

**A THEORY OF MAKING:**

ARCHITECTURE AND ART IN THE PRACTICE OF ADOLF LOOS

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I, William Richard Eric Tozer, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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**ABSTRACT**

Adolf Loos repeatedly discusses the role of art in relation to architecture in his essays, but many of his statements appear either repetitive or inconsistent with one another, and are difficult to reconcile with his buildings. Considering Loos's writing and built work together, rather than separately, suggests that instead of being fully formulated as a methodology and then implemented in practice, Loos's argument emerges serially and in a piecemeal fashion with the progressive development of his buildings through practice—a theory of making. The line of enquiry into the historical and theoretical material is informed by the division of my own design work in practice into sculptural components and furnishings. The research proceeds on the hypothesis that Loos similarly divided each of his buildings into discrete elements that he either understood as art, or considered functional—and that he deployed ornament to signal the latter, rather than the former. This hypothesis is investigated by tracing the origin and development in his built projects of a number of particular components of the Müller House, in relation to the emergence and revision of specific aspects of Loos's written argument on art and architecture in the essays contemporaneous with these buildings. The investigations are structured by reference to the distinct qualities of each component as identified through the design research, focusing on Composite House. While the research method is specific to my own design work in practice, the investigation is structured so as to produce autonomous outcomes in relation to Loos and modernism, which are meaningful when decoupled from this field data. Loos has to date been predominantly examined through conceptions of modernism as the expression of function, structure, technology or society; however, it is argued here that modern architecture could conversely be understood, through Loos, as a form of art practice.



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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **CONTEXT**

This research project proceeds from the observation that while there is great diversity in the manner in which Loos has been understood historically and theoretically, the vast majority of these interpretations are underpinned by an unusual level of consensus—namely that Loos was an early proponent of modernism, and opposed art and ornament in architecture. Underpinning this consensus is the conception that modernism in architecture is centred on issues of function, structure, technology and society. Adrian Forty has noted that, ‘In English-speaking countries between about 1930 and 1960, “functional” became a catch-all term for “modern” architecture’,<sup>1</sup> and this assumption seems to have continued to define scholarship on Loos as a modern architect, despite a significant widening of conceptions of modernism since this time.<sup>2</sup> As ‘functionalism’ now possesses a more particular meaning as a branch of modern architecture, ‘practical-ism’ might perhaps be better shorthand for the notion that the aesthetic appearance of modern architecture is nothing more than the consequence of practical considerations—whether they pertain to function or other phenomena—and it is this broader definition that informs my use of the term ‘functionalism’ throughout. Essentially I am arguing that it is the fact that Loos’s buildings resemble the work of modernist architects who claim to be motivated by these functional or other practical considerations, or whose work is understood in these terms, that has led to the widespread assumption that his work is simply a precursor to it. My research suggests that Loos’s work is not convincingly explained by placing it in this lineage, and conversely, the particular understanding of Loos’s work that emerges—modern architecture as composed of discrete elements of art and function—provides a productive means for reinterpreting the work of those modernist architects.

This widespread view of Loos locates the exteriors of his buildings within the functionalist modernist lineage; however, while acknowledging his contribution to the spatial development of modernism, otherwise generally dismisses his interiors as at odds with both modernism and the architect’s own writing. The following ‘Art and Function’ chapter presents a literature review, with the primary objective of establishing the validity of this interpretation of the existing scholarship on Loos, but also with the aim of framing the research position set forward here, by identifying the authors from which it extends—either in pursuing their ideas through new primary research of the buildings and essays, or by drawing an original line of argument between their ideas. However, it should be noted that where existing scholarship makes explicit reference to the themes of the chapters that follow, this literature is reviewed in the corresponding chapter. The

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<sup>1</sup> Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2000), 187.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Vidler, *Histories of the Immediate Present: Inventing Architectural Modernism*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008). Vidler defines four different histories of modernist architecture.

review begins with the most widely available books published in English, which have inevitably shaped the widespread perception of Loos, and then proceeds to a brief outline of the way in which a number of these assumptions underpin a diverse range of academic articles on Loos.

Just as there has been a vast amount written about Loos, he also wrote prolifically, and on a wide range of subjects. As set out above, this research project concerns itself with the unusual level of consensus amidst the diverse writing on Loos that he was a functionalist opponent of ornament. With regard to the architect's own writing, it is similarly Loos's apparent repetition of a number of ideas throughout most of the essays of his career rather than the particular subject material of each, that is the focus of the research. While Loos's essays deal with a diversity of issues, including furniture, furnishings, fashion, and architecture, Loos repeatedly discusses the role of art, function and ornament. This research proceeds not only with the thesis that Loos's ideas are in fact contradictory to the predominant view of Loos as a functionalist modernist—but also that his discussions of them are neither simply repetitive, nor contradictory with one another or his buildings. Instead, it is proposed that his ideas on art, function and ornament evolve over time, in relation to his own design work in practice. As set out in the methodology section below, five Loos essays have been selected to focus the research through the main chapters, but the 'Art and Function' chapter places these detailed analyses in the context of Loos's other writing.

The historical investigation into Loos is undertaken through research by design, utilizing my own work in practice as a lens. Composite House was selected as the project through which to focus this methodology, because at the time of commencing the research, it was the design in progress that brought together most comprehensively the ideas that I had developed through the buildings of my first decade of practice. Consequently, Composite House functions as useful shorthand for this collection of ideas, and a meaningful mechanism for structuring references to the other projects through which these ideas emerged and evolved. The project, located in Balham, a central suburb to the south of central London, was commissioned in 2006, designed and documented during 2006 and 2007, and completed on site in 2008. Composite House was constructed for private clients, a couple and their two young children, who live in the house with a nanny. The inherent nature of design work means that using it to structure research will almost inevitably result in original outcomes. Conversely, however, one of the intrinsic challenges of research by design is ensuring that the investigation is structured so as to produce outcomes that are not only original, but also that teach others something material about the subject to which they are applied—rather than only possessing meaning when paired with the design material. This could be described as a research equivalent of the value of a design process itself—to deliver an outcome other than that which the author would have arrived at instinctively. Research by design carries with it a risk also attendant on the design process itself—appearing to pose and answer questions, when in fact engaged in rhetorical and self-reflexive dialogue that has no meaning outside of its own framework. Using my own design

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work in practice as a mechanism to reexamine the buildings and writing of Loos inevitably provides an original perspective, but as set out in the 'Methodology' section below and in Part One, the research was structured in such a way that the outcome challenged some of my original objectives, led to unexpected conclusions for my ongoing practice—and offered an interpretation of Loos that challenges a number of assumptions underpinning much existing scholarship on his work, and modernism more generally. While any architect could use their work in practice to pursue a research question, my methodology is unique to my own design work and historical and theoretical subject.

My research method is atypical of the work carried out on the Bartlett's Architectural Design PhD programme only in that it is conducted using design work carried out in practice. It could be said that while most projects are structured around academic design work that is set up to directly address an historical or theoretical research question, my own takes design work carried out in relation to building projects and uses it to question an historical and theoretical subject. However, it is also true of many projects that are not practice-based that a body of design work commenced well in advance of commencing the PhD programme suggests the research question or subject. Nonetheless, design work in practice possesses a unique character as a research tool due to the fact that there are forces outside of the academic research programme acting upon it. Consequently, by comparison to design work based entirely in academia, the relevant aspects of practice-based design work must be extracted from many others that are unrelated to the research question. In these terms, the former could be understood as analogous to a laboratory experiment, and the latter akin to the collection of field data. Like all laboratory work, design research conducted entirely in academia conversely has the opposite potential pitfall—that the validity of its outcomes depend entirely upon isolating the relevant aspects before setting up and conducting the experiment. RMIT University offers a PhD programme specifically targeted at practicing architects, but it differs from the Bartlett course in that the primary stated aim is for candidates to move from mastery of their profession to creative innovation.<sup>3</sup> While continued and improved creativity and innovation are likely outcomes of my doctoral work at the Bartlett, this is a side effect of my primary goal—an original reinterpretation of Loos that opens further avenues of theoretical and historical research that are autonomous from my design work. The challenge of my teaching prior to the PhD programme was to apply knowledge distilled from my practice-based experience without imposing my own design agendas and processes. In subsequent teaching I similarly aim to apply the theoretical conclusions of my doctoral research that can be uncoupled from the research methodology that facilitated them.

Prior to commencing work in practice I had developed a keen interest in Loos, and as a result, all of my work is to some extent influenced by his the buildings and writing. This is not to say that Loos is the only influence on the design work, or that all of the work in practice is research

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<sup>3</sup> Leon van Schaik, *Mastering Architecture: Becoming a Creative Innovator in Practice* (Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005).

relevant to a study of Loos. The understanding of Loos that I brought into practice was partly based upon my own experience of his work, but largely formed through reading existing scholarship. Designing buildings in practice presented the opportunity for me to understand Loos's work from a different perspective, and prompted me to question a number of the assumptions about the meaning of his work that I had adopted from secondary sources. My work in practice has obviously continued during my doctoral research and so has inevitably changed incrementally as a result of the insights that I have gained. Alongside my practice work I have accumulated over ten years experience in architectural journalism. While I did not conceive of it in this way at the outset, this is an interesting parallel to Loos's simultaneous writing and building, and I have progressively come to realize that my writing has influenced the development of my design work. While academic writing has distinct differences from journalistic writing, which can in turn be distinguished from the writing carried out in the process of building projects, both of the latter forms of writing have influenced the course of the former. Both my buildings and writing informed my selection of my research subject, but the primary effect of my journalistic essays and practice-based writing is on the mode of my research. Writing is used in my practice-based research as a means for progressing and implementing the design process, but in my doctoral research has operated as a mechanism for collating, sorting and analyzing the practice work in order to mediate its relationship with my theoretical and historical subject.

#### MOTIVATIONS, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research project is to some extent motivated by the fact that the understanding I have developed of Loos through practice cannot be readily reconciled with existing scholarship. A tendency to generalize in relation to both his writing and buildings has perpetuated a widespread belief that Loos was a functionalist modernist, despite the fact that this does not sit easily with specific components of many of his buildings. As my research interest in Loos predates the ten years of design work in practice through which this investigation is structured, the relationship between my understanding of Loos's architecture and my conception of my own work is inevitably reciprocal. The discussion of Loos is consequently informed by two distinct types of research—abstract consideration of an historical example from primary and secondary sources, and the process of making architecture in practice. In broader terms, the research aims to capitalise upon one of the overwhelming conclusions I have drawn from my own practice—that abstract or theoretical ideas emerge from the process of making buildings in practice, at least as much as the converse is true. The historical research into Loos yields hypotheses that inform both the development and understanding of my own built work in practice, and the process of realising and reflecting upon the latter similarly produces ideas that illuminate the former.

The disconnection between the observations of my research through historical and theoretical sources on Loos, and my research by design, is centred on the notion that architecture can be understood as a form of art practice. This issue is placed in a broader context by Robin Evans, when he observes that 'it is more difficult to make a building art-like than a picture because the perceptions of the building are more in themselves but less manageable, less capable of full orchestration'.<sup>4</sup> Evans distinguishes between the capacity of architecture by comparison to other forms of art practice,<sup>5</sup> noting that 'Architecture is the exceptional case because, substantial yet representational, it is more equivocally of the world and, at the same time, *about* the world than any other art form'.<sup>6</sup> Evans's focus on the notion of projective space resonates with my design-based understanding of Loos's work, and architecture more generally, as art in the sense that it is one's emotional response through perception that is central. Loos's use of false beams, non-load-bearing columns, and space-enhancing mirrors suggests an architecture concerned with perception, and runs counter to modernist notions of transparency and truth. In this respect, this research project could be seen as an attempt to apply Evans's general ideas on architecture and art to reach a specific understanding of Loos—but which in turn facilitates a reconsideration of modern architecture more generally, as a particular form of art practice, in order to effect a change in the way it is both understood historically, and practised.

Evans also laments architecture's tendency to draw upon mathematics, the natural sciences, the human sciences, painting, and literature, and asks 'Why is it not possible to derive a *theory of architecture* from a consideration of *architecture*?'<sup>7</sup> This question also resonates with one of the primary motivations for this research project, the observation of a distinct gap between the statements and actions of architects since the modern period. Rather than understanding Loos through abstract theoretical reference or rhetoric, this research sets out to derive an understanding of Loos's theory of architecture from close observation of his work in practice.<sup>8</sup> The gap between architects' stated and enacted processes is to at least some degree connected to Donald Schön's observation of 'a widening rift between the universities and the profession, research and practice, thought and action',<sup>9</sup> and a 'selective inattention to practical competence and professional artistry'. In this respect, this research project also sets out to

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<sup>4</sup> Robin Evans, *The Projective Cast: Architecture and Its Three Geometries* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), xxi.

<sup>5</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, 65.

<sup>6</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, 65.

<sup>7</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, xxxvi.

<sup>8</sup> Leslie Van Duzer and Kent Kleinman, *Villa Müller: A Work of Adolf Loos* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 17. Van Duzer and Kleinman have noted that in existing scholarship on Loos, 'the built is seen as an illustration of the written. This involves a kind of tagging of the former with excerpts of the latter, as if naming constitutes an interpretation or description. In this approach, the pieces that do not match terse Loosian quips naturally remain obscure, and the pieces that seem to match are consumed in the process of naming'. However, while Van Duzer and Kleinman cite this simply as an explanation for the suppression of documentation that is inconsistent 'with the architect's own prodigious rhetorical output', it is argued here that this is evidence that Loos's writing is not rhetorical at all, but rather has a reciprocal relationship with his built practice.

<sup>9</sup> Donald A Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Ashgate, 1983), vii-viii.

reexamine the meaning of Loos's statements on architectural education and representation in light of the hypothesis that he understood architecture as a form of art—with the aim of specifically addressing this rift in relation to my own practice, writing and teaching, and suggesting ways in which contemporary architectural education could be reconsidered.

These more general objectives—addressing the inadequacies of a functionalist explanation of modernism, and the gap between architectural education and practice—are questions raised by my own design work in practice. This research project also has a more specific aim, however, in seeking to test how effectively my own design methods operate as a form of art practice, by using them to structure the enquiries into Loos. It is hoped that testing my own methodology in this way might suggest ways in which it might be revised. Preceding the commencement of the research, my own design work had been limited to small architectural projects, and I harbored concerns that increasing the scale of projects or the practice might diminish my authorship of the architecture produced. If one views architecture as a form of art, one might conclude that it was not possible to practice art at a scale where the authorship of drawings and management of building sites and clients is beyond the control of an individual. If one is to understand Loos's architecture as art practice, the small scale of Loos's projects could easily be seen as evidence supporting this notion, and this research sets out to test the validity of such a conclusion.

The role of words—and in particular writing—in the production of architecture is a key aspect of this research project, as a potential source of liberation from the notion that architectural authorship is singularly and inextricably linked with drawing.<sup>10</sup> Like Loos, my own practice of architecture has consisted of built work, teaching and prolific journalist writing on architecture, and the selection of Loos's work as the subject of this research is motivated by a desire to understand more fully the relationship between these activities.<sup>11</sup> Connected with this objective is the aim to qualify and quantify to some extent the sense drawn from practice that many activities considered design-neutral are in fact central to the process of design in this context. Clients, staff, peers, and planning and building regulation issues are hugely influential on design outcomes in practice—and the role of words, whether written or spoken, seems under-recognized by comparison to drawing in communicating and realizing design.<sup>12</sup> While many of the processes of practice are generally given only professional rather than academic consideration by academia, it is proposed here that they can be considered part of the design

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<sup>10</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 12, 19. Forty cites Tom Markus as observing that 'Language is at the core of making, using and understanding buildings'. Forty notes that 'one of the most distinctive features of modernism has been its suspicion of language', and that this 'denies language any place in the practice that it purports to discuss'.

<sup>11</sup> Adolf Loos, 'On Thrift,' in *Adolf Loos: On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, Cal.: Ariadne Press, 1995), 178. Loos himself remarked that 'I do not need to draw my designs. A good architectural concept of how something is to be built can be written down'.

<sup>12</sup> Mario Carpo, *Architecture in the Age of Printing: Orality, Typography and Printed Images in the History of Architectural Theory*, trans. Sarah Benson (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 2001). Carpo sets out a history of the manner in which writing has transformed architectural production.

process because they are influential on architectural outcomes in this context. All of the processes of practice have some effect on the design of all elements of built architecture, but there are various synergies between some particular processes and elements. These connections illuminate the relationship between the building components identified in the design research in Part One, and the Loos essays with which they are paired in each of the chapters in Part Two. The relationship between an architect and client has particularly resonance with the consideration of walls, floors and ceilings alongside 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay. Loos's peer group can be seen as connected with his ideas on contemporary culture and craft in 'Ornament and Crime', and his design of staircases, joinery and fixtures. Writing is a central theme of the 'Architecture' essay, which is paired with analysis of Loos's design of doors and windows. External form is especially susceptible to planning and building regulations, and the discussion of comfort and beauty in the 'Art and Architecture' essay addresses assumptions that also underpin this process. Drawing is a central theme of the 'Ornament and Education' essay, and the principal mechanism by which the discussion of Loos's design of space is illustrated.

## METHODOLOGY

As detailed in the 'Art and Function' chapter, theorists on Loos have to date dealt with his built work and writing separately from one another, or treated one as simply an explication of the other. Consequently, the widespread conclusion is that in repeating a collection of simple ideas on art, function and ornament, the essays present a number of contradictions, both with one another and with Loos's buildings. This research considers the buildings and essays together, and my own research by design is used to structure the methodology. Utilising the ubiquitous written building specification as a model, my own work is analysed by assessing how the specific qualities of various building components affect the particular way in which they are articulated in order to be perceived as either 'sculptural elements' or 'furnishings'.<sup>13</sup> This analysis, set out in the 'Art and Architecture' chapter, is focused on the Composite House (2008) project, and the development of the building elements of the house is traced through the preceding and subsequent projects that fully illuminate the characteristics of each. Conflating the trade-based categories of a specification of works, the five selected groups of building elements are walls, ceilings and floors; staircases, joinery and fixtures; windows and doors; external form; and space. Each of the main chapters examines the same five sets of building components in the Müller House (1930), using the specificities identified through the design research to guide the search for Loos's own treatment of them. Loos's other projects are investigated to identify the time at which each of the group of building elements was most actively developed into the form in which it appears in the Müller House. This chronology guides the pairing of each group of elements with a seminal Loos essay that discusses art, function and ornament, and the particular characteristics of the grouping informs a reading of Loos's

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<sup>13</sup> A discussion of a number of the key terminology used in the dissertation concludes the Methodology section of the Introduction.



statements. Rather than being contradictory with one another or his buildings, it emerges from this line of enquiry that in each of the essays Loos subtly modifies his ideas to accommodate the changing issues he faces in his built work. The first portion of each chapter serves simply to test whether the hypothesis that Loos's work can be understood as similarly composed of sculptural elements and furnishings, can be sustained through detailed and repeated testing. The analysis of each essay then proceeds to test whether the hypothesis can be extended to propose that Loos himself understood his own buildings in this way, and used the corresponding terms 'art' and 'function' respectively.

Walls, floors and ceilings clearly occur throughout Loos's built work, but this analysis is paired with 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay of 1900 because it is preceded by an interior project, and was followed by a decade of apartment interiors in which Loos is dealing extensively with these elements—not with external form, or external windows and doors; only to a limited extent with staircases; and to no particularly notable degree with joinery or fixtures. Space inevitably forms a part of these projects, but its role is less compositional and more perfunctory than in other periods. As Loos does not refer specifically to his own built work in his essays, it is not possible to establish direct links between an essay and components of the buildings that precede or follow it. Rather, the analysis of 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay is presented here because the period of most intense development of Loos's handling of walls, floors and ceilings follows directly from this first written discussion of architecture as a form art, and ornament as signifying a building component as outside of this realm—and his handling of these elements can be traced, relatively unchanged, from this period through the intervening projects to the Müller House. The 'Ornament and Crime' essay is similarly paired with the discussion of staircases, joinery and fixtures because a number of these elements of the Müller House can be traced almost unchanged from examples that first occur in projects that immediately predate and postdate its publication date of 1908. While the essay reiterates many of the statements of the preceding essay with regard to art and ornament, the fundamental revision that Loos makes to his ideas is the proposal that new ornament should be a product of culture. While Loos's walls, floors and ceilings of the period are either unadorned surfaces or treated with classical or traditional detail, his treatment of staircases, joinery and fixtures demanded a modification of his statements to explain the appearance of elements that were neither entirely unornamented nor historically ornamented, but were instead signified as functional rather than art elements of his architecture by the appearance of evidence of their craft.

