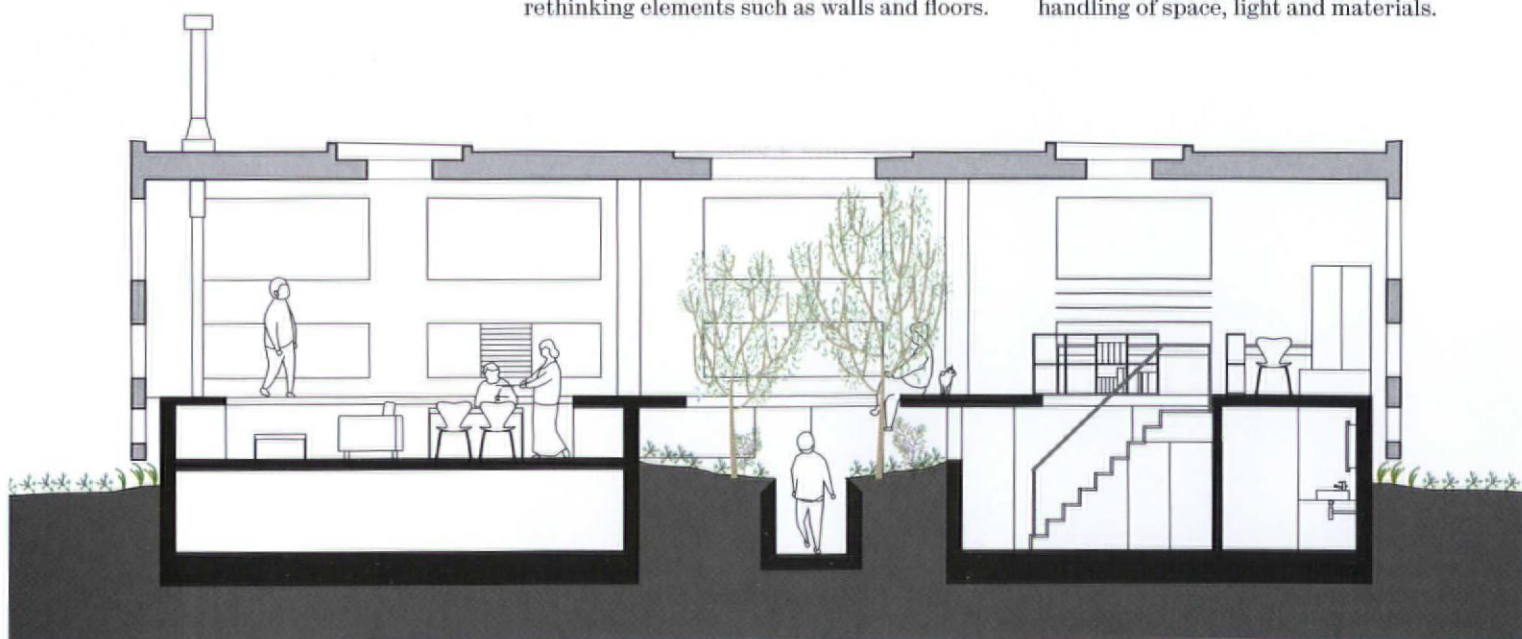
The idea of the house as a nest is endearingly fundamental; the dwelling as archetypal shelter and retreat, nurturing new and successive generations. In designing this family house on a suburban site in Onomichi City in southern Japan, Keisuke Maeda of UID Architects wanted to explore the notion of house as nest, a spatially intimate, layered and latticed structure partly embedded in the earth. 'It is similar to creatures that generate their nest under elements covering the forest floor,' explains Maeda. And the nest also embraces wider cosmic properties. 'It is a principle that expands from a nest in a forest, to a forest, to the earth and ultimately to the universe,' he adds.

The clients were a mother and her two daughters. The site is on the edge of a forest, with neighbours at some remove. Maeda sought to develop a single unified dwelling space that relates to its surroundings by rethinking elements such as walls and floors.

Specifically, a partially embedded lower ground floor becomes like an anthill or subterranean nest, while above ground, a floating timber box resembles branches and leaves covering the forest floor.

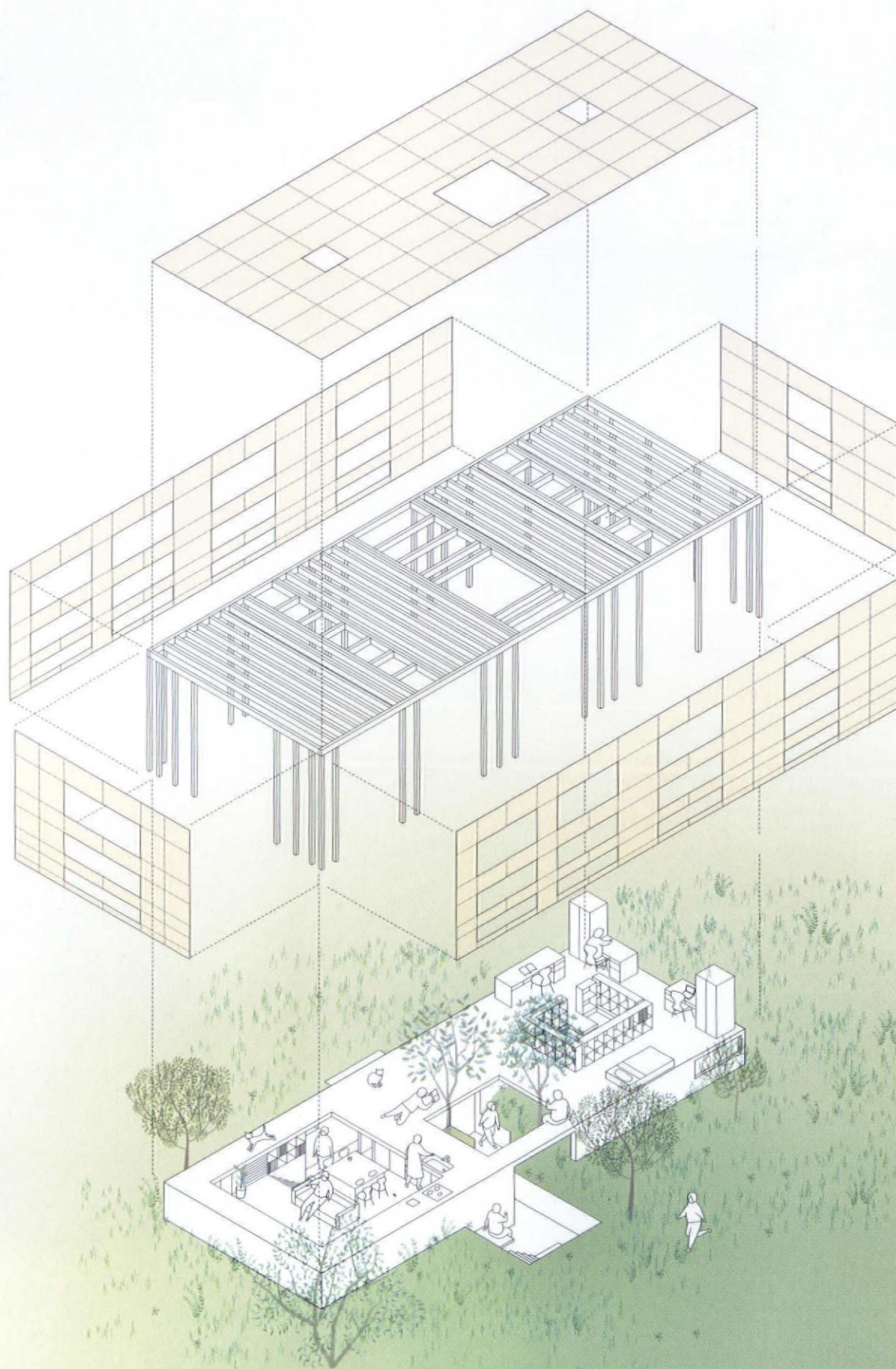
Entry is by means of the sunken lower floor, which contains bedrooms, storage and an internal courtyard garden planted with delicate Japanese maples that rise up through the house. Set slightly above ground, the main floor houses a living space, more bedrooms, a study and a sunken kitchen area. The changes in level serve to subtly define and demarcate different functions.

Apart from the earthbound concrete level, the upper box is made entirely from timber, with a structural frame of Douglas fir encased in plywood panels. Large openings admit copious light and views. The jury admired both the concept and its execution, noting that the house displayed an unusual sensitivity in its handling of space, light and materials.

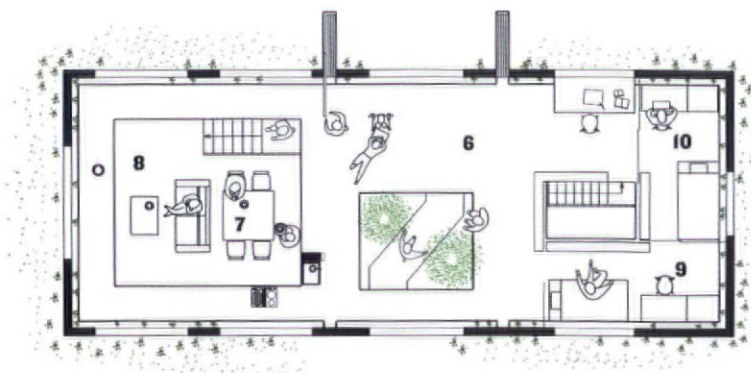


long section



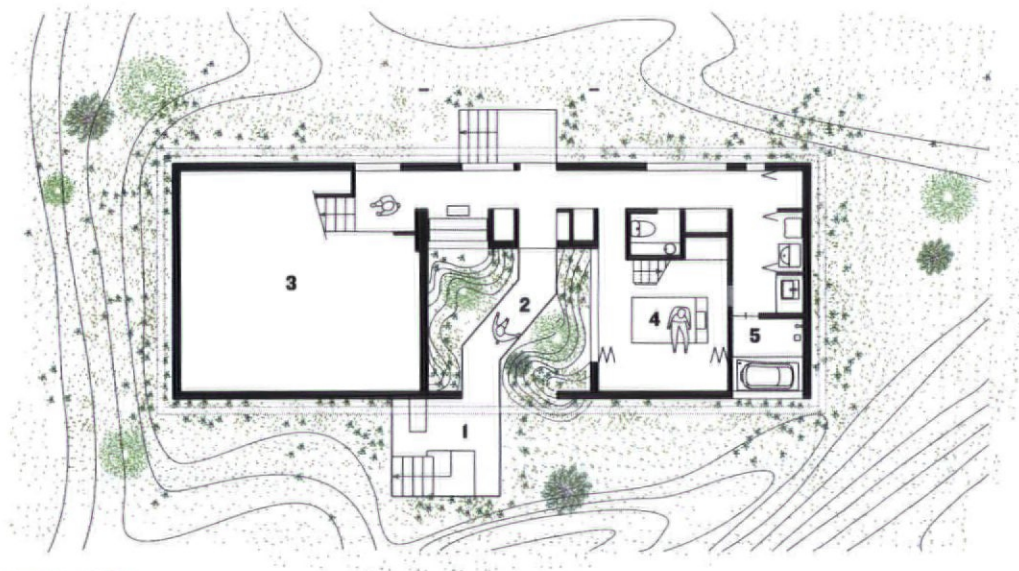


exploded isometric projection

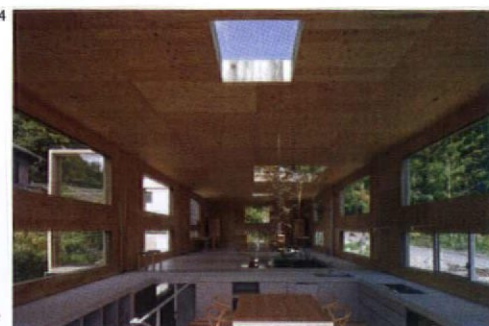


- 1 entrance
- 2 sunken courtyard
- 3 storage
- 4 bedroom
- 5 bathroom
- 6 living/terrace
- 7 dining
- 8 kitchen
- 9 study
- 10 children's room

upper level plan



lower level plan



3. Above ground, the house is a single fluid, light-filled space, with nature pressing in on it and through it
4. The kitchen and dining area is treated as a sunken enclave within the main volume

Architect
UID Architects
Photographs
Hiroshi Ueda

COMMENDED

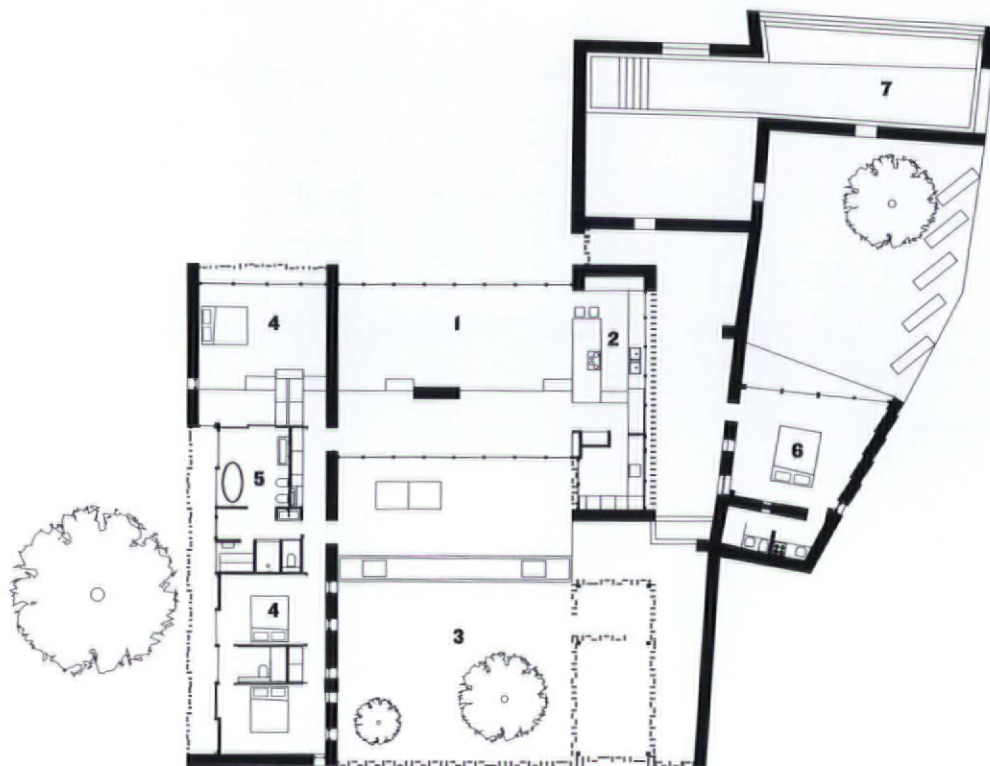
STONE HOUSE CARL FREDRIK SVENSTEDT

LUBERON VALLEY, PROVENCE, FRANCE

The house is built on an abandoned farm overlooking the Luberon valley in Provence. Framing and defining the dwelling, the ruins of the farmhouse form an armature for new elements, while a guesthouse and pool were inserted within the old stone walls.

