



Coast Lines

A deceptively simple shell conceals a tactile beachside residence



Book Review

New Releases 16

A selection of new Australian and international architectural titles.

New Living Models 18

A contemporary review of fifteen of Craig Ellwood's most significant residential works.
Review by Craig Bremner

Competition Review 20

The competition to redesign New York's Times Square ticket booths and surrounds won by two Australians. *Interview by Helen Kaiser*

Conference Review

CityEdge 32

Australia's first international urban design conference reviewed.
Review by Esther Charlesworth

Industry Review

Enrique Norton 24

How is bringing this award-winning Mexican architect to Australia for Interior Designex.
Preview by Ewan McEoin

Postcard from London 28

London colours its millennium celebrations with art and light. *Text by Leon van Schaik*

Queen Street canopy 36

A look at the controversial new central structure in Brisbane's heart.
Review by Michael Keniger

Chinatown's flying saucers 38

'Artitecture' soars above Old Sydney Haymarket. *Review by Tony Caro*

Archive/Unbuilt Innovation 40

Examining the development of design duo Innovarchi, through a selection of unbuilt projects. *Review by Helen Norrie*

Work in Progress/Xiamen City Square & Park, China 44

Brearley Middleton tackle cross-cultural issues in the realisation of this urban park.
Review by Steve Whillford

Environmental Review

Geological 80

The Australian Geological Survey Organisation building stands up to performance scrutiny. *Review by Lindsay Johnston*

Product Review

Product Postcard 106

A practical tear-out reference guide for architects sourcing new products.

Flooring 108

An overview of new and innovative flooring products on the Australian market.

Malaysian Architects Architron

50 In the last of the series, a spectacular residential project defies its surrounds.
Review by Leon van Schaik

In Print

56 The new printing education facility on RMIT's Brunswick Campus has evolved at the hand of John Wardle. *Review by Leon van Schaik*

Coast Lines

66 Sean Godsell's seaside weekender continues themes raised in his earlier residential work. *Review by Paul Katsieris*

Wharfare

74 Reaching out to cruisers – Darling Harbour's Wharf 8 revamped. *Review by Harry Margalit*

Adaptation

86 Dale Jones-Evans' industrial expression is exemplified in this mixed-use conversion.
Review by Ewan McEoin

Postcolonial

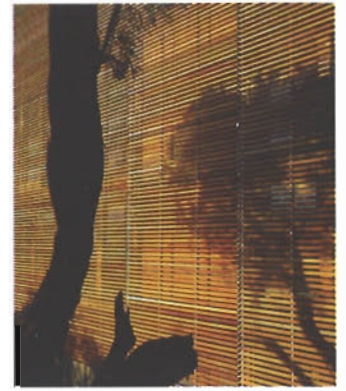
92 A tactful restoration and transformation of a Melbourne institution by Shelley Penn.
Review by Alex Selenitsch

Puzzle Box

96 Intricate 'interventions' in the Masonic Club of Tasmania signal new beginnings for client and architects alike. *Review by John Ancher*

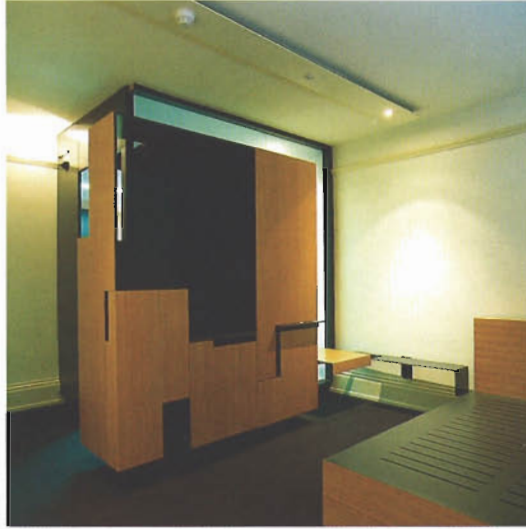
Then & Now Council House

100 How it revisits a Perth icon, saved by popular demand and the efforts of a significant few.



Cover / Carter-Tucker house, Breamlea, Vic
Architect / Sean Godsell
Photography / Earl Carter

Puzzlebox



Puzzle-like interventions in a heritage-listed building represent a departure from traditional Masonic associations.