While published only two years after 'Ornament and Crime', the 'Architecture' essay is paired with the analysis of windows and doors because in the process of again restating the notion of architecture as composed of autonomous elements of art and function, it is in this essay that Loos asserts the importance of separating these two roles of architecture by rallying against the notion of applied art, which attempts to combine the two. This realization in Loos's writing comes at a juncture when Loos is designing his first houses, which require him to deal with external form, windows and external doors, which did not form part of the scope of the

preceding apartment projects. The essay is paired with windows and doors, rather than external form, because the development in these projects of window typologies that appear in the Müller House is more readily discerned than an origin of external form. While Loos also dealt with external form extensively in the projects of the decade following the *Architecture* essay, the articulation of the form of the Müller House can be more readily traced to the projects that pivot around the publication date of the 'Art and Architecture' essay in 1920. The essay further refines Loos's argument by attempting to distinguish more explicitly between art, applied art, and ornament; and discusses architecture's conflicting requirements to be both practical and useful, and confronting and challenging. These issues seem more pertinent to the constraints acting on external form than any of the building elements discussed in the other chapters, and a clear trajectory can be observed between the external form of the Müller House and the projects that follow and immediately precede the essay. The explicit theme of 'Ornament and Education' is architectural training, but the publication date of 1924 coincides with a distinct shift in the spatial distribution of Loos's projects. It is in this period that Loos's projects first display the spatial complexity that has come to be known as the *Raumplan*, and the notion set forward in the essay—that one cannot be taught to design architecture because artistic ability is innate—resonates with the emotive and intellectual responses that are elicited by the spaces of Müller House, and the appearance of related spatial elements in the preceding projects.

The 'Art and Architecture' chapter discusses my design research through photographic and drawn documentation of completed buildings. This structure recognizes the central role of photography as a design tool—shaping the reception of each project, and consequently the way in which subsequent buildings are commissioned, designed and constructed.<sup>14</sup> As these photographs are my own or taken under direction, they foreground the issues central to the design research—by contrast to those that have been commissioned by various publications to highlight aspects of lifestyle, the clients, or the furnishings. Drawing is utilized to frame the discussion of space due to the tendency of photography to foreground form, material and light over the spaces that they define. Each section of photography or drawing acts as the primary mechanism by which the various aspects of the design research are presented, and is preceded by a short written discussion that sets out the manner in which my conception of architecture—as composed of sculptural elements and furnishings—is articulated in relation to each group of building components. The detached and predominantly descriptive tone of the text is an extension of the project text that I write at the conclusion of each project in practice so that it can become part of the design process for the designs that follow. Each chapter investigates an

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<sup>14</sup> George Dodds, *Building Desire: On the Barcelona Pavilion* (London: Routledge, 2005), 7. Discussing the manner in which photographs of the Barcelona Pavilion have shaped its reception, Dodds remarks that 'It is one thing to recognize ... that an event may be a prop for its own representation in another medium; it is quite another to offer up a representation as evidentiary of the event's facticity'.

Jonathan Hill, *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users* (London: Routledge, 2003), 21. Hill notes two roles of photography: 'to present the architectural object as a higher form of cultural production so as to defend and promote architects and patrons, and to further the absorption of buildings and architects into commodity production and consumer culture'.

aspect of Loos's building and writing, and while photography is also used extensively, it predominantly serves to illustrate the argument set forward in detail in the accompanying text. While the vast majority of the photographs presented of the Müller House are my own, a small number from other sources are included where they offer views of the building that either no longer exist or are obscured in the current state of the house as a museum. For practical reasons, most notably the lack of access to their interiors, photography from other sources has been utilized extensively in relation to Loos's other projects. As noted throughout, these photographs are often cropped dramatically to highlight the particular aspect under discussion and to highlight relationships to the Müller House and the design research. With the exception of the Müller House, the dates of Loos's projects are repeated in each paragraph in which they occur to provide clarity. The appendices comprise a survey of my design work in practice, and a selection of my own essays on various architectural subjects over the past ten years. These appendices are intended to offer the reader context for the work that is presented in the dissertation, and a mechanism for pursuing other analyses through the same material.

A number of terms used extensively in this dissertation warrant explication and positioning in an architectural or broader context. Some of this terminology is used by Loos, while some has its origin in descriptions of my own practice-based design work. Consequently, each of the terms has a distinct meaning that derives from its origin and specific usage. Furthermore, there are both overlaps and divergences of Loos's terminology and my own. Set out below is a brief discussion of the use of the terms 'element', 'type', 'composition', 'sculpture', 'art', 'culture', and 'space'.

The term 'element' is used—interchangeably with the word 'component'—in discussions of my own design work, to refer to visually discrete pieces of buildings. These 'elements' are primarily the categories into which the chapters are divided—walls, floors and ceilings; staircases, joinery and fixtures; doors and windows; external form; and space. They are posited as 'elements' in the sense that they are aesthetically received as such—not to propose that they are physically elemental, even from a construction point of view. In other words, these are the visual pieces that together constitute the perceived whole of the building. Loos does not use the terms 'element' or 'component', but they are used in this research to refer to his built work. This deployment of the term 'element' is closely linked to some usage of the word 'type' in modern architecture, although the latter term is more often used to refer to use or morphology. This connection is perhaps best made with reference to Gottfried Semper's *The Four Elements of Architecture*, which Forty cites in his discussion of 'type', remarking that 'Semper's project was "to trace these prototypical forms of architecture"'.<sup>15</sup> While focussed on processes, Semper discusses architectural types in a manner that is analogous to the use of the terms 'element' and 'component' in this dissertation—terracing (masonry), roofing (carpentry), the hearth (ceramics), walling (textiles). In relation to the subject of 'style', Harry Mallgrave and Michael

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<sup>15</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 306.

Robinson variously translate Semper's writing using the terms 'type', 'element' and 'component' in relation to pieces of buildings—although the word 'element' predominates, and 'type' is also used to refer to something that has become standard or typical. 'For nature in its infinite abundance ... constantly repeats its basic forms, modifying them a thousand times ... It shortens elements and lengthens others, develops some elements fully, then merely alludes to them elsewhere', states Semper, continuing that, 'In just the same way, art is based on a few standard forms and types that derive from the most ancient traditions; they reappear constantly yet offer infinite variety, and like nature's types they have their own history'.<sup>16</sup> Peter Collins uses the term 'element' extensively in *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture, 1750–1950*—to refer to aesthetic pieces of buildings, whether decorative or tectonic.<sup>17</sup> Where Collins discusses the desire of modernists to reject established or historical building elements, Bernard Tschumi uses the term 'element' to refer to fragments, pieces or components in order to describe the nature of disjunctions in his own work.<sup>18</sup>

The 'elements' and 'components' of my own design work are described as arranged in 'compositions' that are characterised as 'sculptural' or in the realm of 'art'. The term 'composition' is similarly perhaps most illuminated by reference to Semper. In Mallgrave and Robinson's translations, Semper repeatedly uses the term to similarly refer to collections of parts, rather the way something is made, and the manner in which something is visually conceived rather than physically assembled.<sup>19</sup> Colin Rowe notes in the essay 'Character and Compositions' that, 'The shelves of any representative architectural library in the United States or Great Britain might suggest that between 1900 and 1930 the major critical interest of the architectural profession throughout the English-speaking world lay in the elucidation of the principles of architectural composition'.<sup>20</sup> Rowe notes the large number of publications on the subject during this period—by comparison to very few before or after—and the stark contrast to the contemporaneous modernist manifestoes, which denied any role for composition and were partisan where the composition books were detached in tone. Rowe cites Frank Lloyd Wright's pronouncement of the death of composition and Ruskin's reservations on the use of the term, but notes that if decoupled from the notion of 'correct composition', any building could be understood as a compositional.<sup>21</sup> The broader meaning of the term 'composition', as used in this research, is connected to Semper's notion of the importance of merging his four 'types' into an expressive whole in order for a building to constitute architecture.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Harry Francis Mallgrave, Michael Robinson, *Gottfried Semper: Style* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2004), 72.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Collins, *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture, 1750–1950* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965).

<sup>18</sup> Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper: Style*.

<sup>20</sup> Colin Rowe, *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa and Other Essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1976), 60.

<sup>21</sup> Rowe, *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa*, 61–62.

<sup>22</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 306.

In the sense that it is used in this dissertation, the term 'composition' could be understood as an alternative to the terms 'order' and 'form'. If 'order' is defined as 'the attainment of beauty, through a relationship of parts to the whole',<sup>23</sup> then my use of 'composition' differs only in that beauty may not always be the objective. This distinction is derived from the conception of architectural 'composition' as 'art', consequently also encompassing the capacity to unsettle or intellectually challenge—although it could be argued that this amounts to a form of beauty. Aspects of the broader usage of the term 'form' provide a useful connection between the meaning of the terms 'composition' and 'sculpture' and 'art' as set out below. Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre conceive of 'order' as 'the process by which experience is filtered, transformed and fed back to us in reduced form',<sup>24</sup> but it is through its operation as 'art' that it is conversely proposed here that architecture need not be reductive in this process.

Confusion with regard to the use of the term 'form' stems from its distinct meanings as either referring simply to shape, or to the embodiment of an idea. It is this latter meaning that resonates with my own use of the terms 'art' and 'sculptural', which are used interchangeably in this research to refer to aspects of my own design work—to describe components of a building that form part of the aesthetic composition that elicits an emotional or intellectual response in those viewing or inhabiting it. Conversely, the term 'furnishing' is used to describe building elements that are present predominantly to perform a functional role. The term assigns them a status equivalent to unfixed furnishings such as chairs and tables—recognising that despite the fact that they are not part of the aesthetic composition of the building, these elements inevitably have an aesthetic appearance and so the term 'functional' is inadequate. Loos conversely only uses the word 'art', and not 'sculpture' when referring to architecture. My own usage reflects a belief that while the art qualities of architecture are unique and specific, the other branch of art practice to which they bear most relation is sculpture. While sculpture and architecture vary in the manner in which they are perceived, it is through the aesthetic perception of form that both communicate ideas. I use the term 'composition' to refer to the assembly of building 'elements' but these arrangements are 'art' or 'sculptural' because they are a sign of something else, and this meaning derives from the perception of them rather than from the objects themselves.<sup>25</sup>

Vitruvius describes 'the art of building' as one of the 'three departments of architecture',<sup>26</sup> and Leon Battista Alberti discusses architecture as a form of art practice—'I think you could not omit architecture from that category'.<sup>27</sup> However, their usage of the term differs from that outlined above in that they are referring to the buildings as objects, rather than an abstract meaning that

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<sup>23</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 240.

<sup>24</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 248.

<sup>25</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 154. Forty discusses the development of the term 'form' in relation to Kant, Goethe and the Romantics.

<sup>26</sup> Vitruvius, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, trans. Morris Hickey Morgan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 16.

<sup>27</sup> Leon Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 2.

is communicated through perception of them. Semper's depiction of architecture and music, as 'purely cosmic (nonimitative) arts' hints at the other meaning used here. In the modern period, Walter Benjamin noted that, 'We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art'.<sup>28</sup> While in contemporary usage architecture is widely referred to as one of the 'arts' there is significant discomfort about its role in relation to other forms of art practice. This uneasiness appears to centre on issues of function, which is perhaps to some extent a legacy of the role of 'function' as the dominant lens through which modernism is understood. Jane Rendell remarks that, 'Artists value architecture for its social function, whereas architects value art as an unfettered form of creativity',<sup>29</sup> while Hill comments that, 'To be art, the artwork must remain useless'.<sup>30</sup> Hill argues that, 'The drawing, which is synonymous with design, does much to define the status of the architect as an artist and architecture as an art, which the process of building and the experience and matter of the building may hinder'.<sup>31</sup>

The term 'space' is used in this research to refer to the internal and external areas and rooms defined or suggested by architectural forms. 'Space' is treated as another 'component' or 'element' of a building and so is used as a categorisation by which to describe and analyse both my own built work and that of Loos. This is clearly problematic, however, in that it is difficult to distinguish space from the materials and structures by which it is shaped. Where the other 'components' have clearly defined physical dimensions and properties, space is inherently less tangible, at least in the sense that the term is used here. Forty discusses at length the modernist use of the term 'space' and a number of key aspects are outlined here as they pertain to this research project.<sup>32</sup> My own distinctions between space that operates as 'furnishing' and 'sculptural' space are closely aligned with the historical development of the use of the term 'space' in relation to architecture—to describe both a physical void, and a philosophical notion respectively.

Until the end of the nineteenth century the term 'space' was used in relation to architecture to refer to voids, as simply the opposite of volumes, and modernist usage of the word demonstrates 'a willingness to confuse it with a general philosophical category of "space"'.<sup>33</sup> Forty outlines how this philosophical notion of space in architecture has its origin in German philosophers of the late nineteenth century—due in part to the dual meaning of the German

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<sup>28</sup> Joanne Morra (ed.), Marquard Smith. *Visual Culture: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* (Abington: Routledge, 2006), 114. Morra here cites Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936).

<sup>29</sup> Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2006), 3. Rendell's introduction frames the subject in a way that reveals an assumption that the two disciplines are separate.

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Hill, *Immaterial Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2006), 138.

<sup>31</sup> Hill, *Immaterial Architecture*, 55.

<sup>32</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 256.

<sup>33</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 256.

word 'raum'—and in particular Semper, who is 'responsible for the introduction of "space" as the principal theme of modern architecture'.<sup>34</sup> The philosophical development of the term 'space' that is relevant to architecture can be traced through Georg Hegel, Arthur Schopenhauer, Robert Vischer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Conrad Fielder, Adolf Hildebrand, August Schmarsow, Theodor Lipps, and Lefebvre.<sup>35</sup> Forty notes the importance of Sigfried Giedion's *Space, Time and Architecture* in collating a number of these ideas and presenting them in English to a broad audience of architects,<sup>36</sup> but remarks more generally that the understanding of space within the architectural discipline is comparatively limited.<sup>37</sup> The analysis of space in relation to Loos's later built projects in this research project is supported by Forty's observation that space is of increasing importance in Loos's work after 1914.<sup>38</sup>

Loos uses the word 'culture' in relation to classical music and antiquity, and with particular reference to architecture he uses the term to refer to the physical crafting of a building. This is quite distinct from my own use of the term 'culture' to refer to the mechanisms by which architecture is designed in practice. This conception of the term recognizes that design outcomes are inevitably shaped by all of the processes by which it is produced, rather than only those that are widely recognized as the location of design—such as drawing, and in particular the initial sketch. In other words, my use of the term 'culture' posits an architecture practice as a microcosm of society or civilization, in which certain ways of thinking and doing are innate.

Loos's use of the word 'culture' suggests that it is the preserve of the educated and wealthy—a valuing of 'high culture' directly at odds with the more recent interest in architecture's relationship to popular culture. With reference to Robert Venturi, Vincent Scully has remarked upon 'the unsuspected life to be found in the common artefacts of mass culture when they are focused upon individually'. Scully continues that, 'It is significant in this regard that Venturi's ideas have so far stirred bitterest resentment among the more academic-minded of the Bauhaus generation—with its utter lack of irony, [and] its spinsterish disdain for the popular culture but shaky grasp on any other'.<sup>39</sup> While quite distinct, Loos's notion of 'culture' is connected to my own through the notion that architecture is the product of culture. It is argued in this research that for Loos 'culture' is the appropriate source of ornament and the mechanism by which architecture can be taught, while in my own work architecture is posited as the outcome of the specific 'culture' of a practice. My own conception of 'culture' is tangentially connected to Adolf Behne's proposal that form is a social matter, and that architectural forms correspond to

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<sup>34</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 257.

<sup>35</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 258-272.

<sup>36</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 268.

<sup>37</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 270.

<sup>38</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 265.

<sup>39</sup> Vincent Scully, Introduction to *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, by Robert Venturi (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966), 10.

social forms,<sup>40</sup> while Loos's understanding is more closely aligned to Georg Simmel's connected idea that the individuality of great works of art is of little value from the perspective of culture.

## CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Mimicking the structure and language of Loos's own essay titles, the chapter titles make explicit the key element of Loos's argument that it is here argued is espoused by the featured essay, and links it specifically to the building components with which it is paired. As set out above, there are particular intensities of development of the various groups of building components that suggest correlations with each of the selected essays. In some instances, however, observed changes in Loos's built work seem to precipitate the amendment of previously stated ideas in a new essay—whereas in others the crystallization of thought in writing appears to prompt a change in the design of his buildings, or progressive changes in the work accelerate before or after the publication of an essay. The design of some building components seems to remain relatively unchanged from early in Loos's career; others appear to gradually mature into the form in which they appear in the Müller House; some exhibit periods of experimentation followed by a change of approach. All of the groups of building elements occur throughout either all or most of Loos's built work, and so there are significant overlaps to the chronologies of projects that are considered in relation to each essay. Similarly, all of the selected essays discuss art and ornament in relation to architecture and it is proposed that through them Loos collectively sets forward the argument that architecture is composed of discrete elements of art and function. Consequently, the structure of the chapters does not refute that the pairings of essays and groups of building elements are relatively interchangeable, but rather sets out to highlight particular connections between the two that are suggested by the design research. Each chapter espouses an argument that is particular to each essay and group of building elements—but can also be read independently as an investigation of the overall hypothesis that the Müller House can be understood as composed of sculptural elements and furnishings, and that Loos himself conceived of it in these terms, using the terms 'art' and 'function'.

### Chapter One: Art and Function

A literature review of English language scholarship on Loos is followed by an analysis of Loos's own writing, with particular reference to his use of the terms 'art', 'function', and 'ornament'. The five Loos essays that are utilized to structure the chapters in Part Two are here placed in a specific but broad context. The chapter quantifies the extent to which existing scholarship is underpinned by the assumption that Loos's work forms part of a lineage of modernism understood as grounded in issues of function, technology, structure and social change. The authors who have highlighted the limitations or inappropriateness of this assumption are identified, as are those whose work points towards the possibility of understanding Loos's architecture as a form of art practice.

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<sup>40</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 165.



## Chapter Two: Architecture and Art

The conception of my own design work as composed of sculptural elements and furnishings is discussed through analysis of the groupings of buildings components, as they appear in Composite House. The analysis of each grouping traces the development of the building elements through the preceding and subsequent projects, and the suppression of the perception of function is identified as central. The specific characteristics of each set of components is identified, and the particular manner in which they are articulated in order to establish their status as a sculptural element or furnishing.

## Chapter Three: Art and Ornament

Junctions, materiality and scale are pivotal to the understanding of walls, ceilings and floors put forward in the design research; hence providing a lens for focusing investigations into these elements of the Müller House. The development of Loos's own distinct treatment of walls, floors and ceilings in the Müller House is followed through his earlier projects, highlighting their origin in his earliest apartment designs and commercial interiors. Loos's use of the terms 'art' and 'function' in 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay is identified as analogous to the terminology 'sculptural' and 'furnishing' utilized in my design research. It is argued that through the essay Loos proposes that architecture is a form of art practice, and ornament is a mechanism for signaling a building component as functional and so outside of this realm.

## Chapter Four: Ornament and Culture

As revealed by the design research, issues of structure, junctions and positioning are critical to the articulation of staircases, joinery and fixtures; and these issues direct the examination of Loos's design of these elements in the Müller House and his other projects—especially those of his second decade of practice. The 'Ornament and Crime' essay is reexamined to ascertain how his ideas on art, function and ornament have evolved from those espoused in 'The Poor Little Rich Man'. Through this investigation it emerges that the specific properties of staircases, joinery and fixtures seem to prompt Loos to consider the origin and form of the ornament that he deems appropriate to adorn functional elements of architecture—namely contemporary culture and craft, rather than historical reference.

## Chapter Five: Art and Crime

The windows and doors of the Müller House and Loos's other buildings are reexamined with consideration to the design research observations regarding the movement, reflection and transparency of these components. Comparing Loos's earlier houses and buildings with the houses of the latter years of his career suggests that, unlike the other building components discussed, windows and doors are increasingly treated as functional elements, rather than as art. The 'Architecture' essay appears to be a watershed in Loos's work, as it is the point at which he clarifies that it is only the *combination* of art and function in the design of an architectural element to which he is opposed.

### Chapter Six: Function and Art

Issues of thresholds, junctions and weatherproofing—identified in the design research as pivotal in relation to external form—are here utilized to direct renewed study of the exterior of the Müller House. The development of the articulation of the external form of the Müller House is traced through Loos's career of built work, but the houses of his last decade of practice are identified as its most direct precedents. The demands of designing external form appear to prompt Loos's refinement of his distinctions between art, applied art, ornament and function in the 'Art and Architecture' essay.

