



Learning Curve

**Wood Marsh have created
a bold new identity for
Deakin University**



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Gabriel Poole | Ian Moore | Field Consultants | Carlos Zapata
Craig Rosevear | Allen Jack & Cottier | Robin Boyd

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Cover / Deakin University Burwood Campus, Burwood Victoria. Architect / Wood Marsh. Photography by Tim Griffith.

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● **Tasmania can be a tough place** to practice architecture. A small population, a slow economy that tends to reduce the level of patronage, limited opportunities within the profession to exchange and debate ideas: these all impact heavily on local practitioners. It is therefore no surprise that many choose to leave the state to pursue their careers elsewhere. The University of Tasmania's recent politically motivated funding decision to close the school of architecture in Hobart is indicative of the struggle that local practitioners face.

Despite these difficulties, a number of new voices are set to emerge from the local milieu, combining in their work an acute understanding of Tasmania's landscape, culture, climate and construction practices with a desire to participate in the international architectural community. The Robert Gough House, by architect Craig Rosevear, is a project that demonstrates both this local knowledge and international outlook.

Although Rosevear is a relatively new name to the profession outside Tasmania, a knowledge of his career and development thus far make the execution of the Gough House appear inevitable. While at university, Rosevear gained first place in the inaugural National CMAA Concrete Masonry Competition, while his final design thesis won second place in an open international competition for a new primary school in Birmingham, England. These early successes were reinforced by a rigorous post-graduate apprenticeship to architect Michael Viney, whose cool-climate rationalist intellect is unusual among Australian architects. Viney's work consists of a series of unashamedly imposing built interventions that attempt to engage with the powerful Tasmanian landscape. Architecturally, Viney combines influences as diverse as the omnipresent Le Corbusier, traditional Japanese architecture, Isosaki, Rossi, and the architects of the Ticino school, who, like both Viney and Rosevear, attempt to explain their local circumstance within an 'international' language. Unfortunately for Australian architecture, Viney and his impressive oeuvre remain relatively unknown outside their state of origin.

Robert Gough was introduced to Rosevear while he was contemplating a move to private practice. Gough is a young client, and as such harbours an experimental spirit rarely found in conservative 'old money' patrons. He had purchased a relatively cheap but spectacular strip of sand dunes that overlook Storm Bay at the mouth of the Derwent River, situated at Clifton Beach on the eastern shore of Hobart some thirty minutes south of the city centre. Rosevear describes Gough's brief as minimalist – open plan living with views from all major spaces, and a large covered outdoor space for the storage and maintenance of surfing equipment.

Gough also showed an interest in structurally expressive buildings, which coincided neatly with Rosevear's interest in engineering, matured through his association with legendary Hobart engineer Jim Gandy. An exceptional site, daring client, and the importance of this project to Rosevear's new practice guaranteed an arresting result.

The Robert Gough House / Clifton Beach, Tasmania
Architect / Craig Rosevear

Beyond parochial boundaries

Craig Rosevear's Gough House speaks of a desire to make a contribution to architecture that has relevance beyond his home state of Tasmania

Review by Gerard Reinmuth
Photography by Leigh Woolley



The house is sited between the dunes to minimise the view of the house from both the beach and the flatland behind.



Rosevear's rationalist training is immediately apparent in the conceptual strategy underpinning the project – an elevated bridge structure that establishes a spatial link between the exposed beach frontage at Storm Bay and the sheltered flatland of Pipe Clay Lagoon to the rear. This response to perceived 'lines of force' in the landscape is a reminder of Rosevear's apprenticeship to Viney, whose work is similarly concerned with its place in the greater context. Three of Rosevear's architectural heroes (Craig Ellwood, Charles Eames and Mies van der Rohe) have all designed unrealised projects for a 'trussed-bridge' house, and Gough's brief provided an opportunity for Rosevear to realise his own version. The design approach was further validated by an independent environmental impact statement that recommended the house be elevated to minimise disturbance to the fragile coastal landscape and that it be sited between the dunes to minimise the view of the house from both the beach and the flatland behind.

The structural system used in the building demonstrates a synthesis of the architectural idea with local construction practices, site conditions and, importantly, budget. A steel solution was chosen due to cost considerations, with the frame exposed due to the formal possibilities it presented. Whilst the open structure is susceptible to corrosion, Rosevear counters this with the argument that an exposed frame is easier to monitor, allowing any corrosion to be identified and remediated. The original idea of 'house-as-truss' was further modified by the need to erect the building without on-site welding. This would have broken down the galvanised coating, and further, the small size of local galvanising baths were unable to accommodate a large welded truss. A modular system resulted, composed of elements that could be individually galvanised, carried onto site and manually erected and bolted into place over a short (four day) period. The final system uses thicker elements than if a welded truss were used, however Rosevear preferred both the slightly muscular aesthetic and the detailing opportunities presented by the bolted connections.

The tight, densely vegetated vehicular approach from the flatlands admits no view of the house. Only on arrival can one glimpse it perched dramatically above the dunes. The last fifty metres of the journey is completed on foot, walking up the rear sand dune to the lower level entry door which masks much of the view to the bay. The compression of this journey is followed by an explosion of space as one reaches the top of the entry stair, which as a sequence owes much to the drama of Viney's circulation routes

and to the primary reference for both architects, Corbusier's *promenade architecturale*. The expansion of space at the upper platform is powerful. Like a giant spatial telescope, the upper room appears to suck the entire coastal view into the house, an experience attenuated by the extension of the floor and ceiling planes beyond the building envelope to form covered decks that further draw the external world into the room. Rosevear first observed this spatial technique at use in Viney's work - a technique which Viney in turn absorbed from his studies of traditional Japanese architecture.

