



AT RISK OR ADAPTABLE?

The Young House, 1959 J Esmond Dorney Tasmania

At Risk or Adaptable?

- **The Young House 1959 Architect J Esmond Dorney**

- Author Danielle Pacaud

- *Heritage Tasmania, Hobart, Australia*

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- **Change and Continuity - Conservation and adaptation in 20thC Regional Modernism**

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- *“Life, in all its phases, is, or should be, progressive. Take the modern jet propelled ‘plane, with all its beauty of line and speed, and compare it with the clumsy, inefficient by-planes of thirty years ago. What a contrast, and what progress has been made in those thirty years, yet it is only a result of our lengthy learning step by step, how to improve those clumsy-looking old aeroplanes.”*

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- Esmond Dorney, quoted from a talk he gave to design students in 1948

- Notes belonging to John and Isobel Thorpe, Lindisfarne

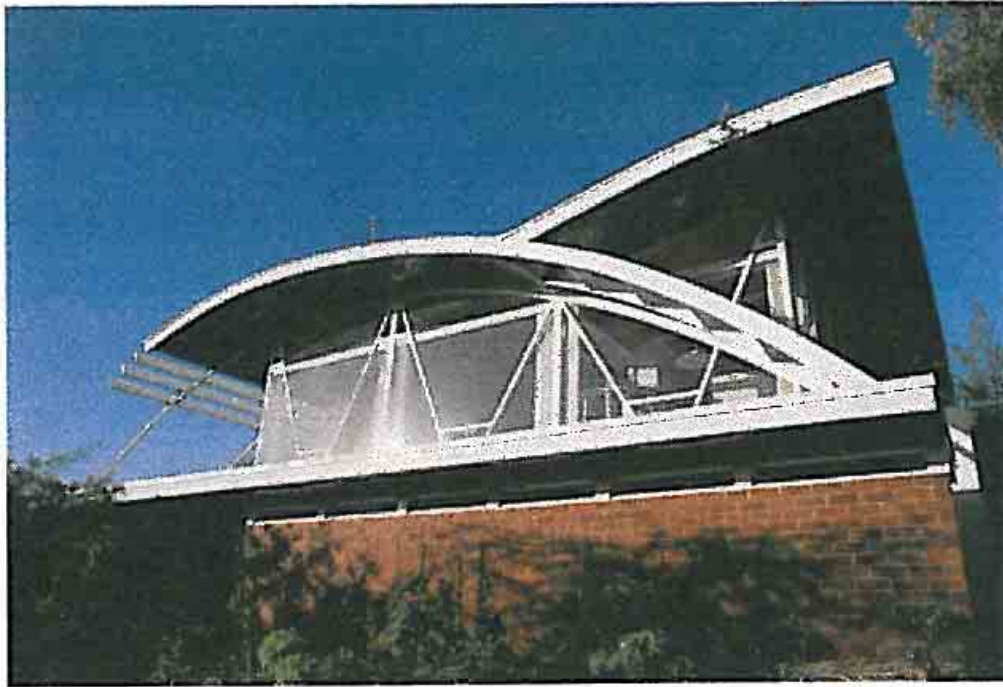
The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- The Young House, designed in 1959, is Esmond Dorney's best-known residential work.
- Its significance lies in the way it describes in formal and spatial terms the role played by the architect and his work in Tasmanian Architecture...
- Sited prominently above the suburb of Sandy Bay the Young House appears as an alien, or implant, relating more to the Melbourne work of the period than any Tasmanian precedents.
- However this formal language hides and then, on closer inspection, reveals Dorney's understanding of the complex nature of Hobart's topography, climate and prospect....
- Reinmuth, Gerard (compiled by) The Young House then and now, RMIT



Esmond Dorney's domestic work expresses (apparently wilfully) the complex diversity of its setting, running along slopes that cant and fold with the changing contour, designing with the character and form of this place, Hobart.

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Although the suburb of Sandy Bay has grown up around the site since Dorney designed the Young House, the distinctive roof is still seen against the sky.





Carefully restored by its owners, who commissioned new fabrics and introduced artwork as well as well-selected finds from garage sales, the house interior is a faithful interpretation of its period.

