



This house is a direct response to its site. Set high on a hill in an old, established part of Newcastle overlooking the harbour, the site was originally part of the Bishop's residence. Building the house was conditional on it not interfering with the view from the Bishop's 19th century mansion on the crown of the hill.

This meant setting the house into the hill to ensure the roofline remained sufficiently low. But instead of a retaining wall, the architects created a two-level rear pavilion with services on the ground floor and bathrooms on the top connected by bridges to upstairs bedrooms in the front pavilion. The two pavilions are book-ended by masonry walls, forming an internal courtyard with gardens at either end. The eastern garden is the first thing seen on entering the house, revealed through a double-height window.

A glass roof 'floats' over the court on a timber frame, leaving a gap between it and the gutter which runs along the edge of the front pavilion's roof, penetrating the walls at either end through vertical and horizontal slots. The glass roof is also open at each end, creating a circulation of air inside the courtyard.

The front pavilion is a splendid glass lantern protected by a massive inclined roof which, in typical Stutchbury fashion, seems unconnected to the house itself, but supported instead by a series of angled steel stanchions. This pavilion wraps itself around a front court and is fully transparent with views to Newcastle Harbour from the internal courtyard through the large glazed sliding doors. A degree of privacy and sun-shading is provided on the upper levels at each end of this pavilion by a series of box window frames which, from inside, frame the view.

THE FRONT PAVILION IS A SPLENDID GLASS LANTERN PROTECTED BY A MASSIVE INCLINED ROOF WHICH, IN TYPICAL STUTCHBURY FASHION, SEEMS UNCONNECTED TO THE HOUSE ITSELF, BUT SUPPORTED INSTEAD BY A SERIES OF ANGLED STEEL STANCHIONS

The building celebrates its own construction by boldly expressing its structure, especially the 2.5 metre grid of recycled hardwood columns with every second one bearing the roof structure. The grid, in turn, draws attention to the domestic rituals which take place under the protection of the massive, floating roof. On the ground floor, the clearly demarcated living areas for parents and children are linked by the common kitchen/eating area. On the upper level, there is a sequence of bedrooms which run off a cross-over walkway lit by a conspicuous series of lights. The ritual element is even more evident in the bathrooms where the wet areas form a linear sequence of spaces. In the main bathroom, the sense of ritual is heightened by the sunken bath which takes on an exotic mood because of the way the northern light is filtered through the timber battens. These battens on the exterior of the rear pavilion – especially with their shuttered windows which open and close by a pulley system – conjure up a Middle Eastern feel, a hermetic and mysterious mood in contrast to the flagrant transparency of the rest of the house.

Just as the house was not imposed on the site, nor was it

