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^liverpool crescent house

architects

Terroir

photography

Ray Joyce

text

Jeff Malpas

architect's statement

Externally this house is a blunt cube in the landscape, an uncanny one that contains a contrastingly intimate interior. This play is repeated in the spatial concept. What appear at first to be interiors are continually externalised, through, for example, the use of materials and floor-to-ceiling glazing that at its openings creates a vertiginous relation to the exterior.

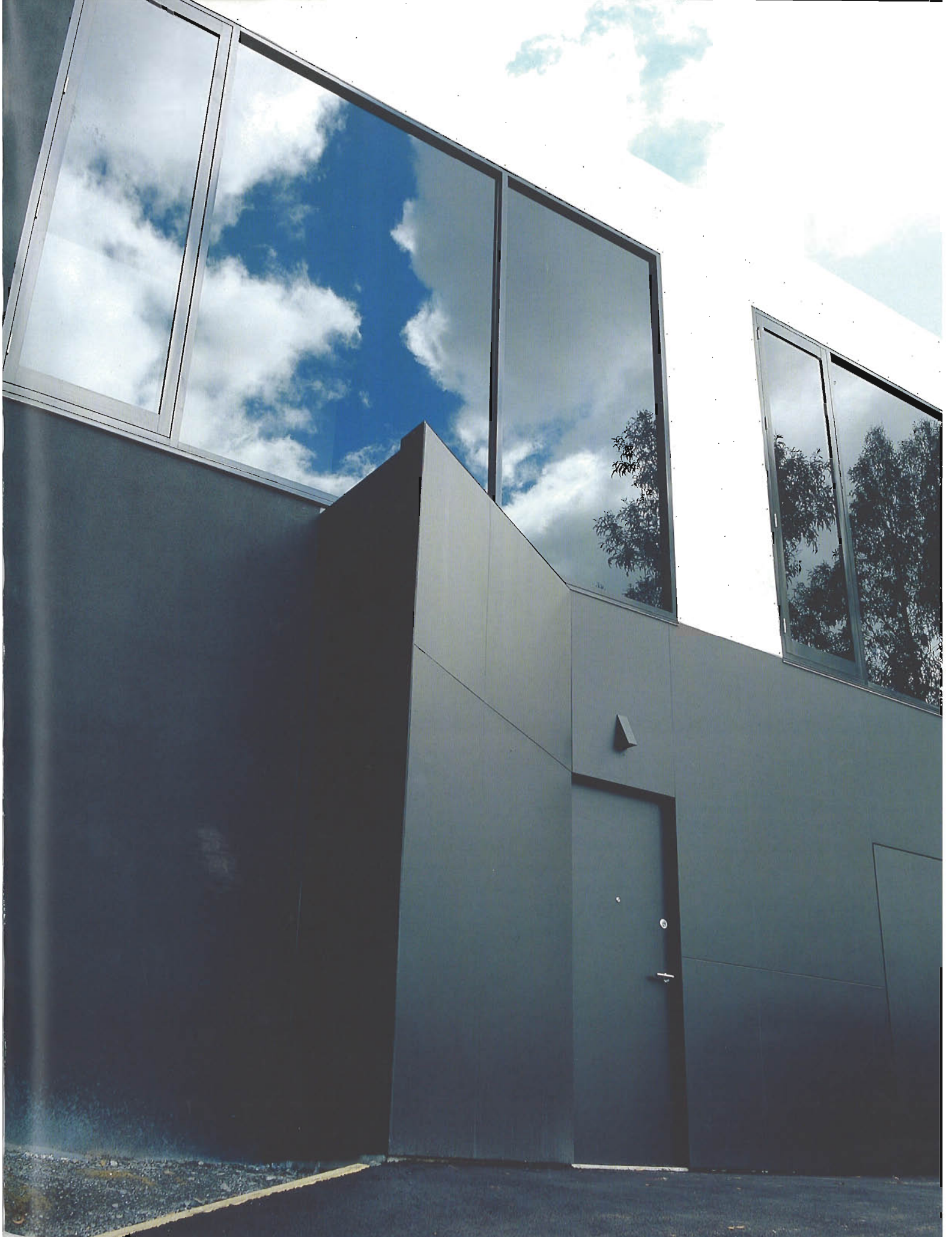
These public spaces of the house were conceived as plateaus. They are compressed around the more private functions – toilet, bathroom, bedroom etc. – that occupy the solid centre of the house and that push up from the base. This core is understood conceptually as having been carved from the massy substance of the site, an idea that is reinforced in the colour scheme, and provides a counterpoint to the public plateaus of the interior and their colours. The core folds out into the landscape in a suntrap courtyard connecting the spatial sequence of the house with the slope of the site.