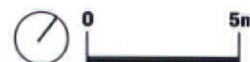
Set under a large overhanging roof, the main glazed volume of the living space and open terraces orchestrate a sense of fluidity and transparency, opening up to natural light and expansive views down the valley. The smaller bedroom wing is structured by three distinct plywood volumes, like large crates, that integrate storage and wet spaces.

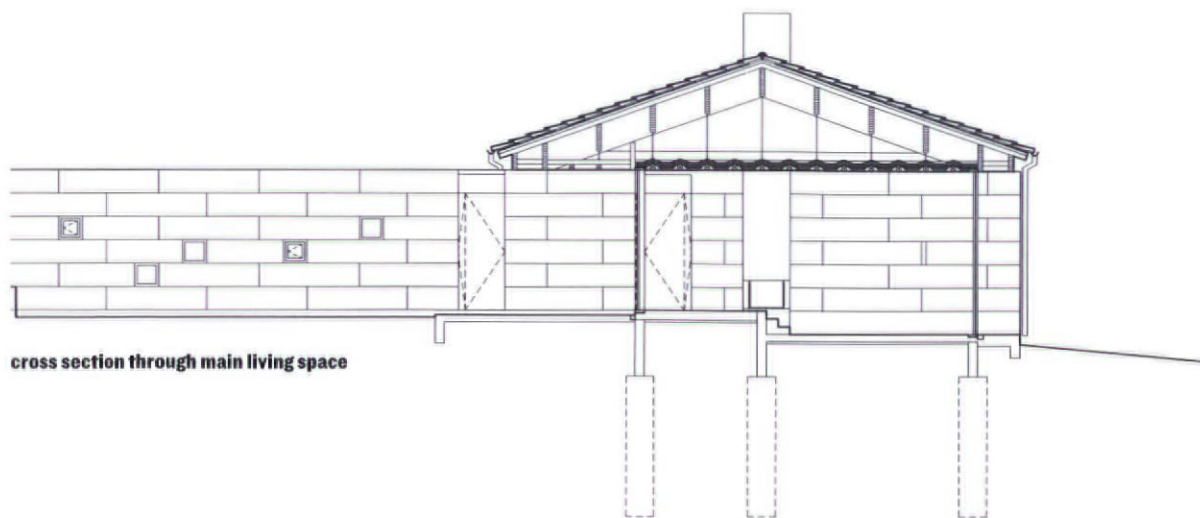
The site lies in a protected national park, which has strict guidelines regarding the use of materials in any new structures. The house is constructed from solid sandstone blocks, quarried from the locality since Roman times. Building principles are elemental, with the blocks staggered or skewed to make openings or create texture. Interiors are left untreated with concrete floors and birch ply ceilings. The jury thought the relationship between old and new was deftly and poetically handled.



ground floor plan

- 1 living
- 2 kitchen
- 3 courtyard
- 4 bedroom
- 5 bathroom
- 6 guesthouse
- 7 pool

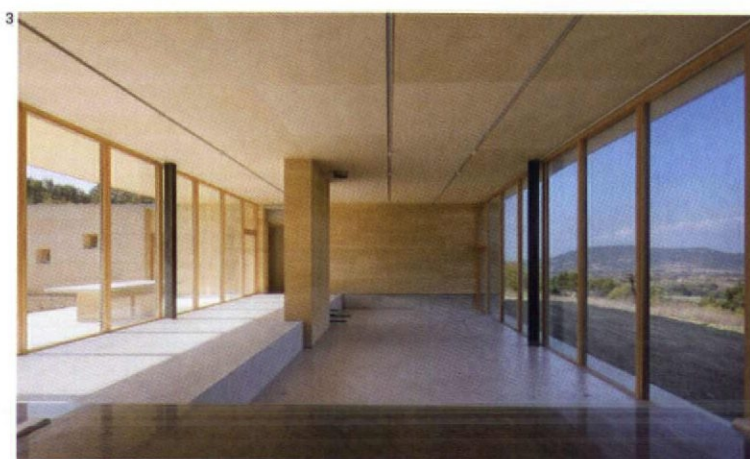


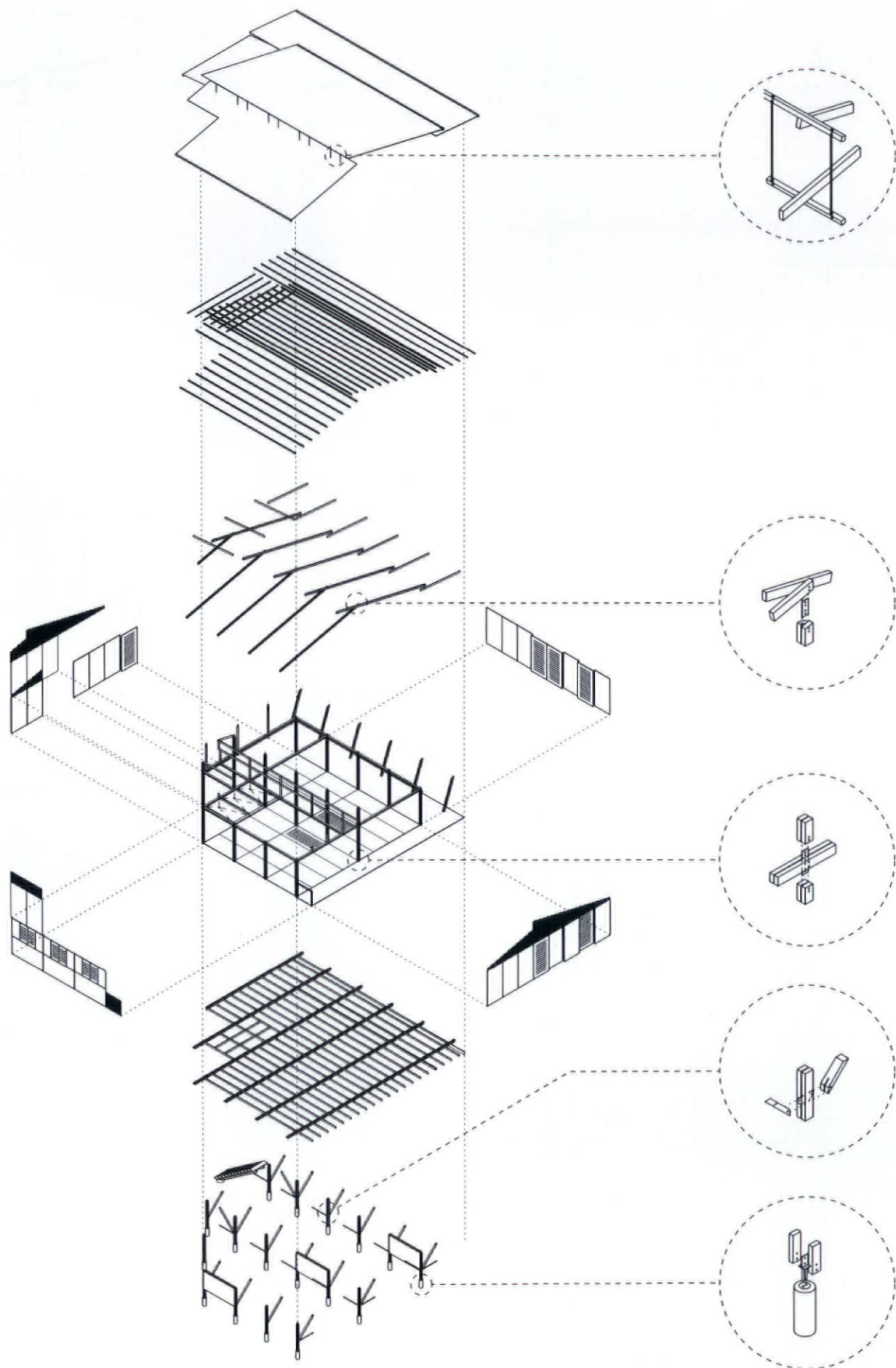


cross section through main living space

Architect
Carl Fredrik Svenstedt
Sanitaryware
Duravit; Aquamass
Taps
KWC; Flaminia
Lighting
Havells Concord
Photographs
Hervé Abbadie

1. New parts sit within the crumbling armature of the farmstead's original walls
2. Timber and local sandstone give the house a powerful archetypal quality, rooting it more intimately to site and place
3. The glazed pavilion of the main living space





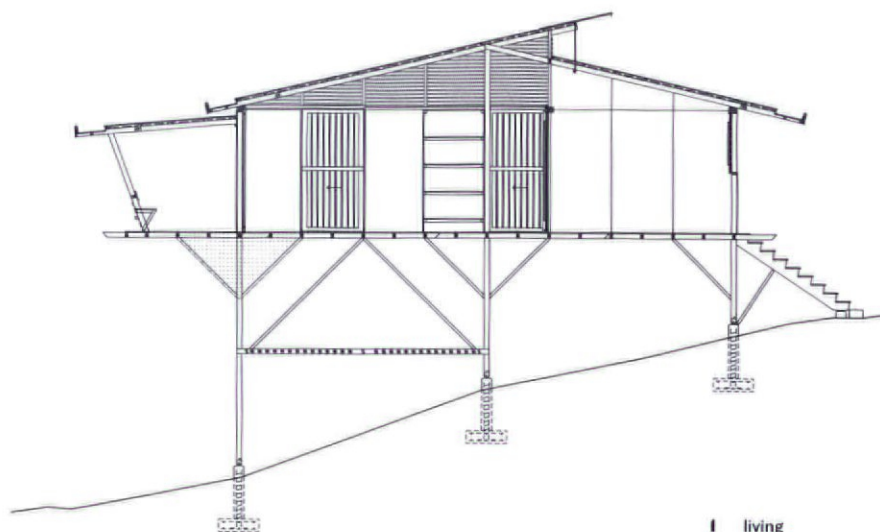
COMMENDED

SHELTER @ RAINFOREST MARRA + YEH ARCHITECTS

SABAH STATE, BORNEO, MALAYSIA

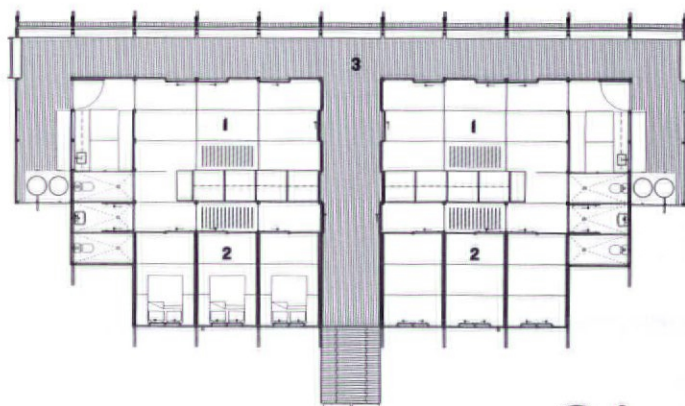
Commissioned by a forestry company that sustainably harvests and manages 100,000 hectares of tropical rainforest, this house provides accommodation for the company manager, his family and visitors. Elevated on stilts, the house is arranged as two mirrored halves linked by an entry 'dog run' and a long veranda overlooking the forest landscape.

Its form reflects the local vernacular longhouses, with their frugal timber structures, as well as the imperative to live simply and self sufficiently. The house is low cost (£120 per sqm) and autonomous (exploiting rainwater collection, biogas units and electricity from solar panels), while large overhangs and the veranda filter light and temper heat gain. Locally harvested and milled timber is the main building material, limited to just two section sizes. This addresses the reality of scarce resources, increasing the yield per tree, as well as the logistics of processing and construction. Locally fabricated plywood is used as a diaphragm for walls and floors. The jury found it a highly convincing project, emblematic of craft, care and environmental stewardship.



cross section

- 1 living
- 2 bedroom
- 3 veranda



first floor plan



Architect
Marra + Yeh Architects
Roof
BlueScope Lysaght
Lighting
Philips
Exterior protection
Dulux Solarscreen
Hardware
PC Henderson
Photographs
Brett Boardman

1. (Opposite) an exploded projection shows the simple construction using only two timber section sizes, 100 x 50mm and 50 x 50mm
2. Drawing on vernacular precedents, the house sits lightly in Borneo's tropical rainforest
3. A generous veranda, which funnels cooling breezes through the house, runs along the main living space

1. The tightly compressed site in Osaka is typical of Japan's impossibly congested urban milieu
2. (Opposite) elevating part of the house above ground frees up space at ground level



COMMENDED

DIG IN THE SKY HOUSE ALPHAVILLE ARCHITECTS

OSAKA, JAPAN

This new house in Osaka divided the jury. Some thought it wilfully complex, both formally and spatially, others admired the architects' response to the challenging issue of how to build creatively in the incredibly congested centres of Japanese cities. Indeed, among the group of 12 winning projects, it is one of the few genuinely urban houses.