### Chapter Seven: Art and Education

The spatial arrangement of the Müller House is investigated in light of the design research conclusions regarding the articulation of space to elicit an emotional response instead of, or in addition to, making a functional enclosure. Spatial precedents for the Müller House are outlined through Loos's other projects, with particular reference to houses completed during and in the few years preceding his last decade of work. The 'Ornament and Education' essay is reinterpreted as an amendment to Loos's notion of architecture as a composition of elements of both art and function to encompass the less tangible character of space. It is here argued that Loos proposes in this essay that function, and the ornament that signifies it, are products of collective culture that must be participated in through practice, and that art is an outcome of innate and individual genius.

## **PART ONE: LOOS AND DESIGN RESEARCH**

The first chapter in Part One frames the research by reviewing scholarship on Loos to date, and the full body of the architect's own published writing. The literature review outlines writing on Loos published in the English language, noting the surprisingly small volume of such work until the 1980s—despite vast numbers of publications in other languages—and the subsequent rapid expansion of interest from that time. The review focuses on a number of assumptions that appear to underpin a large majority of this scholarship, rather than the great diversity of approaches that they exhibit. A number of authors who have questioned these assumptions are also identified in order to contextualize the position that is argued in Part Two. The chapter then proceeds to survey all of Loos's own writing, in order to provide a broad context for the detailed analysis of the five essays that are the subject of Chapters Three to Seven, in Part Two. With this objective in mind, the analysis similarly focuses not on the unique subject material of each essay, but Loos's repeated use of the terms 'architecture', 'art', 'function', and 'ornament'—which are central to the essays selected to guide the investigation into the Loos in Part Two.

The second chapter of Part One examines the Composite House project in relation to the design research that precedes and follows it, and in doing so sets up the structure through which Loos's written terminology is applied to the analysis of the Müller House and his other built work in Part Two. The completion of Composite House coincides with the completion of my first decade of practice in earnest and so follows a significant body of work, upon which it is possible to reflect in search of evidence of design theory progressively emerging from the process of making buildings. In general terms, the project is here utilized to set out my overall conception of architecture as composed of sculptural elements and functional furnishings before applying it as a mode of investigation into Loos's work. The analysis is structured through the examination of a number of groupings of physical building components—mirroring the structure of a specification of works, the written document that plays an equal role to drawings in defining the design of built architecture. I do not conceive of these components as separate design elements in the nature of a functionalist 'kit of parts', but instead separate the analysis of them with the opposite motivation—to understand the specific nature of their physical qualities so that they can be designed to contribute to compositions that one perceives as coherent in spite of being comprised of various combinations of components.

## **Chapter One** ART AND FUNCTION: Loos

### **1.1** Writing on Loos

From just before the end of his career to the early 1980s, Loos was the subject of a very substantial collection of essays and books in German, and a significant number of others in Italian and French; but Loos's buildings and writing received very little attention in English language publications during this period. As indicated by the title of Henry-Russell Hitchcock's 1929 article 'Houses by Two Moderns (Le Corbusier and Loos)', Loos is here positioned firmly within a homogenous presentation of modernism.<sup>1</sup> P. Morton Shand wrote articles on Loos for *The Architectural Review* in 1934, and the *Architectural Association Journal* in 1959, which ostensibly simply present the work of Loos for an English-speaking audience largely unfamiliar with his oeuvre.<sup>2</sup> In the years between Shand's articles, Colin Rowe subsumes Loos into his discussion of 'Mannerism and Modern Architecture' for *The Architectural Review*,<sup>3</sup> and Reyner Banham portrays Loos's 'Ornament and Crime' essay as a straightforward declaration against decoration, despite noting the frequent appearance of ornament in his work.<sup>4</sup> Heinrich Kulka's 1960 article in the *Architects' Yearbook* is in essence a perfunctory survey of Loos's work, and Esther McCoy only mentions Loos in passing in her paper the following year for the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*.<sup>5</sup> The first substantial work in English on Loos was a 1964 translation of Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler's monograph *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture*, with a new introduction by Pevsner—which served to spread more broadly awareness of Loos's work.<sup>6</sup> It was not until the 1970s that the opinions of Joseph Rykwert, Peter Eisenman and Charles Jencks on Loos appeared in journals, and these did little to challenge the perception of Loos as positioned neatly into a lineage of modernism understood as centred on function.<sup>7</sup>

The following detailed review commences with the renewed English language interest in Loos in the early 1980s and the most widely available books published in English—which have

<sup>1</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock, 'Houses by Two Moderns (Le Corbusier, Loos),' *Arts* 16 (1929–30): 33–40.

<sup>2</sup> P. Morton Shand, 'Loos,' *The Architectural Review* 10 (1934).

P. Morton Shand, 'Loos,' *Architectural Association Journal* 1 (1959).

<sup>3</sup> Colin Rowe, 'Mannerism and Modern Architecture,' *The Architectural Review* (1950).

<sup>4</sup> Reyner Banham, "'Ornament and Crime", The Decisive Contribution of Adolf Loos,' *The Architectural Review* 121 (February 1957): 85–88.

<sup>5</sup> Heinrich Kulka, 'Adolf Loos 1870–1933,' *Architects Yearbook* 9 (1960): 7–29.

Esther McCoy, 'Letters from Louis H. Sullivan to R.M. Schindler,' *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 20 (December 1961): 179–184.

<sup>6</sup> Ludwig Münz and Gustav Künstler, *Adolf Loos: Pioneer of Modern Architecture*. English edition (New York: Praeger, 1966).

<sup>7</sup> Joseph Rykwert, 'Adolf Loos: The New Vision,' *Studio International* 186 (1973). Rykwert notes only that it is 'curious' that the 'arch-enemy of all ornament' should use decorative effects so extensively in his own work.

Peter Eisenman, 'To Adolf Loos + Berthold Brecht,' *Progressive Architecture* 55 (May 1974): 92. Charles Jencks, 'Fetishism and Architecture (with Apologies to Adolf Loos and Gore Vidal),' *Architectural Design* 46 (August 1976): 492–495.

inevitably shaped the widespread perception of Loos—before proceeding to outline the way in which a number of the same assumptions underpin a diverse range of academic articles on Loos. In spite of the diverse range of their perspectives, most of these books and articles are premised on the assumption that Loos opposed the use of ornament outright and that his writing and buildings sit comfortably with a conception of modernism founded on issues of function, technology, structure and social change. The contemporary widespread view of Loos has been greatly influenced by the opinions of Kenneth Frampton, and his views have unsurprisingly incorporated Loos's writing and buildings in the relatively linear progression of modernism—based on function and other practical concerns—that Frampton sets forth in his seminal *A History of Modern Architecture*.

Introducing the 1985 book *Adolf Loos*, by Yehuda Safran, Wilfried Wang and Mildred Budny, Frampton demonstrates considerable bias towards consideration of the spatial development of Loos's projects. Casting the *Raumplan* in a modernist light of social reform, Frampton posits Loos's spatial arrangements as 'an architectural strategy for transcending the contradictory cultural legacy of bourgeois society, which, having deprived itself of the vernacular, could not claim in exchange the culture of Classicism'.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in referring to the fact that Loos's un-built, stepped terrace section model was widely adopted in Germany, Frampton remarks upon the irony of Loos's effect on the underprivileged as a bourgeois architect.<sup>9</sup> In relation to Loos's design of space, Frampton concludes simply that 'Loos must now be seen as the first to postulate the problem that Le Corbusier was eventually to resolve with his full development of the free plan'.<sup>10</sup> With regard to Loos's building forms, Frampton speculates that 'the typological issue posited by Loos was how to combine the propriety of Platonic mass with the convenience of irregular volume', suggesting that efficiency of spatial arrangement is the motivation for Loos's planning, of which the building form is simply a consequence.<sup>11</sup> Aligning Loos tidily with Le Corbusier, Frampton remarks that Loos's forms also exhibit 'that impulse to synthesize, at every conceivable scale, the "type-objects" of the modern world'.<sup>12</sup> However, Frampton does note in the work of Loos 'the ready-made sensibility of Marcel Duchamp',<sup>13</sup> and describes Loos 'as part of a circle of personalities who made a significant impression on the cultural and intellectual character of the period'.<sup>14</sup> Frampton's fleeting and relatively unexplored recognition of the connection of Loos's work to culture, intellect, and art is one of the starting points for this research project.

Writing a decade later, in the introduction to Roberto Schezen's *Adolf Loos: Architecture 1903-1932*, Frampton devotes considerably more time to the consideration of Loos's form-making.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Frampton, introduction to *The Architecture of Adolf Loos: An Arts Council Exhibition*, by Yehuda Safran, Wilfried Wang, and Mildred Budny (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, Precision Press, 1985), 12.

<sup>9</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 12.

<sup>10</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 12.

<sup>11</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 12.

<sup>12</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 12.

However, Frampton's view of Loos's spatial arrangements appears unchanged, describing Loos as caught between 'the infinite, modernizing thrust of American civilization and the tradition of European culture',<sup>15</sup> and presuming Modernist motivations of social reform for Loos's work—'the progressive resistance of the housing authority to all of Loos's attempts to evolve a duplex typology for the urban working class alienated him from the bureaucrats of Red Vienna'.<sup>16</sup> Frampton acknowledges that Loos's form-making is a reaction to the cultural environment of over-exuberant Secessionist Vienna—observing that Loos's sparse forms can be understood as silence, and that, 'This silence spoke of the gap between fact and value as precisely and paradoxically as Wittgenstein's distinction between the *sayable* and the *unsayable*'.<sup>17</sup> The 'silence' of Loos's architecture is placed by Frampton in the context of *Sprachkritik*, a critique of the misuse of language by liberal press originating in 'a neo-Kantian interrogation of language as the supposed bearer of rational thought'.<sup>18</sup> Frampton cites Paul Engelmann, a pupil of Loos and a Wittgenstein collaborator as remarking that Loos 'believed that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view, we must be silent about'<sup>19</sup>—and notes 'Loos' insistence, after Wittgenstein ... on the fact that there is no single universal language, in architecture or in anything else'.<sup>20</sup> The consideration of Loos's architecture as a form of art in this research project is framed by this recognition by Frampton that Loos's work is a cultural endeavour, connected with the philosophy of Wittgenstein and Engelmann, and the sparse music of Loos's friend, composer Arnold Schönberg. Frampton's remark that 'Loos was conscious of photography as a new expressive medium, suspended like his interiors between illusion and reality, as his early use of photomontage would indicate',<sup>21</sup> also provides some support for the notion that Loos's architecture could be understood as a form of art. However, Frampton seems to take literally Loos's proclamations on the limits of art in architecture, despite acknowledging that his architecture is 'proto-Dadaesque'<sup>22</sup> and continues to attempt to subsume Loos's work into a single trajectory of Modernist architecture, commenting that 'there is little reason to doubt that the influence of Loos was decisive in refining the typological programme of Purism'.<sup>23</sup> The fact that Frampton is highly critical of Loos's proto-postmodernist Doric column design for the Chicago Tribune tower competition,<sup>24</sup> also indicates a desire to suppress elements of Loos's work that do not sit comfortably with his presentation of Loos in a linear development of modernism. The notion espoused in this research that Loos proposed a theory of architecture drawn from the process of making architecture in practice is to some extent supported by Frampton's recognition that Loos was less inclined to draw than to spend time on

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<sup>14</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 14.

<sup>15</sup> Frampton, Introduction to *Adolf Loos: Architecture 1903–1932*, by Roberto Schezen (New York: Monacelli Press, 1996), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Architecture 1903–1932*, 21.

<sup>17</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Architecture 1903–1932*, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Architecture 1903–1932*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Architecture 1903–1932*, 14. Citing Englemann.

<sup>20</sup> Schezen, *Architecture 1903–1932*, 18.

<sup>21</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Architecture 1903–1932*, 18.

<sup>22</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Architecture 1903–1932*, 17.

<sup>23</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Architecture 1903–1932*, 20.

site, and remarked that, 'Good architecture can be described, it does not have to be drawn'.<sup>25</sup> Continuing from Frampton's introduction, Schezen himself observes a 'dichotomy between the interior and exterior aesthetics of Loos's residential work',<sup>26</sup> inferring a recognition that a functional explanation of the exterior cannot be applied to the interior.

Aldo Rossi's introduction to Benedetto Gravagnuolo's 1982 *Adolf Loos, Theory and Works*, posits Loos with Heinrich Tessenow and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as 'a trio of masters', but describes Loos's work as a critique of the 'redeeming attitude towards doing' in Modern movement, and claims that while 'Tessenow and Mies ... seem to continue architecture ... without separating knowing and doing', Loos is 'the keenest supporter of this division'.<sup>27</sup> However, Rossi relays Loos's claim that 'all the traffic of associations, schools, professorships, periodicals and exhibitions has furnished nothing new',<sup>28</sup> and speculates that Loos believed that, 'The division between Polytechnic School and Beaux Arts ... robbed him of his profession' in the late eighteenth century.<sup>29</sup> Rossi seems to intend to distance Loos somewhat from a functional understanding of modernism, and his comments on 'doing' do not stop him from concluding that: 'There is no doubt that the most interesting thing about Adolf Loos is his architecture; or rather it is the dominant aspect of his work. The way in which he carries out this work is less certain; he loves to write, to draw, to travel, to argue, to build. He claims that, like all thinkers and writers, at least ever since the Greeks, he is pursuing the truth; but as is well-known the search for truth does not necessarily follow a straight path and, above all, cannot be made into a profession'.<sup>30</sup> Rossi instead seems to acknowledge that Loos's architecture could be understood as a form of art practice, remarking that Loos 'understands, through his experience of America, that the great work of art is becoming collective once again',<sup>31</sup> and describing commissioned practice as 'the artist's means of subsistence'. However, Rossi does not seem to believe that Loos conceived of his own work in this way, concluding that 'Loos seems to accept his limits as a program; architecture is not an art, it is necessary to do one's job well, the problems are the same and only small variations are a technological progression that the artist accepts but that has little effect on his work'.<sup>32</sup>

The selection of the Müller House (1930) as the focus for this research project, and the process of tracing the development of its building components through Loos's earlier designs, is an acknowledgment of established scholarship recognizing the importance of the Müller House and its relationship to his earlier work. Gravagnuolo remarks that 'the Müller House may be seen as

<sup>25</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 24.

<sup>26</sup> Schezen, *Architecture 1903–1932*, 142.

<sup>27</sup> Aldo Rossi, introduction to *Adolf Loos: Theory and Works*, by Benedetto Gravagnuolo (Milan: Idea Books, 1982), 12.

<sup>28</sup> Rossi, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Gravagnuolo, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Rossi, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Gravagnuolo, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Rossi, preface to *Adolf Loos*, by Gravagnuolo, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Rossi, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Gravagnuolo, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Rossi, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Gravagnuolo, 13.

the conclusion of a program of architecture that had been clearly expressed many years before', and concludes that 'this is why one may concur with Heinrich Kulka in his assessment of this work as the most complete expression of his conception of architecture'.<sup>33</sup> One facet of this research project is locating and quantifying specific evidence of the development of the Müller House from the preceding projects and essays that Gravagnuolo observes in general terms.

While Gravagnuolo acknowledges that the Müller House shares the 'spatial interpenetration' of the Moller House, he argues that, 'The conceptual abstraction of the Moller House gives way to ... material realism'. Attempting to illustrate this point, he then proceeds to only describe the lavish use of materials in the house to define the character and 'artistic diversity of the rooms',<sup>34</sup> as if this attention to visual appearance somehow dilutes the abstract quality that is more apparent in the Moller House due to the more restrained palette of white walls and timber paneling. This seems to be all Gravagnuolo means by 'conceptual abstraction' and 'material realism' and he seems motivated by the desire to make his observations consistent with the notion of Loos as part of the functionalist modernist canon. Gravagnuolo notes the consistency of Loos's body of work when he comments that, 'Time has refined, but not changed, the essence of an architectural idea', and while generally only comparing the Müller House to the Moller House, he makes passing reference to Loos's first deployment of top-light in the Villa Karma, and the use of many individual elements in Loos's early interiors—exposed beams, fireplaces, and large walls of mirror divided into squares and reflecting light from a single window to the side.<sup>35</sup> Gravagnuolo notes that 'there can be no doubt that [the Müller House] is a work that synthesizes many of the ideas of design that had emerged in previous works', but comments that 'his long intellectual journey through the maze of experimental architecture draws to a close in the Müller House, the last significant construction built by Loos'.<sup>36</sup> The latter qualification seems to subscribe to the widespread bias in both practice and academia for scale, in that it discounts the apartments that were designed and constructed subsequently. However, it also excludes the Khuner House and his Werkbund housing, perhaps because they do not sit comfortably with the understanding of Loos's external building forms as precursors of functionalist modernism.

In his *Adolf Loos* book of 1991, Panayotis Tournikiotis notes Loos is regarded by Joseph Rykwert as the most important writer among architects of the twentieth century with the possible exception of Le Corbusier, but remarks that Loos espoused a polemical and fleeting position, rather than a systematic theory, and so it could be claimed that any coherent reading is biased.<sup>37</sup> This observation frames one of the stated objectives of this research project, to

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<sup>33</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 203.

<sup>34</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 203.

<sup>35</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 203.

<sup>36</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 201.

<sup>37</sup> Panayotis Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, trans. Marguerite McGoldrick, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 22.



assemble a coherent Loosian theory of making architecture from these fleeting statements. Similarly, the research method of pursuing the development of the design strategies evident in the Müller House through all of the preceding projects is in part motivated by Tournikiotis's observation that Loos's apartments are 'counted among Loos's most important contributions to twentieth-century architecture',<sup>38</sup> and the relative lack of existing comparative analysis of this type. While acknowledging Pevsner's observation that Loos's work can be understood as compositions of materials and proportions, rather than ornamental per se,<sup>39</sup> Tournikiotis does not seem to subscribe to a conception of Loos's architecture as a form of art, describing Loos as an ethical, rather than aesthetic architect.<sup>40</sup> Rather, Tournikiotis proposes that the general lack of ornament and sporadic use of classical elements in Loos's work is evidence that Loos 'opposed the quest for new forms as a refute of history',<sup>41</sup> and instead proposed forms that relate to their own making and cultural history. Tournikiotis uses Loos's statement that 'Architecture arouses sentiments in man. The architect's task therefore, is to make those sentiments more precise',<sup>42</sup> as further evidence that Loos wished to make this relationship evident—rather than connecting the statement with Loos's other statements on the emotional role of art. This frames the counter position proposed in this research project, that Loos uses classical motifs as one form of ornament by which he can identify elements of his buildings that are functional rather than sculptural.

Adolf Opel published two collections of Loos's essays, *On Architecture* and *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, in 1995 and 1998 respectively—the first in collaboration with Daniel Opel. The latter deals with essays that Opel deems to be concerned with the issue of ornament, while the former is presented as a miscellany of all of Loos's other writing. Both are prefaced by short introductory essays that set out this delineation and provide historical context for the essays. In the introduction to *On Architecture*, Opel cites Loos's 1925 letter to the *Neue Freie Presse*. In which he disputed the suggestion that he believed ornament is a crime.<sup>43</sup> Opel acknowledges that Loos 'did not leave a unified oeuvre', and remarks that many interpret Loos's statement in the letter 'as confirmation of the contradictions and inconsistencies they claim to have found in Loos'.<sup>44</sup> Opel notes that Loos was an enigmatic figure to Pevsner, who could not reconcile his radical thinking with his apparent advocacy for ornamentation; but that Kulka countered that, "Loos was no enigma, at least not for those that truly understood him". Apparently unconvinced by Kulka's retort, Opel states that Loos's work 'does appear to be inherently paradoxical', and explains Loos's letter as an attempt to distance himself from oversimplified radicalisation of his ideas by others.<sup>45</sup> Loos's treatment of space and ideas on urban design are presented as Loos's 'great *positive* contributions', as opposed to his negative

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<sup>38</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 35.

<sup>39</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 49. Citing Nikolaus Pevsner.

<sup>40</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 17.

<sup>41</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 2.

struggle against ornamentation.<sup>46</sup> While acknowledging that reductionist views of Loos are widespread, Opel seems eager to establish that while ‘his struggle against ornamentation was only one stage’ of Loos’s work, it was this formative stage that changed the face of modern architecture,<sup>47</sup> and explains dismissively that in his late essays ‘Loos refines and develops his attitude to ornamentation and concedes its justification in certain cases’.<sup>48</sup> Opel proposes that Pevsner’s enigma ‘can be resolved if we look at the interplay between his theories and his practice’,<sup>49</sup> but remarks in the introduction to *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, that ‘It would, however, be wrong to regard Loos’ writings as the testament of a practitioner’.<sup>50</sup> However, Opel does not attempt such an analysis, except to conclude that in Loos’s design for his own tomb, there is, ‘No question of ornament here, where he is drawing up a balance of his life’s work’.<sup>51</sup> At one level, this research project sets out to investigate the interplay that Opel identifies but does not pursue.

