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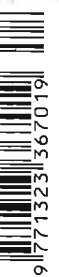
innovative

creative

non-standard

space

Architectural Review Australia 087



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Contents087

012 Editorial, Letters, Book review
014
016

018-025 National and International news

Edited by Andrew Mackenzie
and Sharmila Sandrasegar

028-050 **The space of innovation**

028 Non Standard Architectures

Dale Jones-Evans, Andrew Benjamin

038 Business as unusual, Sydney Esquisse

Martin Kornberger

044 The Snow Show

Mark Rappolt

048 The World Creative Forum

Mark Rappolt

052 **Between the lines. TarraWarra**

Andrew Mackenzie

Allan Powell Architects. Interview with Maudie Palmer

064 **Peppermint Bay**

Leon van Schaik

TERROIR

072 **Mackay Artspace**

Paula Whitman

Cox Rayner Architects

078 **Profile**

Richard Hassell

WOHA. Three Singapore projects

Anoma Pieris

088 **Versatility with flatness**

Julian Raxworthy

Paterson + Pettus/EDAW

097 **ESD. Kogarah Town Hall**

Lindsay Johnston

104 **Eco-Innovation**

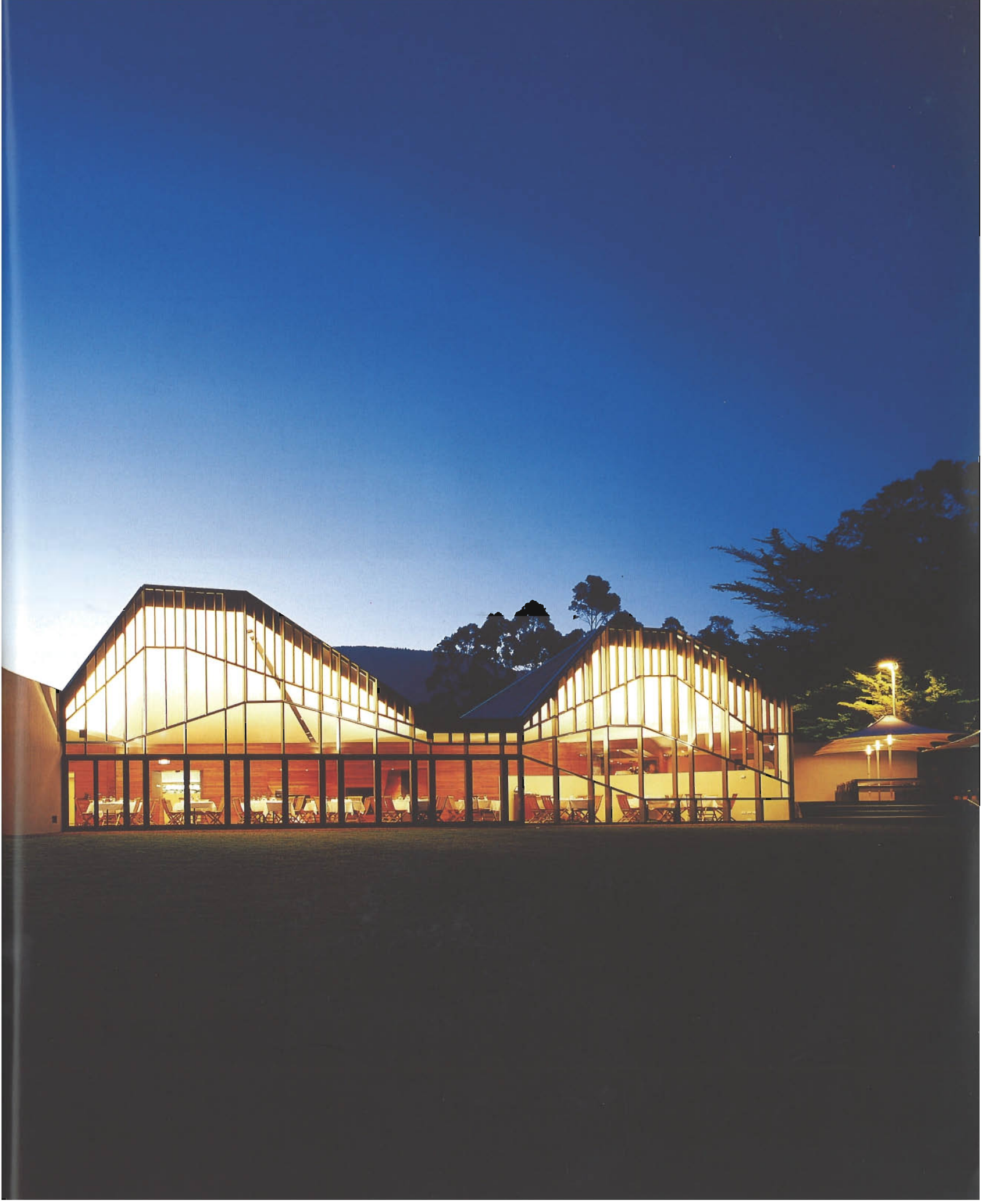
Andrew Walker-Morison



Peppermint Bay.