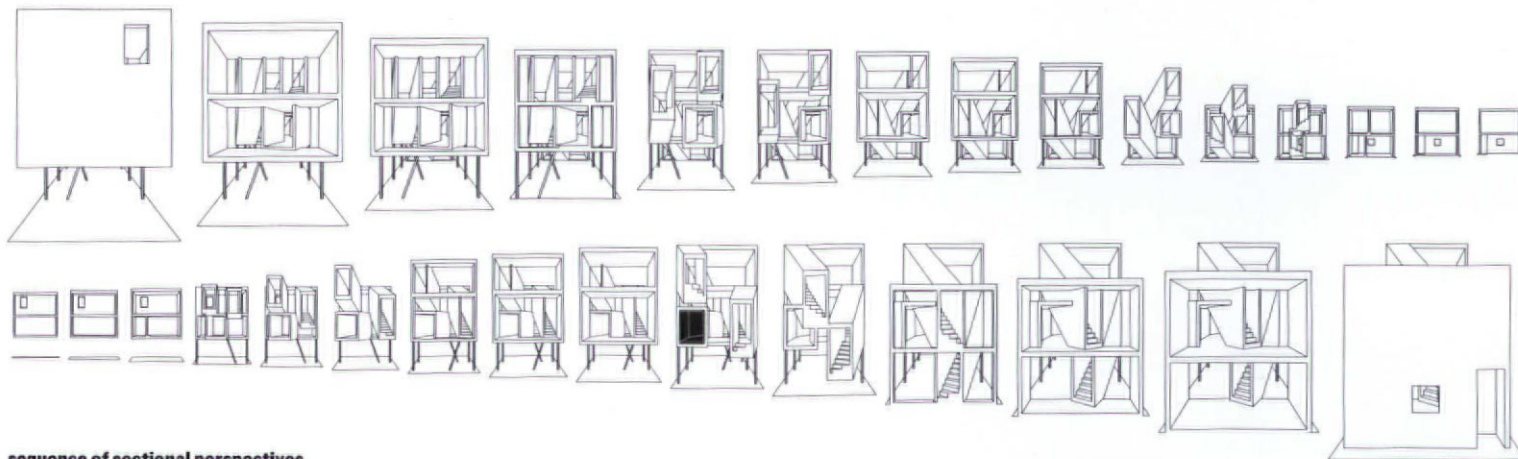
It certainly squares up to its context of an unforgiving slot hemmed in between two existing dwellings. Japan's seismic regulations stipulate that all buildings must be physically separate from each other, so its cities are full of structures that come tantalisingly close to their neighbours, but never touch. Each building becomes an individual object, and this object quality is perhaps most powerfully expressed in the design of contemporary Japanese houses.

The Dig in the Sky House is a simple concept aggregated to create a series of complex and variable domestic spaces. Its basic premise is to separate zones of circulation from zones of inhabitation,

thus initiating an unconventional kind of domestic spatial experience.

Three steel-framed volumes housing the usual functions (dining, kitchen, living and bedrooms) are linked by a network of floating 'tubes' containing ramps, corridors and staircases. This network articulates multiple routes around the house and choreographs different ways of experiencing it. 'To live is the activity of moving', pronounce Alphaville, the house's architects, 'so we try to make moving stimulating.' Two of the three volumes are lifted off the ground on pilotis to free up space at ground level for a carport.

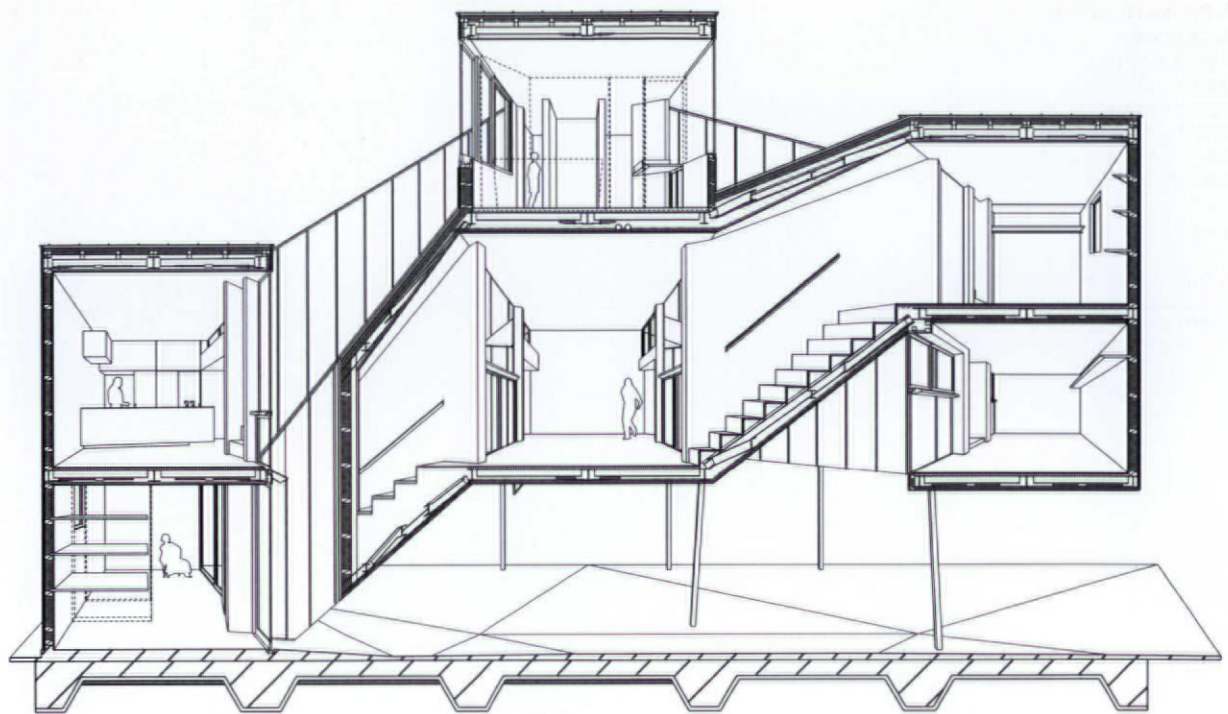
With its constantly changing levels, skewed geometry and sense of compression and release, the effect is rather like being trapped inside a Vorticist painting. And doubtless it will keep its inhabitants well exercised. Yet though it might seem unorthodox, the house offers a challenging new perspective on what modern domestic life might be – dynamic, constantly unfolding and full of possibilities.



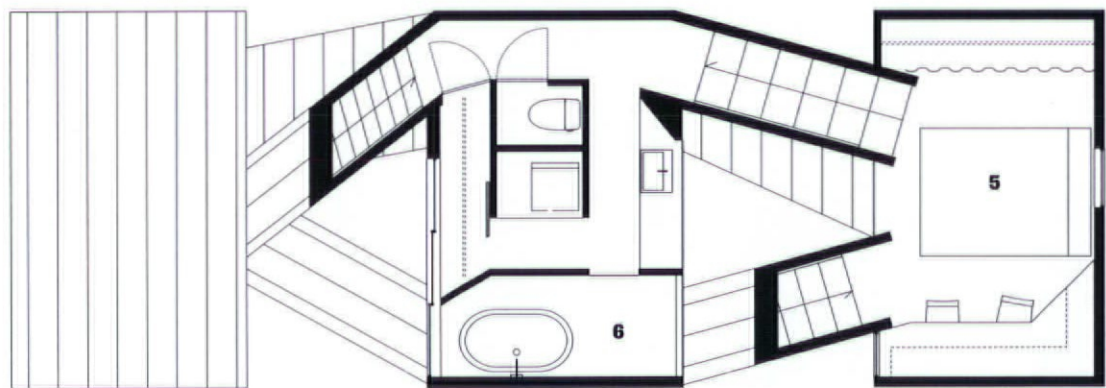
sequence of sectional perspectives



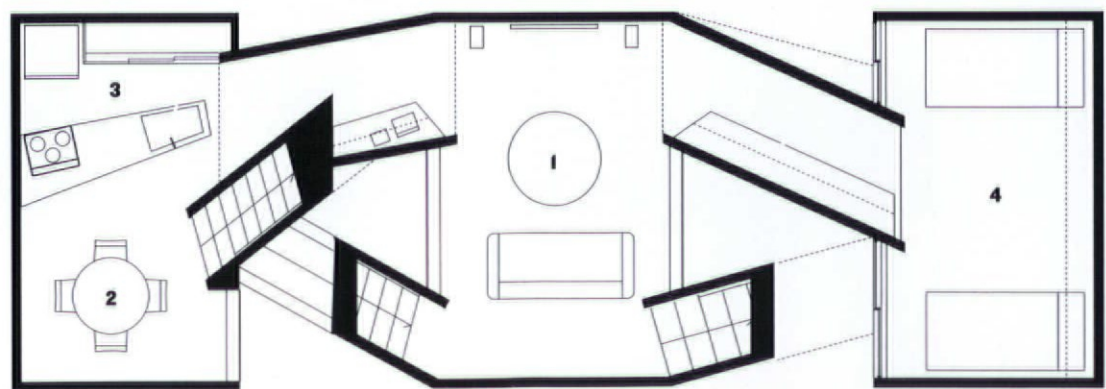
Architect
 Alphaville
Photographs
 Shigeo Ogawa



sectional perspective



second floor plan



first floor plan

- 1 living
- 2 dining
- 3 kitchen
- 4 children's bedroom
- 5 master bedroom
- 6 bathroom



3. The master bedroom incorporates a study area
 4. With functions contained in three separate volumes, each space is separated from the rest of the house by sets of stairs. Slots of glazing provide tantalising glimpses and through views of domestic life
 5. The house establishes a complex sense of spatial interpenetration



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REVIEWS

Dodgy foundations

OWEN HATHERLEY

Serpentine Pavilion 2012,
Kensington Gardens, London,
until 14 October

Fake archaeology is, if nothing else, an interesting upending of Albert Speer's 'Theory of Ruin Value', and it's the animating principle of this year's Serpentine Pavilion, the result of Ai Weiwei and Herzog & de Meuron's Skype collaboration. Their original idea, according to early reports, was for a pavilion that excavated the foundations of the previous 10 pavilions erected since the programme began in 2000. The temporary pavilions always had a certain melancholy quality, in that they so often involved commissioning real architecture from architects who either notoriously couldn't get their works built in the UK despite landing commissions (Hadid, twice, and Gehry) or architects who despite their worldwide prestige never got invited to build here (Niemeyer, OMA, Siza, Zumthor). Then, after only a month or so, those unique, site-specific structures disappear, fit only for the margins of future retrospectives, and British architectural culture is left safely provincial. Herzog, de Meuron and Ai's idea is amusing not least for purporting to carve permanence out of all this, and failing entirely.

There are of course no actual traces of any of the previous pavilions left. So what the architects did instead was draw a fanciful diagram of previous pavilions' foundations, and they then dug it out, in a manner which immediately evokes TV archaeology, or a received idea of what archaeology entails – a dun-coloured playpit, strange shapes set into progressively lower levels, as the historical layers get deeper and more chthonic. A low roof is set over it all to protect the



Above: At dusk, the underlit reflecting pool of Ai Weiwei, Herzog & de Meuron's Serpentine Pavillon hovers above visitors like a UFO
Below: Beneath the pool, cork stools sprout like mushrooms amid the contours of the simulated archaeological remains of pavilions past



priceless things underneath. So it's really a game, a masquerade, and one which has already elicited accusations of 'emperor's new clothes' from architectural traditionalists, as if there really isn't much under that roof apart from mud and nothingness. In fact, there's a lot of tectonic intrigue to be found, albeit within a limited framework.

The circular shape, dictated by the pre-existing, long-dismantled shape of Kjetil Thorsen and Olafur Eliasson's 2007 Pavilion, contains within it a series of platforms and steps, but that's really the only obvious revenant. From here you can ascend, descend, wander round, potter about, through a mini-expressionist landscape; or you can sit on handily-provided stools. Both are made from a light, bouncy cork, a clever and enjoyable approach to the need for temporary or at least perishable materials. The way in is highly directed, with only one entrance – try to lurk in over the Serpentine lawns and you'll get a

stern ticking off from the gallery staff, something which I saw happening several times. It's all capped by a circular roof, with water on it to reflect the sky. It's pretty, especially from the angle where it is almost level with the ground, making what is underneath appear all the more subterranean; but it seems a bit of an afterthought, without much connection to the main idea, except perhaps as a certain disingenuous stepping-back on the part of the architects – the sight of trees and blue skies, the imprints of other people's buildings. This goes alongside the pavilion's role in the story of Ai Weiwei, dissident savant – porcelain versions of the stools and the plans are available as limited edition artworks, 'made using traditional methods in Jingdezhen, China', with price on request.

Ai and Herzog & de Meuron's building fulfils the function of a Serpentine Pavilion very well, such as it is. That is, it's a place to loll around in the sun, or equally

probably to shelter from the rain. On the day I visited, some parents and their kids were playing the cork stools as bongos, youths were lying on the longer platforms, and children jumping between them. Nobody really seemed to be taking the archaeological conceit very seriously, which is fair enough – all there is aside from the interestingly sculpted cork is a small patch of earth with a tiny little pipe sticking through, as if here they'd finally found a real fragment of some earlier pavilion. It's a fun game that can be thought about or not thought about, without making a great deal of difference to the architectural experience either way, bar a few associations and minor amusements. A cork grotto that can be a wry joke about archaeology if you want it to be. It's as inconsequential as it is enjoyable, and hence will disappear with the same swiftness as the other pavilions, leaving just as little trace.