Leslie Van Duzer and Kent Kleinman’s book presents perhaps the most revisionist assessment of Loos to date, noting that in existing scholarship: ‘the built is seen as an illustration of the written. This involves a kind of tagging of the former with excerpts of the latter, as if naming constitutes an interpretation or description. In this approach, the pieces that do not match terse Loosian quips naturally remain obscure, and the pieces that seem to match are consumed in the process of naming’. By way of example, Van Duzer and Kleinman note that ‘the interiors were deemed anachronistic, an inconvenient schism in the work of the eminently quotable author of modernist slogans’—and cite this as evidence ‘that within the core of orthodox modernity were the seeds of its opposition’.<sup>52</sup> However, while Van Duzer and Kleinman cite this simply as an explanation for the suppression of documentation that is inconsistent ‘with the architect’s own prodigious rhetorical output’,<sup>53</sup> it is argued in this research project that Loos’s writing is generally not simply rhetorical, but often instead exhibits a serial and reciprocal relationship with the progression of his built practice. Van Duzer and Kleinman posit their publication primarily as ‘a thorough documentation’ of the Müller House,<sup>54</sup> and they attempt to adopt a neutral tone. However, while Van Duzer and Kleinman identify a number of shortcomings with the existing body of scholarship, they only touch on potential alternative methods for analyzing and understanding this documentation. While questioning some of Van

<sup>46</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 2–3. Citing Münz and Künstler.

<sup>47</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 14.

<sup>50</sup> Adolf Opel, *Adolf Loos: Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*, trans. Michael Mitchell (Riverside, Cal.: Ariadne Press, 1998), 10.

<sup>51</sup> Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, *On Architecture*, 15.

<sup>52</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 16.

<sup>53</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 17.

<sup>54</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 16–17. The authors recognize the debate regarding the impossibility of neutral description, but in spite of ‘this apparently circular argument and the potentially paralyzing predicament’, aim to ‘measure and document the building in great detail’, to discern its ‘concrete parameters’ and ‘measurable specificity’. Implied in this introductory statement is the notion that much discussion of Loos is extrapolated from limited information, and that there is insufficient focus on the actual architectural objects.

Duzer and Kleinman's observations and proposed methods of analysis, this research project ostensibly builds on their attempt to approach the subject afresh, and to some extent could be seen as extending a line of argument from the detailed resource that they have assembled.

Like Tournikiotis, Van Duzer and Kleinman recognize a degree of seriality to Loos's work, noting that 'The interior cladding for the discreet spatial units was selected from a palette of materials that dates back to Loos's earliest work in Vienna'.<sup>55</sup> However, Van Duzer and Kleinman are more precise in defining the nature of this development, noting that Loos's 'technique was characterized by re-alignment, re-assemblage, re-constitution, re-use and only very rarely by invention'<sup>56</sup>—and remarking that by 'linking material transcendence to technical mastery, architectural production is removed from the realm of original genius and from the stimulus of fabulous creative inspiration. Architectural form is tied to a slowly evolving plate, where shifts are infrequent, but when they occur, their effect is cataclysmic and irreversible'. Van Duzer and Kleinman note some isolated similarities between various projects, but at one level this research project could be said to implement the research strategy that they identify as a fruitful line of enquiry but recognize is beyond the scope of their publication. Similarly, Van Duzer and Kleinman also sanction but do not pursue at length the subject matter pursued here through this research method, when they assert that 'Given Loos's preoccupation with issues of cladding, there is value in scrutinizing the Villa Müller in literally the most superficial way, by tracking the thin and textured veneers that make up the interior'.

Van Duzer and Kleinman document a number of fairly significant changes to the design of the Müller House from the original sketches,<sup>57</sup> which are revealing of Loos's design intentions; and they outline the role of 'Loos's local partner',<sup>58</sup> Karel Lhota, noting that, 'As Loos's illness grew more acute towards the end of his life, he was increasingly compelled to abdicate responsibility to his assistants'.<sup>59</sup> While Van Duzer and Kleinman argue that the agreement between the Müllers and Loos was terse, the copies of the contract that they publish is relatively perfunctory, and photographic evidence from other sources suggests a relatively amicable client-architect relationship—not only showing Loos and Lhota on the roof of the house with the client and his dogs, but also Loos sitting on the built-in seat in the living room, celebrating his sixtieth birthday at the Müller House.<sup>60</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman recognize the active role of the client, but by noting that 'Müller's work placed him at the forefront of technological invention' of the type that could 'rip holes in the tradition of building', it could be argued that they succumb to naming and tagging in that they seem to somewhat force a relationship with Loos's statements. The role of

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<sup>55</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29.

<sup>56</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 44.

<sup>57</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 48. A series of changes to the south elevation are documented.

<sup>58</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 24.

<sup>59</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Burkhard Rukschcio and Roland L. Schachel, *Adolf Loos: Leben und Werk* (Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 1982), 364.

Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 20.

Loos's personal relationships with his mother and Claire Beck in determining the course of his career, is also discussed by Van Duzer and Kleinman; and they explain that Loos's employment as a representative of U.P. Werke, a Brno furniture manufacturer, 'essentially financed the architect's emigration from Vienna to the French capital'.<sup>61</sup>

In 2000 Karel Ksandr edited *Villa Müller: Adolf Loos and Karel Lhota*, a collaboration with Petr Ulrich and Václav Girsá, 'produced to commemorate 150 years of the Central Committee for Monument Conservation on the territory of the former monarchy Austria-Hungary and 100 years of the Club for the Preservation of Historic Prague'.<sup>62</sup> As suggested in the title, the stated objective of the publication is to set out to establish the significance of the Müller House as a Czech monument, and to make a case for the integral role of Lhota's as a Czech architect. The book cites the notebook of one of two site managers, Bořivoj Kriegerbeck, as asserting that Loos replaced Lhota,<sup>63</sup> but in one of the subsequent chapters, Ksandr and Besenova proceed to dismiss this evidence without substantive explanation.<sup>64</sup> Instead, Ksandr and Besenova rely upon a transcript of an interview with Loos, in which he is quoted as stating that, "I have built this house jointly with professor Karel Lhota. You ask what I think of this cooperation? Only the best. We were concerned with the plans in equal extent and they contain the ideas of both of us. It goes without saying that I have projected my cubic system into them. If this was my initiative, there were other very important things which were brought in to the world faultlessly by him—Dr Müller's villa is our joint work".<sup>65</sup> Issues of possible nationalistic bias aside, the book provides an incredibly detailed account of the construction and reconstruction of the house, including its contents and its condition before the start of the reconstruction process, and is accompanied by a fairly exhaustive bibliography. The book contains some support for the interpretation of the fixtures of the Müller House put forward in the 'Ornament and Culture' chapter of this research, in the form of an assertion from the manager that 'Loos maintained that the [radiator] units form an integral part of the furnishing'.<sup>66</sup>

Girsá and Hanzl's own almost contemporaneous book also documents the reconstruction of the Müller House, and contains a selection of essays of distinctly varying perspectives.<sup>67</sup> While Ksandr again argues that 'Lhota was not only an assistant to Loos but a partner of equal standing', he acknowledges that 'although Lhota never visited Loos's construction school in Vienna, he considered himself to be the architect's student'—and that 'Loos thought highly of

<sup>61</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 19.

<sup>62</sup> Karel Ksandr (ed.), Petr Ulrich and Václav Girsá. *Villa Müller: Adolf Loos and Karel Lhota*. Ulrich, Prague: Argo, 2000.

<sup>63</sup> Ksandr (ed.), *Villa Müller*, 56.

<sup>64</sup> Marie Benešová and Ksandr, 'Co-operation of Adolf Loos and Karel Lhota in the Design of Villa Müller as Reflected in Preserved Drawings and Documentary Sources', in *Villa Müller*, Ksandr (ed.), 130.

<sup>65</sup> Besenova and Ksandr, 'Co-operation of Adolf Loos and Karel Lhota', 131.

<sup>66</sup> Pavel Zahradník, 'History of the Villa until the End of 1994', in *Villa Müller*, Ksandr (ed.), 63.

Lhota, mainly due to the latter's ability to comprehend his ideas and his efforts in translating them into Czech and writing about Loos's work'.<sup>68</sup> Ksandr also describes Lhota as 'a humble admirer who understood him and created according to his mentor's precepts', and quotes Lhota himself refuting claims that Loos's design contribution was limited by ill health—'There was no culmination or decline; he was always the same'.<sup>69</sup> Rostislav Švácha goes further, strongly refuting claims that Lhota had an authorial role in the design of the Müller House, and brutally describing Lhota's own design work as 'scarcely mediocre'.<sup>70</sup> Other sources make it clear that Karel Lhota was by no means the first architect to work with Loos on his projects, and photographs show Loos on site with Zlatko Neumann in 1926, possibly at the Tzara House.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, a mechanically drawn axonometric of the 1930 house for Dr Fleischner bei Haifa indicates Loos as the architect on the drawing block, but it is far from clear that Loos actually produced the drawing as this is standard practice for labeling drawings.<sup>72</sup> Ksandr also acknowledges that 'two well known garden architects, Camillo Schneider and Karel Foerster were also employed on the project', notes the role of 'head builder' Borivoj Kriegerbeck,<sup>73</sup> and remarks that 'the plans delivered to the town authorities were not signed either by Loos or Lhota but only authorized by František Müller'.<sup>74</sup>

While Loos had significant connections to Czechoslovakia, Sapák goes further than Ksandr and Švácha and denies any claim to Loos being Czech, asserting that the Müller House is undeniably a product of Loos's life in urban Vienna.<sup>75</sup> Like Van Duzer and Kleinman, Sapák also notes the relationship between Loos's personal circumstances and the progression of his architectural career, commenting that 'to have a decent living standard [Loos] had for a long time to be supported ... by a share in the income from his father's firm in Brno'.<sup>76</sup> Sapák notes the influence of Loos on the considerably younger Le Corbusier, and that in 1925 Loos presented at the "For a New Architecture" lecture series, alongside J.J.P. Oud, Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius. Sapák acknowledges that 'Loos himself never voiced the overall statement that the ornament was a crime in every case, explained what he considered to be perverse from the point of view of time and place' and 'In his own work—until its very end—he wasn't a consistent objector to ornament and he used it more than less'.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Václav Girsá and Miloslav Hanzl, *Adolf Loos and the Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, trans. Anna Bryson, William McEnchrou, Michal Kavanm and Lucie Koutkova (Prague: J.H. and Archys, 2001).

<sup>68</sup> Karel Ksandr, 'Loos' Projects in Prague and the Contribution of Karel Lhota,' in *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, Girsá and Hanzl, 61.

<sup>69</sup> Ksandr, 'Loos' Projects in Prague', 61.

<sup>70</sup> Rostislav Švácha, 'The Authorship of the Winternitz Villa,' in *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, Girsá and Hanzl, 62.

<sup>71</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 317.

<sup>72</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 366.

<sup>73</sup> Ksandr, 'Contribution of Karel Lhota,' 59.

<sup>74</sup> Ksandr, 'Contribution of Karel Lhota,' 60.

<sup>75</sup> Jan Sapák, 'Adolf Loos,' in *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, Girsá and Hanzl, 64. Sapák denies any claim to Loos being Czech.

<sup>76</sup> Sapák, 'Adolf Loos,' 64.

<sup>77</sup> Sapák, 'Adolf Loos,' 64.

Julius Posener comments that 'Loos knew his clients well, made friends with people like Goldmann and František Müller, and approved of their style of life even while trying to educate them'.<sup>78</sup> Posener makes this observation with the purpose of comparing Loos's relationship with his clients with that of Le Corbusier, Mies and Gropius, arguing that the others who were only interested in educating their clients, who 'saw nothing in the client but an opportunity to create their new architecture'.<sup>79</sup> Contrasting this with the idea of architects who 'served their clients almost slavishly', Posener proposes that this was one of the fundamental differences between modern architecture and that which came before it.<sup>80</sup> While Posener's suggestion that Loos's work diverges from modernism in this respect provides some general support for the hypothesis of this research project, his observation that Loos 'speaks in his writings of comfort, and of practicality, which we call function'<sup>81</sup> seems to offer particular support to the notion that Loos used ornament to denote function. Through comparison to Lord Burlington's 'house beside a monument', Posener proposes that the end of the eighteenth century 'produced a pure architecture independent of practical purpose', and asserts that 'Loos was a supporter of this kind of pure architecture'—distinguishing 'function' from the 'purely architectural' in Loos's work.<sup>82</sup> This research project seeks to connect Posener's notion of the 'purely architectural' with Loos's use of the term 'art'.

Published in 2002 by the City of Prague Museum, *The Mueller Villa* also documents the condition of the house before and after renovation, but with only very perfunctory descriptions, accompanied by an outline of approach to renovation and conservation. In the foreword, Vladimír Šlapeta remarks in relation to Loos that the Müller House is 'a work of "sovereign art" in residential architecture despite his own proclamation that only tombstones and memorials are grounded in art'.<sup>83</sup> The 2005 book, *Vienna 1900 and the Heroes of Modernism*,<sup>84</sup> includes a section on the work and writing of Loos but concurs with the widespread presentation of Loos as a proto-functionalist by asserting that he opposed ornament outright. In 2007 Szadkowska published *Details*, an extensive photographic survey (by Martin Polák and Markéta Othová) of the fixtures, fittings, finishes and furnishings of the Müller house, without proposing a written editorial position on the material presented.<sup>85</sup>

Ralf Bock's 2007 *Adolf Loos: Works and Projects* notably refers to the elevations of Loos's buildings as 'facades' and starts with these and interspersed sections, before moving on to the plans. This would seem likely to indicate the way in which Bock believes the projects have been

<sup>78</sup> Julius Posener, 'The Müller Villa in Prague,' in *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, Girsá and Hanzl, 53.

<sup>79</sup> Posener, 'The Müller Villa,' 53.

<sup>80</sup> Posener, 'The Müller Villa,' 53.

<sup>81</sup> Posener, 'The Müller Villa,' 51.

<sup>82</sup> Posener, 'The Müller Villa,' 51.

<sup>83</sup> Vladimír Šlapeta (ed.), *The Mueller Villa*, trans. Alastair Millar (Prague: City of Prague, 2002), 10.

<sup>84</sup> Christian Brandstätter (ed.), *Vienna 1900 and the Heroes of Modernism*, trans. Jennifer Taylor-Gaida and Mary Dobrian (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006).

<sup>85</sup> Maria Szadkowska, *Details* (Prague: Muzeum hlavního města Prahy, 2007).

designed. A number of inconsistencies can be observed in Bock's presentation of the Müller House, including the mislabeling of the conversation room as the cloakroom, and the entry as the chauffeur's room, in fact located on the basement level. It seems far-fetched that these are tactical changes, and would seem most likely to be simply production and editing issues. The sectional drawing that appears in Bock's *Works and Projects* seems to accept as truth what would seem clearly to be one of Loos's tactics for obtaining planning consent, the labeling the top-floor roof as not for occupation.<sup>86</sup> Bock describes the object to the side of the external entry seat as a 'plant pot'<sup>87</sup> and while this would appear to be its current use, planting does not appear in earlier photographs and the plans suggest that this might have originally been a coal chute.<sup>88</sup> Bock offers a succinct but written description of the materials used in the interior of the house,<sup>89</sup> and lists Karel Lhota as a 'collaborator'.<sup>90</sup>

August Sarnitz introduces what is almost certainly the most populist and widely distributed contemporary publication on Loos. Sarnitz's opinion on the Müller House is perhaps most clear when he comments that by comparison with the 'upper middle class houses of Moller in Vienna and Müller in Prague', 'the Werkbund houses are one of the most radical of Loos' projects because he makes no use here of expensive materials such as marble and high-grade timber, but the architecture is defined by the quality of space, light, proportion and colour'.<sup>91</sup> When Sarnitz comments on Loos's working methods at the time of the inception of the Müller House, he seems to infer a questioning of the building's authorship—'Loos no longer had any permanent staff in his Vienna office; he drew up the plans himself and contracted their implementation out to various earlier employees'.<sup>92</sup> Sarnitz also notes that, 'The situation was different with the Müller Villa: as František Müller him-self was a building contractor, his company took over the tendering, while Loos and his partner Karel Lhota were responsible for the design and applying for building permission. Planning was started in October 1928, and building was due to be completed by January 1<sup>st</sup> 1930'.<sup>93</sup> Sarnitz here appears to confuse the process of an architect implementing the construction phase of a project with that of a building contractor, and the process of design with planning, and it is unclear why he believes that the role of the client as building contractor would alter Loos's working method. Sarnitz himself earlier notes that as Loos 'still lived in Paris at that time (working on the Knize fashion house in Paris), and only visited Vienna and Prague on his travels ... the house is consistent with Loos'

<sup>86</sup> Ralf Bock, *Adolf Loos: Works and Projects* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), 258.

<sup>87</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 262.

<sup>88</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 48. Van Duzer and Kleinman seem to support this analysis.

<sup>89</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 258.

<sup>90</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 258.

<sup>91</sup> Loos designed Model Houses (1931) for the Werkbundsiedlung organized by Josef Frank, an exhibition that also included houses by Josef Hoffmann, Ernst Plischke, Gerrit Rietveld, André Lurçat, Richard Neutra.

<sup>92</sup> August Sarnitz, *Adolf Loos: 1870–1933, Architect, Critic, Dandy*, trans. Bremin Latido (Koln: Taschen, 2003), 71.

<sup>93</sup> Sarnitz, *Architect, Critic, Dandy*, 71–72.

“interlinke” working methods, whereby an employee in Paris, Neumann, prepared the plans, while his previous pupil, Jacques Groag, carried out the organizational programming and site supervision in Vienna’.<sup>94</sup> It is often cited as significant that Loos was in fact Czech, but while he was eventually granted citizenship of Czechoslovakia, Brno was in reality an outlying suburb of Vienna at the time of his birth, and Loos barely spoke any Czech.<sup>95</sup>

Loos’s work has been the subject of a vast array of academic articles, and his work has been referenced in many more. While these articles demonstrate a huge diversity of interpretations of Loos’s work, there is alarming consensus that Loos opposed the use of ornament in architecture or the consideration of architecture as art, and that his work is instead a starting point of modernism, based on issues of functional and practicality. In 1987 Richard Calvocoressi concludes simply that ‘It was in [the essay] “Architecture” that Loos drew a distinction between architecture and art, maintaining that the house had no claim to be classified as a work of art’.<sup>96</sup> Writing on the relationship between Loos and Kafka and the Jugendstil in 1996 Mark Anderson similarly ‘equates ... the lack of ornament with modernity’<sup>97</sup> and assumes ‘Loos’s anti-ornamental views’<sup>98</sup> in progressing his argument. In the same year, David Crowley labels ‘Adolf Loos’s famous Modern Movement landmark, the Müller House’,<sup>99</sup> while in 2000 Leila Kinney—writing on fashion and architecture—repeatedly links Loos closely with Le Corbusier,<sup>100</sup> and Hubert Damisch claims Loos proposes a simple division between art and architecture.<sup>101</sup> A year later, Jan Otakar Fischer notes that ‘Loos was invited to lecture in Prague often, most importantly in 1925, when he joined Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Oud for a series of lectures that would effectively launch functionalism in Czechoslovakia’,<sup>102</sup> although it is noted below that Fischer also expresses some uneasiness with this categorization. Also published in 2001, Werner Oechslin’s title, ‘Adolf Loos, and the Road to Modern Architecture’, clearly posits Loos’s work as simply the precursor of modernism.<sup>103</sup> In the same year, in the course of a discussion on archiving and architecture, Kleinman makes it clear that he does not believe Loos understood his work as art—stating that ‘For Loos, architecture was the wrong

<sup>94</sup> Sarnitz, *Architect, Critic, Dandy*, 67.

<sup>95</sup> Sarnitz, *Architect, Critic, Dandy*, 91.

Sapák, ‘Adolf Loos,’ 64. Other essays in Girsá and Hanzl’s book attempt to claim Loos as Czech, but seem nationalistic in their motivation.

<sup>96</sup> Richard Calvocoressi, book reviews: Recent Publications on Adolf Loos, *The Burlington Magazine* 129 (March 1987): 188–190.

<sup>97</sup> Mark Anderson, ‘The Ornaments of Writing: Kafka, Loos and the Jugendstil,’ *Assemblage* 1 (October 1986): 133.

<sup>98</sup> M. Anderson, ‘The Ornaments of Writing,’ 141.

<sup>99</sup> David Crowley, review of *The Architecture of New Prague 1895–1945* by Rostislav Švácha, trans. Alexandra Büchler, *Journal of Design History* 9 (1996): 303.