Hillier, Rose-Marie, Retro Revival, House and Garden Magazine



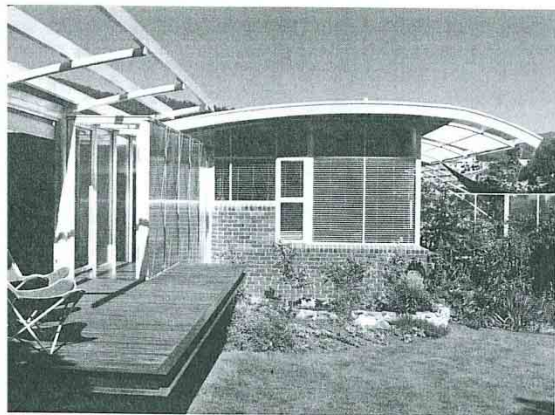
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Original Dorney Drawings, reproduced in '100 Hobart Houses' by Miranda Morris
Photographs by Jan Dallas, published by Hobart City Council 2001

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- “We were always interested in the work of Dorney and had often driven past the house and said how much we loved it,” said Rose Gaby, “When it came up for sale we bought it.
- The house was owned by a single woman and was never really intended to be a family home because it only had two bedrooms.
- We lived in it for about a year before commissioning architect Robert Morris Nunn to design an extension for a parents’ retreat; our vision was for a kind of caboose at the back of the house...which wouldn’t interfere with the integrity of the original”
- Owners’ comments - Hillier, Rose-Marie, Retro Revival, House and Garden



"We wanted an extension for a parents' retreat, but it was important for us that it didn't interfere with the original house" **ROSE GABY OWNER**

"The original pink, black and white vinyl is in very good condition, having been protected by, of all things, carpet."

For Rose – who's interested in mid-20th-century design – the curiosity of the house is the appeal, given its style wasn't anything she'd lived with before. The family's previous houses were Federation and Georgian, and Rose grew up in an antique-filled farmhouse. So this house isn't a nostalgic trip for her, more a celebration of colour, pattern and texture. Depending on your age, it does take you back, but it also moves you forwards with its clean, curated take on modern design. But, be warned, there is no kitsch to be seen.

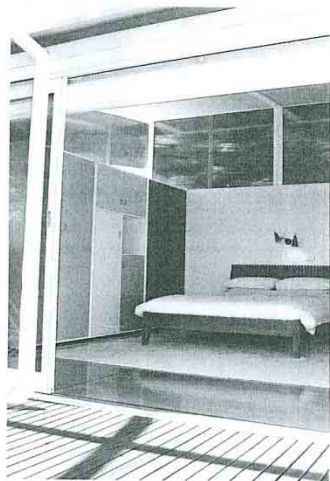
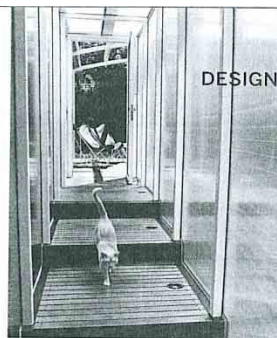
The pair sidestepped the common mistake of merely upgrading with high-end finishes and materials. "The old tops are Laminex with a Fifties pattern, and we even found a place that has the aluminium strip edging, which is characteristic of the era, so we were able to copy that detail," says Rose.

In the popularity of Fifties style, Rose says it has a lot to do with bright and cheerful colours, and the fact things were made with flair and were daring. "The immediate postwar years saw a general

optimism and focus on the house. A lot of what was new and exciting from the period has a sense of lightness and joie de vivre," she explains.

So where do you shop for Fifties design items? Secondhand and antiques shops, both in the city and country, and garage sales are all great sources. "We found the vinyl-covered dining chairs in a second-hand shop. But the Fifties-style Huon pine elliptical coffee table was recently made, by local craftsman Peter Costello. The IKEA woven webbed chairs look old but are new. And the blue canvas butterfly chairs, originally designed in 1938 but made popular in the Fifties, were found in a Hobart antiques shop," says Rose.

She also admits Alex is pretty good at scouring garage sales and finding things that have been thrown out in their local area. Rose says it's all about getting yourself known to the specialist dealers and "keeping your eye out and enjoying the hunt". They clearly relish the idea of unexpectedly discovering something unique in a country store or garage sale. Alex has the final word: "Our children love living in this house with the collections, and they know about, and appreciate, its uniqueness." **THE**



ABOVE LEFT the butterfly chairs on the deck were sourced from a Hobart antiques shop. On display are both the curved steel structure of the house and how the original and the new sections of the house connect. **ABOVE, TOP** the owners' Burmese cat struts down the walkway between the original house and the new extension. **ABOVE** in the parents' retreat, built-ins are painted a popular Fifties colour combination.

