

The photograph on page     is of the board-formed concrete balconies in the internal court of McCaughey Court 1967-8, a residential block of Ormond College at the University of Melbourne (shown earlier on page     ). The one opposite, on page     , is of the Purves House at Kew, 196     which is also shown on these pages. The stair links the four levels of this house, which is on steeply sloping ground and is divisible in two for two generations of one family. The main spaces (shown at right) are open to each other but semi-separated by change of level: bedroom at top, living-room at mid-height, dinning room below, and the smaller flat is down again. Interior linings are lightly limed mountain ash to act as a background for the owner's big collection of paintings.



Timber (above), and concrete (right) display their own character in permissive architecture. The timber example is the Lyons House at Dolan's Bay, near Sydney, built in 1967. A swimming pool was to be the centre of activity, but the site was solid rock, so the pool was built above ground, in a concrete and brick structure which made the core of the building. From it, on all sides, the timber ring of the house was bracketted out, cars and visitors sheltering underneath. The house thus has its floors at pool surface level and the extra height has gained it a wide view of convoluted bay waters. (See also pages and ).

At the President Motor Inn (opposite), built in Queens Road, Melbourne, in 1967, the bedroom suites are held high on concrete columns. This improves their view of the lake in front but, more important, it allows the noisier element of the restaurant to be slipped in independently underneath them.



The McClune House, 1969, is in heavily wooded country near Frankston, Victoria. It has a big parasol roof of steel and fibre-glass sheeting in the shape of a square doughnut, supported on steel-braced timber posts independent of the structure of the rooms. These follow a comparatively free plan beneath the raised roof, avoiding the central open square where a garden court receives the rain. The rooms are conventionally framed as flat-roofed boxes lined externally and internally with off-saw pressure-treated pine boards, stained grey (see also page ). The concrete floor steps down the sloping site. The owners built the house, subcontracting most trades.



Menzies College at La Trobe University, built in two stages, 1968-70, is a residence for 240 students, male and female, who as a matter of policy were given separate wings, to their displeasure. These study-bed wings form two sides, north and south, of a large quad. The other two sides are closed by an administration and seminar-room block on the west, facing the university campus, and a diningroom and common-room block on the east. The construction was load-bearing brick, rising up to six floors and supported on an open ground floor of flexible function. The concrete columns and braces required here to make a rigid base for the brickwork was necessarily sturdy.



The vaulted structures shown below belong to a supermarket, partly seen at the left, and its related house, built at Jordanville in 1954 using a patented concrete-forming process called Ctesiphon, after the town in Iraq where a giant brick hall of similar parabolic shape was built in the sixth century. It was, in fact, a primitive and very economical way to build shell concrete. A series of timber arches was erected, canvas was drawn over them and then three inches of concrete, with some reinforcement, was laid on top. The timber arches were later removed and reused on the next building.

The forest of steel pipes shown on the opposite page was required to secure the Shelmerdine House at Portsea, 1964, to a precipitous sandy cliff facing the occasional unimpeded blasts of the north wind. The house above the pipes, shown on pages , was based on a tripartite livingroom: its conventional centre section opening wide to a protected land court on one side and an exposed sea balcony on the other.



These two rooms from two motels seem curiously and almost coincidentally matching, because their respective buildings are poles apart (400 miles to be more precise). The one above is the penthouse suite at the John Batman in Queen's Road, built in 1964, and shown also on page . It was Melbourne's first "motor inn", which meant that it aimed for very much more sophistication than the familiar motel pattern. The room shown at right is one in the Black Dolphin built in 1960 at Merimbula on the south coast of New South Wales. This was simply a motel but again not of the familiar pattern. It is shown also on pages and . It aimed to be an architectural tranquillizer by the Pacific Ocean halfway between Sydney and Melbourne. The proprietors of both establishments consciously sought to evoke an Australian character by a fairly rugged use of Australian materials and vegetation. They were the first to do so.



This is the Marks House at Mornington, 1969, also shown on page , a big holiday house near the edge of a cliff above the beach road. The uninterrupted view is of a wide crescent of beach leading back to distant Melbourne; it is too good to be missed by any room. So the two floors are stepped along the middle to allow the rooms on the side away from the water to see over the heads of the rooms on the view side. Thus, on the ground floor, children's bedrooms are open to, and look across, their playroom, while on the upper floor the parents' bedroom and study (this page) are open to and look across the main living room (opposite page). A concrete deck on a single support steps forward into a position to command the view even more authoritatively.



The Lawrence House, with its associate flats, was built in the inner suburb of Kew in 1967. The fairly restricted site fell steeply from the street to the rear, so parts of the building were raised up to twenty feet above ground. This released more area for garden development and hoisted the main living rooms into a position better to enjoy the wide view over golf links to the city. The hoisting might have been accomplished by posts of various kinds, but brick, the oldest of all technologies, was selected for the supports as well as for the walls above so that building and supports would be a whole thing. Step-backs and corbels of the brick courses negotiate the transfer of stresses from walls to piers.