<sup>100</sup> Leila W. Kinney, ‘Fashion and Fabrication in Modern Architecture,’ *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58 (September 1999): 472–481.

<sup>101</sup> Hubert Damisch, ‘L’Autre “Ich,” L’Autriche—Austria, or the Desire for the Void: Toward a Tomb for Adolf Loos,’ trans. John Savage, *Grey Room* 1 (2000): 28.

<sup>102</sup> Jan Otakar Fischer, ‘White Walls in the Golden City: The Return of the Villa Müller,’ *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. 15 (2001): 2.

<sup>103</sup> Werner Oechslin, *Otto Wagner, Adolf Loos, and the Road to Modern Architecture*, trans. Lynnette Widder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).



field; in fact, the appropriate domain for authorial invention was limited to one domain only, namely art, and one of Loos's lasting contributions to twentieth-century theory was to divorce architecture and art, absolutely.<sup>104</sup> Kleinman continues that 'the restored Villa Müller is no longer a house. It is not even architecture, certainly not a Loos ... it has become a work of art. We know that the villa is aspiring to the status of art for the following reason: we can no longer touch it'<sup>105</sup>—and with a literal reference to one of Loos's proclamations concludes that the house has become a monument.<sup>106</sup>

In 2002, in analysing Loos's architecture as a form of fashion, Patrizia McBride claims that Loos sought autonomy of everyday objects and art,<sup>107</sup> labeling him as simply 'high-modernist'.<sup>108</sup> Meanwhile, addressing the changing notion of 'good design', Anne Tones and Peter Armstrong present 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay as a straightforward argument against architecture as art, 'so that modernist functionalism, by way of contrast, appears as a liberation'.<sup>109</sup> Embedded in Susan Henderson's 2002 analysis of Loos's work in terms of issues of femininity and masculinity is the assumption that Loos's role in history was to establish the 'language of early modernism'.<sup>110</sup> Although writing from an entirely different perspective, criminal anthropology, Jimena Canales and Andrew Herscher in 2005 similarly comments that 'Adolf Loos's famous essay, "Ornament and Crime", decisively linked unornamented architecture with the culture of modernity and, in so doing, became one of the key formulations of modern architecture'.<sup>111</sup> 'Loos's essay already foreshadowed the white abstraction of "less is more" architecture and the functionalist rigor of the International Style which would dominate the twentieth century',<sup>112</sup> conclude Canales and Herscher.

The following year, Bozena Wisniewska published an article portraying Loos as simply 'overwhelmingly critical of ornament and decoration in architecture' and even claiming that 'Loos wrote that ornament = crime'.<sup>113</sup> Jorunn Veiteberg, in an article on craft, similarly asserts that "'Everyone" knows that he equated ornament with crime', and concludes that, 'Through the article "Ornament und Verbrechen" ("Ornament and Crime") from 1908, he wrote himself into

<sup>104</sup> Kent Kleinman, 'Archiving/Architecture,' *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 321–332.

<sup>105</sup> Kleinman, 'Archiving/Architecture,' 329.

<sup>106</sup> Kleinman, 'Archiving/Architecture,' 332.

<sup>107</sup> Patrizia C. McBride, 'In Praise of the Present: Adolf Loos on Style and Fashion,' *Modernism/Modernity* 11 (2004): 762.

<sup>108</sup> Hal Foster, 'The ABCs of Contemporary Design,' *October* 100 (2002): 193.

<sup>109</sup> Anne Tones and Peter Armstrong, 'Dialectics of Design: How Ideas of "Good Design" Change,' *Design Aesthetics* (2003): 4.

<sup>110</sup> Susan R. Henderson, 'Bachelor Culture in the Work of Adolf Loos,' *Journal of Architectural Education* (2002): 125–135. Henderson remarks of Loos, 'His call for cultural reclamation through a reinvigorated rhetoric set the stage for embedding a new masculinity in the language of early modernism'.

<sup>111</sup> Jimena Canales and Andrew Herscher, 'Criminal Skins: Tattoos and Modern Architecture in the Work of Adolf Loos,' *Architectural History* 48 (2005): 235.

<sup>112</sup> Canales and Herscher, 'Criminal Skins,' 235.

<sup>113</sup> Bozena Wisniewska, 'Ornament and Modernity: Crime or No Crime?' *Proceedings for the School of Visual Arts 20th Annual National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists: Reassessing, The Modern, Modernity And Modernism* (2006).  
<http://media.schoolofvisualarts.edu/sva/media/9983small/Proceedings2006.pdf>

the canon of modernism'.<sup>114</sup> 'Loos wanted a clear distinction between art and practical life',<sup>115</sup> Veiteberg remarks. Ingrid Stevens, writing on the role of nature in design in 2008, collects Loos under the banner of functionalist modernism and misquotes his seminal essay to lend certainty to the association—'The modernists would no doubt answer in the negative, given the tenets of "form follows function" and the battle cry of the modernist architect Adolf Loos, "Ornament is crime"'.<sup>116</sup>

A connected underlying assumption of much writing on Loos is the notion of a disconnection between the external form and interiors of his buildings. Utilising issues of theatre, sexuality, and fashion as her lens, Beatriz Colomina's essay 'The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism' argues that there is 'a radical difference between interior and exterior' in Loos's buildings.<sup>117</sup> Applying aspects of Loos's essays and lifestyle as metaphors for his architecture, Colomina compares the boudoirs of the Moller House and Müller House to theatre boxes, refers to 'the theatricality of Loos' interiors',<sup>118</sup> and describes the photographs of his empty interiors as resembling stage sets. Colomina recognises the limits of this mode of investigation, however, noting that understanding the elevations as masks oversimplifies their role—and so instead proposes the notion of the 'split wall'.<sup>119</sup> The dotted lines of floor levels on Loos's elevations are cited as support for this notion—that Loos's subjects are inhabiting the wall—thereby projecting her own meaning onto what is in essence only evidence of the architect reconciling floor levels and elevations. Loos's writing on the subject of fashion is similarly applied directly by Colomina to her investigation of his buildings as if the latter are simply explications of the former—describing the surfaces that cover structure as clothing.<sup>120</sup> Nonetheless, Colomina's observation of the importance of surfaces provides some support to the focus on the aesthetic perception of building components in this research project. Colomina also applies her own interest in issues of sexuality to Loos's houses in order to portray them as divided into male and female domains.<sup>121</sup> The elevations and interior of Loos's design for Josephine Baker and descriptions of the project by Gravagnuolo and Münz are even characterized as 'fetishization' in response to 'the threat of castration'.<sup>122</sup>

Reviewing Colomina's *Privacy and Publicity*, Caroline Constant writes in 1997 that in understanding Loos through gender issues, Colomina elucidates disjunctions between the forceful tone of Loos's writings and the elusive complexity of his built work, as well as those

<sup>114</sup> Jorunn Veiteberg, 'Running Room,' in *Place(s): Papers and Exhibition*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Gmunden: Think Tank, 2006), 41.

<sup>115</sup> Veiteberg, 'Running Room,' 42.

<sup>116</sup> Ingrid Stevens, 'Nature and Design: Thoughts on Sources and Subjects,' *South African Journal of Art History* 23 (2008): 96–111.

<sup>117</sup> Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992, 94.

<sup>118</sup> Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, 82.

<sup>119</sup> Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, 94–95.

<sup>120</sup> Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, 94.

<sup>121</sup> Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, 81.

<sup>122</sup> Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, 98.

between his domestic interiors and exteriors.<sup>123</sup> Examining Loos through the entirely different lens of postwar American architecture, Richard Sommer's 2001 article similarly notes the same assumption underlying his argument—that 'Adolf Loos, whose later residential projects (such as the Müller House of 1933) made a radical distinction between interior volumes and sequences and the exterior shell. Loos' prism-like domestic interior contains a rich and varied array of spaces whose shape and materiality were expressive of their use and the tastes of their inhabitants. The exterior, in contrast, formed a mute mask'.<sup>124</sup>

However, there is some support in existing articles for the notions that underpin this research project—that Loos's work can be seen as distinct from the functionalist modernist project, that Loos did not oppose the use of ornament, and that his work can be understood as a form of art practice. The research that follows can be seen as a form of detailed investigation of these seeds of dissent. In 1986, writing on convention, canon, and criticism in architecture and citing Kulka, Stanford Anderson proclaims unequivocally that, 'Clearly, Loos is not a functionalist'. Instead, while acknowledging in Loos a 'sense for the relative autonomy that architecture can have as a formal discipline', Anderson asserts 'that the inhabitants' use of the building is not simply utilitarian, but rather is the living of the cultural life of this time'.<sup>125</sup> Two years later, Miriam Gusevich claims that Loos's statements on ornament can be better understood as a critique of kitsch, and so suggests the possibility that Loos did not oppose ornament as it is generally understood: 'Adolf Loos is best known as the foe of ornament and the advocate of functionalism: this reputation rests mainly on the widespread dissemination of his notorious and paradoxical essay, "Ornament and Crime" (1912). In this essay, as commonly understood, Loos advocated an uncompromising anti-ornament position on functional grounds. His radical assertions became an article of faith among the post-World War I European avant-garde, who accepted his claims uncritically and somewhat naively, and incorporated the essay into the canon of the Modern Movement'.<sup>126</sup>

In a discussion on the Arts and Crafts movement in his 1989 article, Samuel Gruber remarks that Loos was hypocritical in critiquing the Secessionists on the basis that their work represents 'total design' and that his ideas 'were later accepted at the Bauhaus'.<sup>127</sup> Gruber's proposal that the work of both Loos and the Bauhaus could be seen as aligned with the work that Loos criticises in 'The Poor Little Rich Man' suggests that he may understand their work as a form of art, despite the fact that they did not see their own work in this way. Albert Smith and Kendra Smith's 2002 remark that the fact that the "Poor Little Rich Man", satirizes the control of the

<sup>123</sup> Caroline Constant, review of *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* by Beatriz Colomina, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56 (June 1997): 245.

<sup>124</sup> Richard M. Sommer, 'Four Stops along an Architecture of Postwar America,' *Perspecta* 32 (2001): 81.

<sup>125</sup> Stanford Anderson, 'Critical Conventionalism in Architecture,' *Assemblage* 1 (October 1986): 15.

<sup>126</sup> Miriam Gusevich, 'Decoration and Decorum, Adolf Loos's Critique of Kitsch,' *New German Critique*, no. 43 (1988): 97–123.

machine/architecture over the life of the occupant', <sup>128</sup> suggests a distinction between Loos's ideas and those of Le Corbusier and functionalist modernism. In 2006, Daniel Purdy notes that, 'Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius credited Loos with being the first to advocate the radical elimination of all ornamentation in buildings', observes that 'Loos's writing as a whole is thus often read as one point on the time line of architectural modernism's development', and concludes that, 'Certainly, Loos encouraged such a reading'. <sup>129</sup> Purdy also notes that, 'More recently, Janet Ward has presented Loos as crucial to the functionalist architectural revolution', and asks, 'What if we step away from the narrative of modernism's rise to read Loos in terms of the cultural geography of nineteenth-century Europe?' <sup>130</sup> While Purdy questions the inclusion of Loos in this trajectory in order to advance a discussion of Loos in his particular cultural context and focussing on issues of ethnicity, the notion clearly supports the line of enquiry pursued here also. Fischer's 2001 observation that 'the rules of functionalism were easier to understand and copy than were the subtleties of the Loosian raumplan', hints at the means by which Loos has been subsumed into a functionalist lineage of modernism, and Fischer's uneasiness with this interpretation is revealed by his remark that, 'A Loos house did not fit any progressive political agenda, nor did it promote any revolutionary means of production or construction'. <sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Samuel Gruber, review: Italian Vernacular Architecture, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 48 (1989): 403–405.

<sup>128</sup> Albert C. Smith and Kendra Schank Smith, 'Architecture as Inspired Machine,' *Built Environment* 31 (2005).

<sup>129</sup> Daniel Purdy, 'The Cosmopolitan Geography of Adolf Loos,' *New German Critique* 99 (2006): 41.

<sup>130</sup> Purdy, 'The Cosmopolitan Geography of Adolf Loos,' 42.

<sup>131</sup> Fischer, 'White Walls in the Golden City,' 4.

## 1.2 Writing by Loos

It is proposed here that 'The Story of the Poor Rich Man' can be understood as an argument for architecture as a form of art, and for ornament as signifier of those parts of architecture that are simply functional. In the 'Art and Ornament' chapter, this essay is put forward as the key crystallization of these ideas, but the preceding essays provide evidence of the origins and development of Loos's thinking. Between the time of Loos's return to Vienna from the United States in 1896 and the publication of 'The Story of the Poor Rich Man' in 1900, Loos published more than thirty essays—nearly half of the output of his entire career. During the same period, Loos's architectural output encompassed only two shop interiors, an apartment and the Café Museum. Themes of art, ornament and function appear in Loos's first essay, 'Our School of Applied Art', published in 1897, and although the essay's subject is not architecture, he clearly uses it as his point of reference. Loos remarks upon the folly of teaching orders of columns to furniture designers, or treating the production of craft as pure art. He proposes that furniture is neither architecture nor art, and that it should be designed based on its function and the craft of its production. Loos counts architects amongst those abandoning the drawing board in favour of craft in England, and champions this approach. In the same year, in the course of reviewing 'The Christmas Exhibition in the Austrian Museum (Household Furniture—The Lefler Room)', Loos reiterates this idea, stating that modern design requires practicality above all else, and claiming that this is a prerequisite for beauty. Loos also perceives a tendency for the furnishings of the aristocracy, preserved because they are unusual and relatively unused, to be collected by museums and then copied to make middle class furniture. Also written in 1897, 'A Competition Organized by the City of Vienna' criticizes competitions as simply draftsmen assembling schemes from things they have seen in journals.

Loos's 1898 essays titled 'Jubilee Exhibition in Vienna' provide evidence of Loos's developing ideas on ornament. Loos notes that the exhibition buildings themselves provide an alternative model to what he perceives as the nineteenth-century search in vain for a new style derived from existing styles but modified to suit contemporary culture. This model includes the artistically satisfying use of materials, and indicating contents through form. Loos also notes 'The need to liberate ourselves from historical styles',<sup>132</sup> and cites leathersgoods and the work of goldsmiths and silversmiths, as products of their time, as examples of how architects could avoid the fakery of displaced ornament. In the same year, Loos published an essay on 'Men's Fashion', which makes no reference to architecture but seems a likely origin of Loos's ideas on architectural form, remarking upon the importance of being inconspicuous in order to be 'at the center of one's own culture'.<sup>133</sup> Loos combines a number of these ideas in 'The New Style and the Bronze Industry' essay, in which he notes the tendency of artists to consider the things that are most difficult for them to produce to be their best, when in fact it is generally the things that come most easily. The essay also distinguishes the folly of disguising something new in an old

<sup>132</sup> Adolf Loos, 'Jubilee Exhibition in Vienna,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 37.

<sup>133</sup> Loos, 'Men's Fashion,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 40.

style, from faithfully copying things from previous times that are still useful or functional. In 'Interior Design: Prelude' of 1898, Loos compares interior design with dressing, proposing that if objects are produced in a modern style as a product of their time rather than an historical style, they can be combined in any way rather than requiring matching. Loos proposes that this idea is not radical, but was in fact the status quo until the mid nineteenth century. 'The Interiors in the Rotunda' of 1898 is perhaps the clearest precursor to 'The Story of the Poor Rich Man', in that it discusses the idea of interior design preventing people from adding things to their own homes for fear of disrupting them—and portrays designed rooms as belonging to their designers, not their owners. But the essay also hints at the thesis proposed here, that Loos views architecture as a form of art, when he notes that a painter would feel too keenly the need to connect with their client to be able to do this. Loos also notes the importance of nostalgia imbued in individual objects received, made and used; however, he is clearly proposing a change to the way architecture is designed, not that it should not be designed—as he remarks that both functional rooms and rooms for receiving guests should be designed. Perhaps as a rationalization of his own design of furnishings, Loos comments that architects can design things other than buildings, but they should do so as craftsmen and artists, not as architects.

In 1898 Loos also wrote a large number of essays on a range of non-architectural subjects that show the early development of his ideas on art and ornament. In 'Chairs' he proclaims that practicality is a prerequisite for beauty, and defines a beautiful object as one that would be worsened if anything was added or taken away. Writing in relation to 'Glass and China', he refines this idea slightly, describing the Greek notion of beauty as 'something practical that could not be made any more practical'.<sup>134</sup> Comparing the 'Luxury Carriages' of trains in England and Austria, Loos observes that the more developed a culture the less ornamented its objects appear to be. Writing about 'Gentlemen's Hats', Loos comments that, 'If one hears of an item of clothing which is out of date by the very next season, then one can be sure it was never truly modern, but merely feigned modernity'.<sup>135</sup> Instead, says Loos writing on 'Footwear', changing shapes and styles should suit changing needs, including increased pace of modern life. In relation to 'Shoemakers', Loos lays the blame for much poor design with clients for their lack of taste and concern for quality, and their failure to carry out maintenance. With regard to 'Furniture', Loos endorses faithful copies of historical examples, but derides making modifications to them, or more so, adapting them to new situations in an attempt to be modern. Furthermore, in the essay 'The Furniture of 1898', Loos proclaims that something highly ornamented can be thoroughly modern if its ornament is in the style of the craftsman rather than in an historical style. Loos seems to be proposing the origin of this modern ornament when he says in 'A Review of Applied Arts I' that, 'We should not be trying to create a new chair for our age, but the best chair'.<sup>136</sup> It is the pursuit of novelty that Loos believes is folly, as true novelty emerges from attempting to create the best of a time. It seems clear that Loos is not opposed to

<sup>134</sup> Loos, 'Glass and China,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 69.

<sup>135</sup> Loos, 'Gentlemen's Hats,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 89.

<sup>136</sup> Loos, 'A Review of Applied Arts I,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 134.

the use of art per se, but a particular attitude to art, when he states in 'The English Schools in the Austrian Museum' that Austrians pit 'Art versus Life', whereas in England, 'Art and life complement each other harmoniously'.<sup>137</sup>

Loos also wrote numerous essays on architecture in the year of 1898, an analysis of which suggests that his attitudes on other subjects are inextricably linked with his ideas on the role of art, function and ornament in architecture, and vice versa. In the essay 'From Otto Wagner's Class', Loos expresses a preference for the good use of classicism over what he calls 'ornamentalism', where one attempts to adapt existing styles to a new use. Seemingly reinforcing this point, Loos states in 'A Viennese Architect' that imagination is of secondary importance to tradition. In a direct parallel with his essay on shoemakers, Loos places the blame for poorly designed buildings on clients rather than architects in 'The Potemkin City' essay. Recalling his comments in relation to furniture, Loos also derides in the essay fake facades with no relation to their actual material, suggesting that he similarly believes their appearance should be the product of their craft. Loos asks the question, 'Is Architecture still an art?' in the 'To Our Young Architects' essay, and his answer—'One is tempted to answer in the negative'—could be interpreted as a statement that it is not.<sup>138</sup> However, Loos clarifies that while, 'Neither within the artistic community nor among the public at large is the architect regarded as a real artist', any painter or sculptor can claim the title 'artist' but only the best architects.<sup>139</sup> Contrary to the widespread perception that Loos opposes the treatment of architecture as an art, Loos seems to be here clearly stating that it should be and always was until it was recently undermined by architects pandering to their clients desires, and the state's misguided introduction of exams and protection of the title.

The title of one of Loos's 1898 essays makes explicit the connection between his statements on architecture and the design of other objects—'The Old and the New Style in Architecture: A Parallel with Special Reference to the Artistic Situation in Vienna'. In the essay, Loos clearly designates architecture as art, remarking that architecture is the slowest of the arts to respond to trends because of the nature of its production. Due to its longevity, architecture survives through changes in culture, so 'architecture will always be the conservative art', says Loos.<sup>140</sup> Due to its longevity, architecture survives through changes in culture, so 'architecture will always be the conservative art', Loos states. In its criticism of valuing mental work over physical labour, the essay can also be seen as defining the nature of architecture as an art. Loos proposes that the architect 'uses materials to arouse feelings in us which are not inherent in those materials themselves', and that people acquire feelings in architecture, rather than those feelings being innate in the architecture.<sup>141</sup> Although Loos uses the essay to claim that 'the

<sup>137</sup> Loos, 'The English Schools in the Austrian Museum,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 147.

<sup>138</sup> Loos, 'To Our Young Architects,' in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 29.

<sup>139</sup> Loos, 'To Our Young Architects,' 29.

<sup>140</sup> Loos, 'The Old and the New Style in Architecture: A Parallel with Special Reference to the Artistic Situation in Vienna,' in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 34.