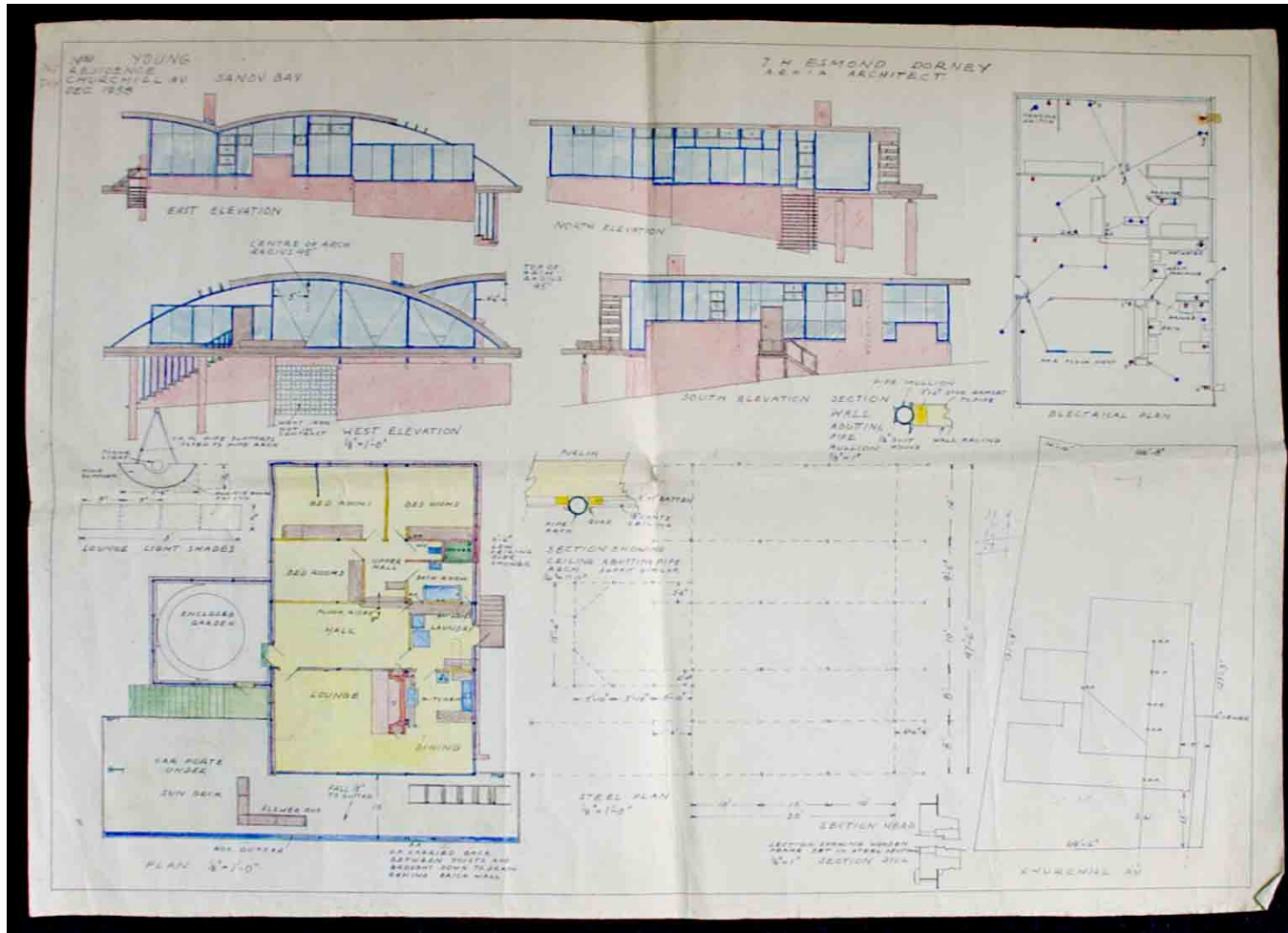


The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- *“Architecture should advance with the times, and we must learn not to stick to our old ideas on building just because we are used to them, but must keep on trying to think of something new – not for the sake of being different, but for the sake of improving on the old, until we evolve something better.”*
- *J Esmond Dorney 1948*