The courtyard and vertiginous windows suggest, conceptually, another level of folding outwards and interconnection with the greater landscape. In this sense the play of interior/exterior is extended to take in the valley and the hill.

This is a new architectural direction for Terroir, a new way of engaging with site and landscape through the compression of cubic spaces, which distinguishes this project from other Terroir projects in which the line plays a dominant role in spatial distributions.

This house can be understood then as a play of doubles – blunt/intimate, interior/exterior, carved space/plateau – in which the experiential qualities of house, of home, of inside and landscape are folded together in a powerful expression of place.







04



from the line to the cube – terroir at liverpool crescent

Liverpool Crescent is an awkwardly located street that runs high up along the steeply sloping northern slope of a wide valley to the west of the Hobart CBD. Here, in a somewhat incongruous setting (further along the road is a white-painted, crenellated, castle-style home, while next door is a traditional weatherboard house with verandah), Terroir has designed what is surely one of its more visually striking buildings – an enigmatic cube in charcoal and white that stares out from among the trees and across the valley to the Derwent River beyond. The front of the building is a single flat vertical plane of which the dark-tinted windows are themselves part, and into which even the large door of the double garage is neatly integrated. The main entry is from the front of the building at the base, and it leads one directly upward, along a more or less enclosed, but nevertheless well-lit, corridor and stairway, into the main part of the house on the floor above. One emerges from the lower level facing in the direction of the full-length windows that look out onto the building's rear courtyard, and immediately there is a sense of the building itself opening out. To the left are the private spaces of the house, the bedrooms and bathroom, while to the right, and also to the front and back, are the public spaces, dining area, kitchen, living room, office space and so forth. Each of

these spaces has something of the same cubic feel that is evident in the house's exterior presentation, and the overall impression is of a series of cubic or rectilinear spaces set alongside, and sometimes almost intersecting with, one another, and all of which are held within the single rectilinear form of the building as well. As a result, the overall design brings with it a very strong sense of spatial integration (the image that comes to mind is of a single cabinet containing multiple and varied compartments) – an integration that extends to encompass the exterior as well as interior spaces of the building and its surroundings. This is achieved partly through the way in which the full-length windows (which enable magnificent land and water views to the south and east) are constituted as simple transparencies in the building's skin, as well as through the use of light shafts that bring external light into the heart of the building in the stairway and the bathroom, and through the way in which the intersection of internal spaces, made evident through cut-out sections of wall that disturb the usual discrete arrangement of rooms, also extends to the space beyond the external walls. This means that in the bedrooms, windows appear as simply cut-out sections of wall analogous to the cut-out sections that also appear internally (the external space of the building thus appears as another



