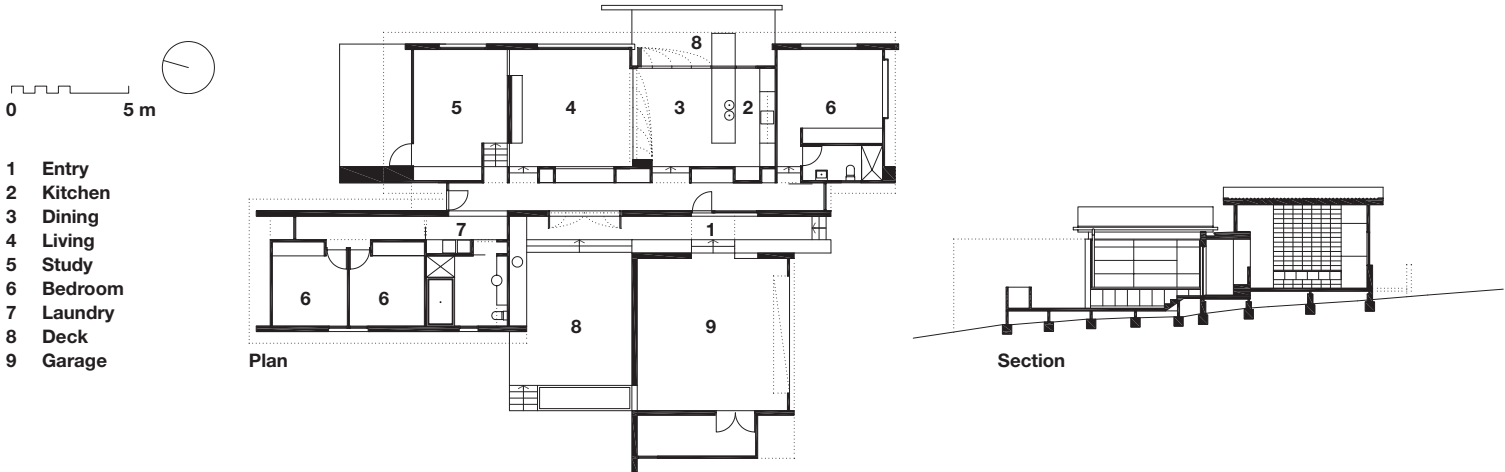




Life in this house by Preston Lane Architects is dictated by the Tasmanian climate, from summer evenings on its

western deck to winter nights in its cosy study.

for all seasons





PREVIOUS PAGES: Heavy parallel walls give the house a feeling of solidity and provide a buffer against the strong prevailing winds. **THESE PAGES:** Smooth, natural materials and a subdued colour palette allow occupants to focus on the landscape outside.

I HAVE A FRIEND who has designed her London apartment so that she can sleep in at least three different places. She lives alone and the apartment isn’t large, but she likes variety and enjoys a change of scene. So she has a conventional bedroom, a sleeping platform and a window bed, each made to accommodate herself or to be readily relinquished for a visiting friend. The idea that a design for a dwelling might create such potential for variety, or that you might be able to live in the same spaces differently, is really appealing. Changeability is found in abundance in the Victorian terraces of our share-house days, but seen less and less in contemporary homes. This house by Preston Lane Architects recaptures something of that spirit, but in this case it seems to be geared more specifically towards living in different directions.

The house, for a couple expecting their first child, is located south of Hobart, on the Channel Highway between Taroona and Kingston. The clients discovered and bought the site – a combination of ex-farming and remnant bushland – about five years ago and moved into their new home less than a year ago.

The property arguably has the pick of the aspects of the small Bonnet Hill community. From its saddle position on the hill, there are unimpeded river views to the east and south-east and, to the west, it looks down to Kingston and beyond to the edges of Wellington Park. Siting of the house was defined by maximizing these views, using the

flattest part of the site, gaining privacy from neighbours and providing enough area to the north for the client to establish a garden.

Once the house had been sited, wind was the next significant factor to consider for the design. With unimpeded views in this part of Tasmania comes exposure to the elements. Throughout the morning, the wind gusts in from the west or south-west, and in the afternoon, the sea breeze flies in off the channel from the south-east, clearing out any residual heat from the day. In construction terms, Preston Lane considered the design as a series of heavy parallel walls that would act as buffers, so that the house would always feel solid, even in the worst gales. In planning terms, they provided the potential to open the home in one direction or another depending on the breeze. In the morning, when the east sun streams into the kitchen and dining area, the wind is generally coming from the west, so doors to the kitchen terrace can be left open comfortably. In the afternoon and early evening, as the sea breeze gets up, the occupants can spill out onto the west deck in the warm sun, once again protected. On those rare hot Tasmanian days, an evening drink is often enjoyed on the east terrace, where the sea breeze brings welcome cooling to the occupants and easy ventilation to the rest of the house.