Behind closed doors

HILARY FRENCH

The Life of the British Home: An Architectural History, Edward Denison and Guang Yu Ren, Wiley, £24.99; *Cheek by Jowl: A History of Neighbours*, Emily Cockayne, Bodley Head, £20

Houses currently built in Britain are the smallest in Europe, almost 10 per cent smaller than current recommended minimums. Homewise, the RIBA's recently launched campaign for better housing, suggests that instead of rushing to provide more, much-needed 'shoebox' housing, we curb our haste in order to focus on quality. The campaign has set out to collect information from the general public to compile a survey of lived reality.

However, ahead of them, two recently published books, *The Life of the British Home: An Architectural History* by Edward Denison and Guang Yu Ren and *Cheek by Jowl: A History of Neighbours* by Emily Cockayne, might contribute something to this research. Both attempt to give some understanding of the development of the particularly British 'home'. *The Life of the British Home* charts a chronology of domestic building that 'explores the forces that have shaped our homes and examines the

Below: Long before Mock Tudor and the double garage, a circular neolithic dwelling opens the story of British domestic architecture

attitudes and innovations of each age'. It is a very wide-ranging survey starting from the Neolithic period with the Knap of Howar (around 4000 BC) in Orkney, the oldest standing structure in Northern Europe, and ending in the last decade with *BedZED* (2002) and the yet-to-be inhabited *Shard* (2012), with a very varied depth and focus through the centuries.

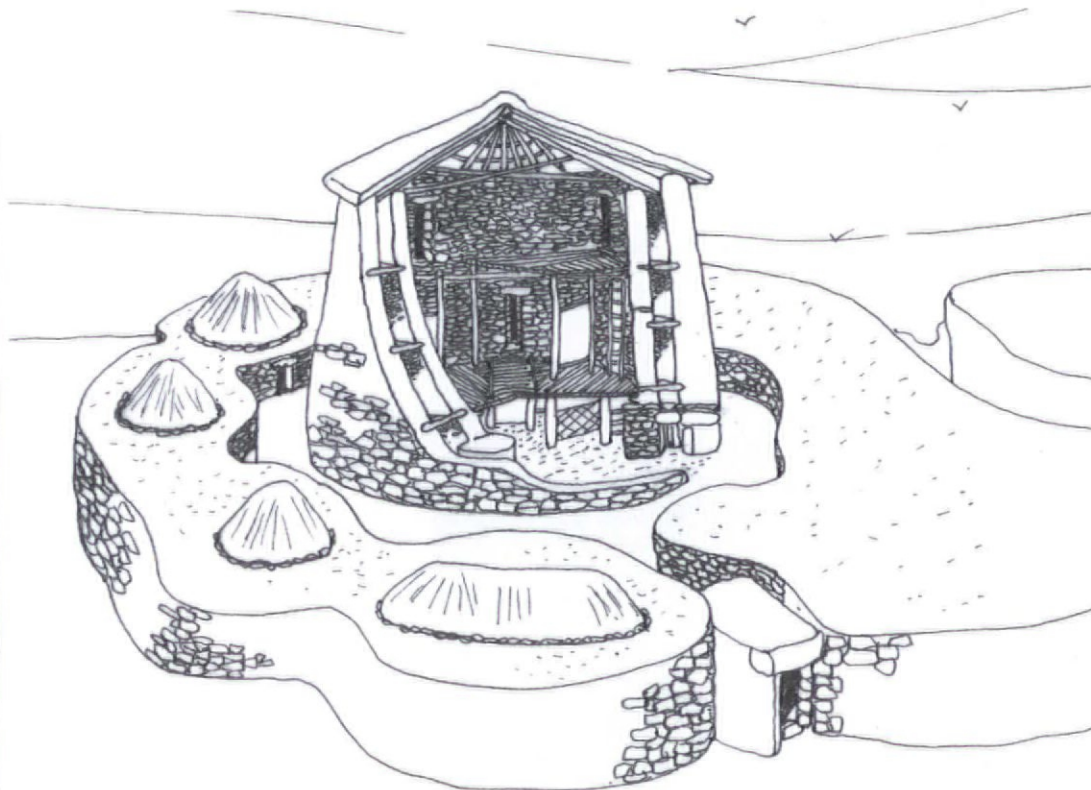
Almost half of the book is devoted to the period between the mid-15th and mid-19th centuries where the emphasis shifts from the ordinary to focus on the great houses, royal palaces and stately mansions familiar from architectural histories and TV period dramas.

More enticing is the first part, with four chapters covering the period from Neolithic times to the mid-15th century. Stone buildings little more than caves, and the intricacy of timber roof structures, demonstrate the ingenuity needed to create shelter in a tough climate. The Roman period, as the well-restored remains illustrated here make clear, brought civic order to the previously largely rural dwellings, only to be replaced eventually by the great halls of early medieval times.

The period from 1830 to today is covered, sometimes with frustrating brevity, in the two final chapters.

The 'life' of the title is only occasionally glimpsed. This book presents, rather, a history of typology, with little description of the interior or the use of spaces. The servant question is mentioned and there is, of course, much written about the plumbing and sanitary innovations in the 19th century. 'Open plan' is identified as the only significant change to the British home in the 20th and 21st centuries accredited to Modernism's use of concrete frame structures. For fans of timelines, lists inside the covers compare types of homes with major historical events.

Cheek by Jowl, A History of Neighbours by Emily Cockayne is written from an entirely different sociological perspective. An entertaining read, it uses court records and newspaper stories to report how the behaviour of neighbours, resulting in prosecution for noise, indecency or anti-social behaviour, has influenced housing design and vice versa. It too covers a lengthy time period, starting in 1200 and ending with the present. It deals primarily with the development of what is now considered the norm, the idea of 'home as haven' through tales of the consequences of a lack of privacy – when the most intimate details of our lives might be exposed



– in communal lavatories and bathhouses, in shared bedrooms, through paper-thin walls, and overcrowded lodgings.

From a design perspective, housing legislation that was introduced, in part no doubt to deal with problems between neighbours, has clearly also played an important part in defining the shape of the urban environment. Defining minimum distances between houses to avoid overlooking, improving sound insulation to prevent eavesdropping (literally), and phasing out shared laundry and bathroom facilities, have had both a physical and social effect on the neighbourhood. As we have gained more privacy inside our own homes we have become separated from the surroundings, the street, or the estate, and from our neighbours.

The neighbour no longer has the role of helpful close resource, ready to lend a cup of sugar or babysit the kids, but plays a different role. Physical proximity means they might see us half dressed in the backyard, or on the doorstep as we open the door to a visitor, and the 'Joneses' are still the benchmark of social status. For Cockayne, the neighbour reminds us of the fine line between our private self and our public persona.

What emerges from these two books is that the shape of the urban environment – rather than merely the shape of the individual dwelling – is key. Privacy and space are both vital ingredients for a good lifestyle but so too is society and community. Outnumbering the rural population, the urban population in Britain is still growing, and whether in suburbs or more dense environments, is still changing. The significant shift in the early 20th century that saw a division between work and home that separated industry – and with it hubbub, noise and dirt – from housing, has now come full circle. At the beginning of the 21st century, advances in technology and changes to employment mean more and more people are now working at home again.

Looking to the future, these two volumes represent the seemingly incompatible and contradictory requirements for housing. On the one hand, Denison and Ren suggest that with improved performance in a high density urban environment the primary goal of 'comfort and convenience' will be achieved. On the

other hand, Cockayne suggests that we have already achieved a reasonable measure of privacy and identifies 'society' as the key desirable goal now. She refers to Oscar Newman's *Defensible Space* (1972) and a need to readdress the collective spaces around our homes, the neighbourhoods or communities. Architects may spend a lot of time designing dwellings, perfecting plans in pursuit of the ideal aesthetic object, but anthropologists would argue that the architecture is merely the container, the vessel for life and must be able to accommodate change in all its myriad forms as life goes on in unpredictable fashion.

These books don't offer solutions to the housing problem but they might offer some ideas for the documentation and communication of the Homewise research. Architects designing housing live (mostly) in very different kinds of homes and rarely meet their audience who in turn (probably) know little of architecture and construction. Denison and Ren have used easily accessible buildings, and include in the endmatter a list of featured sites including as well as existing buildings, historical reconstructions such as the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, in Sussex, the Butser Ancient Farm in Hampshire and the West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village in Suffolk. Equally, Cockayne draws us in with engaging narratives, vivid descriptions and lurid details of repulsive yet riveting aspects of intimacy. Both could go some way to communicate to a broader audience the experiential quality of home.

Meeting the maker

LYNDA RELPH-KNIGHT

Heatherwick Studio: Designing the Extraordinary, V&A, London, until 30 September

While Barber Osgerby's Olympic torch continues to hit the headlines as it makes its journey to the East London site, the Victoria & Albert Museum's latest show is a welcome reminder that there is far more to design than just the finished object. Process and materials are key elements of the exhibition *Designing the Extraordinary*, which explores the versatile work of Heatherwick Studio.

Below: Heatherwick's project *Extrusions* exploits the imperfections inherent in a particular manufacturing process. By forcing aluminium through a die, benches of almost any length can be created – but it took Heatherwick 16 years to find a machine capable of production on this scale

A gallery full of 'stuff' – exquisite models, materials samples, prototypes and sketches – tells the story of Thomas Heatherwick, the studio's charismatic founder, from his student days at the then Manchester Polytechnic, where he studied 3D Design in the late 1980s, to the international standing he now holds across design disciplines. His 'Throne' of 1989 might be a tad cumbersome – a steel and wood confection more befitting an Ancient Egyptian ruler than a study in modern-day ergonomics – but it foretells a fascination with craft and making that underpins his extraordinary designs. In those early days, he sensed a disconnect between design and craft, a gap he has sought to bridge ever since.

Indeed, the weighty tome on Heatherwick created by his studio and published by Thames & Hudson to coincide with the V&A show is simply entitled *Making*, an obsession that runs throughout his projects. Take his 16-year quest to find a manufacturer capable of producing the aluminium bench titled 'Extrusions', which started when he was studying at London's Royal College of Art. He eventually found one in China and the piece, commissioned by the Haunch of Venison and Cass Sculpture Foundation, was completed in 2009.

Then there is the Seed Cathedral, the feted British pavilion for the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai with its 60,000 clear acrylic rods elevating the basic box design into a shimmering structure that stands six storeys high. Each rod contains seeds – some 250,000 in all – from the Kew Gardens Millennium Seed Bank. The construction process, again by Chinese teams, was remarkable.

The V&A show isn't chronological. Exhibition curator Abraham Thomas has opted instead for 'themes and ideas about questions' that emerge from Heatherwick's burgeoning portfolio. So you see the studio's collection of Christmas cards, each one challenging convention and marking a small experiment with form and materials, set opposite an ongoing scheme for Teesside Power Station dating from 2009 and the skeletal 'Autumn Intrusion' commissioned by Mary Portas in 1997 to grace the facade of Harvey Nichols' store in Knightsbridge that arguably kick-started Heatherwick's meteoric rise to fame.





Left: Thomas Heatherwick's 1992 Pavilion, a project completed while he was still a student at Manchester Polytechnic, consciously returned to an apparently outmoded type – the Victorian garden pavilion

Heatherwick defies definition as a designer. He is not an architect, but there is a rich seam of architecture and masterplanning projects in the studio. The origins of building design are in his early work, particularly the Pavilion he created at college in 1992 that is now installed in the Cass Sculpture Park in West Sussex, though this could just as easily be considered as furniture or art. Not so the Masdar Mosque (sadly unbuilt) commissioned by Foster + Partners for a low-carbon city in Abu Dhabi, the contoured Shingon-Shu Buddhist Temple in Japan, or Hong Kong's Pacific Place shopping centre for Swire Properties. These are serious buildings, and more massive developments are in the pipeline, especially in the Far East, following the success of the Shanghai pavilion. It shows how quickly one iconic building can boost a designer's reputation.

There are bridges – the Rolling Bridge at Paddington Basin now revisited as a proposed large-span crossing for the River Thames represented in the show by a working model. There is a full-size section of the new London bus, introduced on the 38 bus route earlier this year, for which the studio team led by Neil Hubbard even designed the textiles with a pattern that follows the contour lines of a seated person. There is the Zip Bag for Longchamp, designed in 2004 and copied in street markets across the globe, that led to a commission to design the 'fluid' interiors of the luxury brand's New York store. And there will be the Olympic Cauldron,

designed by Heatherwick and destined for the exhibition once the Olympics ceremony is over.

What links these projects is the questioning that Heatherwick says informed his curation and a commitment to experimentation that endures over time – a glass bridge, for example, has been 'work in progress' since 1996 and the expressive Cloud Bridge since 2008. There is a fascination with materials and industrial processes – the starting point for the Wellcome Trust's glass bead sculpture 'Bleigiessen' (meaning lead pouring) is the behaviour of falling liquids, though the original concept came from Heatherwick's childhood experiences of his mother's bead shop in London's Notting Hill – and a real passion for working with craftsmen that dates back to his student days.

There is also a highly sculptural quality to all of the work, however technically driven the projects are. Take the Cor-ten steel-clad East Beach Café at Littlehampton in West Sussex, designed by Heatherwick architect Peter Ayres, which takes the form of a weathered sand dune, or the spun moulded plastic chair for Italian furniture manufacturer Magis.