<sup>141</sup> Loos, 'The Old and the New Style in Architecture,' 33.

“artistic unity of the whole” is an illusion’,<sup>142</sup> it seems unlikely that Loos is disputing the notion of the art of architecture as the overall conception of the building, but rather the presumption of his contemporaries that they need to design every part of it. Loos’s essay on ‘Building Materials’ refines these ideas by clarifying that all materials are of equal value in the eye of the artist, and their value in architecture derives from labour in the use of that material, rather than being intrinsic to it. ‘The Principle of Cladding’ makes it explicit that Loos views the selection of materials as a mechanism for creating an effect, or eliciting an emotional response—clearly distancing his ideas from functionalism. Loos points out that cladding is older than construction, and proposes that cladding can take any appearance except to simulate the thing that it covers.

The ‘Ornament and Culture’ chapter uses the seminal ‘Ornament and Crime’ essay of 1908 in relation to argue that Loos conceived of ornament as a product of culture, and proposed its continued use in modern architecture in this manner, not its extermination. The development of this idea can be traced through the essays that precede and are contemporaneous with ‘Ornament and Crime’. While Loos wrote only little more than a handful of essays between ‘The Story of the Poor Little Rich Man’ and ‘Ornament and Crime’, his focus seems to have distinctly shifted from defining architecture as a form of art, to defining the appropriate source of modern ornament. In his ‘Guided Tours of Apartments’ of 1907, Loos asserts that the modern style has emerged through crafts uncontrolled by architects, and proposes that ‘modern’ is not another decorative trend. When Loos proclaims that, ‘The inability of our culture to create new ornament is a sign of its greatness’,<sup>143</sup> it is proposed here that he is not arguing against ornament, but rather commenting on the impossibility of setting out to create it. Loos is arguing that changes in ornament are the organic product of the culture in which they are produced, and hence invisible within that culture—‘The evolution of humanity goes hand in hand with the disappearance of ornamentation from objects of everyday use’.<sup>144</sup> Loos uses ‘Pottery’ (1908) as an example of how ornament can be a product of its culture and in particular its own production, noting that the potter is not interested in imitating colours found in nature, but in colours that can only occur in pottery. Loos’s comments are clearly intended as an analogy for application to the production of modern ornament in architecture, as he notes that this approach is generally suppressed by architects and designers. Proposing that attempts to create ornament are stifling the art of architecture, Loos notes that, ‘The artists said I was an enemy of art. But it was not because I was an enemy of art that I disapproved of them; I wanted to protect art against her oppressors’.<sup>145</sup> The ‘Surplus to Requirements’ (1908) essay is a criticism of the German Werkbund in these terms, suggesting that instead objects are modern if, ‘They are so much in the style of our age that—and this is the only criterion—we do not see them as being in a “style”’.<sup>146</sup> Also published in 1908, the ‘Culture and Cultural Degeneration’ essays reiterate this

<sup>142</sup> Loos, ‘The Old and the New Style in Architecture,’ 35.

<sup>143</sup> Loos, ‘Guided Tours of Apartments,’ in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 54.

<sup>144</sup> Loos, ‘Guided Tours of Apartments,’ 54.

<sup>145</sup> Loos, ‘Pottery,’ in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 151.

<sup>146</sup> Loos, ‘Surplus to Requirements,’ in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 154.



idea, claiming respectively that, by analogy, clothing that is anything other than expression of contemporary culture is an affectation, and that it is folly to try to invent the style of our time or a style that will last forever.

Loos's 'Architecture' essay of 1910 is the central focus of the 'Art and Crime' chapter, where it is argued that Loos rallies not against ornament per se, but against applied art as the erroneous combination of art and ornament. As can be seen from the above analysis, this theme is evident in many of the preceding essays, but it is in the 'Architecture' essay that this aspect of his ideas on art, function and ornament in architecture seems to have reached its full development. Loos wrote only a few essays between 'Ornament and Crime' and the 'Architecture' essay, and so the latter can be seen as a distillation of a number of disjointed earlier ideas on various subjects into a single essay explicitly on the subject of architecture. The 'Function and Art' chapter presents the 'Art and Architecture' essay of 1920 as the refinement of Loos's distinction between art and ornament. While Loos wrote significantly more essays between the 'Architecture' and 'Art and Architecture' essays, this is largely a function of the greater time period between them. The 'Art and Architecture' essay is similarly a focusing of a number of ideas from previous essays on the subject of architecture, and as with the 'Architecture' essay, it represents a watershed in Loos's thinking predominantly because of the intervening building projects rather than essays. Nonetheless, a number of minor refinements in Loos's ideas can be identified in some of the intervening essays. In the 'My Building on Michaelerplatz' essay of 1911, Loos discusses the ability of clients to judge the plans of buildings as this pertains to function, but not their appearance—which seems to align with the separation between function and art that it is proposed in the 'Art and Crime' chapter is evident in the 'Art and Architecture' essay. Similarly, in the process of critiquing architects' attempts to invent a vernacular architecture as simply another form of trying to invent a new style, Loos's 'Heimatkunst' essay draws a distinction between imperceptible incremental changes and the occasional invention that tears a hole in tradition—again aligned with function and art respectively.

The 'Art and Education' chapter presents the 'Ornament and Education' essay as Loos's refinement of his argument to encompass space in his understanding of architecture as composed of discrete elements of art and function. Loos's essays of 1921—'The House with One Wall', 'Houses for the Lainz Social Housing Development', 'Social Housing Development Day, and Learning a New Way of Living'—all deal explicitly with the articulation of space, which is almost completely absent from the essays of the preceding periods. Some of these ideas are functional, while others concern themselves with changing the way people spend their leisure time and interact with one another in their own homes. The purpose of the 'Grand Babylon Hotel' essay is to demonstrate the potential of flat roofs to provide outdoor spaces in the form of terraces. 'The Chicago Tribune Column' essay of 1923 does not deal with issues of space, but instead returns to the themes of 'Ornament and Crime', lampooning the competition format and the client's vain desire 'to erect ... the most distinct office building in the world', by proposing a

building that is completely divorced from the culture in which it is located. Also a restatement of earlier ideas, rather than the development of new ones, is Loos's 1924 essay on 'Furnishing a Modern Apartment'—'But the walls belong to the architect. Here he is master of his own world. And with the walls go the non-movable pieces of furniture. They must not look like furniture. They are part of the wall and do not have the independent existence of the old-fashioned ornamental cupboards'.<sup>147</sup> Almost contemporaneous with the 'Ornament and Education' essay, however, the 'On Thrift' essay of 1924 criticizes the inability of photography and drawings to communicate the experience of a space.

With regard to the themes of art, function and ornament in architecture, the essays that follow after 'Ornament and Education' are ostensibly restatements of the ideas that reach their conclusion in the essays that frame each of chapter of this research project, or feature unrelated issues. The 'Short Hair' essay of 1928 reveals the pointlessness of debates over appropriate styles, due to the fact that they are ever-changing. Loos remarks in the 'Josef Veillich' essay of 1929 that no craftsman would deride their own work from the preceding year and that, 'With such an attitude one marks oneself down as an artist'.<sup>148</sup> However, this should not be misinterpreted as Loos labeling these people as artists, or suggesting that being an artist is inappropriate for an architect or designer, because as he clarifies that, 'It will be different when people can distinguish clearly between art and craft, when the confidence tricksters and barbarians have been driven out of the temple of art. In a word, when my mission has been fulfilled'.<sup>149</sup> The 1929 essay on 'Furniture and People' can be understood as an analogy for architecture, in which Loos proposes that something truly modern will not need to be coordinated with other things, whether historical or modern. Published in 1930, 'The Vienna City Council's Tenements Cannot Tolerate Criticism' recounts an interview with Loos, in which it is claimed that Loos 'rejects the designation "artist" because he believes the architect should be a craftsman'.<sup>150</sup> However, while Loos states that, 'Architects must finally see that it is not their place to be artists, but craftsmen', he goes on to state 'that their task is to work in the service of human needs ... while an artist has the right to speak through his "superfluous" works'.<sup>151</sup> Loos also prefaces this comment by remarking that, 'Only a tiny minority of architects have comprehended that they should be craftsmen and not "artists"'—the scare marks suggesting that he is again referring to others' definitions rather than his own. Loos is not excluding architecture from the realm of art, but once more challenging the definition of his contemporaries, and proposing that architects separate their roles as craftsmen and artists.

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<sup>147</sup> Loos, 'Furnishing a Modern Apartment,' in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 177.

<sup>148</sup> Loos, 'Josef Veillich,' in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 184.

<sup>149</sup> Loos, 'Josef Veillich,' 184.

<sup>150</sup> Loos, 'The Vienna City Council's Tenements Cannot Tolerate Criticism,' in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 194.

<sup>151</sup> Loos, 'The Vienna City Council's Tenements,' 194.

My practice was established in 2002, and has to date focused on single residential buildings—most of them extensions and refurbishments—and small commercial projects. The scale of the projects was intentionally restricted until recently, on the basis that a premature expansion in the size of the buildings or practice could dilute or destroy the development of a distinct design culture. The appendix of projects commences with a list of all of the projects referred to in this chapter, indicating the type of building and the date of its completion on site. Each of the projects bears its own name, rather than the name of its client or street, in recognition of its status as piece of artwork, as distinct from its role as a building. Also included in the appendix is a statement about each work, produced either after its realisation as a building—in order to guide the design of the next project—or during its own inception or production, to direct its own realisation. In this respect, while each of the projects has an autonomous design agenda, they can also be understood as collectively constituting a single project or body of creative work. The engagement of an architect is understood in my practice as comprised of two quite separate components, an appointment and a commission, pertaining to quite distinct roles as a professional and designer respectively. Our clients for Composite House seemed to have independently reached a very similar conception of the process—explicitly stating that they saw their role as briefing us on what they needed and wanted, and the architect's as developing a design to respond to this. Like all of the projects in the practice, Composite House involved all members of the studio, which at the time comprised myself, and four other members of staff at various stages. The project was the last in which I undertook all of the initial sketches, client meetings and site inspections, and involved staff only in documentation and supporting my role—a process that has since changed, as outlined in the Conclusion, at least in part due to the progressive conclusions of this research. The site for the project was an existing three-storey Victorian house, which was entirely demolished with the exception of the street elevation, and portions of the rear elevation and roof.

A number of years prior to the establishment of my practice, an interest developed in my speculative work in the potential for architectural design strategies to be developed from the inherent characteristics of a project—such as site, programme, representation and construction—rather than from external inspiration. The rectilinear external form of Composite House references the white, rendered, flat-roofed, single-storey rear closet wings of Victorian houses like the one to which it is attached. Axonometric drawings of staircases are the inspiration for the staggered stacks of small-scale rectangles that provide access between each level of the house, and the absence of visible detailing recalls the drawn condition. Exposed brick walls make visible the construction of the building, the bleached finish of the timber floor attempts to capture the appearance of unfinished sanded pine floorboards, and black flood-lamps of the type used on the building site are fitted permanently as a literal remnant of the construction process. In a broader sense, Composite House openly draws upon the design of previous projects, composed—as the name of the building suggests—to form a new composition that acknowledges the serial nature of the architectural design act.

As noted above, the structure of the 'Architecture and Art' chapter mimics the format of a written specification of works, highlighting the integral role of this written document in defining the design of built architecture. While both a building specification and the chapter are structured around physical building elements, the former is generally organized by building trade or construction method, and the latter is arranged into groups of components that can be visually perceived—walls, floors and ceilings; staircases, joinery and fixtures; windows and doors; external form; and space. I have never consciously conceived of designs by considering these components separately in this way, but rather had become increasingly aware through practice of the manner in which the particular physical properties of different components affected the implementation of a design strategy for the whole building. Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that Loos ever designed his buildings in this way, and consequently the structure acts as a relatively transparent mechanism for carrying out a comparative analysis that operates independently from the design strategies of both architects. The components of Composite House and my other buildings are presented here as examples of the conception of sculptural elements and functional furnishings—and the repetition of the form of analysis with each component serves to test whether this general notion can be sustained through detailed and repeated interrogation. Tracing the development of each set of building elements through the preceding and subsequent projects establishes how the strategies informing their design emerge out of the process of making buildings—and illuminates how the particular physical qualities of each component place different demands on the implementation of the same overall design strategy. In each of the following chapters, the particular way in which these elements are understood in my own work informs the analysis of the same elements in Loos's buildings. Loos does not discuss his own work in these terms, but applying this design-led line of enquiry to the chronological development of his essays and buildings illuminates my hypothesis that he similarly conceived of architecture as comprising discrete elements of art and function.

## 2.1 Walls, Ceilings and Floors

The walls, floors and ceilings of the Composite House project are predominantly treated as sculptural objects at a variety of scales, however some are given the status of furnishings through being posited as curated found objects.

Fig. 2.1.1: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The double-height space between the ground floor and lower-ground floor heightens the perception of the smooth white-painted walls as planes in a sculptural composition at the height of the whole building, rather than as simply walls enclosing spaces on each floor. The low-level wall forming the balustrade to the double-height space is similarly uniform in material and devoid of visible detail at its edges and junctions with other surfaces, so as not to undermine a sculptural reading.



2.1.1

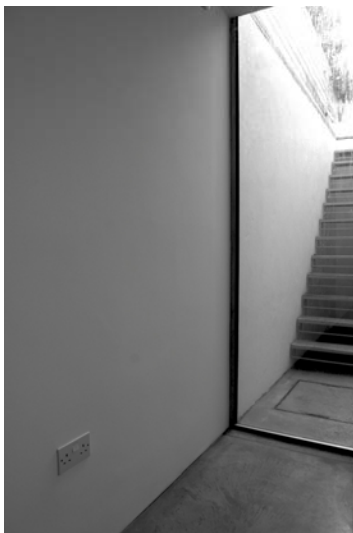
On one of the two boundary walls of Composite House, the original brickwork is exposed and painted, and so reads as materially distinct from the sculptural form of the new building. To the other boundary, however, the original wall is treated with a smooth, white paint finish in order to appropriate it into the large-scale, massive and planar, new building form. The flank wall of the first-floor bedroom similarly forms part of this composition, as do all of the enclosing walls of the new subterranean level of the house. Shadow gaps on the internal walls—at their junctions with ceilings and floors—create the perception that the rooms they enclose are small-scale sculptural volumes distinct from the large-scale composition, despite the fact that they share the same materiality and rectilinear geometry. The wall to the staircase operates in the same way, but vertically rather than horizontally, appearing to pass through the horizontal planes of the large-scale volume due to the positioning of the shadow gaps on the ceilings, rather than the wall, at their junctions.

Fig. 2.1.2: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The smooth plastered wall of the new lower-ground-floor level, extending continuously from interior to exterior, constitutes part of the new large-scale sculptural building form.

Fig. 2.1.3: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The freestanding walls to the interior of the upper levels also form part of the sculptural composition.

Fig. 2.1.4: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The sculptural quality of the staircase wall is supported by the use of shadow gaps that create the impression of a detached plane. The boundary wall is articulated as a found-object furnishing by the use of an exposed brickwork finish.

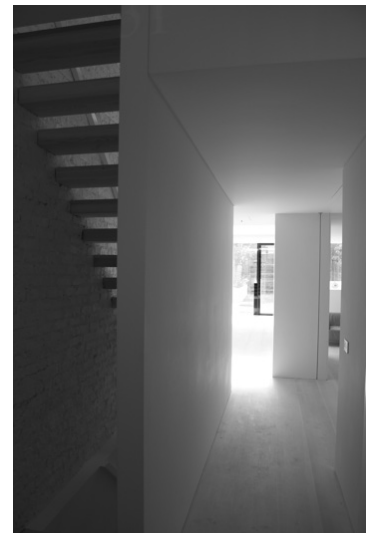
2.1.2



2.1.3



2.1.4



Shadow gaps similarly generate the perception that the white-painted, plastered ceilings of the three main levels of the house are planes that pass above the internal walls. However, due to their materiality and the absence of shadow gaps in favour of butt joints at their junctions with boundary walls, the ceilings are appropriated into the large-scale composition of the boundary walls and external form. The ceilings can also be read from the exterior and interior as continuous with the roof planes, and this perception is heightened by the expression of the rooflights as frameless voids puncturing the sculptural volume. Conversely, the ceiling of the top floor is articulated as a furnishing—a curated found-object part of the site, signalled by the appearance of the pitched roof form of the original building on this level. This shift of geometry clearly distinguishes it from the rectilinear and orthogonal ceilings that form part of the sculptural composition of the project.

Fig. 2.1.5: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The ground-floor living room ceiling is expressed as part of the large-scale sculptural composition of the house through the use of butt junctions with the boundary walls. The articulation of roof-lights as frameless incised openings heightens the plastic quality of the ceiling, while shadow gaps to the top of the internal walls at their junctions with the ceiling create the illusion that it is a continuous plane.



2.1.5





2.1.6

Fig. 2.1.6: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The lower-ground-floor ceiling is detailed in the same way as the ground-floor ceiling, and the opening to the double-height dining space takes the same form as the ground-floor roof-light, but at a larger scale.



2.1.7



2.1.8



2.1.9

Fig. 2.1.7: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The double-height space to the front of the playroom is expressed as a gap between the orthogonal sculptural form of the ceiling and the faceted geometry of the found-object bay of the Victorian front elevation.

Fig. 2.1.8: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Views between the lower-ground and ground floors heighten the perception of the ceiling planes as part of a composition at the scale of the whole house. In the foreground, the articulation of the void above the lower-ground-floor dining space frames a view of the smaller-scale roof-light opening to the ground-floor living space.

Fig. 2.1.9: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. A roof-light above the second-floor staircase is detailed in the same way as the one in the ground-floor ceiling, but the expression of the angled geometry of the existing Victorian roof form signals this ceiling as a functional furnishing, distinct from the orthogonal ceiling planes of the lower-ground, ground and first floors that form part of the new sculptural building composition.

Similarly, the floor surfaces of Composite House are treated as separate from the large-scale white form, as planes of timber or concrete that appear to pass under the internal walls due to the use of shadow gaps, as described above in relation to the ceilings. The timber-decked floor and walls of the garden space are, like the internal walls and floors, articulated as a smaller-scale sculptural volume—of the same geometry, but materially distinct from the large-scale white form.

Fig. 2.1.10: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. This colour photograph highlights the materiality of the concrete floor as a plane distinct from those of the white-painted walls and ceilings. The concrete floor runs continuously from the interior of the lower-ground-floor bedroom, through the outdoor courtyard, and back into the interior of the dining, kitchen and playroom spaces.

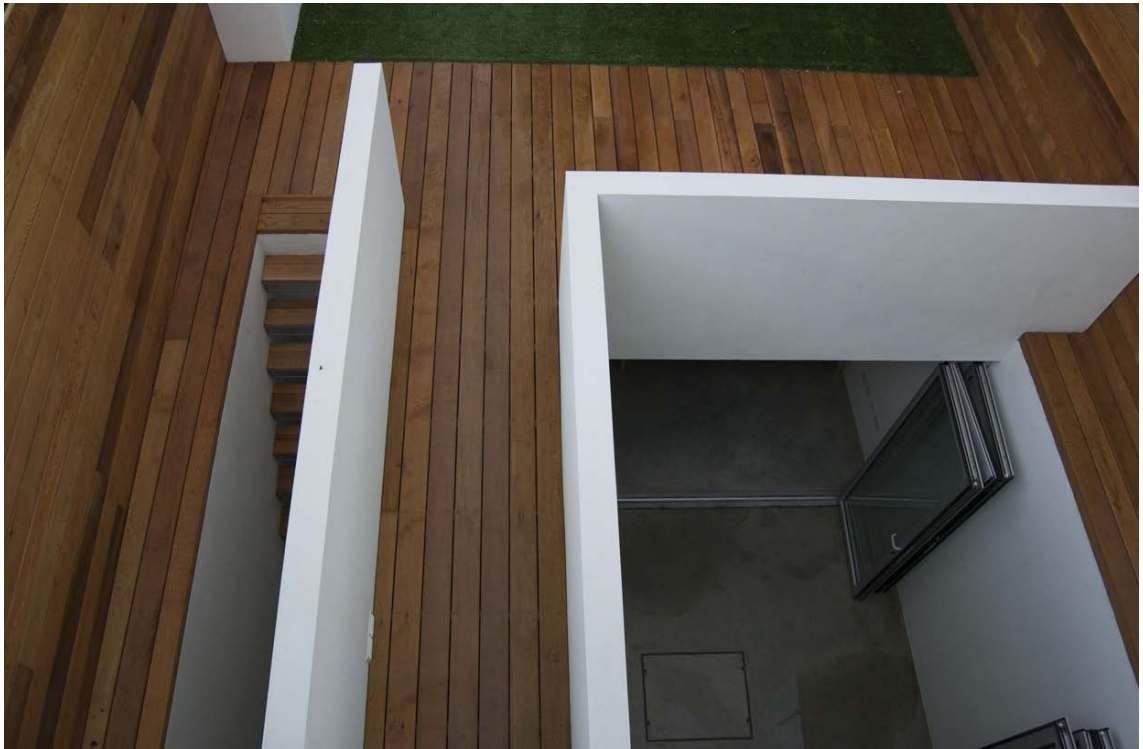
Fig. 2.1.11: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. While expressed as an unimpeded sculptural plane, the colour of the timber floorboards to the ground floor demarcates it as separate from the large-scale white composition of walls and ceilings. Butt junctions to the external walls define the overall dimensions of this autonomous plane, while the shadow gaps on the bottom of the internal walls create the impression of continuity.