- *“In building a house today the first things to be considered are sunlight and view, whether it be of the garden or somewhat more extensive. The planning should begin with these points.*
- *The living room should have view and afternoon sunshine, when it is more likely to be in use...*
- *The bedrooms should get morning sun but to avoid waking too early, particularly as far south as we are in Hobart, it is well to arrange the windows so that the sun does not come in too early. This can be done in many ways, such as by a projecting corner of another room.”*
- *J Esmond Dorney 1948*

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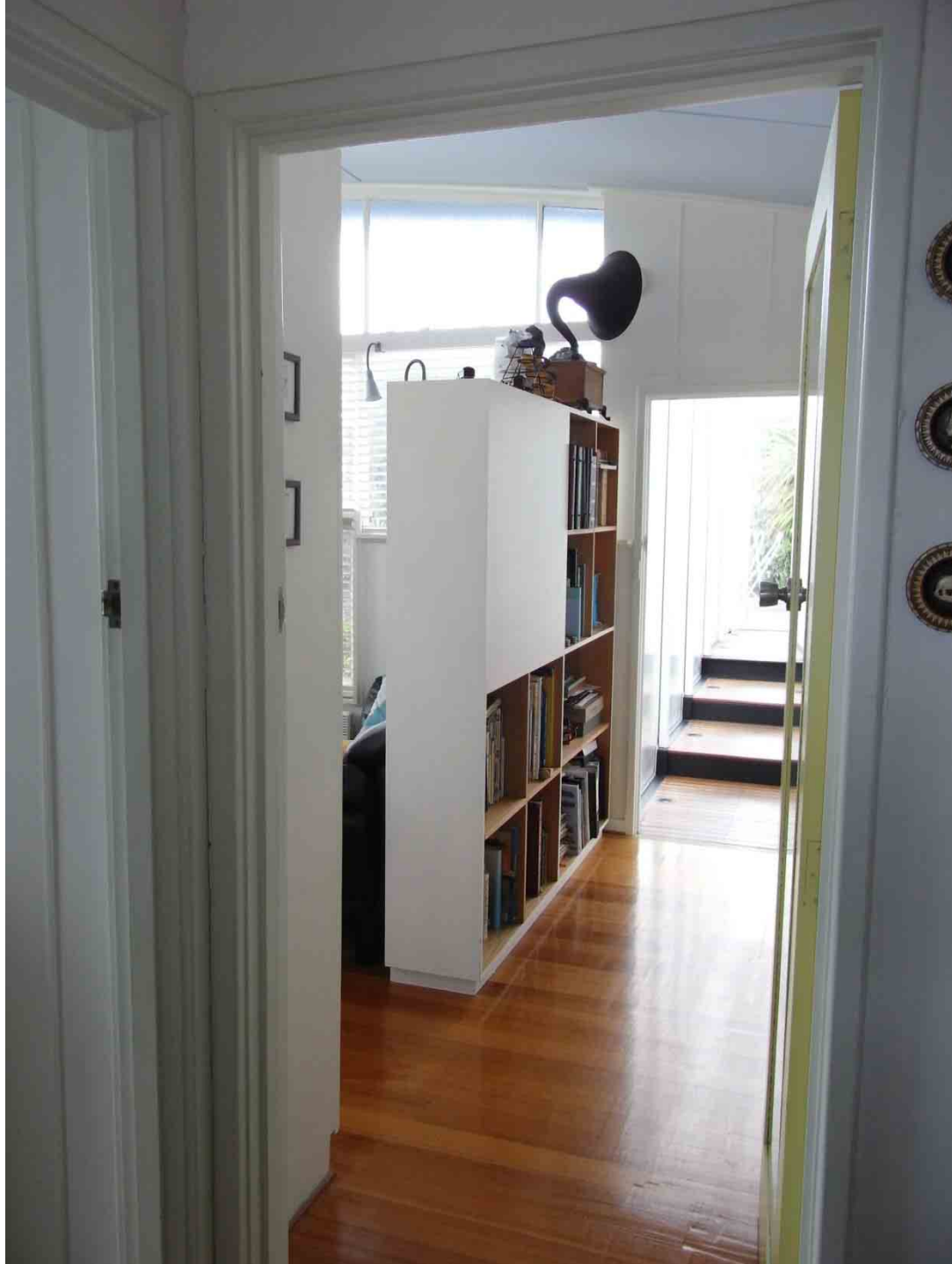