Composed around a double circulation spine that runs between internal and external spaces, the dwelling is compass-like in arrangement.

Entry is from the south, the living and main bedroom spaces focus on the eastern aspect, a “warm” study room at the end of the house faces north and the remaining secondary bedrooms and dining courtyard look to the west. The spine links these areas of the house, providing bench seats to extend living spaces, niches for art and a substantial amount of storage space hidden behind flush-finished joinery panels.

Preston Lane director Daniel Lane talks of his firm’s preoccupation with the idea of thresholds. It is their belief that the Tasmanian house must attempt to draw the outside in wherever possible, even if only visually, as a way to create a continuous relationship with external spaces, particularly when the weather dictates enclosure for so much of the year. So in this house, the architects have taken every opportunity to explore and exploit this relationship. The circulation spine reaches out into the surrounding landscape with views at each end and becomes part of the western deck. A polished concrete slab in the north-facing study runs to an outside terrace. Internal joinery becomes external storage and the stainless steel benchtop seamlessly extends through the kitchen window to become an external breakfast and drinks bar. Throughout, it is always possible to see out to the landscape beyond the edges of the house.

As if the surrounding landscape was enough to colour the home, the materials and finishes in this building are stripped back, smooth, natural

and warm. Timber floors form much of the living surface, with lush carpet an alternative in the spaces for relaxing. I’m particularly partial to the etched concrete blocks in a soft grey-brown that constitute the protective walls of the home’s exterior and form a dramatic core-filled divider between the living room and northern study. The chimney-like element acts as a centre to the living spaces and a means to capture the sun for passive warming.

The potential to live in different directions became most apparent when I was touring the house with the owner. Even after a year the couple is still learning different ways to live in the house. There has been a winter tucked into the warm study, full summer nights spent eating and drinking with friends on the west deck, winter mornings catching the sun on the kitchen terrace. The concept was most clearly revealed when the owner talked of his intentions for the external space. Along with regenerating the remnant bushland on the site, he has plans for each of the outdoor spaces adjacent to the house – each with a different focus, based on aspect, weather exposure or the requirement for further privacy.

It is refreshing to see how complexity and simplicity sit comfortably with each other in this design, and I can imagine that the addition of children will further reveal the ways in which a small home can cater to many situations. **JUDITH ABELL**

THESE PAGES, ABOVE:
The sheltered western deck
is the perfect place to bathe
in afternoon sunshine.
BELOW: Positioned on the
saddle of a hill, the house
enjoys spectacular views
in all directions. A double
circulation spine runs
through its centre.





ARCHITECT

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PRACTICE PROFILE

Small practice specializing in small- to medium-scale housing and small commercial work.

PROJECT TEAM

Daniel Lane, Nathanael Preston,
Phil Ackerly, Garth Ancher

BUILDER

Cordwell Lane

CONSULTANTS

Engineer Gandy and Roberts
Interiors Preston Lane Architects

PRODUCTS

Roofing Colorbond Trimdeck
Hi-Ten; wool batt insulation
External walls Etched-face
blockwork; cement sheet;
exterior-grade plywood,
maddison oil finish **Internal
walls** Plasterboard painted
in Dulux 'Antique White USA'
Windows Capral double-glazed
windows **Doors** Capral 200
series, anodized aluminium-finish;
Vantage bi-fold doors; Centor
internal bi-fold doors and sliding
doors; Nova Hardware **Flooring**
14 mm Tasmanian oak strip
flooring **Kitchen** Miele ovens and
dishwasher; Baumatic cooktop;
Qasair rangehood; Liebherr
refrigerator; Franke integrated
sinks; Gessi tapware; ss and
Silestone benchtops **Bathroom**
GSI Traccia basins; Duravit toilets;
Zucchetti tapware; Bette bath
Climate control Devi ceiling
heating **External elements**
Pelewan timber decking

TIME SCHEDULE

Design, documentation
6 months

Construction 7 months

FLOOR AREA

263 m²

PHOTOGRAPHY

Ralph Alphonso

LEFT: The living room and raised northern study are divided by a chimney-like partition wall of etched concrete blocks. The wall's thermal mass assists in natural climate control.