064

Architect. **TERROIR**
Text. **Leon van Schaik**
Photography. **Brett Boardman**





Architects' statement. This project continues TERROIR's exploration of the potential for architecture to provide thresholds between physical, cultural and psychological realms (after Bachelard) via the parallel conception of architecture as landscape. Further development of key formal techniques utilised by the practice – line, labyrinth, poche and 'the galvanised object' – provide a means for this exploration.

Peppermint Bay provides a threshold between visitors and the produce, producers and landscape of the Huon and Channel region, south of Hobart. The winding journey to the peninsula (via car or ferry) is continued at the site in a labyrinthine path that provides a specific circuit through the emerging garden, culminating at an existing oak tree. In addition to its function as path, this line provides a template for the building and for further development of the site and garden over time.

The building is conceived as a singular but complex threshold zone, the form and extent of which resulted from the linear mapping of the site. Further mapping of circuits within the building results in a series of spaces related to their specific site location and outlook. This merging and widening of the lines to make surfaces and spaces – the folding of the striated space into smooth space – fuses the lines into and with the surface of the site such that, conceptually, they become inseparable from the greater landscape.

An elongated entry space connecting carpark and garden provides glimpses to the kitchen, bar and restaurant spaces beyond, without the need to engage directly with these activities. One side of the path is described by a timber container harbouring entry points to the public areas and which provides for a series of poche spaces for services and stores.

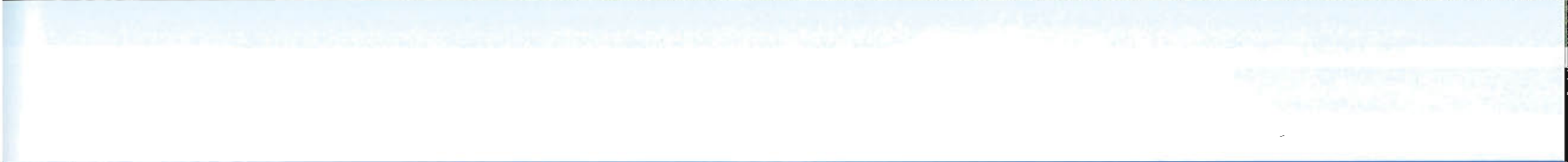
The public spaces beyond the wall are divided into three key zones, each of which has a precise relationship to the landscape. The bar hovers atop a steepening in the cliff to provide connection with the water below, the restaurant concentrates the view across the bay to the horizon, while the function area gathers itself opposite the oak tree at the termination of the labyrinthine route.

A grey metal landscape results from the gathering of all roof and wall elements, exhausts, and entry and exit sequences into a singular 'galvanised object'. The front of the object provides a yawning aperture between the public spaces and view and is elevated in response to the form of the peninsula beyond.

1, 2 & 3. A stretched 'z' circulation, analogous to the winding route through the peninsular landscape, provides access to the three principle public spaces, kitchen servery and shop.

4. Slim oblique forms 'galvanised' by a cloak of slate grey continues TERROIR's exploration of architecture as landscape.

5. An extended sloping roofline at the entrance suggests the unfolding drama to come.



A new generation of architects are pushing on the doors of mastery and asserting that they have crossed the threshold into creative innovation – making works that change the way we think about what is possible in architecture. Taine argued that creative periods are marked by the emergence of a prevailing creative type. Martyn Hook, one of such a triumvirate – Iredale, Pedersen and Hook, has suggested that threesomes are leading the way in the new research-led practice in Australia. Others include BKK in Melbourne, Miramar in Sydney and M3 in Brisbane. Without becoming entirely hostage to this idea, the fact is that most of these threesomes do have a member who is embedded in an academy, a member who is embedded in construction, and a member who is a spokesperson. TERROIR, with Richard Blythe in Launceston, Scott Balmforth in Hobart and Gerard Reinmuth in Sydney, is just so structured. And in Peppermint Bay they make their debut in the public realm – their previous work having consisted of houses and alterations and additions.