Of course, such innovation and diversity demands varied expertise and Heatherwick has collaborated with many people. The V&A show reflects this, paying homage to all involved in the work. A neat feature is the recorded interviews and discussions with commissioners, collaborators and Heatherwick team members accessible via telephone handsets throughout the show.

This openness is typical of Heatherwick, who, for all his success, remains deeply aware of the part others play in his projects, especially on the craft side. When asked how he manages to stay down to earth, his response is how could he not be humbled when working with so many different people of such great skill. Which brings us back full circle to his student concern about the scant recognition that makers receive and his pledge to change that.

Would that more designers pushed the boundaries of science and art as much as Heatherwick seeks to do. And would that more showed as much respect for all involved in answering the questions the work poses.

Expensive executive toys

NIAL HOBHOUSE

Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, London, until 12 August

The courtyard of Burlington House is just now largely filled with an installation by Chris Wilkinson RA. Entitled *From Landscape to Portrait*, it consists of 11 timber rectangles in the frozen stages of rotation from the horizontal to the vertical. Each is anchored to a snaking armature of steel panels which somehow does additional duty as seating for visitors to the Royal Academy *Summer Exhibition*.

It is hard to know what to make of this. For a start, the courtyard was conceived as the august anteroom for the small village of learned societies that are housed around it. It remains one of those enclosed London spaces (Somerset House is another) that is at its best when left empty and, in such a context, any site-specific intervention tends to flatter neither the site nor the intervention. One has to question as well whether vernacular high-tech can ever sit comfortably with (slightly trite) narrative sculpture, or indeed with the quality of materials (or engineering) that come with the budget for any temporary structure.

We are told that this whimsical blurring of architecture with sculpture is merely an overture for this year's architecture room in the exhibition, which has been curated on just this theme by Wilkinson himself and by Eva Jiricna.

As always with the RA, institutional convention and politics make it hard for any curator to pursue a thematic idea but, to the extent that they succeed in doing so, the choice of theme raises some large problems for architectural representation generally, and for the status of architecture within the RA itself. Rather than dismiss the room as just another bad year for architecture in the Academy, we should ask what they had hoped might really have been gained from approaching architects' models of buildings as though they were sculpture (or indeed, an architect's drawing as though it were an oil painting).

As it turns out, when you are encouraged to look this way at presentation models, they suddenly seem very long on the overworked ingenuity of expensive executive toys. Perhaps this is not something that should surprise us about any object conceived with rhetorical purpose (or for the desk of a developer), but it does feel a little odd to be reminded of it by the RA itself. And, as we turn to the walls, the same set of problems is, if anything, compounded: we have to confront there in addition just how much architectural energy (and development value) is being expended now on making pretty patterns for two-dimensional facades. This is all the nearly perfect demonstration of the reduced role of architecture in the process of building, and it suggests that the architect is now lucky to play catch-up with painting and sculpture. If this is really true, he or she should avoid making submissions to the *Summer Exhibition*.

From here, the pervasive Law of Unintended Consequences leads in uncomfortable directions. If the representations of buildings have their own autonomy, what then does it imply about the buildings (both built and unbuilt) to which they bear some ongoing relation? Zaha Hadid's submission asks these questions powerfully, with an extensive assemblage of images of the Heydar Aliyev Centre Auditorium. First among these is an acrylic painting by the architect that on examination can be neither quite the building she imagined nor, certainly, as it was completed; there follow a set of beautiful large photographs by Hélène Binet of the building still under construction. What is this

Below: Dan Graham's slides transform New Jersey's repetitive tract housing into post-Minimalist sculpture

about? That here is a building on the shores of the Caspian that few of us are ever likely to see so, really, what the hell? That as a building it looked its best when half-finished, and that we have already missed the moment in Baku? Or, simply, that the construction programme (even perhaps the photographer's travel schedule) fell inconveniently for the Royal Academy deadline?

Architectural representations are not works of art or, at least, are probably not best approached as works of art. To describe them, properly, as the notational record of a conceptual process, convenient for the moment (and in the inconvenient absence of the building) to the designer or to the public, is not to deny them a peculiar aesthetic of their own. Indeed, there are many fine architectural drawings and models – and even some good architecture – at the RA this year, but the uneasy format of the exhibition turns everything there to an exercise in advertising design; in doing so, all imaginative quality grows nearly invisible.

Suburban minimalism

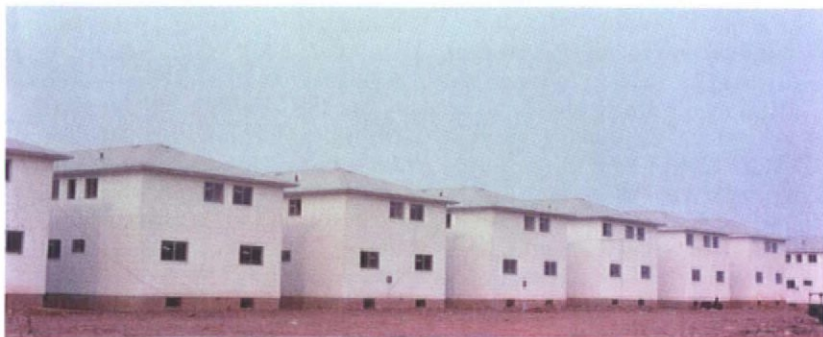
BRIAN HATTON

Dan Graham's New Jersey, Craig Buckley and Mark Wasiuta (eds), and essay by Mark Wigley, GSAPP, Columbia University & Lars Müller Publishers, £45; *Dan Graham, Hans Ulrich Obrist: Conversation Series No 25*, Walther König Verlag, £16.50

Head west under the Hudson from Manhattan, cross the ridge of Hoboken, and a traveller on the Penn trains or Pulaski Skyway suddenly hits on a marshland littered with swamp-sunk dinosaurs of dead industries. Then the houses begin, the suburbs that spread across 'The Garden State'. New Jersey's sprawl, remarks Mark Wigley,

seems so near yet so far from Manhattan's skyscrapers that to move from one to the other is 'to go on safari'. Perhaps to the migrant Wigley, the New Jersey excursions that led to this book seemed like safaris; but to their guide Dan Graham, they were trips to where he grew up, and where, in June 1965 he began as writer and artist by making a photo-essay that would become known as 'Homes For America'.

Graham is widely known today for enlivening public places and gardens with his pavilions of two-way mirror glass; yet despite the pavilions' optical and tectonic sophistication, and his knowledgeable enthusiasm for architecture, he maintains that hybrid attitude with which he entered the '80s art world, first running a gallery showing Minimalists such as LeWitt, Judd and Flavin, and then as artist-writer and rock critic. As he tells Hans Ulrich Obrist: 'I don't consider myself an architect. On the other hand, I like to do things that are on the edge of two areas. Pavilions are somewhere in between, they are ambiguous.' Two-way mirror glass in pavilions escapes its corporate and security origins by inviting visitors into re-creative interplay of relations and identities: 'Venturi has a word for it: not either/or but both/and. He was interested in the ambiguity of something between two things.' Likewise, Graham has sought initiatives between stereotypes and clichés, detached from them yet, like a Pop artist, happy to engage their power in disarming representations. In his Pop modality, Graham did two new things. First, he saw magazines as a common mediation both for art (in writing) and consumerism (by advertising); hence, a site in which directly to install not-for-sale art amid commercial non-art. Second, he turned attention to architectural consumerism in the form of mass-produced suburban 'Tract' housing.



About to exhibit his friend and fellow NJ-born artist Robert Smithson, Graham's gallery went bust, causing him to retreat to his parents' home in Westfield. There he began, with a Kodak Instamatic, to record the suburbs that were multiplying everywhere. He took slides. He liked that their opalescent hues corresponded with the industrial haze of suburban light. Also, their projected sequence repeated the serial rows and echelons of standardised houses that were ubiquitous in the new developments. Seriality in fact became both subject matter and organiser of his project – its in-formation, in Graham's hyphenated usage. As he says in interview with Mark Wasiuta, 'I realised, in terms of a cliché of modern buildings, that you also have a seriality; but it was both clichéd and serious ... Music was like that at that time.' Graham noted serial forms in the Kinks' rock riffs, in Boulez's abstract compositions, in the cities described in Michel Butor's novels, in the Paris suburbs of Godard's *Two Or Three Things I Know About Her*; and they informed Donald Judd's account of the city plan in his 1963 'Kansas City Report', which Graham has often cited.

At Smithson's studio, Graham showed the sequence to friends, and again in the *Projected Art* exhibition at Finch College, where an editor offered to put it in *Arts Magazine*. He then wrote a text, researching promoters' brochures for an essay that elaborated a typology of their estates, layouts and range of choices. In a tone of straight reportage, the text related the developers' pragmatic production and marketing methods, and the merely adventitious variation among projects, arising from contingencies of site and restricted choice of house-type, colour and sequence. The 'Cape Coral' project offered eight types, with names like 'The Serenade' and 'The Rhapsody', in eight colours such as 'Seafoam Green' and 'Coral Pink'. Not content with simply recording such variants, Graham set out a systematic exposition of their combination in a chart of sequenced rows of choices permuted according to market analysis of female or male 'likes' or 'dislikes': 'This serial logic might follow consistently until, at the edges, it is abruptly terminated by pre-existent highways, bowling

alleys, shopping plazas, discount houses, lumberyards, or factories.'

The same might be said for Graham's text, which, as if miming its topic, continued as if in an autonomous analysis that would be 'abruptly terminated' only by the following article. Indeed, when *Arts* published it in December 1966, they cut Graham's photos, illustrating it only with a Walker Evans photo of row houses and a brochure image of 'The Serenade'. It was *Arts* who titled it 'Homes For America', adding a misleading subtitle, 'Early 20th Century Possessable House to the Quasi-Discrete Cell of '66' surely because, in cutting the photos, they lost Graham's subversive ambiguity. For, the full photo-text appeared as if describing projects not of suburban non-art, but radical recent minimal and conceptual art. The photos showed the suburbs' serial rows and details strangely like works by sculptors such as Judd, Andre and Smithson, while the text's strict objectivity recalled Donald Judd's lean appraisals of artworks, and its tables of permuted sequences oddly resembled the 'idea-as-machine' programmes generated by Sol LeWitt and others.

Such features were conducive to uncertainty as to the intention and status of Graham's work. Was it architectural typology, or some kind of structuralist analysis of suburban anthropology? Was it some cool exposé on the congruence of art and non-art? Was it a document itself of conceptual art, an algorithm whose enactment would in itself perform the art? Or was it as Graham once said, the fact that it was 'only a magazine article and made no claims for itself as art' that was important? Yet Graham would produce 10 versions of it, some for publication, some for exhibition; each one, Wigley points out, adding to a series which was taken to be a copy ('cliché') of an original which in fact never was properly published. This seriality itself, straddling text and picture, art and language, art and architecture, art and non-art, art and commerce, itself amounted to an early example of what Thierry de Duve has called Graham's 'critique of artistic autonomy'. For, as Mark Wigley points out, 'Homes for America' 'rejected any sense that gallery spaces could be seen as independent of urban or suburban life'.

Although *Arts* never published it properly, the 'Homes For America'



Above: Suburban interiors, photographed by Graham, form an intriguing precursor to Stephen Shore's better-known, more aesthetically motivated images

'in-formation' – its unity of medium and message – got relayed as illustrations and models for articles by Dan Flavin and by Robert Smithson, who in December 1967 published his spectral account of a visit to New Jersey, 'A Tour Of The Monuments Of Passaic'.

Smithson's and Graham's differing representations of their home state were described in Ann Reynolds' book *Robert Smithson: Learning From New Jersey And Elsewhere*. Quoted there, commenting on the use in social exposés of Walker Evans' documentary photography, Graham conveyed again that in-between attitude that he has kept throughout his various projects: 'I wanted to keep all those meanings but empty out pejorative meanings. On the other hand, I didn't want to go so far as minimal. I wanted to show that minimal was related to a real social situation that could be documented.'

Both of these books add to the bibliography around Dan Graham and to awareness of how art practices since minimalism began, in ways quite different from in the 1920s, bear on ambient space. Through installation and site-specific works, art has, as it were, intervened in architecture's spatial order yet from outside its professional and symbolic order. In the cases of Richard Serra's 'Tilted Arc', and in Gordon Matta-Clark's 'Splitting' (of a New Jersey house) architectural interventions were aggressive and political; but Graham's approach to architecture has always been half on the side of its users. So, while Wigley and Wasiuta's essays here demonstrate the complexity of Graham's involvement with vanguard art, literature and architecture, his photos of shops, streets and domestic interiors also show his amusement and sympathy with the demotic language of suburban life – not least expressed in pop music, as is recalled in Graham's conversations with Wasiuta and Obrist. However, while both these books communicate Graham's generous latitude of reference, they are unable to illustrate its scope. Those who know only Graham's recent work may not be aware of the range which he explored between 'Homes For America' and one of his first pavilions, 'Public Space, Two Audiences', which he built for the 1976 Venice Biennale, *Ambient Art*. In those years, Graham's

explorations moved through conceptual art, film, performance, and video – all of which have left traces in the pavilions. Readers of these two books may, therefore, wish to supplement them with the comprehensive catalogue published for Graham's recent exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

From Russia with wood

AVERIL KING

Wooden Churches: Travelling in the Russian North, Richard Davies and Matilda Moreton, White Sea Publishing, £40

The fate of northern Russia's historic wooden churches is highlighted in this beautifully produced book by architectural photographer Richard Davies. Evoking both sadness and wonder, it records the demise of the region's remaining churches, but also celebrates the skill of the craftsmen who constructed them.