Dorney's original drawings submitted for planning approval in December 1958

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- *“As much built in furniture as possible should be included in a new home – storage walls are very convenient particularly between such rooms as the kitchen and dining rooms, where they are available from both sides and save so much walking and carrying.*
- *With properly built in furniture the work saved in cleaning a home is very considerable, no furniture to sweep under no heavy wardrobes to shift, no awkward corners and everything built to suit.*
- *It is more than worth considering if building a new home to build in as much furniture as possible.”*
- *J Esmond Dorney 1948*











The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- *“Houses today are often too much shut off into small units like a closed box for each activity. Of course it is necessary in some cases but not at all necessary in others. For instance the combination kitchen-living room is wonderfully convenient, and so very workable.*
- *The kitchen is a unit in itself, but opens into the living room, divided only by a bench for serving; and if the living room has a glass wall, making the garden part of the whole scheme, what a bright, happy workplace it is.”*
- *J Esmond Dorney 1948*



The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- *“The lounge is where the whole family comes together, and it should be a room of ease and relaxation, with a large welcoming fireplace as a focal point and a glass wall again bringing warmth, sunshine and beauty into the room.*
- *No picture, however wonderfully painted, could equal this natural picture.*
- *The piazza can be brought right into the lounge for some distance, giving even a closer link with the outside.*
- *A separate lounge and dining room, though necessary in some cases is not so necessary in a small home; a dining alcove off the lounge, large enough for the particular requirements of the householder, lends extra spaciousness and makes it so much more livable. Instead of leaving the fire and the warm room to go to a cold one to eat, you remain in the warmth and cheerfulness of the lounge room”*









The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- *“The bathroom with its modern fittings can be very attractive. It needs to be on a bright side of the house and to be in warm colours ...*
- *with hard, cold composition floors and tiled walls it can be a very cold cheerless place...*
- *instead of the bright warm place it should be.”*
- *J Esmond Dorney 1948*







The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- *“Never forget that a garden is an integral part of the house. Even the most perfect house in the world is beautified, softened and becomes more a part of the landscape if trees and lawns surround it. The garden should not be allowed to remain outside but should be made an integral part of the whole house otherwise its beauty is wasted. You may think I over-emphasise the combining of the inside and the outside of the home with glass walls, but I know of no home that I have designed thus, that the owners would change back to the old conventional style.”*
- Esmond Dorney in an interview with Petrina Moore, 1990





The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania



536 churchill avenue extension



morris-nunn & associates architects

208a collins street
hobart

This project involves the extension and alteration of the existing house to cater for a new set of requirements, which the existing house was not designed to. The design decisions of the new work have been based on an appreciation, understanding and interpretation of Dorney's original design. The intention of the new work therefore is to build in the spirit and upon the principles of the existing house, in order to cater for a growing family in 1999.

The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania



Just as with the interior alterations the new extension, to the rear of the site, takes its clues from the existing building. It is conceptually conceived as a pavilion in the garden, with design intentions based on the built vocabulary (frame, platform, roof) of the existing house.

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The new extension and alterations to 536 Churchill Avenue aim to continue the conversations begun by Dorney in original - the explorations of light, translucence and enclosure. We believe that the approach taken, that of respecting the existing, is a responsible one. We believe that it will not only leave the existing value of the house intact, but develop and extend these ideas, producing a new layer of complexity, history and use to an already valuable building.