The house shown on these pages and on the preceding double-spread was built in 1958 in South Yarra for my own family. One of the principal objectives in planning was to create a private indoor-outdoor environment despite the narrowness of the allotment and the congested surroundings of an inner suburb. The device adopted was to divide the house in two by a garden square, forty feet deep: two storey parents' block at front, single storey childrens' block at back. Tall glass walls, partly obscure, partly hooded, were erected on each side of the garden to protect it from wind and much rain, but not sun. In the two storey section the upper floor is not wall to wall. It is a platform independently supported, emphasizing that the whole space enclosed here is one, and in it conventional segregations are neither necessary nor desirable.



This view at right of the Baker House at Bacchus March, 1964, is from the kitchen looking beyond to the living-dining room. The view above, of the Boyd House at South Yarra, 1958, is from the living-dining room looking through various functional space-dividers to the kitchen. In each case the division between the two rooms is not sharply defined and the materials are continuous. In the former case the main ones are rubble slate, quarried locally, and a patent sheet made of straw, untreated but compressed and bound by wire. In the latter case the background is dark brick and the foreground is red (jarrah) and white (mountain ash) timber, with brass fittings.



This group of holiday houses at Portsea was built in 1968 on a long, comparatively narrow site running between the highway and a cliff above the Bay beach. The four units are identical but each has its own private, and in some way different, outlook from the long window-wall of its main rooms. Each of these window-walls opens to a terrace, over which the roof tilts up abruptly to give cover from the rain while allowing a deeper penetration of sun. Instead of a passage, a semi-outdoor garden space roofed but only insect-screened on one side (see right) serves as an entrance hall and circulation space.



The two opposite poles of character in architectural surface, the cool and the warm naturally have opposite attitudes to nature. A cool building sits itself up challengingly, a proud man-made object defying any living vegetable matter other than grass to come within moving distance of it. A warm building at the least will welcome trees around to lend their shadows to it, as did McCaughey Court, at Ormond College on page . The Featherston House went much further. It invited a whole garden indoors. The picture on page was taken looking vertically down to the plant-covered floor of the general living space (other more explicit pictures of the space appear later). The houses on this page and opposite were content to make creepers and climbers feel welcome on their outdoor areas by offering posts and pergolas for finger-grips. In all these cases natural growth has become in time part of the architectural surface, and in the Troedel House of 1954, above, nature kindly adds another decoration: the low winter sun (the only which the two-layer pergola was designed to admit) reflects back and forth in the zig-zag glass wall as if trying to imitate atrellis.



This is the restaurant of the Black Dolphin motel at Merimbula (also illustrated on pages    and    ) as it was for some years after completion. It has since been altered by new owners. The columns throughout the building were the trunks of gum trees. Heavy double timber beams carried lights between them. It was from the start, and still is, one of the very few restaurants in Australia outside a capital city which attracts gourmets. For that, and for the new carpet, I claim no credit.



Timber is and probably always will be, while it lasts, the most marvellously sympathetic and amenable material in the architectural larder. On the previous two pages it is hardwood (Mountain Ash) dressed formally for inner suburban living and displaying its adaptability to folding screens, louvres, and so forth. The pictures are of the Purves House, Kew (page ) and the Fletcher House, Brighton (page ). On this page and the one opposite the timber is softwood and casually undressed for the outer suburbs. The photograph below is of the Handfield House at Eltham, 1961, and the one opposite is of the McClune House, 1969, at Frankston (also seen on page ).



The form of Domain Park in South Yarra was determined by light-angle regulations and by the magnetic views: to the north the sun and the city seen across a green mile of the Botanic Gardens; to the south of the Bay. The building was planned to be narrow enough to allow all main rooms to fill its width and have an outlook both ways, so giving these rooms a heightened sense of isolation and suspension in space. The noisy lifts, service and escape stairs, and some air-conditioning plant, were isolated in separate towers adhering to the south side of the slab. (See left. Above is the foyer. The north face is shown on pages      and      ).

Domain Park was the first example in Melbourne of a genre that has some powerful, sincere opponents: a "highrise" block (though that adjective was not common parlance in 1962 when it was built) overlooking public gardens. The opponents argue that public gardens should be oases in the city from which no buildings are visible. Yet Melbourne's building regulations permit flats to skyscape only when they are opposite parks, presumably on the principal that, since so few Melburnians actually visit any Melbourne park, at least these green areas on the map should be enjoyed visually, from an elevated armchair, by as many people as possible.



The house on the preceding double spread is the Kaye House at Frankston, Victoria, built in 1966. It overlooks a majestic view from a narrow shelf of reliable ground atop Olivers Hill. To provide adequate indoor and outdoor living space on the main upper level, supporting timber beams and brackets had to be projected some sixteen feet from the brick base structure. They were necessarily straight, square and massive under a compressive stress of mighty dimension even in a holiday house. Tensile stress performs at the other end of the structural range. Though supporting a heavy load of roof, the steel cables at right (see also page ) are just three-quarters of an inch thick and drape in deceptively relaxed curves between steel stanchions at each end of the house. The cables, propped at intervals by window mullions, take the place of beams or joists. The timber decking that is the base for the roof is stapled to them. It adopts a secondary droop of its own at right angles to the cables and thus gives each bay of the roof the shape of a saucer, or shallow reversed dome, which stabilizes it against any tendency to lift or flutter in a high wind.