Masonic Club of Tasmania / Hobart
Architects / Reinmuth Blythe Balmforth *terroir*
Review by John Ancher
Photography by Richard Eastwood



● **This fragmentary job is significant** for a number of reasons: it is the first completed work of a young architectural practice; it demonstrates that e-architecture can work; it is the result of a fruitful collaboration with a client not generally believed to be a patron of progressive design; and, it is architecturally distinctive.

The Masonic Club of Tasmania occupies the state's earliest purpose-built school building, the 1847 neo-Gothic sandstone edifice of the original Hutchins School. Hutchins moved out of the city in 1965, selling its property to the Masonic Club. Over the years, the physical presence of the former school in Hobart's urban fabric has been severely compromised. The most intact and striking of the remaining buildings, for which a Conservation Management Plan was produced in 1997, is the original central structure now home of the Masonic Club.

Richard Blythe, before going into partnership with Gerard Reinmuth and Scott Balmforth in early 1999, advised the Masonic Club that it would be commercially sound to convert the under-utilised first floor of their heritage building into boutique hotel accommodation. The Club consequently proceeded with the conversion of nine hotel rooms as an exploratory venture. There is strong likelihood of future expansion into an adjoining cloistered wing, should this initiative prove profitable.

The design process adopted by the architects is one they say will be central to their methodology as long as they operate out of Tasmania: e-architecture.

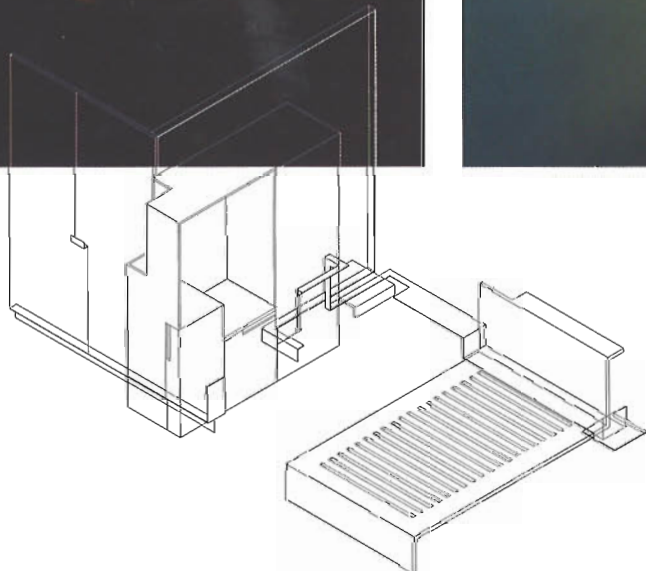
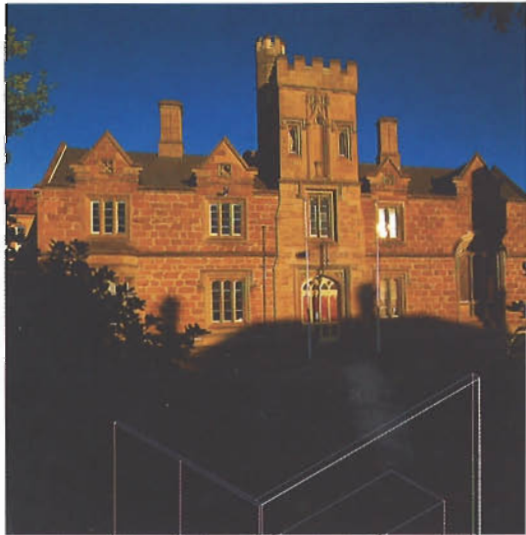
Reinmuth, while working with Richard Murphy in Edinburgh, was heavily involved in the conceptual design stage of the Masonic Club, as was Blythe in Launceston, both communicating over the internet with project architect Balmforth in Hobart, who made good use of the digital camera.

With work commitments focusing on Sydney during 2000, the partners will be swapping tasks to a certain extent, though the e-modus operandum will remain the same. This partnership is passionately Tasmanian while conceding that isolation in paradise is a dangerous syndrome for those seeking to operate in a wider context. e-architecture means equal opportunity.

