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sustainable architecture and landscape design



Under Wraps

Our guide to exterior cladding

Black is Back

Recycled finesse in a Victorian country retreat

Family Farm

Organics at the gate

Converted Past

A sharp factory conversion in Hobart

Good News

Five low-impact heating options



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A winner at the 2009 Tasmanian Architecture Awards, its owner-architect has created a sharply contemporary family home within a former factory by embracing its industrial past, writes Susanne Kennedy.

Industrial Strength

A night-lit view of the living spaces from the backyard. The rear wall is automated to open to the outside.



height living spaces which extend the length of the original outer factory wall.

The contrast between the top and bottom storeys is also enhanced by the sky views and softer finishes and materials found in the private spaces. The more serene bedrooms and upstairs hallways are lined with lime-stained timber and plasterboard which reflects and absorbs natural light from the saw-tooth windows and skylights.

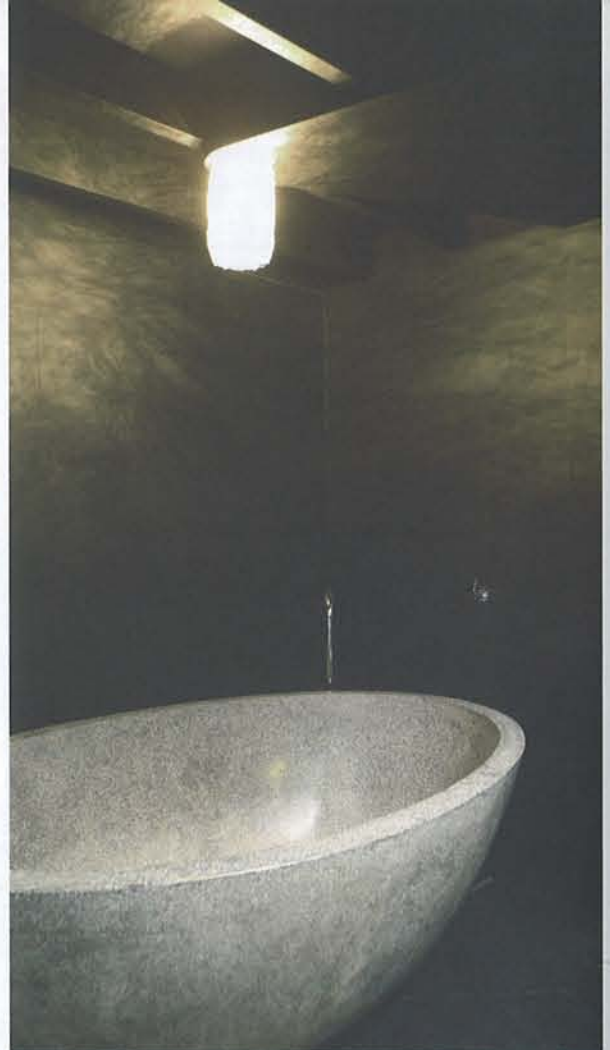
The lower level is characterised by openness, hard surfaces and robust living spaces; the product of industrial features have been kept, such as the remnants of glue where shelves once were and the outline of cricket stumps (which now mingle with children's chalk outlines) on the besa block wall; the underside of the top storey – expanded metal and exposed timber floor and steel support beams – is revealed when one looks up. Leftover floor joists have been re-invented to make a long kitchen bench which is central to the family's home life. Here children chat and draw and visitors sip wine and watch on as their hosts cook. Other joists were mounted on an old butcher's block to create a unique dining table.

Exposed pipes from the hydronic heating system are an appropriate choice with respect to both the industrial aesthetic and an effective and sustainable heating solution for a voluminous space. The roof has three rakes that work with strategically placed skylights and saw-tooth windows to maximise internal light all year round. Expanded metal has been used to varying effect and function. It veils skylights, creates interest as an industrial feature and its grain offers privacy in certain areas of the house, from particular angles. When the front garage door rolls up, passers-by can enjoy the unexpected surprise of domestic life behind a factory façade. This idea of the reveal, the unexpected, is one Balmforth particularly enjoys and is facilitated by through-views from the street to the rear garden. He explains that a sense of depth of space was attractive and characteristic in the original industrial building and has been preserved where possible in the renovation design with, mainly, parallel internal walls which frame these through-views.

A number of quirky elements lighten and play with the industrial aesthetic: rock-climbing grips have been used as handles for hall storage cupboards. Some are real grips and others have been fashioned from timber; the actual handles are lost in the array on the wall. The back wall of the house has been automated to roll completely open, with a touch of James Bond; and steel rectangles peel out to create shiny shutters on the exterior rear wall, which is reminiscent of an advent calendar emptied of chocolate.