The original churches were built from the turn of the 10th century onwards at the instigation of Prince Vladimir of Kiev, as he attempted to civilise the people of Rus by adopting Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Once, even tiny villages would boast a *troinik* (group of three) comprising a summer church, winter church and bell tower. To build them, guilds of itinerant carpenters, their only tool the axe, used huge, straight trunks of pine hewn from ancient local forests. Grown slowly, the wood was immensely strong, and capable of surviving for centuries. Logs were laid horizontally, often on a foundation of river boulders, and interlocked at the corners, with the lower edge of each log grooved to form a tight fit with the one below. The gaps between them were tightly packed with sphagnum moss. Aspen was used for the churches' silvery, weatherproof roof shingles.

Although wood was the principal building material, over time it was often superseded by brick and stone. Indeed, in the 1830s a German traveller remarked that: 'the Russian country people take a particular pride in the stone churches of their village ... nay, its inhabitants would scarcely marry those of villages with wooden churches'. In the north, which, with



Above: The tradition embodied by the wooden Church of St Alexander Svirsky (1769), Kosmozero, is continued by more recent clapboard houses

Below: Heavenly hosts adorn the soffit of the dome in St Blaise's Church of the Intercession (1761), Lyadiny



the founding of St Petersburg, had been comparatively neglected, more wooden churches survived, but even here villagers deferred to fashion by cladding them in white painted boards and covering the onion domes in metal to give the impression they were built of stone.

As well as evocative tableaux of wooden churches standing listlessly – and sometimes gloriously – in Russia's flat northern landscape, the book also includes many details and interiors, such as the small, stepped shingles covering the curvaceous onion-shaped gables of the Church of the Transfiguration (1781) at Turchasovo and the delicately cut roof shingles of the tent roof of the Church of the Prophet Elijah (1798) at Seltso. There are intimate views of the forlorn, icon-stripped iconostasis at the Church of St Michael (1655) at Krasnaya Lyaga, the still-splendid painted sky ceiling at St Blaise's Church of the Intercession (1761) at Lyadiny, and the zig-zag

arrangement around the octagon to throw off water at the Church of St Alexander Svirsky (1769) at Kosmozero. An invaluable glossary explains the idiosyncratic elements that make up each design, and plans and elevations of different church types further enhance our understanding of a unique architectural and social legacy.

With the Revolution of 1917 came the state promotion of atheism and innumerable village churches were destroyed, a process that continued under Khrushchev. As they disappeared, the skills involved in building these remarkable examples of rural craftsmanship were lost. Now, as Mikhail Milchik, Deputy Director of the St Petersburg Research Institute of Restoration notes in his afterword: 'Wooden architecture, the most original and most unique part of the cultural heritage of Russia, is on the verge of total extinction'. Who will come forward to save these wonderful buildings?

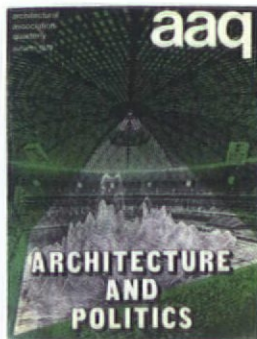
In Sharp focus

JAMES DUNNETT

Sharp Words: Selected Essays of Dennis Sharp, Architectural Association Publications, £25

Dennis Sharp (obituary AR July 2010) was a man of wide interests in architectural history and theory. He also enjoyed participating in the politics of architecture – at the AA, the RIBA, and various international architectural groupings – but as the son of a builder he never lost his feeling for architectural practice. This is all aptly reflected in the selection of his articles and shorter writings in this compilation. Subjects range from Muthesius and Mackintosh to Kisho Kurokawa, from Paul Scheerbarth to Bruce Goff, and from 1930s cinemas to 'Utopian Ideals and the Complexity of the Modern City' – a paper given at the World Association of Chinese Architects Conference in Hangzhou in 2006, 40 years after the date of the earliest essay in the book. But all these diverse subjects come within his own broad definition of the word 'modern', which he says was used to qualify 'architecture' from the 1830s and as a pair with 'movement' by Mackintosh in 1901.

This latitude provided the context for his own non-doctrinaire approach, allowing him to be an enthusiast for the hard-edge quasi-Constructivism of Connell Ward and Lucas while also being an early proponent of rediscovered Expressionism. But there was at least one clear thread running through his work, and a valuable one – his sympathy with German culture and his ability to open it to us. Inspired in part by his revered German-émigré teacher at the AA Arthur Korn and by his national service in Dortmund, he was able to write with authority about figures scarcely known here such as Bruno Taut, Hermann Finsterlin and (especially) Scheerbarth, and tirelessly to promote publication of Muthesius's *Das englische Haus* in English. Some of these texts, dating as they do from up to 50 years ago, have been superseded by subsequent work, but on the other hand, they capture vividly the climate of their period, as do the 1970s covers from *Architectural Association Quarterly* magazine



Above: Autumn 1972 edition of *Architectural Association Quarterly*, on the theme of 'Architecture and Politics', edited by Dennis Sharp

during his editorship and the articles reproduced in facsimile including 'Space and Performance', a magisterial historical survey from AR June 1989 (the first in what was to be a long-standing collaboration with graphic designer Malcolm Frost). Sharp was never closely identified with a particular architectural approach or group, as was Reyner Banham for example, but he was most interested in what one would loosely call the organic strand of the Modern Movement' (as Paul Finch remarks in his introduction), and he was ready to admit a spiritual dimension to architecture. He had associations with diverse designers such as Santiago Calatrava, Kurokawa, and Paolo Soleri ('Culture, form and visionary architect meet again at [Soleri's] Arcosanti as they did in Urbino, Florence, Bath and Chandigarh'), whose work he was happy to promote. His erudition was phenomenal and there are many names thrown out here without further reference or description, for example in 'Muthesius and Mackintosh', about whom one would like to know more. His ceaseless activity enriched architecture and this book is a timely reflection of it.

A cracking read

LINDSAY BREMNER
AND JEREMY TILL

Toward a Minor Architecture,
Jill Stoner, MIT Press, £13.95

Why, you might ask, is this book review written as a conversation between two people?

Our answer might be because the book itself is a series of conversations; between many authors, between architecture and fiction, major and minor, inside and outside. It is a multi-authored collaboration in which many voices have their say, none with authority. The minor architect, as Stoner describes her, is an editor, and a book of minor criticism is not written, it is composed.

If so, why does the title of the book, *Toward a Minor Architecture*, position itself so directly in relation to the canonical, magisterial text of modern architecture, *Toward a New Architecture* (Vers une architecture) that Le Corbusier published in 1923? Is it trying to offer

an alternative to Modernism's master narrative and, if so, towards what end?

The answer is more subtle than this, for while Stoner's book offers an implicit critique of the major architectural canon, she does not operate confrontationally. Instead she sidesteps into another territory – that of the 20th-century novel. 'As Walter Benjamin read the elemental artifacts of nineteenth-century Paris as though they were texts, so can we read elemental fragments of twentieth-century fiction as though they were architecture.' This act of displacement of architecture into fiction 'offers nonvisual images of space that the camera cannot reach, and temporal/spatial enactments that lie outside the conventions of architectural representation.'

Stoner's book reads as a novel, an architectural fiction. It is gentle, brilliantly precise and economical in its use of language. Sentences themselves open up new horizons for architectural reflection, in the manner of poetry. That makes it sound rather over-literary, a book written by an academic for other academics. **But that would miss the point. For reading this book is easy and compelling, if one suspends one's disbelief, goes with the flow of writing and submits to where the text takes one. At times one becomes sceptical, for there are some unnecessary overstatements (as in the likening of suburbs to concentration camps), but these are outweighed by the momentum of the argument and its subtle articulation of new architectural strategies.**

The real strength of its argument arises from extraordinary and detailed readings of spatial episodes from 20th-century literature (Kafka, Carver, Cheever, et al), which then provide clues for reframing architecture. One of the highlights of these is Neddy Merrill's swim through suburban swimming pools, retold from John Cheever's short story *The Swimmer*. 'Neddy's swim is a denial set against and within a matrix of capture: the risk of revealing oneself, the loss of suburban social graces, the possibility of bankruptcy and foreclosure, and the breakdown of his seemingly ideal family structure. He wants to sublimate the private pools into a flowing river, to have these private enclosures take into full account what has happened to him, to remove from these objects their boundaries. Swimming

through – that is to say, entering into – a series of private properties, Neddy attempts to draw a fluid line of force, but finds himself blocked by a sequence of ossified, fortified interiors.

Neddy's attempt to recalibrate the segmented space of Westchester County is ultimately futile, leaving him trapped within temporal and spatial enclosures and obstructed by architecture.

This introduces the central theme of the book – the four central myths of architecture – the myth of the interior, the myth of the object, the myth of the subject and the myth of nature. Stoner meticulously picks these apart, but does not leave architecture in tatters and walk away. Instead, she remarkably emerges with an affirmative, celebratory proposition, which she calls 'minor architecture'.

What is minor architecture?

Minor architectures are lines of escape through the majority rule of architecture's myths. They reveal the latent externalities within architecture's enclosures, weaken its status as visible object, break the stable identity of the architect-subject and expose the nature within.

'A minor architecture is becoming space rather than being form. It hums along restlessly, turning away from the stale orders of commodity, originality, permanence, and perfection, and towards incompleteness and immanence.' 'Minor architectures are, in fact, opportunistic events in response to latent but powerful desires to undo structures of power.' They are intentionally 'improvised, fractional, stripped of decoration and even of grammar.'

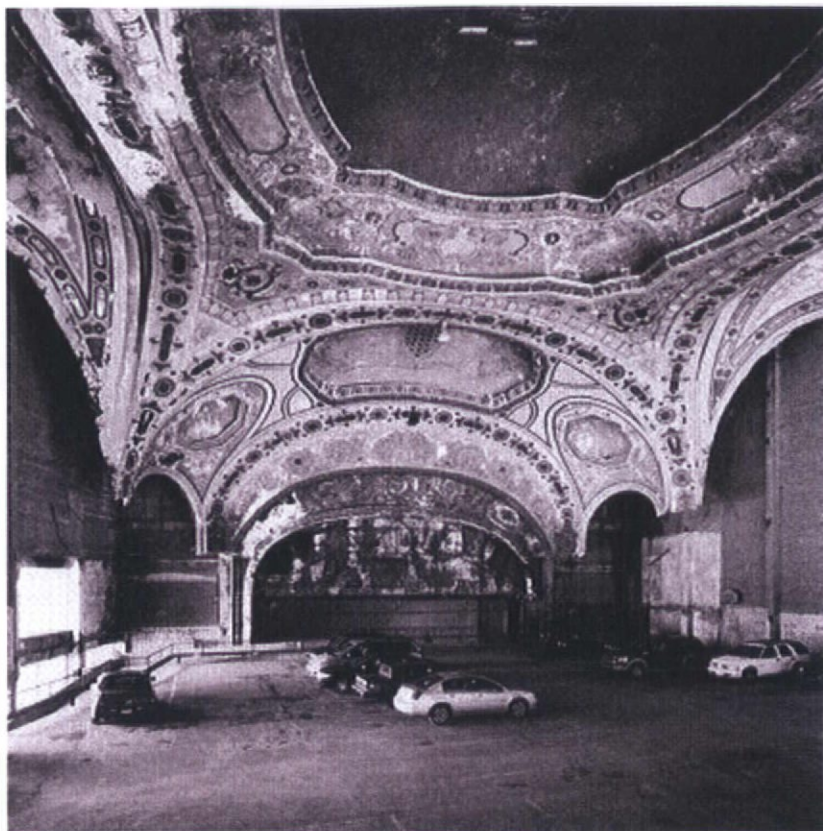
What then does it mean to be a minor architect?

'Thus to practise architecture in a minor mode requires not only the partial deconstruction of buildings and the structures of power that lead to their incessant reproduction, but also the deconstruction of the architect/subject. Minor architectures not only register a minor voice upon the major one, they also cause identities to collapse into one another ... authorship is put into reverse, and the design process becomes editorial.'

This raises a number of questions (not always answered in the book):

'How does an architect become minor? What ambitions must be

Right: Gentrification in reverse gear. The former Michigan Theater in Detroit, built on the legendary site of Ford's autogenesis, was transformed into a car park in 1982; the cars that built Detroit have come home to roost in the ruins of its civic grandeur



dismantled and what expectations let go? Wherein lies the incentive to be anonymous?' To which the answer should be: what choice do we have other than to become minor, given that the myths of architecture have failed us so badly?

But doesn't this imply that minor might become major, and all architects condemned to be no more than tinkers, given Stoner's definition that 'a minor architect is a minor destructive character, a tinkerer and hacker, journalist and editor, alter ego and subaltern'?

She avoids this position, for she is very clear that minor architecture needs major architecture to exist – they are 'a mixture with blurring, slippage and overlap. Minor architectures operate within that mercurial, indeterminate state that is the passage from striated to smooth, from closed system to open space.' The minor architect does not operate by adding new, frozen, stuff to the world but by subtly, sometimes invisibly, reconfiguring what is already there. Stoner's chosen sites are the American post-industrial landscape of suburban dross and corporate obsolescence. 'The perceived poverty of these buildings releases us from responsibility to adhere to any

laws, covenants or precedents. This is precisely what makes them vulnerable to minor experiments and valuable as another kind of "natural" resource. Open to new intensities, these graveyards of capital are the fields, forests and quarries of our present time.' However, by limiting the argument to a very specific US context, the book may miss fulfilling the wider potential of the argument, for Stoner is dealing with modes rather than sites of operation. The wonderful strategies/tactics that she develops are as applicable to an architecture that undermines the power structures in a typical British housing estate or a refugee camp in Ethiopia, as they are in the American built landscape. Her strategies are explicitly political, collective and collaborative. They 'liberate from below'. And they creatively edit the stratified, separated spaces of political and economic power, opening cracks in their edifices and liberating architecture from capture. This reminds me of the words of Leonard Cohen's *Anthem*: 'Forget your perfect offering There is a crack, a crack in everything That's how the light gets in.' And that is the biggest compliment you could pay!