2.1.10



2.1.11





2.1.12

Fig. 2.1.12: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The colour and materiality of the timber decking sets it apart from the large-scale white composition of walls and ceilings. However, the decking operates in the same manner as the walls and ceilings in the sense that walls of decking are expressed as continuous with the decking that forms the floor surfaces—and so also appear as a single sculptural composition, albeit at a smaller scale. Like the butt junctions between the walls and ceilings, there is no visible change to the detailing at the junction between the horizontal and vertical planes of decking.

The articulation of internal walls as freestanding, rectilinear sculptural volumes and planes has its origin in the Open End (2004), Tabula Rasa (2006) and Extrapolation House (2007) projects, was first refined through the use of shadow gaps in Light Box, (2005) and serially developed through Stereoscope (2008), and Sleeper (2007), before appearing in Composite House (2008), then Aggregate House (2009) and subsequent projects.

Fig. 2.1.13: Aggregate House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2009. Walls are detailed with shadow gaps to their junctions with the floor and ceiling, to appear as freestanding rectilinear planes.

### 2.1.13



The Sleeper project is the first appearance of white-painted brick walls appearing as curated found-object furnishings, distinct from the sculptural articulation of the project. White-painted brick as found-object furnishing is also deployed in Pavilion (2005), Public House (2006) and Aggregate House (2009), and the same status is given to the rendered original walls of Striated Space (2008). Also treated as furnishings are some of the original Victorian walls adjoining the new architectural insertion of Hackney House, which are left unaltered—complete with architraves, cornices and skirtings—to signal their status as functional building elements rather than sculptural components. Other original walls, however, are appropriated into the sculptural composition of the project through the removal of these ornamental building features, to render them as rectilinear abstract planes.

Fig. 2.1.14: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. A cut-out shelf to a freestanding wall continues the design strategy at a smaller scale.

#### 2.1.14



Like those in Composite House, the ceiling of Hackney House (2002) is articulated as part of the large-scale sculptural composition of the project—and the perception of this is similarly heightened by the use of frameless rooflights that puncture this form to create the impression of a massive, planar, plastic volume. The deployment of ceilings as sculptural planes punctuated by rectangular openings can be followed through the Elegant Shed (2003), Open End (2004), Diorama (2005), Light Box (2005), Pavilion (2005), Terrace House (2005), Semi-detached (2005), Landscaper (2007), Extrapolation House (2007) and Aggregate House (2009) projects—and a number of other projects also incorporate ceilings as uninterrupted rectilinear planes, including Public House (2006), Sleeper (2007) and Striated Space (2008). In Public House, the sculptural quality of one of the ceiling planes is accentuated by the fact that it is integrated with the adjoining walls to form an L-shaped rectilinear form that appears distinct from the found-object ceiling of the building within which it is sited. Shadow gaps are first used in the Light Box project to define ceilings as continuous planes that pass above internal rooms, walls and joinery—and this device is also deployed in Sleeper, Stereoscope (2008) and Aggregate House. While the folded form and maple veneer finish of the ceiling of In the Fold (2006) is very different to the geometry and materiality of Composite House and these other projects, it is also part of this lineage—in the sense that it is articulated as a sculptural surface incised by voids in the form of rooflights.

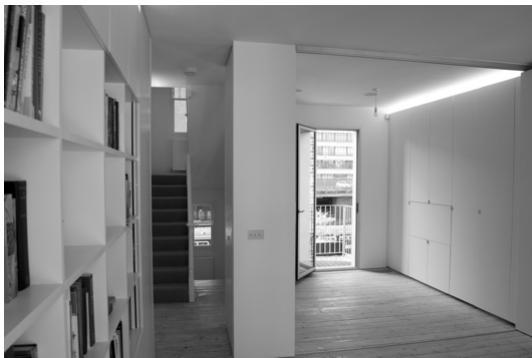
Conversely, the angled geometry of some of the original ceilings of the One Up One Down (2004) and Semi-detached (2005) projects is set in opposition to that of the new sculptural composition, in order to signal its role as functional, found-object furnishing. The original ceilings of the sites of the Karntner House (2005) and Striated Space (2008) projects have been similarly defined as furnishings—through their materiality rather than their geometry—by the expression of beams and pitted render respectively. In the case of the Stereoscope project, the furnishing role of the original ceiling of the top-floor space is signaled by both its geometry and materiality being distinct from the sculptural composition of the new architecture—angled and timber, versus orthogonal and plastered. Conversely, the original ceiling of the site of the Artefact (2007) project shares the same overall geometry and materiality as the new ceilings, but is identified as performing a furnishing rather than sculptural role through its butt junction details where it meets the original walls—by contrast to the new lowered ceiling that is visually separated by a strip of recessed lighting. Similarly, the existing ceilings of the site of the Open End (2004) project are variously treated as part of the new sculptural composition through the removal of decorative detail, or curated as found objects and their status as furnishings signaled by ornate cornices. The same can be said of a number of other projects where adjacent areas of the original buildings that form the sites are left relatively untouched—Hackney House (2002), Elegant Shed (2003), and Landscaper (2007) are examples of this.



2.1.15



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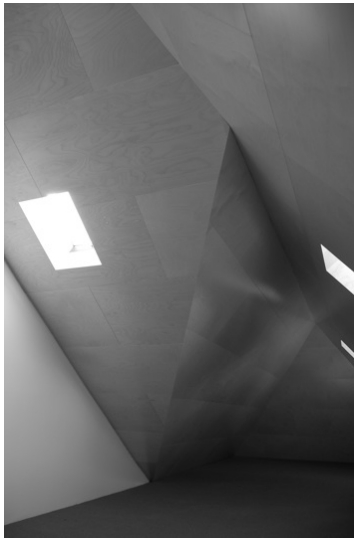
Fig. 2.1.15: Public House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2006. The sculptural appearance of the rectilinear and orthogonal ceiling plane above the kitchen is accentuated by its continuity with the perpendicular wall plane enclosing the adjacent dining area.

Fig. 2.1.16: Semi-detached, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The frameless articulation of the roof-light creates the illusion that it is an incision in a plastic solid, and so contributes to the sculptural quality of the ceiling as an abstract plane.

Fig. 2.1.17: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. Shadow gaps to the top of the joinery units and internal walls that divide the interior spaces contribute to the impression that the ceiling is a single uninterrupted plane at the scale of the whole building.

Fig. 2.1.18: Stereoscope, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The trussed roof structure is curated into the new project with a white paint finish but is otherwise treated as a found-object, and its existing geometry utilized to signal that it is distinct from the sculptural composition of the new rectilinear and orthogonal elements.

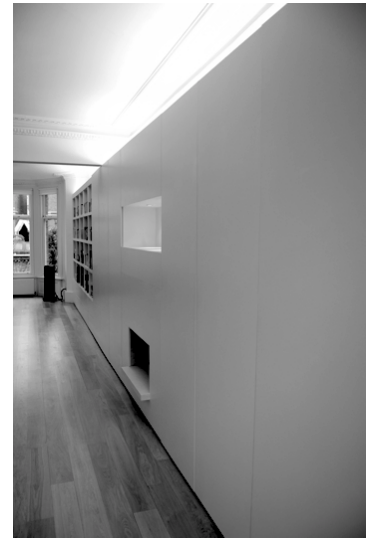




2.1.19



2.1.20



2.1.21

Fig. 2.1.19: In the Fold, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2006. The ceiling is expressed as a continuous folded surface of maple incised by roof-light openings.

Fig. 2.1.20: Public House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2006. A stair enclosure above one of the dining areas is given a rectilinear and orthogonal form and detailed with shadow gaps, so as to appear as part of the sculptural composition of new walls and ceilings.

Fig. 2.1.21: Open End, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2004. Ornate cornices to the existing ceilings are retained so as to highlight their separation from the sculptural composition of rectilinear planes formed by the new insertions.

The polished concrete floor of Hackney House (2002) is treated similarly to Composite House, as distinct from the main white volume of the project, but possesses a sculptural quality as an unbounded surface—in the case of Hackney House running from the interior to the exterior, where it folds up to form a staircase and retaining wall. The development of the treatment of floor planes as smaller-scale sculptural elements can be traced from Hackney House through the Pavilion (2005), Diorama (2005), Lightbox (2005), Sleeper (2007), Landscaper (2007), Artefact (2007) and Stereoscope (2008) projects to Composite House. By contrast, the concrete floor of Autonomous Fragment (2007), and the timber floors of Karntner House (2005), Tabula Rasa (2006), and Sleeper (2007) are all articulated as curated found objects and so have the status of furnishings.

Fig. 2.1.22: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. The materiality of the timber floor of Sleeper signals its status as furnishing rather than sculptural element.

Fig. 2.1.23: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. The cedar decking, which forms the floor to the external spaces of the Sleeper project, is conversely articulated as a small-scale sculptural element, continuous with the treatment of the adjacent walls.

2.1.22

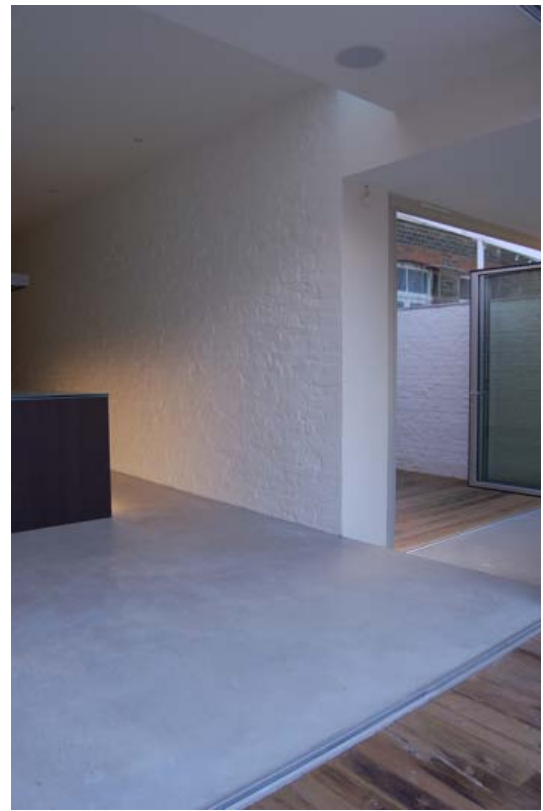


2.1.23





2.1.24



2.1.25

Fig. 2.1.24: Aggregate House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2009. The materiality of the timber floor of Aggregate House signals its status as a found-object furnishing, and its distinction from the new sculptural elements is punctuated by the use of shadow gaps to the internal walls.

Fig. 2.1.25: Pavilion, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. Floors of polished concrete and timber decking are expressed as autonomous planes of different materials. They are given a sculptural quality by the absence of changes to their articulation, both at their edges and where they meet other building elements.

## 2.2 Staircases, Joinery and Fixtures

Staircases, joinery and fixtures are variously treated sculpturally or as furnishings in Composite House. Unlike the walls, floors and ceilings, however, the status of furnishing is not limited to components of the original building, and new elements are articulated as furnishings through detailing that visually foregrounds their functional status. The evolution of these details is evident in the preceding and subsequent projects, alongside examples of existing staircases, joinery and fixtures that are assigned the same status through their articulation as found objects. As a new-build project, the re-reading of the Müller House (1930) in these terms could be seen as more directly informed by examples of these elements from Composite House. However, Loos's design methods for designating some of the staircases, joinery and fixtures of the Müller House as furnishings is in some respects more akin to the found-object examples.

The stringers and other fixtures and fittings of the main staircase of Composite House are concealed in order to visually suppress its functionality and enable it to be read as a small-scale sculptural element. While new, the handrail is attached to the adjacent wall of the original house and so assigned the same status of furnishing. By contrast, the staircase from the garden to the basement is clearly articulated as a functional building component—through its contrasting galvanised steel material and exposed details—and so operates as a furnishing rather than as an element of the sculptural composition of the house.

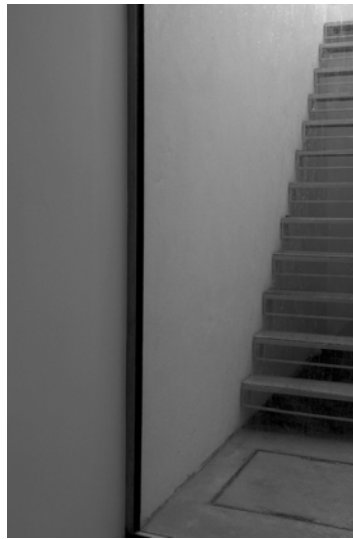
Fig. 2.2.1: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. This colour photograph highlights the materiality of the timber open-riser staircase, leading up from the ground-floor living space, and the stainless steel kitchen joinery—both of which are treated as small-scale sculptural elements. The structure of the staircase is bolted into the existing brickwork boundary wall and the new balustrade wall, and concealed by the floorboard cladding, giving the impression of staggered and floating abstract planes of timber.



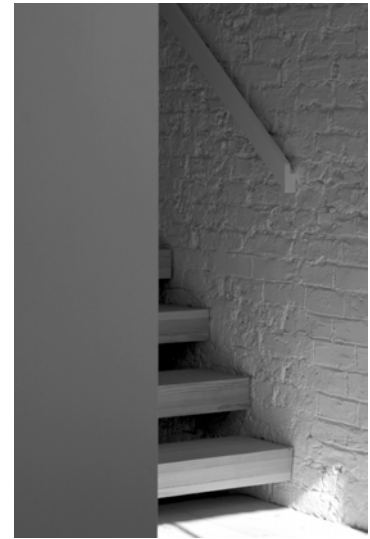
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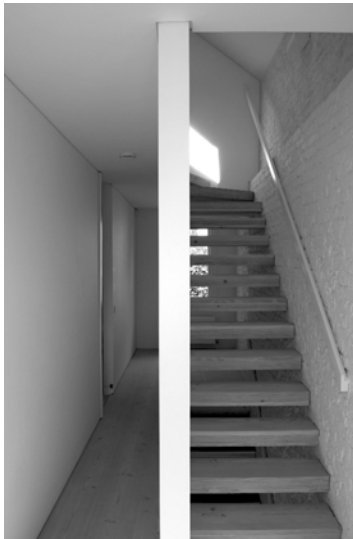


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Fig. 2.2.2: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The staircase connecting the lower-ground floor to the garden is constructed of galvanised steel and cedar decking, and its structure is exposed so as to assign it the status of a functional furnishing.

Fig. 2.2.3: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The furnishing status of the external staircase is heightened by the juxtaposition of a manhole cover installed with a frame hewn of the same material.

Fig. 2.2.4: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. While the main staircase is treated as a sculptural element, its handrail is conversely articulated as a furnishing, and its functional status is heightened by its placement on the found-object existing brickwork boundary wall.



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Fig. 2.2.5: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The open-riser staircase can be perceived as a continuous sculptural element that runs vertically through all four floors of the house, with varying adjacencies to different compositions of sculptural elements and components that visually operate as furnishings—such as the timber floor planes and the white-painted internal planes and volumes, and the found-object sash windows and brickwork boundary wall.

Fig. 2.2.6: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The structure of the second-floor landing is concealed by a small-scale sculptural plane of white wall that is visually separated from the ceiling and perpendicular balustrade wall by shadow gaps.

Fig. 2.2.7: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. From the ground-floor entry the small-scale sculptural element of the timber staircase can be perceived alongside the similarly scaled planes of concrete and timber floors, and the large-scale, sculptural, white building form.

While the vast majority of the joinery units in Composite House—in the living room, master bedroom and playroom—are treated as small-scale sculptural compositions, the kitchen island is expressed as a furnishing. While the wall cabinets of the Composite House kitchen are treated as part of the composition of white rectilinear volumes in the centre of each floor level, the furnishing status of the kitchen island is established by its articulation as a freestanding element of a smaller scale. Its stainless steel finish is distinct from the large-scale sculptural composition, and the expressed handle details support a functional reading.

Fig. 2.2.8: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The living room joinery unit encloses the television, stereo equipment and storage, and is integrated with the wall, fire door and fire curtain that enclose the ground-floor hallway. Combined with these other components, the joinery unit constitutes a small-scale sculptural element that appears as a freestanding rectilinear volume in the middle of the interior space. Shadow gaps to the unit at its junctions with the floor and ceiling contribute to this visual impression.





2.2.8

Other fixtures and fittings are either completely concealed or exposed and set in visual contrast to the sculptural composition of the building in order to lend them the status of furnishings—examples are the wall-mounted floodlamps, the chandelier that hangs over the double-height living space, and the rainwater hopper and downpipe to the external wall of the master bedroom. Plain white light switches are used on all the white walls, and where possible are located on walls that do not form part of the sculptural composition of the house. Radiators are variously subsumed into the sculptural composition, as is the case with the under-floor heating concealed within the concrete floor of the lower-ground level, or exposed as furnishings in the form of wall-mounted or floor recessed fittings such as those in the bedrooms and ground floor respectively. The unfixed furnishings of the house did not form part of the design, and the client was advised only that they should be eclectic in their relation to one another, and should not match the materiality of the building. The spatial distribution of the house suggests certain furniture arrangements, but the spatial arrangement does not rely upon a particular layout.

Fig. 2.2.9: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The switches and heat detector to the kitchen take the form of basic white fittings that align them with the unfixed furnishings of the house, such as the table in the foreground, rather than with the sculptural forms of the walls and kitchen island to which they are attached.

### 2.2.9

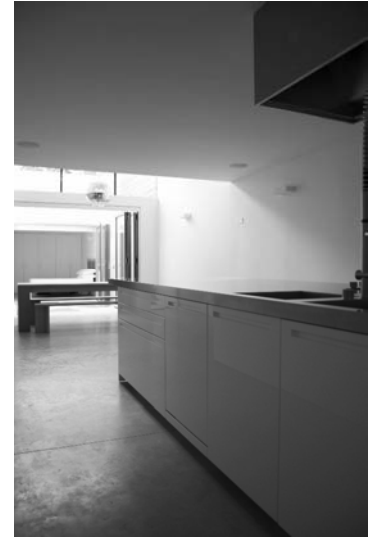




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Fig. 2.2.10: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Rainwater discharge from the roof of the master bedroom could not be concealed into the large-scale composition of white forms, and so is expressed as a functional furnishing affixed to the building—albeit idealised through its rectilinear form and galvanised steel material, which connects it with other furnishing elements of the building, such as the staircase from the garden to the lower-ground floor.

Fig. 2.2.11: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. As in the kitchen, the movement sensor and light switches in the playroom are specified as basic surface-mounted, white fittings so as to clearly demarcate them as functional furnishings attached to, but separate from, the sculptural elements to which they are attached.

Fig. 2.2.12: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Where lighting cannot be completely concealed it is expressed as furnishings, such as the hanging lights over the dining area and the wall-mounted floodlamps.

The evolution of these details is evident in the preceding and subsequent projects to Composite House—alongside examples of existing staircases, joinery and fixtures that are assigned the same status through their articulation as found objects. While not open-riser, the staircase of Hackney House (2002) is treated as a sculptural item—evidence of its craft as a functional building component is suppressed through the concealment of the stringers and the absence of handrails and nosings. This detail also occurs in Light Box (2005), but the most direct origin of the main staircase of Composite House, however, is the loft staircase of One Up One Down (2004). The staircase is finished in a different timber, but is otherwise visually identical to that in Composite House, and the intervening Semi-detached (2005), Sleeper (2007), and Landscaper (2007) projects. The galvanized steel external staircase to Sleeper is drawn from the materiality of adjacent railway structures, and is the direct source of the furnishing staircase that appears in the outdoor area of Composite House.

Fig. 2.2.13: Hackney House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2002. The external staircase of Hackney House is constructed of cast concrete and appears as a sculptural element due to the concealment of its structure and junction details with adjacent elements.