Unfortunately, there is little subtlety to counterbalance the powerful spatial experience, with both side elevations composed of clear glass sheets broken into 1200mm modules with a single panel of celery top pine boarding employed for privacy where required. The east/west orientation of the long glazed elevations also raises concern for the thermal comfort inside the house, although the architect and client decided that unprotected glazing to the rising sun was desirable, while the existing vegetation to the west was considered adequate protection.

The planning is rigorously classical, and refers in particular to the 'kitchen wing of Glenn Murcutt's Kempsey House, which Rosevear has visited. The single bedroom at the rear overlooks the pedestrian approach, but is visually shielded from it by the extended deck area. The bed (also designed by Rosevear) is a steel structure bracketed off the core wall and cantilevered toward the centre of the room, and is therefore subject to the deflection and movement that occurs in the primary structure in strong weather. A fundamental request from the client was to be shielded from the external environment as little as possible, as the ability to retain a sense of camping on the site would complement his vigorous outdoor lifestyle. This comment on the character of the client is a critical factor in the assessment of this project. While the building may be viewed as a simplistic 'modernist' response, that it responds with sensitivity to the client's brief and character is difficult to challenge. Most importantly, the Gough House makes a significant contribution to architectural debate in a small city, and challenges others to respond in built form. While Rosevear is firmly rooted in Hobart, this project speaks of his desire to make a contribution to architecture beyond his home state. Whether he will receive opportunities to stray further afield remains to be seen.

Gerard Reinmuth is a graduate architect who recently moved to Sydney, and works for Denton Corker Marshall.

His honours thesis *Heffermann, Nation, Ross, Viney* is the only major study of recent Tasmanian architecture.

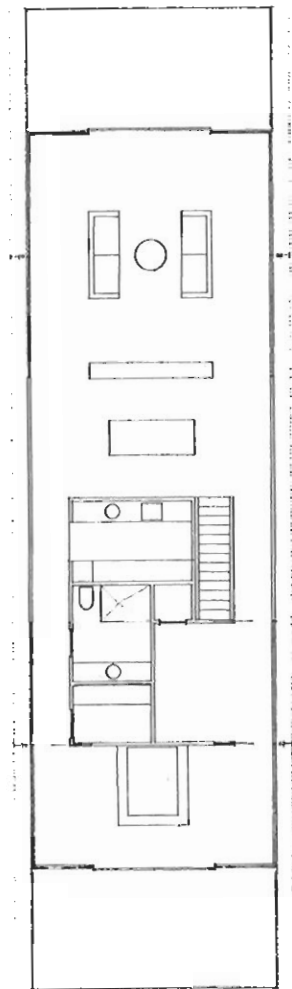
Project Summary Robert Gough House, Clifton Beach, Tasmania. **Architect** Craig Rosevear. **Collaborator** Michael Moss, Architectural Design and Drafting. **Structure** Jim Gandy, Gandy and Roberts. **Consulting Engineers:** **Bulldozer** David Conner and Stuart Hamilton. **Size** Internal, 190 sq. m; decks, 80 sq. m. **Roof** Light Colorbond Spandek. **Structure** Galvanised steel, BHP. **Cladding and Decking** Jointed celery top, Sikaflex. **Soffit** Hardies Millboard. **Handrails** 25 square stainless steel tube, Grant Fletcher. **Glazing** 6.36 and 8.76 sound laminated glass and Huntingdale suite clear anodised aluminium doors and windows. **Interior Wall Linings** 12 mm mdf. **Ceiling** 13mm plasterboard. **Floor** Feltex carpet, Colouredust Storm. **Floor Covering House Tiles** Winklemans 100mm sq. **Tapware** Acton. **Sanitary Ware** Saroma. **Joinery** Imperite coated and European Beech veneered mdf, Kam joinery. **Furniture** Craig Rosevear and Robert Gough; stainless steel, Grant Fletcher; upholstery, Mark Caswell.

The floor and ceiling planes are extended beyond the building envelope to form covered decks.

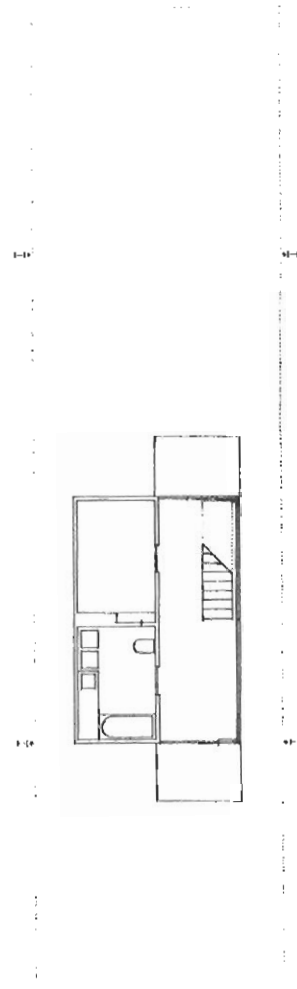


The view from the living space is like a giant spatial telescope.

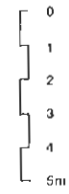




Upper floor plan



Entry level floor plan



The key intent of both client and architect was to represent and physically register the quality of this coastal landscape and siting in built form

The bed is a steel structure bracketed off the core wall and cantilevered toward the centre of the room.



View towards the kitchen.