The boutique hotel conversion was constrained by the requirements of the Conservation Management Plan. After stabilising the roof structure, the existing heavy and decrepit Marseilles tiles were replaced by roofing iron. Internally, the architects stepped nimbly around the fraught issue of carrying out alterations to the existing built fabric by adopting a design philosophy of obvious insertion. This decision was also prompted by a limited budget of \$450,000.

Four of the nine rooms are reasonably large. The others are tight. The larger rooms allow the bolt-on idea to reach its full potential. The restricted spaces of the bunk rooms and secondary suites utilise scaled-down versions of the beds and storage units developed for the two main suites and two loft rooms.

In the four larger rooms particularly, the architects have refined a concept of built



opening spread, clockwise from top left: A band of grey steel weaves its way through the building. A room in its entirety. The bathroom behind. Steel and timber details. facing page: The handcrafted 'puzzle' unfolds. this page, left to right: The existing building. Charcoal unifies the new work throughout. Insertions in the floor are a reminder of historical significance. The 'installations' in their raw form, variations of which appear in each room.

intervention, approximating 'contraption as Chinese puzzle'. The functional necessity of providing storage, for clothes, TV, bar fridge, and other amenities, is interpreted through compartmentalising and reassembly so that a 'boxes within boxes' construction evolves – largely solid, part void.

The resultant storage units are inventive and powerful. They protrude into the rooms as head-high sculptural forms, enhancing spatial depth, demanding attention as sculpture, whilst raising curiosity as to functional performance. Does it all work? Curiosity is rewarded. It does.

The functional protrusions grow out of the bathroom containers behind, accretions that are more attached to the room's fabric than the storage units, although they are obviously removable. Internally, the bathrooms are hard edge, tight but airy, spatially extended by a partial wall of sandblasted glass onto the bedroom, which allows the infusion of muted external light.

The whole insertion, storage unit plus bathroom, is respectful of the room's original simplicity, which remains unscathed.

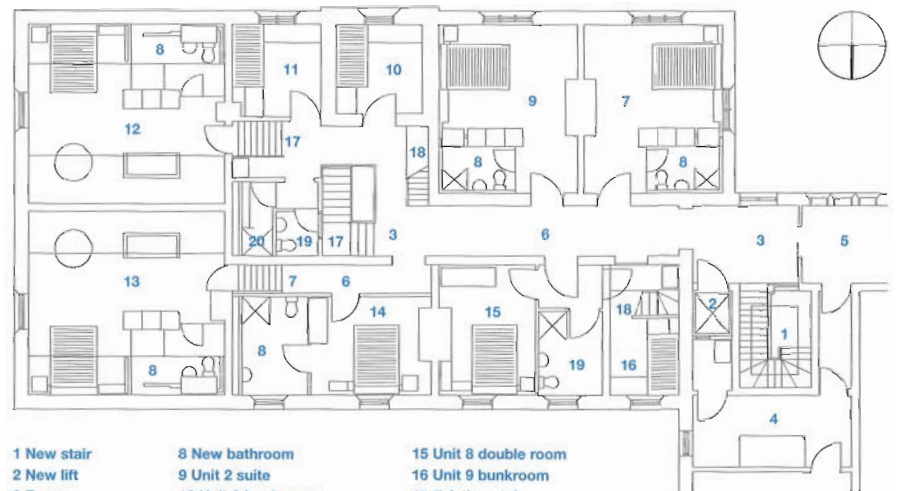
Beds are also built in. A ribbon of steel forms the bed frame then continues on as baggage rack. Its extension ties in the bathroom's glass wall. In other locations this snaking band of steel is the mounting armature for downlights, the balustrade rail of a stair, the pelmet of a sliding door. It is always charcoal in colour and is present in all rooms, in the hall and in the stairwell, as a visual metal touchstone.