PEDAGOGY

Cooper Union, USA

MATTHEW BARAC

Occupying a privileged position in the history of architectural pedagogy, the reputation of the Irwin S Chanin School of Architecture at the Cooper Union as a centre of invention and creativity stretches back to its foundation in 1859. Since then, the institution – which admits undergraduates solely on merit, awarding full scholarships to all – has provided opportunities to not only experiment with the practice of architecture but also with how to teach it. John Hejduk and Roger Canon's *Education of an Architect* of 1971, now in its third iteration, gave perspective to this debate, positioning student endeavours at the nerve centre of wider processes of spatial innovation.

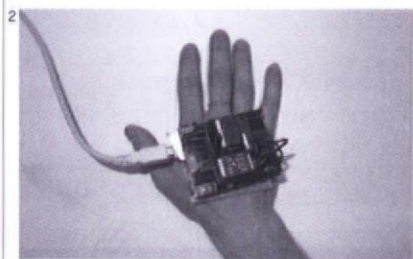
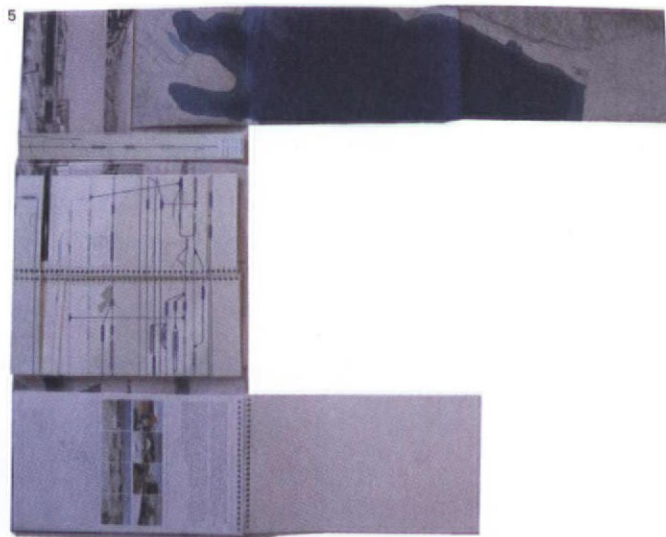
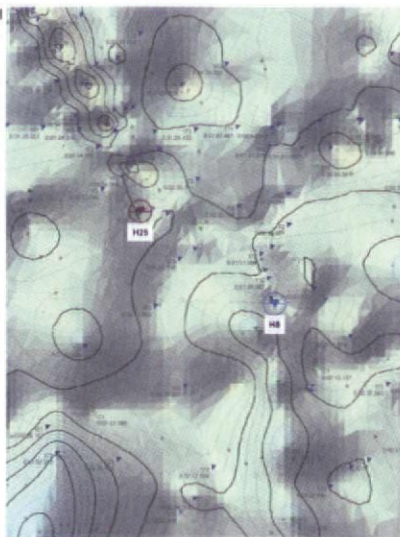
The notion of an elite academy that acts as a hotbox of creativity on behalf of society at large is not far removed from the aspirations of its founder, industrialist and philanthropist Peter Cooper, who sought to nurture a new generation of thinkers and doers at the heart of the city. Today's Cooper Union, complete with its recent addition – a Morphosis-designed block, featuring warped screens on the outside and a giant fishnet spiralling up its central stair – still occupies a central position in downtown New York.

The school's spirit of invention continues to burn, if somewhat dampened by the anxieties that permeate our age of economic uncertainty, environmental instability, and unseen risks to life and limb. Perhaps less bombastic in their battle against banality than their 19th- or 20th-century forebears, some in the faculty now see the

1. Digital mapping of graduate Galen Wolfe-Pauly's centre of gravity as he moves up the surface of a climbing wall
2. Sensors were attached to Wolfe-Pauly's wrists and ankles to track his movement
3. An image of Wolfe-Pauly's climbing body generated from his digital mappings
4. The school's new building in downtown New York by Morphosis creates a vertical campus with its sweeping geometries inside and out
5. Students present their final thesis project in the form of a book, exploring and extending the possibilities of that medium
6. A thesis project set in Gaza extends across the exhibition walls

school as an enclave beset by a widespread contempt for intelligence that stifles creative play. This contempt, fuelled by implacable market demands and infinite IT possibilities, manifests as what David Turnbull, a professor at the school for six years, describes as 'cynical reason that haunts the discipline'. As a result, students and staff fall back on the school's protection, at the risk of finding themselves accused of paranoia about the world outside.

The gauntlet thrown down by acknowledging the difficulties of dealing even-handedly with this world, and architecture's impotence in the face of it, is taken up in the 'thesis' project tackled in the final year of the five-year degree. Given the polemical nature of the challenge, which is structured as a research endeavour, students are invited to produce their thesis proposition – the work of the first semester –



as a book. The rationale for producing a book, rather than a building, discloses a pedagogical fit between teaching aims and learning outcomes. Students at this level are expected to assume the responsibilities implied by participating in the knowledge economy, and so to pick out their own paths across the educational terrain. As Hayley Eber who, with Turnbull and colleague Urtzi Grau, completes the thesis team explains: 'we adopt a bottom-up teaching approach, whereby the student drives the discussion, as a way to encourage critical work that is self-generated.' This is not about letting students run free, but rather about empowering them with the most important lesson: learning how to learn.

Some immediately grasp the power of the book format, using it to bring order to topic choices that respond to a range of global and local concerns, some focus towards the

self, and others on far-flung sites: from Gaza to Ghana, from Dharavi to the Dead Sea. A knee-jerk tendency towards narrative in turn offers opportunities to deconstruct the storylines often unwittingly adopted by architectural projects. These semantic loops circumscribe learning challenges which build up the capability for synthesis that Turnbull and his team are after: 'A student's capacity to structure an argument is important. We insist on empathy as a motive to complement literacy and verbal dexterity.'

At first, graduate Galen Wolfe-Pauly struggled with the task, relentlessly compiling information until he realised it would be pointless to bind 'everything he ever knew' into a book. A climbing-wall offered an alternative, vertical terrain on which to map and organise his research. He filmed his ascents up the wall, recording the trajectory of his centre

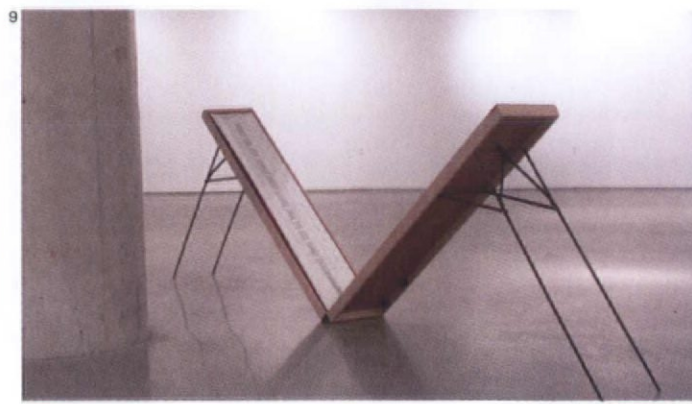
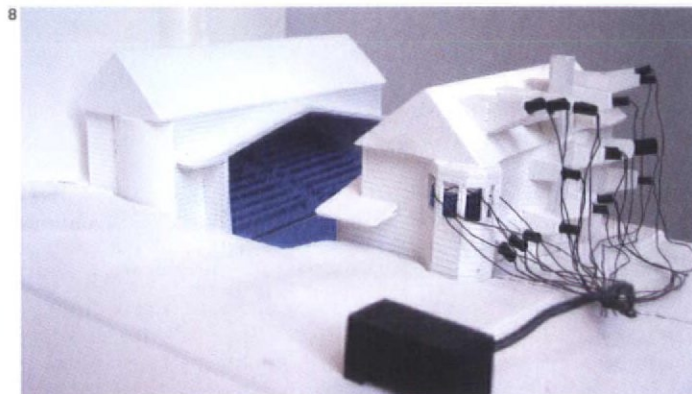
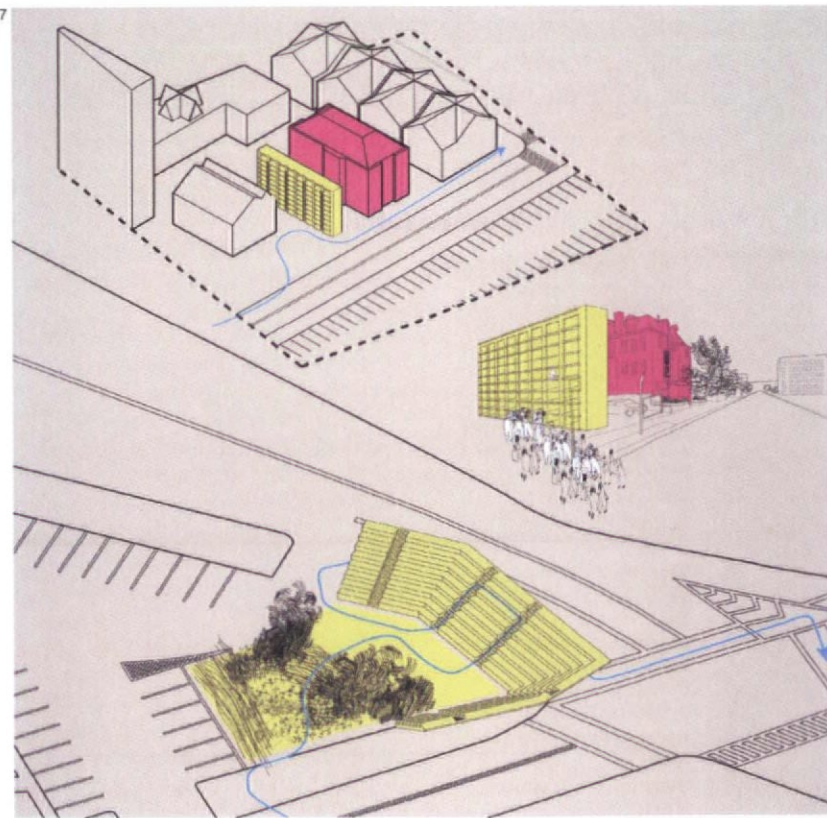
7. Graduate Andrejs Rauchut's project transports the complex spatiotemporal narrative of *The Comedy of Errors* to New York's Staten Island

8. A model of Rauchut's urban development scenario. Post-production, the stage sets scattered around Staten Island are intended to be used as new public spaces. Here a once-private house is transformed into a public hall

9. Rauchut's thesis book is extended lengthways and doubles up as a display table

of gravity and analysing the speed and movement of his wrists and ankles using finely-tuned sensors. An advanced mathematics course supplied the expertise needed to script codes that generated drawings of his climbing body.

Andrejs Rauchut's project embraced literary metaphor, deliberately misreading *The Comedy of Errors* as a design brief. He stage-managed a 'constellation of architectural set-pieces' to reconfigure the public space economy of New York's Staten Island. Following Shakespeare, he enacted his urban development scenario in a single day, mobilising an imaginary consultation process in which commuters and residents are caught up with actors in the twists and turns of the plot. His book, oversized and bound in wood, opens to form a display table designed to temporarily occupy the site as street furniture.



REPUTATIONS

Craig Ellwood

PAUL DAVIES

Craig Ellwood: cool Californian clothes horse, vain self-publicist, driver of yellow Ferraris, scourge of accountants, serial womaniser, sex addict, party animal, a man who played fast and loose with credit of all kinds, neglecter of children, dreadful abstract painter, retiree to Tuscany, professed 'nonsensualist' (!) and not even an architect; yet author of one of the finest houses of the 20th century (Case Study House 16), even ambassador for Mies van der Rohe; architecture's Cary Grant.

Although from Texas, and originally Johnnie Burke, 'Craig Ellwood' has achieved, long after his death in 1992 at the age of 70, in both his seeming straightforwardness of approach and larger-than-life character, a perfect representation of Los Angeles' *genius loci*: the beguiling chimera of flickering lights, all solidity melting into air. California in the 1950s, when Europe was at its most pompously solid, was a harbinger of one of those great shifts in architectural culture, as modernity moved under blue skies and palm trees, driving west on Sunset to the sea, away from mundane questions of function to those of lifestyle.

The shift was crucial and inevitable, anticipating David Adjaye in fashion as much as Danny Libeskind in showmanship. Everything JK Galbraith was pondering at the time – *The Affluent Society* (1958) that dissolved luxury and necessity under the rubric of advertising – was coming home to roost before his very eyes: in *Domus*, actually. Ellwood thought it was more stylish to borrow his staff's wives and girlfriends for photo shoots and send the pictures to the Italian publication for kudos. Now he fills vast volumes of Taschen. Julius Shulman's photography brings vibrancy,

cocktails at five, JAX clothes, Bang and Olufsen and sex to the architectural interior, its patio and even its shrubbery. Yes sexual intercourse, famously not invented for the English until 1963. Together Ellwood and Shulman brought to houses what Marilyn Monroe brought to Lucille Ball.

Ellwood began his architectural career as a cost estimator, before which he was in PR for the Hollywood Bowl. Estimating skills would be reflected in his refinement of structure – the use of what seems impossibly thin two-inch hollow sections, once railway tracks, to save money on tricky ground – and also in the expression of that structure, shadow gaps and lack of cover strips in the forgiving Californian air. Huge windows, vestigial walls, dislocated fireplaces that spin out as barbecues to the periphery of the plan of CSH16, layers of semi-opaque glass around the master bedroom shouting peekaboo from within. That spectacle you can never actually see, because it's always shrouded in shrubbery and security cameras. The kitchen even features a conspicuous cocktail glass cooler – I repeat, a glass cooler, to cool your cocktail glasses. This is 1953.