05



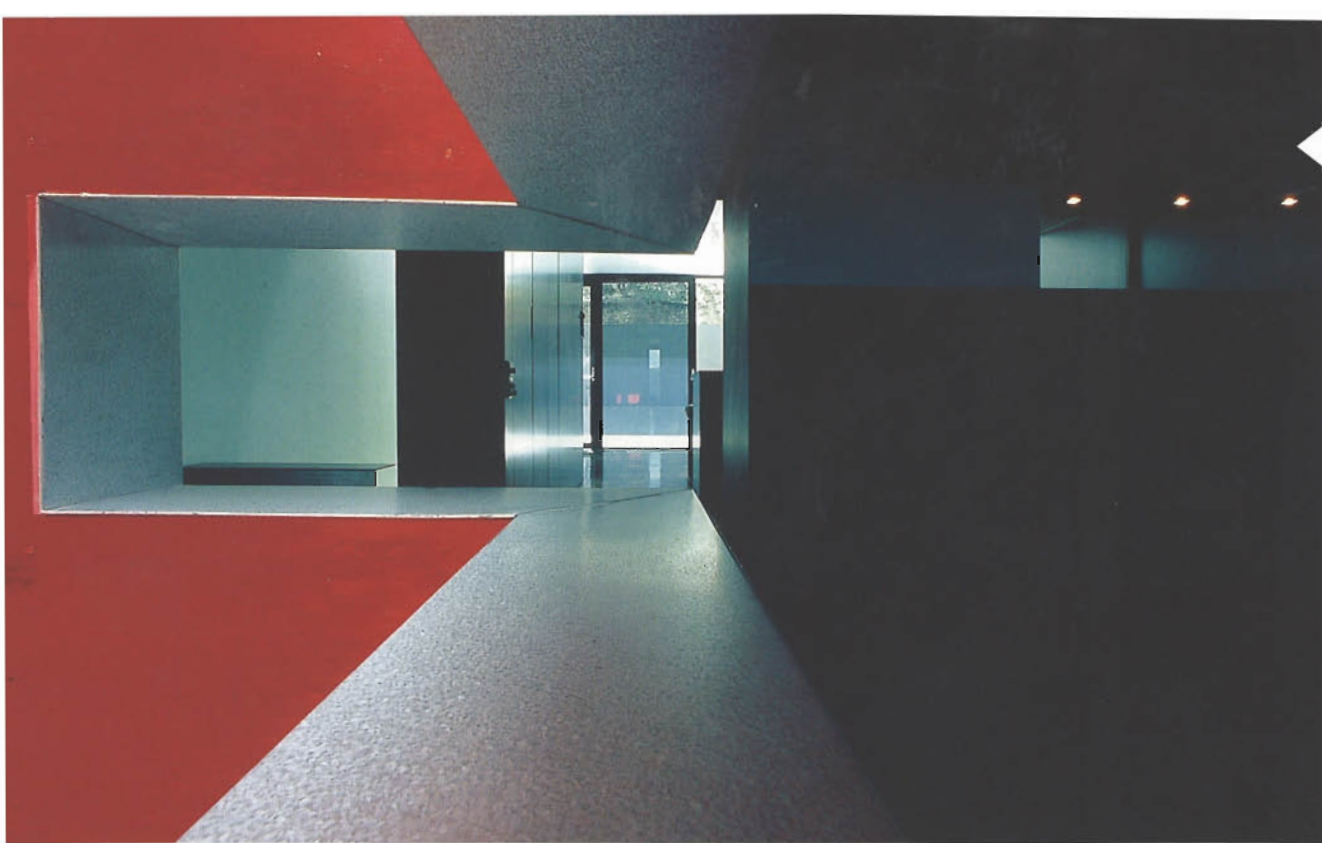
06

of the spaces with which the cubic forms of the rooms, and the house, appear to intersect and overlap).

Here what also becomes evident is the appearance of the building as constituted entirely through the intersection of a series of vertical and horizontal planes, and consequently the walls of the building draw attention to themselves purely in their function as demarcating sections of space – as the skin that gives materiality to the rectilinear structure of the building. The preceding statement from Terroir describes the project as a new direction for the firm, a project in which the line no longer plays the dominant role in spatial distribution. The line is not absent here, however, but rather is used and configured in a different way that is itself determined by the specific requirements of the site. As deployed in other Terroir projects such as Peppermint Bay, the line determines the primary axis of the site horizontally – the line moves from the front of the site to a specific point within the site, and in so doing establishes a curving pathway along which the main elements of the building are organised. There is no possibility of such a horizontally linear arrangement here – the steepness of the slope alone rules this out – but the line remains, firstly in the straight movement from the front of the

building to the rear by means of the stairway (a line that begins in a small and enclosed space at the front and bottom of the house, and emerges into a cleared space at the centre that looks out to the open courtyard at the rear – the line thus ‘performs’ an opening up of the house and of the spaces it contains and also enables) and, secondly, in the form of the vertical axis that is given in the upright manner of the building’s square situation on its site and around which all of its spaces are gathered.

Of course, the cubic form that is such a key element in this project is itself present in some of Terroir’s previous designs (including some of the earliest, from 2000, at Tranmere and Longley), but nowhere else does it appear in quite the same consistent and self-evident fashion as it does here. Rather than constituting an entirely new direction for Terroir, then, I would rather say that this house in Liverpool Crescent exemplifies Terroir’s creative engagement with its own forms and techniques through creative engagement with the specificities of a project and a site.



07

01. This uncompromising cube, apparently impervious to the surrounding bush, belies an embrace of the landscape from within.

02. The building occupies a steep site overlooking a wide valley to the west of Hobart.

03. An inscrutably sealed front elevation resists the vernacular clichés of 'the house in nature'.

04. The room meets the outside, as a plateau exposed to the full expanse of the valley beyond.

05. A light slot in the cube's roof illuminates and orientates one of the more public spaces, which opens out to a sun trap courtyard at the rear.

