

Ed Lippmann has always been an interesting architect. Suddenly his work has become even more so. His ruminations with pencil on butter paper are growing in confidence. Returning to Australia from a tour of some of the century's great residential work inspired him. But what to do? Fire in the belly doesn't always put food on the table. Fortunately his timing was right.

The telephone rang. He was wanted.

# Home Delivery



Opportunity can arise from the most unlikely circumstances. The Taylor Residence at Mosman in Sydney is a classic example. It resulted from the recommendation of a real estate agent to his client. This will come as a great surprise to many architects. Most property agents, preoccupied with tidal movements of the market, have little interest in client education and the true value of quality contemporary design.

Exceptions do come along and in this instance Ed Lippmann grabbed the opportunity with both hands and designed his most impressive residential building. Thirty-nine is a good age to create something special. It is the time by which architects need to perform, or risk disappearance beneath the gush of new talent.

The Taylor Residence began life as something else altogether - a modest extension to a Californian bungalow. Ever the architect, Lippmann persuaded his clients to reconsider and expand their ambitions. This was a nice first move.

Good design has an indelible stamp and Lippmann shows he can be as indelible as anyone. His design is as immaculate as it is simple. As Tim from the Demtel commercials says: "but wait...there's more". Complex in conception, it is exquisitely crafted with a degree of finish usually reserved for modern machinery. It is an example of a gentle, kindly modernism, progressive enough to appear utterly at home in this decade.

It also has an authenticity about it that is missing from much of the work trawled from the architectural press. Those are the projects which look like fish out of water. The looted variety inevitably appears shallow and two dimensional. Lippmann's approach to architecture is methodical, systematic and a consequence of empirical process. He reveals how design should be considered from first principles - an approach disregarded by many schools of architecture. The result parallels the mood of modern art with graduates obsessed by the urgent adoption of style rather than an understanding of technique. This has led to 'artists' who cling to art dealers and architects who lean on structural engineers.

This early release approach to the training of architects puts Lippmann in a minority. He understands the language of materials, building and construction. On the Taylor Residence it produces an under-the-bonnet explanation whereby those parts normally concealed often for good reason - are suddenly better understood and valued. In this instance the exposed structural steelwork is welded rather than bolted to achieve an almost flawless finish.

*Lippmann...understands the language of materials, building and construction...it produces an under-the-bonnet explanation whereby those parts normally concealed, often for good reason, are suddenly better understood and valued.*





*Lippmann has achieved a house of X-ray quality spared from being bleak by a combination of high quality detail treatments and sparkling luminosity.*

"The project is a result of travels abroad," notes Lippmann. His wanderlust took him to the Case Study houses in California and Frank Lloyd-Wright's Taliesin West. From there he took up Lord Palumbo's invitation to visit the Farnsworth House prior to a tour of the Johnson Wax Building. It was then on to New York City via Fallingwater. In London Richard Rogers showed him Channel 4 and then to his office and John Young's apartment. The tour included Foster's Sackler Wing at the Royal Academy and in Paris he spent time at the Cartier building and other work by Jean Nouvel. A tour of Pierre Chareau's steel and glass masterwork, the Maison de Verre concluded an eventful study.

This itinerary is highly relevant to the Taylor Residence. It reminds us of how the senses can be affected in a way only possible by first hand experience. This is confirmed by Lippmann who suspended commercial work to recharge the batteries. His experiences burned bright.

"The brilliant use of pre-fabrication in the Case Study work, the spatial extension inherent in Wright's interior to exterior spaces. The craftsmanship of the Maison de Verre and Nouvel's confident expression of the glass facade were all at the forefront of my thinking when I returned.


"The Taylors rang by coincidence almost immediately upon that return to request our services for the bungalow 'extension'. In our initial conversations they talked of Tuscan villas. Unlike most clients, they were not familiar with my work but had been referred by the estate agent who had sold them the house.

"On first inspection I explained the benefits of contemporary design to capitalise on the inherent opportunities of the site, aspect and orientation. The spirit of 'this' place (ie. Sydney, Mosman, Lennox St. cul de sac) as distinct from other places such as Tuscany. Although this wasn't exactly Woolhara and the 10-jet jacuzzi I had warned against ('Armour Plated Elegance', Steel Profile 54).

The road to Lippmann's architecture heroes is highly motivational. If he chose to appear in photographs alongside monuments such as those by Lloyd-Wright and Chareau, it is only because few of us are not moved by such a brush with genius. His travels reinforced and affirmed the principles which underscore beautiful function.

The influence of various heroes is ingrained in the Taylor Residence - Nouvel, Rogers, Foster, Lloyd-Wright and Chareau. It proves that the best architecture has a habit of returning to remarkably similar beginnings.

This latest work demonstrates Lippmann's coming of age. For a long time in 'the most promising' category, and usually as understudy for the main performers, suddenly he has stepped out of the shadows. If it is not already obvious, he is now a main event.

Peter Hyatt 

Client:	Brad and Julie Taylor
Architect:	Lippmann Associates Tel. (02) 318 0844
Design team:	Ed Lippmann, Scott Lester
Structural engineer:	Ove Arups and Partners- Tristram Carfrae
Steel fabricator:	Edcon Steel Pty. Ltd.
Builder:	Caromac Pty. Ltd.
Cost:	\$410,000 (inc. landscaping and garage)
Size:	190 sq.m. (house)
Photography:	Peter Hyatt



The quality of the entire work would not have been available but for the commitment of builder Gordon [unclear], an integral member of the project team", says [unclear]mann.

He was fortunate to encounter clients who reported every effort to create a thoroughly temporary Australian residence." He describes the relationship as a process of engaging and productive findings from design stage through to documentation, construction of this house delivered its commitment to quality. The project was consistent with [unclear] of other complicated projects concerned with [unclear] form and space.

This is a house of relationships where the exterior gardens open to the interior via large, glazed [unclear], stacking doors. A motorised fabric screen 'wall' protects the vast north-west facing glass facade which, inside offers views to Sirius Cove and the city [unclear] beyond. A north facing skylight over the full [unclear] of the house is covered with metal louvres to [unclear] excessive sun but permit maximum winter gain. The manipulation of sunlight is complemented by gas fired ducted space heating to [unclear] efficient winter warmth. In summer, high bay [unclear] glass screens ventilate and extract hot air. [unclear] is banded in a horizontal module with [unclear] cueing the onlooker to the 'open' or 'closed' mode. The horizontal panellised aesthetic relates [unclear] to the landscape and ground plane (while [unclear] above it) has a distinct Japanese derivation. The aesthetic impact is one of calm and serenity, of [unclear] rather than height.

The expressed structural steel frame, composed of [unclear] vertical beam and column sections, provides the basic [unclear] and spatial rhythms.

This frame expresses the 'parti' of servant to served [unclear] with the wet area located in the middle of the [unclear] on the eastern (solid) wall. The frame is welded [unclear] provide a seamless finish appropriate for a domestic [unclear] rather than industrial environment. The frame was [unclear] coated with zinc silicate spray prior to being painted [unclear] with a metallic silver roofing paint.

The triple curved roof forms respond to the planning [unclear] bedrooms and bathrooms and suggests the [unclear]

*Full height, retractable, electrically driven sun shading devices protect the west face of the house.*

*Louvres provide a filtered light while the steel staircase provides a minimal structural mass and maximum transparency.*