Despite the branding, CSH16 was actually a commercial development, acquired (like several others) for the Case Study House Program by publisher of *Art and Architecture Magazine* John Entenza. Entenza promptly gave it a number and rubbed out the rather cramped site boundary to give it more general significance, thereby deceiving us for years, since its very specificity explains that opaque glass trickery. It was privately bought on completion and lived in for life, a rarity indeed, for in general, Craig Ellwood's houses lasted as long as their owners' fashion sense. As John Chase admirably points out in *Glitter, Stucco and Dumpster Diving* (2000) what do you expect? Remake and remodel is the very modus

'Clothes horse, self-publicist, sex addict, party animal, dreadful abstract painter, yet author of one of the finest houses of the 20th century'

Craig Ellwood
1922–1992
Real name
Johnnie Burke
Education
Structural Engineering
UCLA Night School,
self-trained as a cost
estimator at 'Craig Ellwood'
and Lampport Cofer Salzman
Big break
Case Study House 16,
Salzman House (1953)
Buildings
Case Study Houses
(1951–58)
Smith House,
Los Angeles (1955)
Scientific Facilities,
California (1969)
Art Center College of
Design, Pasadena (1976)
Quote
'In architecture, structure
is the only clear principle'

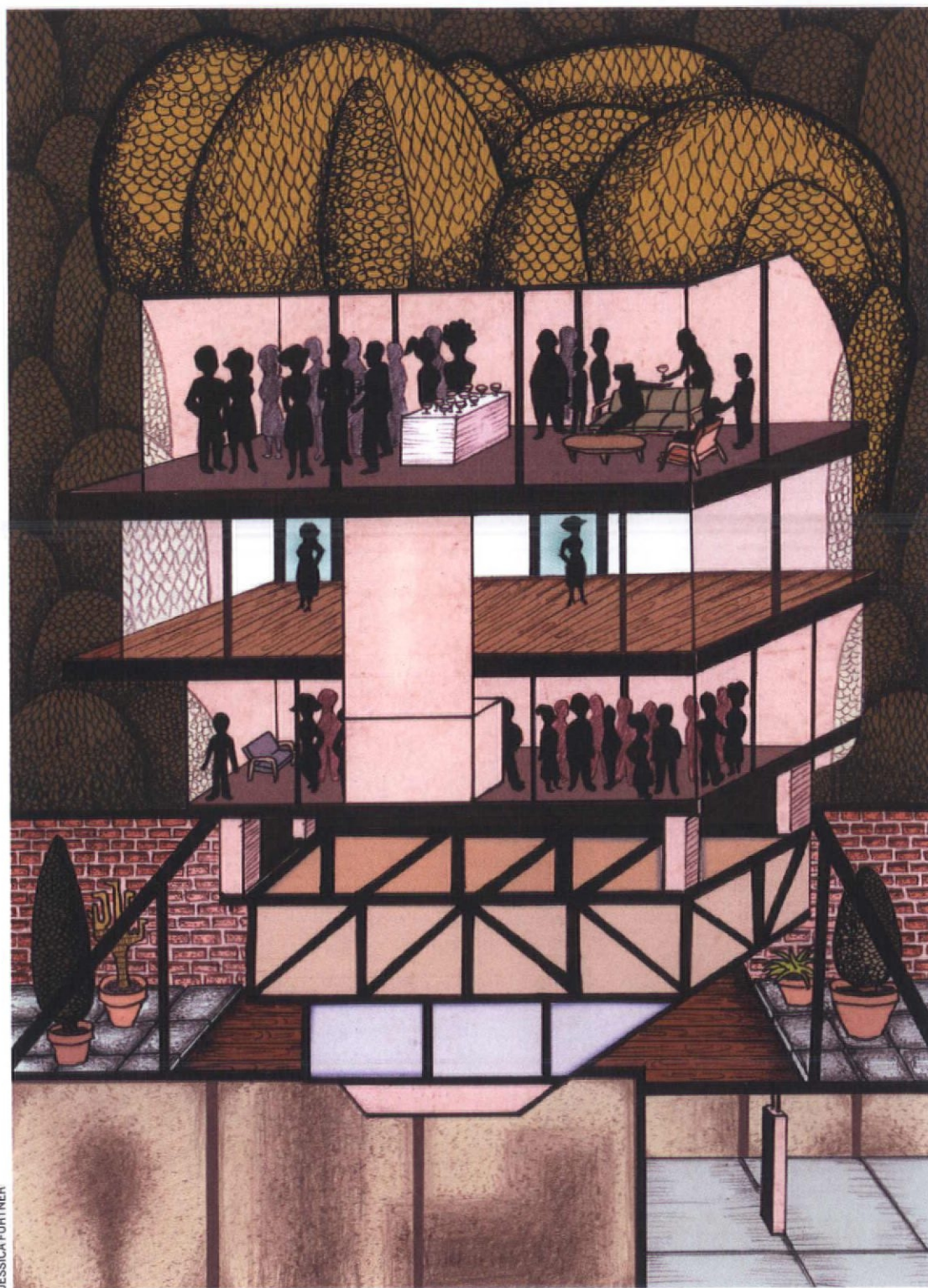
operandi of the place. You really shouldn't be surprised if the non-progressive freshly-appointed studio executive suddenly decides to plaster your lithe contemporary modern in Doric columns and fit a brand new kitchen. This happened absolutely on cue to Ellwood's CSH18, much to the horror of progressive enthusiasts yet in total fulfilment of that *genius loci*.

The skill Ellwood displayed with CSH16 was to be sadly eclipsed when he moved on to bigger things. As a struggling sole practitioner, Ellwood stayed afloat with the help of his second wife, a Hollywood actress. He moved on to a former Miss Delaware, and finally to his youngest wife when he was 62. As the publicity made him more successful, he perhaps became more unfortunately self-conscious, with his adoption of a more uptight, conspicuously Miesian language.

It's hard to imagine Ellwood and Mies together. Ellwood was definitely in awe, and they both conveniently loved cocktails and dirty jokes. Otherwise they were worlds apart. Ellwood certainly did not crave solitude.

His son Adam went to the trouble of sending a bitter note to reviewers of Neil Jackson's excellent biography of Ellwood (2002), to say that he remembers his father telling him he was ditching his mother in a Paris hotel bar aged 13. His brother Jeff can be found offering reviews of his father's work on Amazon, and this territory is evidently and publicly raw. Jeff, Adam and Erin were disinherited when Ellwood married last. We all join in this gossip, you can find it on the blogosphere when you search for the Ellwood Associates entry for the 1975 Long Beach Grand Prix with Miss Delaware perched on the fairing (go faster stripes by Ellwood naturally). We all wish we could have joined in the fun.

Ellwood taught at Yale in the same period as James Stirling, lecturing somewhat perversely on 'Nonsensualism'. With a bigger office, and still not an architect himself,



JESSICA FORTNER

Ellwood suffered the delights of delegation by all accounts poorly, yet his disciples certainly found their voice, even if this is only belatedly recognised in the also excellent (if now prohibitively expensive) default catalogue raisonné: *Craig Ellwood, In the Spirit of the Time* by Alfonso Perez-Mendez (2003). The Rosen House, for instance, as well as being even more structurally mean than, say, CSH16, features the most oppressive of Neo-Classical plans. It is tempting to give it a Farnsworth House for kids strapline, and miserable kids at that. Of the bigger buildings, Pasadena's Art Center grabs the headlines as a building as a bridge, but that's about all it seems to be, despite all of Ellwood's protestations. Xerox Data Systems attempts to make a box interesting but fails. Both evoke alarming associations with embryonic British High-Tech. Whatever the case, the subtlety simply goes, and by this stage he was bored and so are we.

It is fitting that the gregarious Craig Ellwood hung out with some fairly dubious pals. It is also fitting that by the late 1970s the architecture business, the agents, the new job developer, the superstructure and general la-di-da got to him. This is one of those remarkably real and honest moments in such a hyper real career. If you were any good in California in the '70s you were bound to acquire some lively pals at some rollicking parties. If you didn't you'd be sort of missing out.

Latterly, he was still knocking girls' socks off, but he preferred to do it near Ambra in Tuscany in a 16th-century farmhouse, with his old buddy John Entenza even fixing him up with a Graham Foundation grant to paint. However, with Ellwood there is always a tale, and according to one of my students his pictures were often painted by Miss Delaware (who, incidentally, went off into the personal growth healing thing). However, that is from a most unreliable source.



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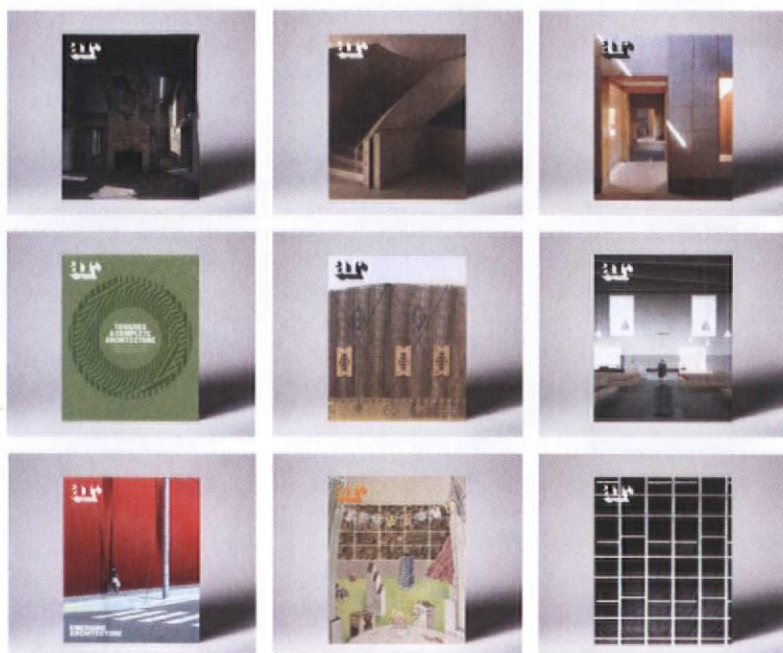
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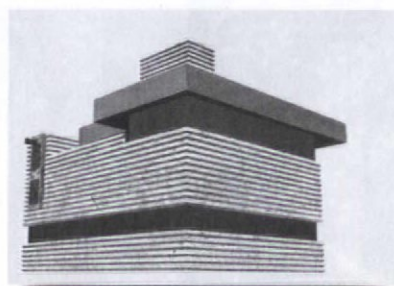
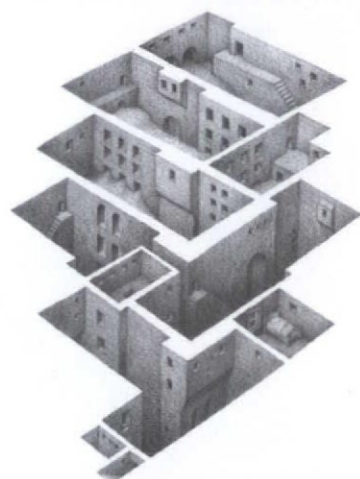
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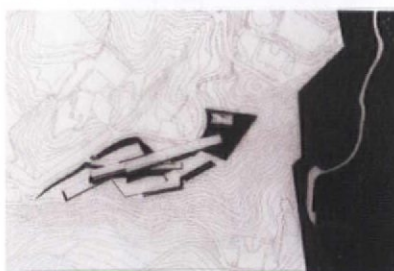
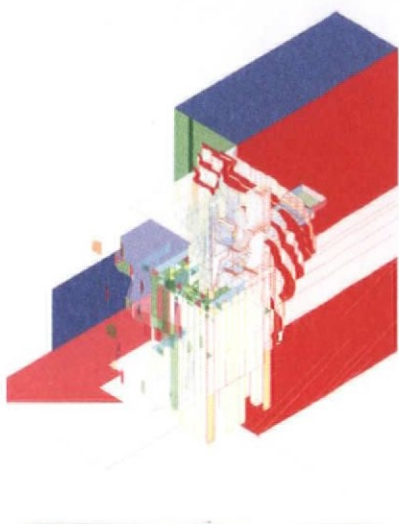
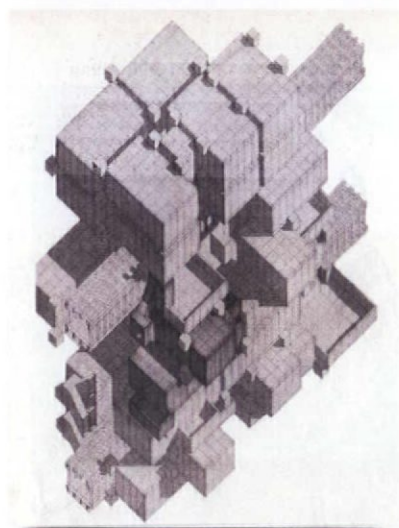


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Folio has now leapt out of the confines of its back-page 12-times-a-year format to become the AR's Folio blog – which celebrates the architectural drawing with a constantly expanding collection of images. As a gambit we've started it off with some of our favourites in the office, but we'd love for you to be involved in its evolution. So please submit drawings at architectural-review.com/folio



Top row:
 Mathew Borrett (2003)
 Iakov Chernikhov (1933)
 John Bicknell and Paul Hamilton (1964)
 Middle row:
 Mario Chiattoni (1914) McNab
 Gage Potts
 Pollock (1967)
 Peter Cook (2010)
 Bottom row:
 James Wines (1981) Charlotte
 Baker (2009)
 Zaha Hadid (1982-3)

A tribute to light

Elliott Erwitt, 2011



Carlotta de Bevilacqua - Paolo Dell'Elce: Copernico

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