06. The theatre of arrival is carefully staged, from the tightly contained threshold, to release at the 'landing'.

07. Enclosure is ruptured by precise excisions, both of the cube's shelf-like exterior and here, its internal divisions.

08. The scenography of context is vividly articulated

09. From the top of the stairs looking through the building to the front.

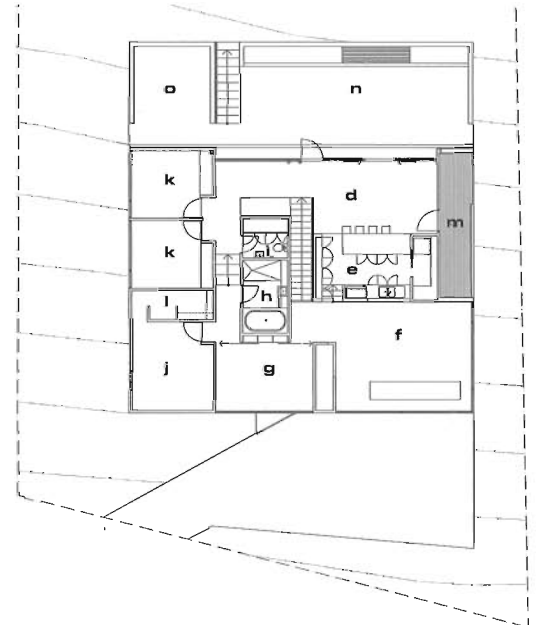
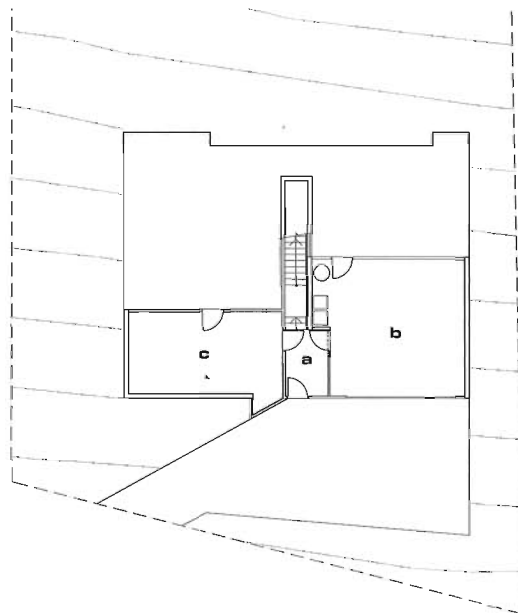


08



legend.

- a. entry
- b. garage
- c. store room
- d. dining room
- e. kitchen
- f. living room
- g. study
- h. bathroom
- i. toilet
- j. master bedroom
- k. bedroom
- l. walk in robe
- m. deck
- n. courtyard
- o. service courtyard



liverpool crescent house

principal architect Terroir Pty Ltd **project team** Gerard Reinmuth, Richard Blythe, Scott Balmforth, Paul Sayers, Sophie Bence, Nic Fabrizio, Sam Nichols **consultants: engineer** Gandy & Roberts Pty Ltd **builder** Cordwell Lane Building Pty Ltd **size** 246sqm **time to complete construction** 10 months **council** Hobart City Council **design software used** AutoCAD **materials: walls** blockwork – hardwood timber stud framing **wall linings** Zinalume flat sheet, compressed cement sheet cladding Zinalume flat sheet, compressed cement sheet **roof** Lysaght Trimdek Zinalume guttering fabricated Zinalume **paint** Dulux Tuscany Acratex with semi gloss paint finish **windows** Capral, St Lucia Series 'Charcoal Metallic Pearl'; Capral, 400 Narrowline Series 'Charcoal Metallic Pearl' **doors** Capral, St Lucia Series 'Charcoal Metallic Pearl' **glazing** Pilkington **hardware** Lockwood by Access Hardware **heating/cooling systems** Daiken heat pump and Nobo panel heaters by Wright Refrigeration **other** custom twin wall polycarbonate skylights by Statewide Skylights **interior materials: ceiling** Zinalume flat sheet, plasterboard **internal walls** Zinalume flat sheet, compressed cement sheet, plasterboard, plywood with Interior Woodstain 'Red' (Tasmanian Paints Pty Ltd) and Clear Satin Sealant **paint** Dulux Tuscany Acratex with semi gloss paint finish **glass** Pilkington **lighting** Casa Monde **flooring** Godfrey Hirst Carpet by Carpet Company, plywood with Interior Woodstain 'Ebony' (Tasmanian Paints Pty Ltd) and polyurethane, concrete with Sealwell 800 clear sealant (Maintenance Systems) **joinery** Laminex laminate, plywood veneer with 'Ebony' Interior Woodstain (Tasmanian Paints Pty Ltd) and 2-Pac clear gloss finish by A & J Joinery **furniture** Featherston Interiors **fittings and fixtures** Caroma, Scala, Mizu **hardware** Lockwood by Access Hardware **other** Custom Balustrade and Handrail MS plate with clear finish