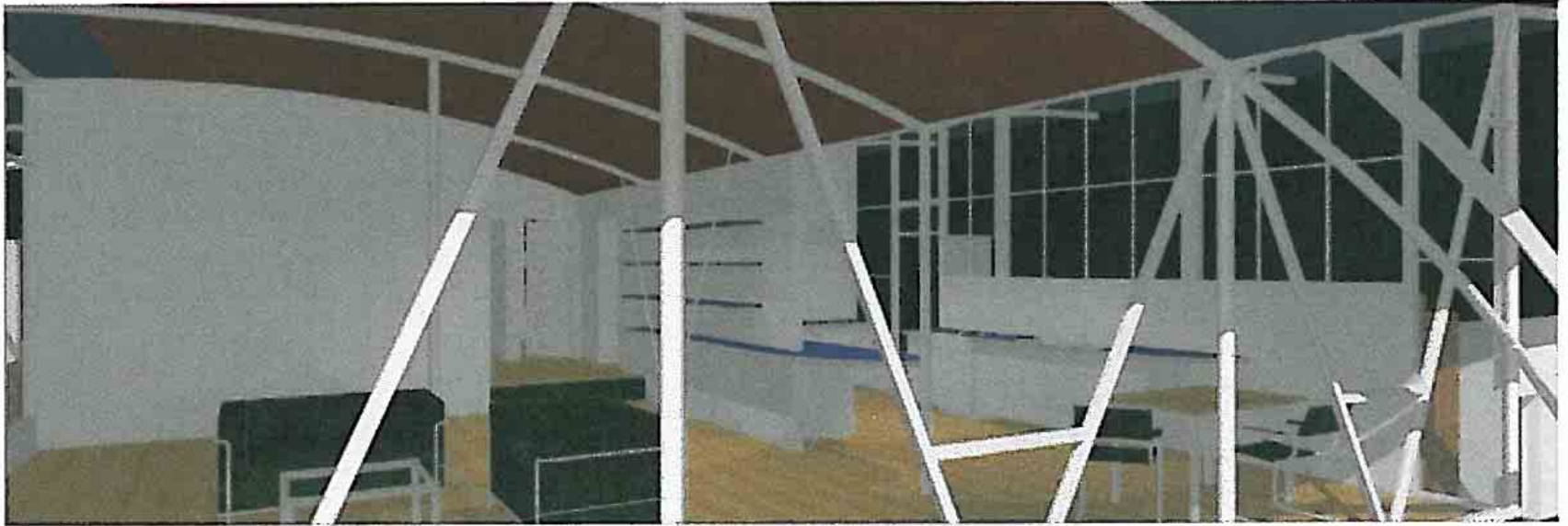
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- The tectonics of the new extension follow those of the existing house:
- The structure (as with the existing house) is formed by a series of butterfly pipe frames following the curves of the existing.
- The floor plate extends beyond the bedroom providing a threshold outside the internal boundaries- a podium in the garden.
- The roof floats and slides along the frame and over the walls separated by a series of transparent strips of polycarbonate. The northern side of the roof is feathered and reduced to become just unclad structure.
- The walls clad in mini-orb sit between the pipe frame under the blue ceiling. These walls wrap around the south, west and east of the new extension, orientating the interior to the northern light and view.
- Slit windows, horizontal in the study and vertical in the bathroom, capture focused aspects of the garden and site.

