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INTERIOR DESIGN

House, Wombarra, New South Wales, Australia
Architect
Lippmann Associates

1
The transparent structure, barely visible, hardly intrudes on the landscape.

2
The western zone, made partly opaque by plywood panelling, contains the entrance and more private areas.

3
The eastern more transparent part of the house projects out over the sloping site, supported by steel struts.



Sea view

Set in the midst of an Australian wilderness, an elegant glass and steel house demonstrates Modernism's continuing ubiquity and adaptability.

Australia's verdant cities and astonishing rural hinterlands, with their unique flora and fauna, invite Modernist expression and transparency, particularly in the design of the private house. Glenn Murcutt in New South Wales has demonstrated how a Rational idiom can be adapted to a variety of contexts while evoking tradition – the rural shed, the functional structure, the verandah – and the romance inherent in the landscape.

A series of houses by Lippmann Associates, also based in New South Wales, evinces similar preoccupations. For some time the practice has been developing a system of lightweight steel and glass structures that is easily adapted to the context, is durable and as maintenance free as possible.

The Cashman/Pickles House is one such and was designed as a weekend retreat for a family of four, about an hour's drive from Sydney.

Its setting is spectacular, for this glazed pavilion sits lightly and extremely privately in the midst of dense vegetation in the Wombarra nature reserve, with views to the east of the nearby beach and ocean, and on the west to mountains. The soil here is unstable and the annual rainfall high, so that geotechnical recommendations for lightweight construction coincided with the skeletal, transparent inclinations of architects and clients. They also conformed with official requirement to interfere with the site as little as possible.

Only a small part of the two acre site was suitable for building.