Future visions include a rear garden of lush grasses and creepers edging the expansive outdoor space – the creation of yet another surprise in the layered through-view.

Balmforth recalls a friend's accurate observation that his approach to architecture was akin to dress-making; indeed, Balmforth's new warehouse home has the equivalent of pleats, contrasting sheer and opaque effects (for instance with the expanded metal), a variety of textures and weights in materials as well as omnipresent glimpses, layers and reveals.





The wide range of aesthetics that are juxtaposed throughout the house. **opposite top** An oblong designer tub and starkly contrasting walls make the bathroom a striking space. **bottom** The main living area has an industrial quality; not an immense space characterised by expanded steel, polished concrete floors and the original factory wall.

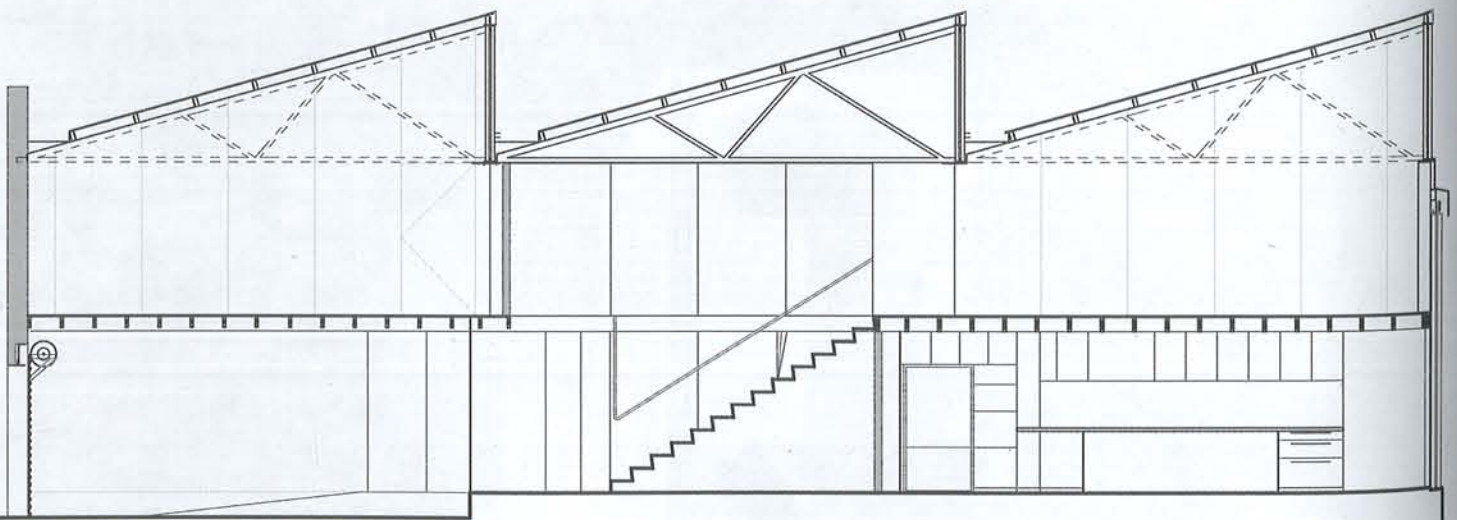


Industrial strength





The original factory façade remains, giving no hint of the domesticity inside.



Side elevation

Specs:

Architect

Terroir
www.terroir.com.au

Kitchen bench and dining table

Discarded, leftover ply floor joists. The timber rock-climbing like grips to upper level doors were also crafted from leftover ply floor joist odds and ends.

Hot water system

Natural gas fuelled instantaneous.

Heating system

Hydronic heating system incorporating a natural gas fuelled water boiler is reticulated throughout the house in insulated pipes, running through the wall. Radiant heaters in all bedrooms and living spaces.