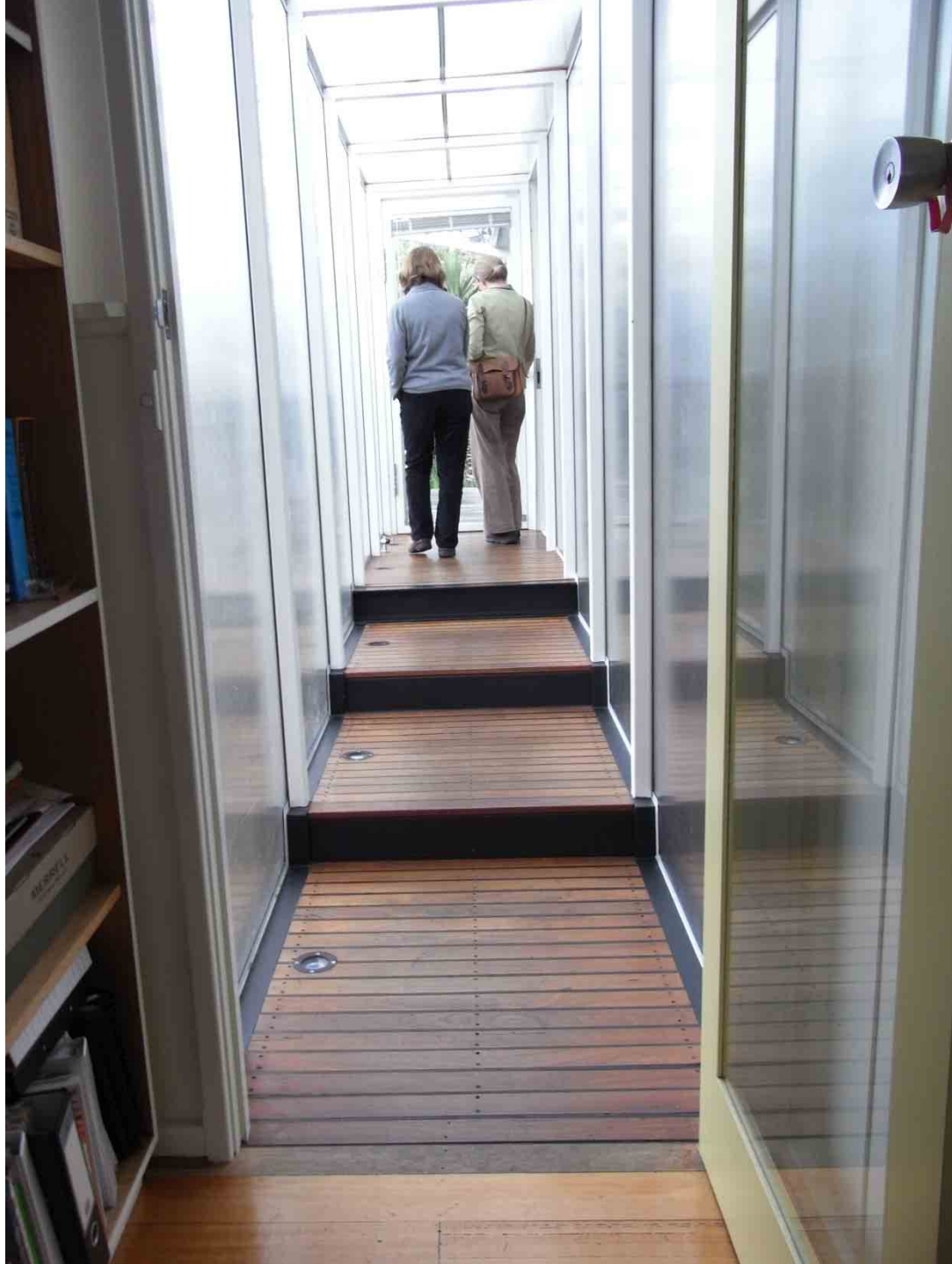
The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- 'By demolishing the existing wall between the kitchen and the laundry, the kitchen can be pushed back to give more room to the dining area and extending the space available to the kitchen.
- The new joinery of both the kitchen and the storage will have the same 1950s feel as that found in the existing kitchen.
- The purpose is to increase the 'workability' of the interior spaces and their resolution is based on the principles found in the existing house and in Dorney's own writings; the open planning of the living kitchen areas and the inclusion of built in furniture wherever possible.'

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It is proposed that the screen wall be removed along with part of the wall which currently divides the kitchen from the living room. This is primarily to enlarge the usable living area and increase the interaction between the kitchen and the living room. The wall which is to be partly removed will be rebuilt as a storage wall, consisting of the kitchen bench wrapping around into the living room and a series of shelves supported by a 'V' frame reminiscent of the framing in the front western window glazing.







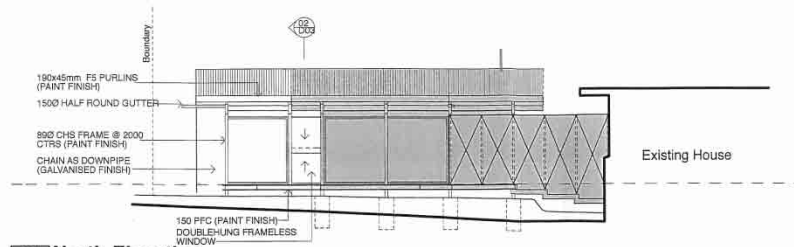




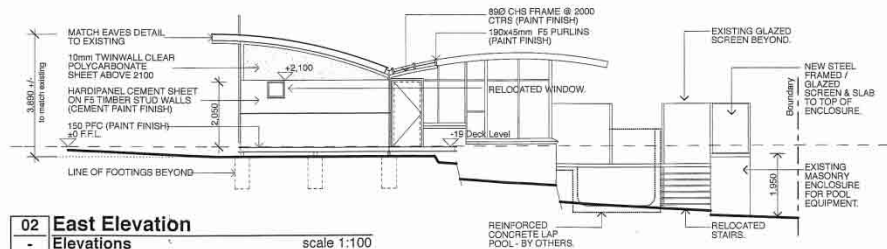




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01 North Elevation
- Elevations scale 1:100