In this building their mastery is readily apparent. The program is simply arrayed around a stretched 'z' line that is the founding diagram of the design, a ramp that emphasises a cut across the site, linking arrival and departure by road and by sea. Three public spaces – bar, 80-seat restaurant and 100-seat function room – fan out towards the view along a coastal fringe of lawn. Each is united with its own external realm, the bar at the higher contour at road end with an external hard paved area and a view directly back up the estuary; the restaurant with a lawn fringed with trees and glimpses of water beyond; and the function room with the undercroft of a mature oak tree. The 'z' itself is a wide corridor that channels people effectively into each of these spaces, from the carpark on one side, and from the boat pier via the water race and herb wall on the other. It also divides a shop, an industrial kitchen capable of serving 400 or taking on jam production when local fruit is in glut, and the main toilets from the public areas. This is a direct and effective diagram (they acknowledge Stephen Holl's influence here) that is then made manifest in a novel structural solution. This is an advance on Gaudi's hyperbolic roof design of the school of the Sagrada Familia (also tried recently by Greg Burgess at RMIT Bundoora) in which roof purlins – in effect – are supported centrally and arranged in alternating waves at the eaves. This gives a minimal structural thickness and lateral stability almost like a shell. Here the shape of the 'z' enables the creation of three large humped shell waves over the public spaces and two crimped tall waves over the kitchens, housing vents and plant. It is one of those natural, serendipitous solutions that resolve form and function and that dawn on you, rather than being forced on you as evidence of architectural dexterity. The humps over the three public spaces are sliced off and glazed with a pattern of bars, increasing towards the top, that reduces glare inside, and from outside resonates with the tree patterns on the hills beyond. There is something of Aalto in this, though he did not use this mode exactly, and TERROIR do not list him as an influence. In this zone of speculation they talk of Francis Bacon's concept of the garden (1680) segueing from 'lawn to pleasure garden to constructed wilderness and beyond'. Certainly the existing oak tree creates a dense unity with the function room – where the shell swells in height to match itself to the profile of the

tree, forcing contemplation of man-nature divides, but also coupling two exotics – one plant the other person – with the nature of wilderness on an island largely given over to that label. There are a number of wry comments about the picturesque here, a steel trough along a slightly outwardly inclined steel wall houses a long line of herbs. A zigzag water trough slides under the verdant oak tree, striking light into its deep shade – in another reference not explicitly made by TERROIR, an inversion of Barragan's troughs on arid dust under gum trees. The containment of the natural seems to be the trope. They are amused that the locals keep sneaking flathead into this salmon race. Wilderness is there by virtue of its utter exclusion.

On the other side of the 'z', in what I see as their second zone of speculation, there is an air, TERROIR acknowledge, of almost Hugo Haring agricultural expressionism. Here, shielded by a retaining wall from the village green behind the complex, a deeply capacious shed is created in what amounts to a lean to – but is in fact a flattened zone of beams. Mesh walls and gates house all the paraphernalia that usually litters the interstices of less well provided for buildings, more constrained by their need to be conventionally light of touch, as required by the conventions of the Sydney School, the school that dominates thinking about building in wild terrain. TERROIR seemed initially uncomfortable with this farmyard side. And yet this is one of the signs of a robust new approach to the business of staging entertainments, this generous workyard that so comprehensively engages with the reality of what needs to be done and how it is always somewhat messily and sporadically done.

It is in the third zone of their speculation that this becomes very evident. Here I see them striving for something very important, something that would indeed alter perceptions. However, I am not sure that they are there yet. TERROIR talk of the 'z' as a fractal compression of the journey to the site by water or by road, and I think that the way in which people slide across the complex makes this a justifiable claim. But the arrival by road is through a terrain that is not at all present in the first two zones of speculation. You arrive onto a large tarmac carpark, from which you see back framed by a fringe of existing cypress trees on one side, and the facade on the other, a bald view up the Derwent. Unashamedly a plane of tar and a plane of water are juxtaposed. This is Roadhouse aesthetic, but it is unremarked, as if a simple, inevitable given. This blank utility continues. The entrance facade is a simple domestic scale wall (flat topped thanks to the ingenious structure that unfolds beyond) with kerb and triangular planter, at right angles to the view. Centrally it has a chimney and two pencil cedars have been planted either side. Chromed letters – slightly overscaled for a residence – announce 'Peppermint Bay'. Glass sliding doors, flush with this wall, are marked by a sandwich board on the kerb. Were it not that this too is unremarked, I would have assumed that this was a loving replica of a Sunset Strip facade from Ed Ruscha's eponymous photo book from the 1960s. Unsettling this concept – as if in a contrasting homage to Virilio (who is also not mentioned, though he rather than Deleuze owns this concept – a grey inclined plane that roofs the shed behind juts out into the tarmac, partially obscuring the entry doors, and then strongly vectoring towards them. What can be going on? This is not Venturi and Scott Browne learning from Las Vegas, there is no aestheticising super graphic in what has been