The storage units are framed by this steel band. Their sliding material is MDF, painted charcoal or faced in pale timber veneer. Handles are slits, hinges concealed. Great ingenuity is exhibited in the Mondrianesque arrangement of panels and planes throughout the job, in the storage units and the showers, along extensive charcoal walls that replace areas of decrepit sheeting in three prominent locations. Carpet is charcoal too. The existing fabric, which has been tidied up but not painstakingly repaired, is invariably painted off-white. Switches, downlights and smoke detectors are set in narrow strips of MDF, with wiring and mechanisms hidden in slim wall or ceiling-mounted steel channels. Everywhere the existing fabric remains unviolated.

Reinmuth Blythe Balmforth *terroir* will inevitably be regarded as Young Turks in the Tasmanian context. In their partial transformation of the Masonic Club, they have strutted their stuff with distinction. A strong design philosophy carried out rigorously, with flair and restraint in balance, has ensured that their interior architecture emerges as a fresh and vital statement.

It is hoped that in the future the Masonic Club of Tasmania's incursion into the hotel industry will be decisive enough to allow RBB *terroir* to complete the task they have so promisingly started.

John Ancher is a Hobart-based architect and former lecturer at the University of Tasmania's School of Architecture and Urban Design.



- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 New stair | 8 New bathroom | 15 Unit 8 double room |
| 2 New lift | 9 Unit 2 suite | 16 Unit 9 bunkroom |
| 3 Foyer | 10 Unit 3 bunkroom | 17 Existing stairs |
| 4 Laundry | 11 Unit 4 bunkroom | 18 Existing stairs to attic |
| 5 Existing cloister | 12 Unit 5 deluxe suite (loft) | 19 New bathroom (shared facilities) |
| 6 Corridor | 13 Unit 6 deluxe suite (loft) | 20 New shower room (shared facilities) |
| 7 Unit 1 suite | 14 Unit 7 double room | |

First Floor Plan

The whole insertion, storage unit plus bathroom, is respectful of the room's original simplicity, which remains unscathed.

Project Summary Masonic Club Hotel Refurbishment **Architects** Reinmuth Blythe Balmforth *terroir* **Project team** Gerard Reinmuth, Richard Blythe, Scott Balmforth, Naomi Williams **Consultants:** Electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, fire detection Johnstone McGee and Gandy Pty Ltd **Engineer** Johnstone McGee and Gandy Pty Ltd; Specialist input by Peter Spratt and Associates **Quantity surveyor** Davis Langdon Australia **Lift** AP Moring Pty Ltd; Heritage; Mike Grant and Associates **Builder** Wilkins Construction Pty Ltd **Sub-contractors:** Joinery Joinery Products Pty Ltd **Size** Refurbished area 350 sq.m **Time to complete** 10 months (construction 3 months) **Council** Hobart City Council **Client** Masonic Club of Tasmania Inc. **Budget** \$450,000 **Materials:** Roof BHP Colorbond Custom Orb **Guttering** Colorbond **Interior materials:** Ceiling Existing lathe and plaster, pressed metal; new 13mm Boral Plasterboard **Internal wall cladding** Existing lathe and plaster, solid render; new MDF, expressed joints; new Boral Plasterboard **Paint** Dulux 2-pack polyurethane & 2-pack epoxy paint finish to MDF joinery and doors; acrylic paint finish to walls, ceilings; Interpon powder-coating & Dulux Luxathene to steelwork **Glass** Sandblasted glazing & toughened shower screens by Hobart Glass and Aluminium **Lighting** Gamma Illumination downlights & track lighting; Arrowslim fluorescents; Clipsal Matisse light switches and sensors **Flooring** Tullmaster luminaire 48oz carpet on AH60 hair-felt underlay; 60 x 60 floor tiles from Montile **Furniture** Built-in MDF; Laminex decorwood; powder-coated mild steel **Window furnishings** Scope slimline venetians **Joinery** MDF with Dulux 2-pack polyurethane finish; Interpon powder-coated mild steel; Laminex industries laminate **Bathroom fixtures** Caroma WC & tapware; Fowler basins **Hardware** Lockwood night latches, Hafele ball catches, Elco commercial cylinder locksets and knobs; Perko concealed door closers; Howard Silvers dome door stops **Signage** Vinyl-cut lettering by Signfast **Heating systems** Pureheat Alpha flush mounted heaters