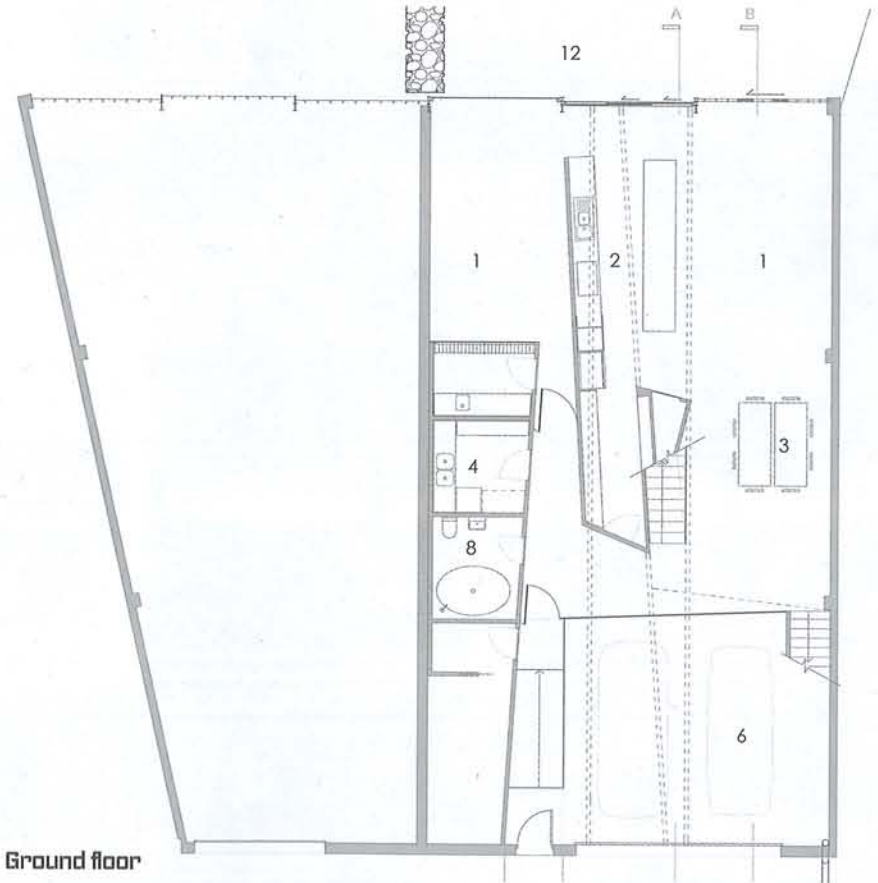
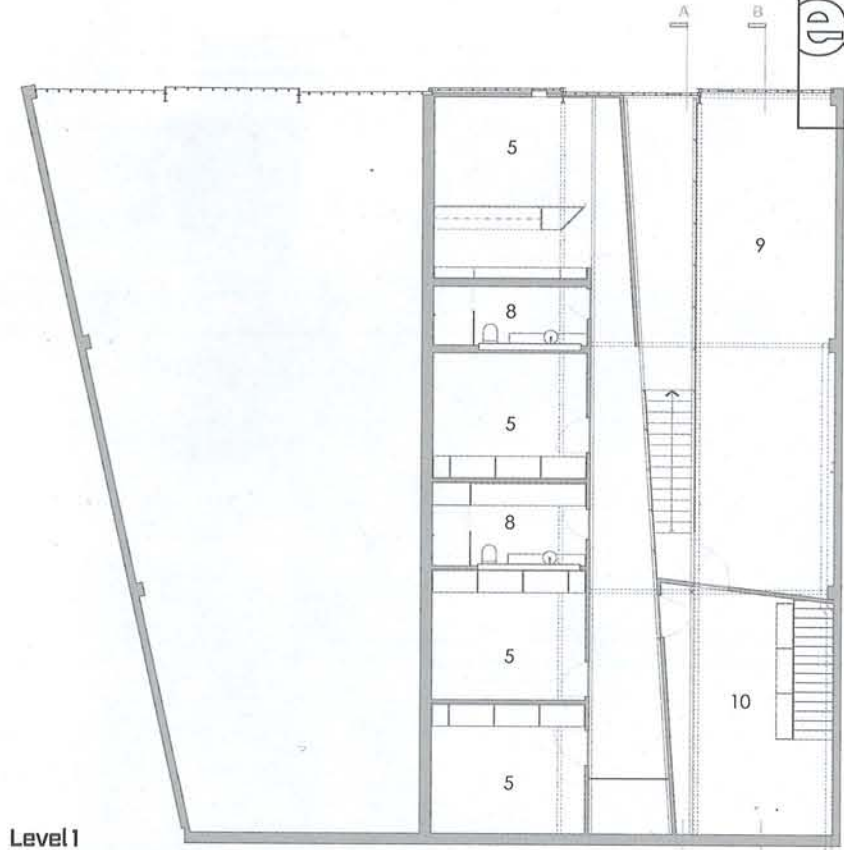
Joinery

Some internal linings to the lower level (and shelving to the pantry), other than the Formply in the kitchen, is OSB (oriented strand board). It is a board product made from recycled timber 'chips'.

Plywood wall and floor linings to the upper level are plantation-grown timber

Flooring

The lower level is generally the existing concrete floor with a new environmentally-friendly clear sealant.



- 1/ Living
- 2/ Kitchen
- 3/ Dining
- 4/ Laundry
- 5/ Bedroom
- 6/ Garage
- 7/ Garden
- 8/ Bathroom
- 9/ Study
- 10/ Playroom