assembled here. TERROIR are anguished by the lettering, it is not of their choosing. Yet it plays into their hands. If you think back over the road journey from Hobart, there have been numbers of skillion-roofed, 'moderne' houses of various ambitions and in varying states of repair located in the most awkward of positions in this seemingly pastoral landscape. As if ill at ease. The collage of elements on this face of the building suggest that TERROIR are working with the dirty realism that Ed Ruscha – who also photographed carparks – turned into art. Are they trying to master that? Is the ugliness an initial perception of a new beauty that reflects what has been done unselfconsciously by owner builders all over the island?

Is this triple-sided assemblage of such differing concerns, so differently resolved, an unselfconscious collage of several masteries, or is it a deliberate concatenation of these different forces, giving rise to a new way of seeing what architecture can do in these specific circumstances? That I am uncertain is either an indication that they have not resolved this yet, or that they have resolved it in a manner that I do not yet appreciate. I do want to think that the uncertainty here signals – as Mark Cousins argues – “the unfolding of a beauty whose form as a totality is all the more triumphant for having overcome the resistance to itself in its moments of ugliness.”

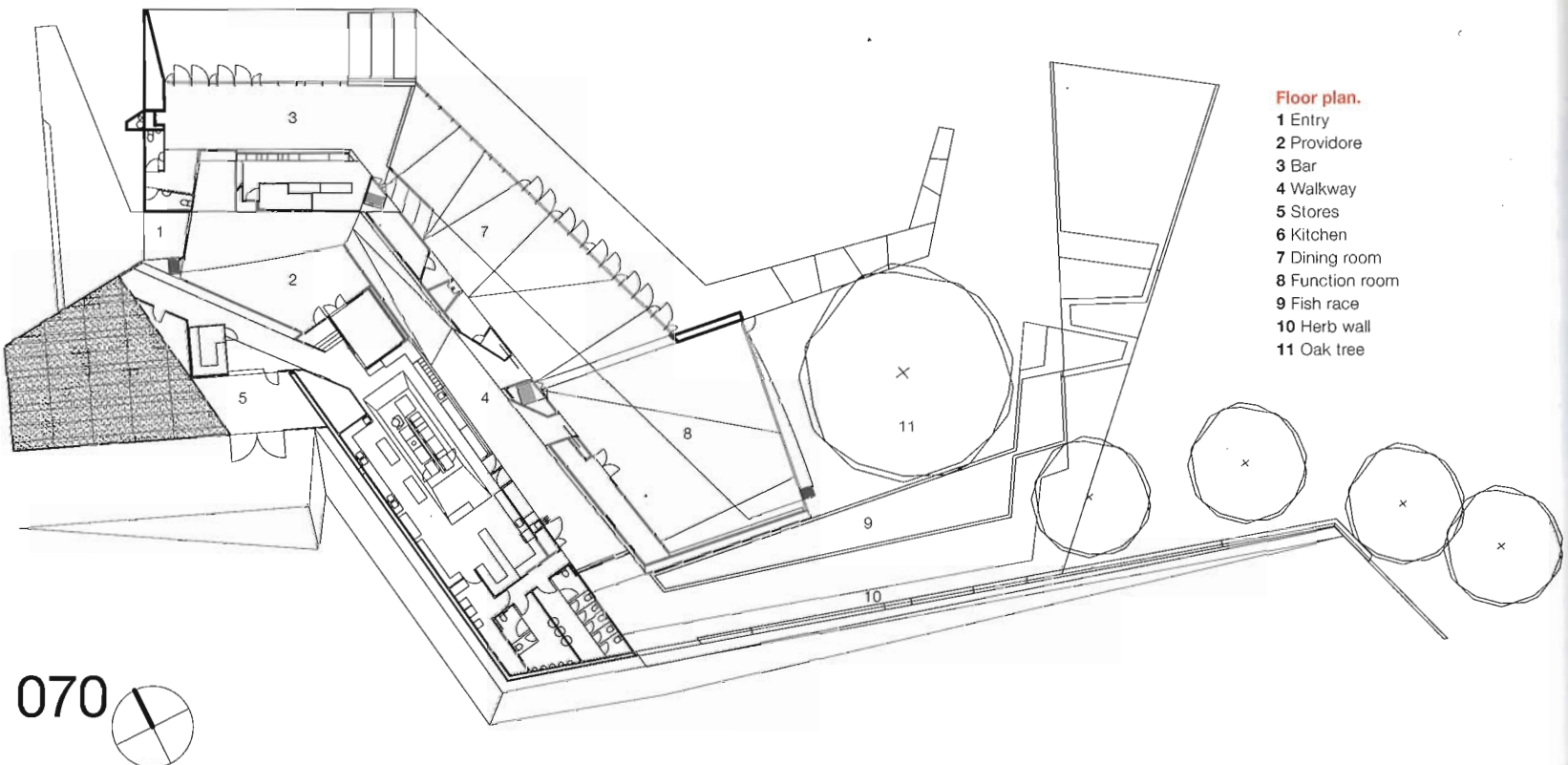
Given the selection of the three zones of speculation and given the central diagrammatic force of the fractal 'z' – which I have seen at work in a modest but effective dwelling on the outskirts of Hobart