02 East Elevation
- Elevations scale 1:100

revisions

Alterations+Additions
536 Churchill Avenue
Sandy Bay
Tasmania



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North & East
Elevations

status
Development Approval
DATE
Tuesday, 16 December 2008

0808-DA02

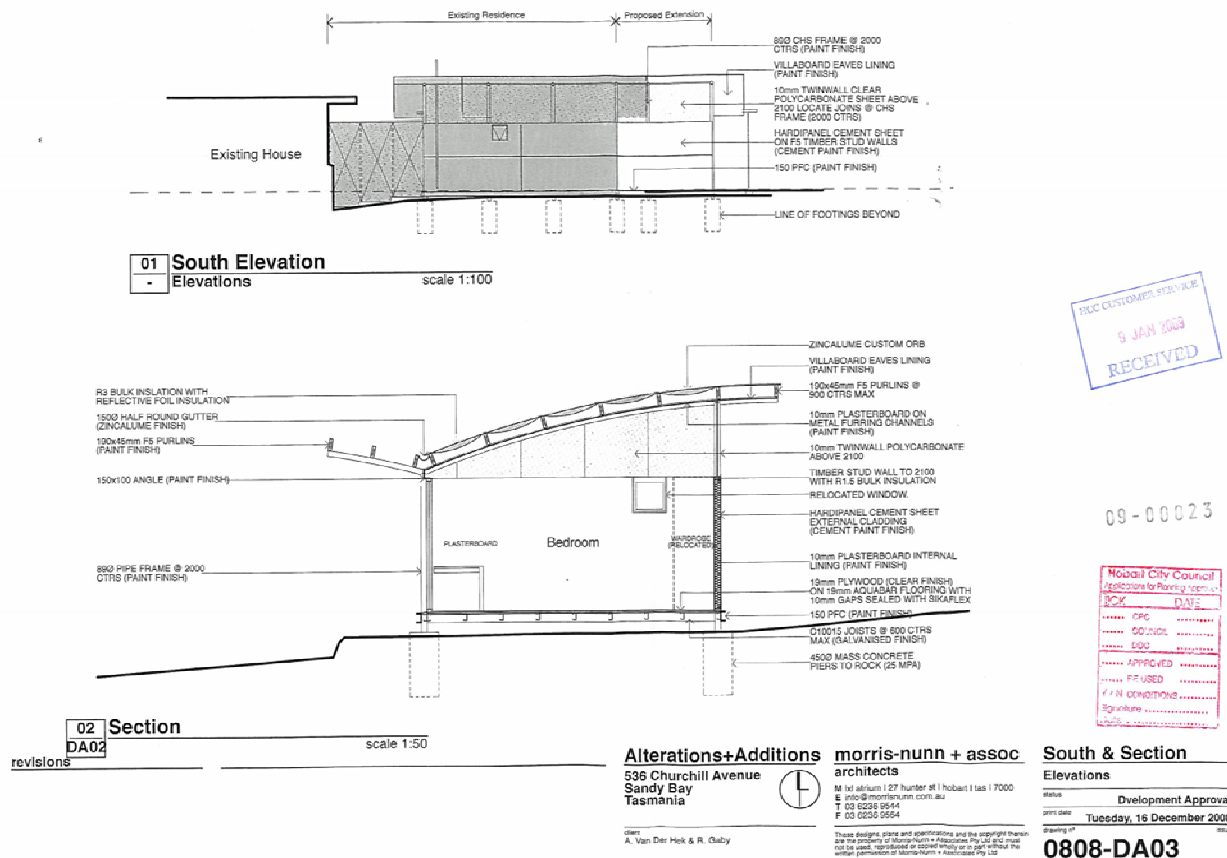


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Hobart City Council	
Applications for Planning Approval	
DATE	DATE
CPG	CPG
DD/ENGL	DD/ENGL
GDD	GDD
APPROVED	APPROVED
FE USED	FE USED
IN CONDITIONS	IN CONDITIONS
SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE

Morris-Nunn Alterations January 2009

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The Young House, 1959 Esmond Dorney Tasmania

- *“ A house should be planned like a machine, but a home is much more than a machine, and can in many ways express its owner’s personality.”*
- *J Esmond Dorney 1948*