– and given the artful ease of the structure that combines them, I would punt that TERROIR are indeed nudging into the kinds of innovation that make us wonder about the reality of our situation here. Even so, there is a need for reverse mentoring of this work, so evidently aligned with Aalto and Haring, Ruscha and Venturi. TERROIR are in a closer alignment with the architects Corrigan and Lyon – whose work is expressly linked to those aforementioned creative innovators – than they are to the 'light touch' Sydney school, in which they were initially schooled. Their growing critical awareness of the arguments they so fruitfully pick is vital if they are indeed to transcend the mastery they currently, if uncertainly in zone three, demonstrate.

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Principal architect/s TERROIR Pty Ltd **Project team** Gerard Reinmuth, Richard Blythe, Scott Balmforth, Sarah Benton, April Krause, Daniel Lane, Paul Sayers, Rolf Svendsen, **Project manager/s** TERROIR Pty Ltd **Consultants** **Engineer** Structural, Civil, Hydraulic – Gandy and Roberts Pty Ltd; Mechanical – Ian Loney **Quantity surveyor** Davis Langdon Australia **Builder** Fairbrother Pty Ltd **Landscape architect** TERROIR Pty Ltd **Sub-contractors** Electrical – Advanced Electrical; Mechanical – Degree C; Plumbing – Southern Plumbing; Glazing – Voss Glazing; Painting – Starr and Bewsher; Steelwork – Crisp Bros. **Size** 1050sq.m **Time to complete** Design/documentation – 12 months; Construction – 5 months **Council** Kingborough **Client** Peppermint Bay Pty Ltd **Materials** **Walls** Steel frame **Wall linings** Trimdek Colorbond slate grey compressed sheet (paint finish) **Cladding** Trimdek Colorbond Slate Grey/Compressed cement sheet **Roof** Trimdek Hi-Ten Colorbond slate grey **Guttering** Fabricated Zinalume **Paint** To match Colorbond slate grey **Paving** Compressed gravel **Windows** Powdercoated aluminium **Doors** Powdercoated aluminium/Glass-Stax by Lotus **Glazing** Clear glazing **Signage** Aluminium/vinyl cut lettering by Signfast **Heating/cooling systems** Electric in-slab and under-carpet heating **Interior materials** **Ceiling** Plasterboard/Custom slotted MDF **Internal walls** Plasterboard/Tasmanian Oak tongue and groove boards **Paint** Dulux 'Berkshire White'/Dulux 'Antique White USA' **Lighting** Custom in association with Advanced Electrical **Flooring** Polished concrete by Maintenance Systems/Carpet and vinyl by Carpet Company **Joinery** Fairbrother/Kingston Joinery **Fittings & fixtures** Caroma bathroom ware and tapware **Hardware** Lockwood by Gunns Architectural Hardware **Doors** Operable walls by Lotus.





8. Folded planes of Tasmanian Oak segue walkway into restaurant and function room and contain a variety of storage and service 'poche' spaces.
9. A subtle resolution of form and function, these smaller and tighter wave forms provide ventilation and plant over the kitchens.
10. The layering of the constructed and the natural continues into a long fish race.