Fig. 2.2.14: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. The Sleeper project sits immediately adjacent to railway tracks, and the external staircase is articulated as a functional furnishing distinct from the sculptural timber volume—the design referencing the industrial staircases visible from the house.

Fig. 2.2.15: Light Box, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The closed riser oak staircase of Light Box possesses a sculptural quality due to the concealment of its stringers into the adjacent walls, and the absence of protruding nosings or raked risers.

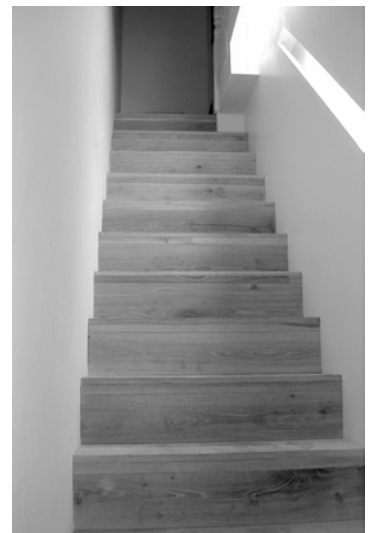
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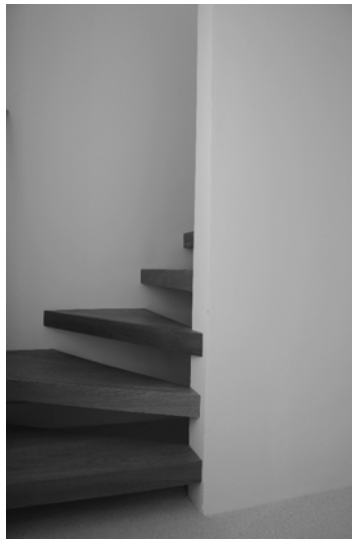


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Fig. 2.2.16: One Up One Down, William Tozer Architecture and Design. Photograph by Ed Reeve, 2004. The detailing of the sculptural staircase in Composite House was developed in the One Up One Down project, where its juxtaposition with a traditional sash window heightens its sculptural appearance.

Fig. 2.2.17: Semi-detached, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The detailing of the second-floor winders in the sculptural staircase of Composite House can be traced to the top-floor staircase of the Semi-detached project.

Fig. 2.2.18: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. While the open-riser staircase in the Sleeper project is finished with timber floorboards salvaged from the found-object floors, it is assigned the status of a sculptural element by the concealment of its structure and junctions. This visual effect is exaggerated by its incongruous juxtaposition with the reinstated existing Victorian stringer and balustrade, which clearly appears as a functional furnishing.

The deployment of joinery in all of the projects can be divided into those subsumed into the sculptural composition of other elements of the building, articulated as autonomous small-scale sculptural compositions, or expressed as functional building components analogous to furnishings. The incorporation of joinery into the composition of other elements of the building can be seen in most of the projects—the full-height cupboards integrated into the utility room wall of *Open End* (2004) is a clear example, while the kitchen island in the same project is articulated as an autonomous small-scale sculptural item. The same division is evident in *Pavilion* (2005), *Semi-detached* (2005), *Light Box* (2005), *Karntner House* (2005), *Tabula Rasa*, (2006), *Artefact* (2007), *Sleeper* (2007), and *Stereoscope* (2008). The appearance of joinery units articulated as furnishings can be traced to the *Hackney House* (2002) project, where the kitchen is articulated using materials distinct from the sculptural volumes of the architectural project, and the two components terminate short of the ceiling and in the middle of the space respectively. The white lacquer and sandblasted glass kitchen units of *Elegant Shed* (2003), are another such example. The treatment of joinery as small-scale sculptural elements can be traced from *Hackney House*, through many of the projects, but the device was first used as a freestanding volume to divide zones of an open-plan space in *Diorama* (2005). *Sleeper* is the first example in the body of work of walls and joinery units used together as sculptural planes and volumes to divide space in the same manner as the lower floors of *Composite House*. The device is used to structure the division of space of both levels of the un-built *Extrapolation House* (2007).

Fig. 2.2.19: *Sleeper*, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. The wall of cupboards on the right of the photograph is visually integrated into the sculptural plane of the boundary wall, while the bookshelves in the foreground on the left appear as a functional furnishing in the room.

Fig. 2.2.20: *Pavilion*, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The shelves and cupboards at the rear of the *Pavilion* kitchen are presented as part of the white, rectilinear sculptural volume that encloses the utility room, while the kitchen islands are presented as functional furnishings.

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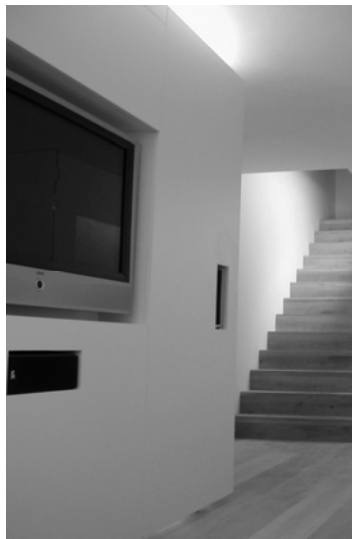
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Fig. 2.2.21: Open End, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2004. The distinction is evident between the sculptural volume formed by the pantry and refrigerator joinery to the background of this photograph of Open End, and the furnishing status of the kitchen islands.

Fig. 2.2.22: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. The kitchen joinery unit in the background on the left of this photograph of the Sleeper project is designed to have the same furnishing status as the table that can be seen in the foreground on the right.



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Fig. 2.2.23: Artefact, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. The main wall of kitchen units in the Artefact project is designed to complete this face of the sculptural volume that encloses the shower room, but the row of high-level units functions visually as a furnishing, like the pendant light hanging from the ceiling on the right of the image.

Fig. 2.2.24: Lightbox, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The cupboards forming the balustrade wall to the staircase visually form a sculptural plane in the composition of the scheme, whereas the unit in the foreground of the image has the status of a furnishing and the exposed integration of the television and speakers into its design contribute to this impression.

Fig. 2.2.25: Stereoscope, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Integrated into the plane of the wall, the cupboards in the background of this photograph are part of the sculptural composition of planes and volumes of this interior. Conversely, the kitchen island in the foreground is designed with contrasting materials and expressed handles, assigning it the status of a furnishing, and so aligning it with elements such as the extractor hood above.



Most of the projects demonstrate an absence of ceiling-recessed lighting, in favour of surface-mounted wall or ceiling lighting that assumes the character of furnishings—whether in the form of floodlamps like those in Public House (2006), or pendant lights as can be seen in the Karntner House (2005) and One Up One Down (2004) projects. The use of under-floor heating in order to maintain a sculptural reading of floors and walls is first seen in the Hackney House project, while floor-recessed and wall-mounted radiators expressed as furnishings can be observed in many of the projects, such as Open End and Karntner House respectively. Built-in seating is evident in commercial projects such as Striated Space, Interior Street, Laneway, and Public House; however, in all of the domestic projects, furniture does not form part of the architectural composition.

Fig. 2.2.26: Karntner House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. Wall-mounted floodlamps are used with the intention of them having the same status of other furnishings, such as the freestanding lamp to the right of the image.

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Fig. 2.2.27: Karntner House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. Fluorescent lighting is concealed above and behind the white rectilinear volume that encloses the wardrobes and the kitchen units, and so serves to support this sculptural composition. By contrast the wall-mounted floodlamps have the same furnishing status as the chandelier visible to the top left of the photograph.

Fig. 2.2.28: One Up One Down, William Tozer Architecture and Design. Photograph by Ed Reeve, 2004. The division between lighting as part of the sculptural composition and lighting as furnishing can be seen in the living room of the One Up One Down project, where respectively lighting can be seen concealed in bulkheads and plinths to the left of the image and exposed as a pendant light shade on the right.

Fig. 2.2.29: Public House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2006. The built-in furniture to the left of this photograph formed part of the design of the project, but its materiality and detailing renders it distinct from the white, rectilinear and orthogonal planes and volumes of the sculptural composition of the scheme. The bench seating instead appears visually related to the unfixed furnishings in the space, such as the tables and chairs to the right of the image.

### 2.3 Windows and Doors

The Composite House project contains windows and doors that are treated as elements of the large-scale and small-scale sculptural compositions of the house, and others that are articulated as furnishings. By contrast, if one applies this design methodology to an analysis of the Müller House, the windows and doors are almost universally treated as functional components rather than as sculptural elements. The original windows and front door of the Composite House are clearly traditional building components and so possess the status of furnishings, rather than contributing to the rectilinear and planar sculptural composition of the house, due to the visual foregrounding of their functional status. However, the same could also be said of the modern sliding and folding doors that furnish the openings to the first and lower-ground floors. When closed, these building components are clearly sets of glazed doors; however, these doors differ from the traditional windows and doors in that when they are open, the void in the sculptural building volume can be viewed unimpeded. Moreover, the frameless glazing and doors to the ground floor of Composite House are articulated so that they do not compromise perception of the sculptural composition of the large-scale building volume. Mirror is predominantly used in Composite House in a perfunctory form, but the mirror to the master bathroom encompasses the entire wall and so becomes a compositional element also. Furthermore, the reflection of the glazed ground-floor rear elevation is utilised to create ambiguity between the external courtyard and balustrade, and the interior void and balustrade—the reflection of each is directly overlaid on the view of the other. A solid ventilation window in the first-floor rear bedroom similarly operates entirely within the formal language of the new building form, visually suppressing the craft by which it is produced in order to support a sculptural reading of the building. The internal doors throughout Composite House are recessed into the adjacent walls and ironmongery concealed wherever possible, and thus appropriated into the large-scale sculptural composition of the building.

Fig. 2.3.1: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Due to their frameless detailing, the windows and doors that form the ground-floor elevation at the top of this photograph read visually as a void in the sculptural composition of large-scale white planes and volumes. By contrast the sliding-and-folding door openings—shown to the lower-ground floor at the bottom of this image—can also be read as compositional voids when open, but the doors themselves appear as a functional furnishings in these openings, and this is the dominant effect when they are closed.



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Fig. 2.3.2: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The continuity of the sculptural composition of rectilinear planes and volumes between the interior and the exterior is preserved by the transparency of the ground-floor rear elevation, and heightened by the reflections that it facilitates. The small-scale sculptural composition of planes of cedar decking is physically contained to the exterior, but reflections extend this composition into the interior of the ground floor. Similarly, the white sculptural planes of the walls that enclose the internal double-height space and external courtyard are symmetrical about the line of the ground-floor glazing, and so create a visual doubling that reinforces this composition.



2.3.3

Fig. 2.3.3: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. A visual opening is formed by a full-height, frameless clear glass panel that runs between the bedroom wardrobes and the boundary wall is matched by a physical opening between this joinery and the flank wall, which forms the doorway to the bathroom. Mirror across the entire surface of the opposite wall of the bathroom creates a visual doubling—of both the room, and the ambiguity of the visual and physical openings described above.

Fig. 2.3.4: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Particularly when closed, the sliding-and-folding doors to the openings on the lower-ground floor and first floor (shown at the top of this photograph) have the status of functional furnishings, and so are akin to the other building elements that operate as furnishings, such as the new rainwater hopper and downpipe and the existing Victorian sash window on the right of this image.



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Fig. 2.3.5: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The sliding-and-folding doors to the ground-floor openings appear as furnishings, aligned with the dining table and hanging lights in the background of the photograph, and distinct from the composition of sculptural rectilinear volumes and planes.

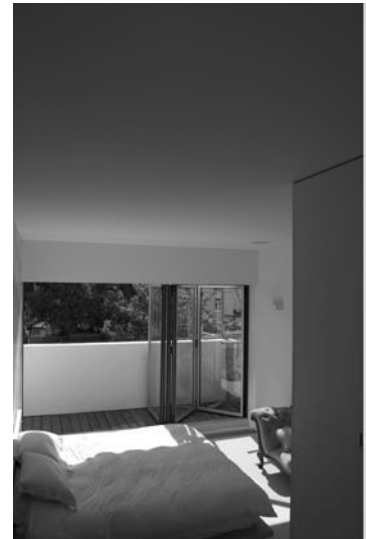




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Fig. 2.3.6: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Unlike the sliding-and-folding doors, the frameless glass balustrade to one side of the first-floor terrace forms part of the sculptural arrangement of planes and volumes.

Fig. 2.3.7: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. This door to the ground-floor living room (concealed to the wall in the centre of the image) is typical of the internal doors of Composite House, designed to form part of the sculptural composition of white planes and volumes, either when open or closed, depending upon which is the dominant mode for each door.

Fig. 2.3.8: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The sliding-and-folding doors to the first-floor master bedroom appear as furnishings like the bed and sofa that sit within the sculptural forms of the space.

The articulation of the windows and doors of Composite House has a clear relationship to the development of these building elements of the preceding and subsequent projects. The existing window and exterior door openings of *Artefact* (2007) are partially appropriated into the new sculptural composition by being treated as voids to the interior walls, but their status as original elements or new insertions is ambiguous. This device can be traced to the utility room window of *Hackney House* (2002), where an existing window opening was finished with frameless glazing. The windows to the timber-clad portion of *Hackney House* are the earliest appearance of windows treated as voids in a sculptural building mass, like the rear elevation of *Composite House*. The frames and sills are completely concealed to the timber cladding, in the same way that the frames are concealed to the render or within the glazing itself in *Composite House*. A similar treatment can be seen with the concealment of the window frames to the timber cladding of *Elegant Shed* (2003).

The glazed, folding and sliding doors on the basement and first-floor levels of *Composite House* are clearly descendents of the sliding doors to the rear of *Hackney House*. In both projects the elements read as functional building components in their closed position, and as voids in the sculptural composition when open. More directly related are the sliding and folding aluminium doors of the *One Up One Down* (2004) and *Pavilion* (2005) projects. The hinged, solid panel 'window' to the first floor of *Composite House* is a permutation of the large, rendered, hinged wall panels to the rear elevation of *Victorian Hoarding* (2004). The frameless double-glazed panel between these two panels could also be seen as a precursor to the glazed screen forming the rear elevation of the ground floor of *Composite House*, but the first explicit use of this detail is the rear elevation of *Pavilion* (2005), and it features in a number of other projects, including *Tabula Rasa* (2006). The pantry door in *Hackney House* is the first appearance of a door that is entirely appropriated into the articulation of the plane of the wall in which it is located. Rather than being full-height like those in *Composite House*, however, the pantry door terminates short of the ceiling to provide a lighting detail, and the cut-out handle opening continues this articulation at a smaller scale. The concealment of doors as panels in large and small-scale sculptural elements of the building was first used in *Open End* (2004), incorporated again in *Light Box*, and then refined in the *Sleeper* project to closely resemble its articulation in *Composite House*. The compositional deployment of mirror appears in a number of earlier projects, including *Stereoscope* (2008).



2.3.9

Fig. 2.3.9: Artefact, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. Existing window and door openings to the interior of the Artefact project are universally treated as voids in the sculptural composition of white planes and volumes. The configuration of the original external openings is not evident from the interior and so the openings read as abstract voids of an L-shaped geometry. Frameless, fixed double-glazing to the external openings lends them the same appearance as the unglazed openings to the building interior.



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Fig. 2.3.10: Artefact, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. From the exterior of the Artefact project adjacencies with similar openings to the property above and remnants of the brick header courses reveal the likely origin of the openings, creating tension between their abstract sculptural forms and their status as found objects.

Fig. 2.3.11: Hackney House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2002. The Hackney House project incorporates windows articulated as voids in a timber volume, through the concealment of structure and junctions to the adjacent cladding.

Fig. 2.3.12: Tabula Rasa, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2006. Fixed glazing and a sliding door with concealed frame to the two external openings at the rear of Tabula Rasa allow the elevation to read as rectilinear plane with incised openings to its plastic form.



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Fig. 2.3.13: Hackney House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2002. The glazed sliding doors to the rear of Hackney House are a clear origin of both the frameless glazing to the ground floor of Composite House and the sliding and folding doors to the lower-ground and first floors. Like the sliding-and-folding doors in Composite House, the sliding doors of Hackney House also appear as furnishings in a void in the composition of the sculptural elements of the scheme—but this is not the case when they are open, because they are completely concealed by sliding into an adjacent room.

Fig. 2.3.14: Open End, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2004. When the glazed doors of Open End are folded back, the openings in the building appear as voids between the white and timber sculptural planes of ceiling and soffit, and the floor respectively. When closed, the doors appear as furnishings that fill the building openings, and as a consequence, the sculptural composition of the new building is significantly more difficult to discern.



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Fig. 2.3.15: Pavilion, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. At one end of this room of the Pavilion, the sliding and folding doors operate in the same way as those in the Open End project, oscillating between roles as a void in the sculptural compositions, and functional furnishings, depending upon whether they are open or closed. At the other end of the room, however, the frameless fixed glazing operates only as a sculptural void, in the same manner as the ground-floor rear elevation of Composite House.

Fig. 2.3.16: One Up One Down, William Tozer Architecture and Design. Photograph by Ed Reeve, 2004. Due to the exposed frames, the windows to the rear elevation of the top floor of One Up One Down appear as furnishings whether open or closed. This functional element occupies the void to sculptural compositions of zinc and white plaster, which are formed by the dormer to the exterior, and the ceiling and wall planes to the interior.



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Fig. 2.3.17: Victorian Hoarding, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2004. Frameless glazing to the rear of Victorian Hoarding appears as an incised opening in a sculptural volume of white render and plaster. This glazing is appropriated into a larger void when the adjacent wall panels are hinged open. Rather than appearing as functional furnishings in the void when open, like those in Pavilion and Open End, the solid panels add complexity to the articulation of the rectilinear sculptural volume in this configuration. This is a larger-scale version of the opening panel in the flank wall of the first-floor master bedroom of Composite House.

Fig. 2.3.18: Stereoscope, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Mirror covering one entire wall of the bathroom in the Stereoscope project serves to dematerialize this side of the sculptural volume enclosing the utility area, while visually doubling the room, and contributing to the impression that the vertical wall of external elevation continues behind this volume.

## 2.4 External Form

The external form of the Composite House project is articulated entirely as a sculptural composition of white, rectilinear volumes and planes. The asymmetric components of this composition are placed in an overlapping and stacking arrangement that moves from the exterior to the interior. Visual continuity of these volumes and planes is facilitated by concealed details and through the use of reflection, while shadow gaps are used to maintain their distinction from one another. Window and door openings are articulated as incised openings or voids between compositional elements of the external form—and as outlined above, the windows and doors that occupy these openings are designed to either dematerialize them into the void, or foreground their status as functional furnishings distinct from the composition within which they are located. The original building, which forms the site for Composite House, is presented as a collection of found-object furnishings sitting adjacent to the new composition—and is preserved in its entirety to the front elevation, and only partially to the rear. The exterior of the Müller House can similarly be understood as a massive and planar, white, rectilinear, sculptural volume with incised openings.

While many London borough councils have made it patently clear on other projects that they would resist even a single-storey modern extension, Wandsworth Council granted full planning approval to the three-storey modern proposal for Composite House. Most of the projects from which Composite House was developed are limited to single-storey rear extensions, loft extensions, or interior works by the fact that they had to be undertaken as Permitted Development—works not requiring Planning Consent. Wandsworth Council approved the proposal for Composite House in spite of the fact that it was located in a Conservation Area—accepting our view that the modern design was sympathetic to the surrounding buildings in a non-historicist manner, and did not detract from the already eclectic character of the area. It is difficult to discern whether this decision was the product of a generally more progressive attitude from Wandsworth by comparison to other councils, or to the individual case officer assigned the project—to whom the Town and Country Planning Act grants significant powers in deciding the fate of proposals for individual residences. The decision may also have been swayed by the fact that we were able to produce a significant catalogue of previous projects showing first-hand the effect of various aspects of the project.

Fig. 2.4.1: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The rear elevation shows most clearly the articulation of Composite House as a series of stacked and overlapping, rectilinear, white volumes and planes.





2.4.1

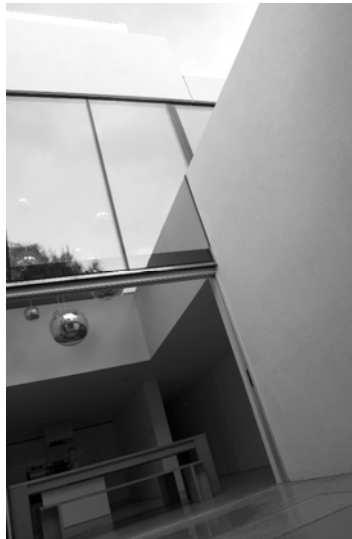


2.4.2

Fig. 2.4.2: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The rear elevations of the existing houses that form the site for Composite House are treated as a found-object furnishing.



2.4.3



2.4.4



2.4.5

Fig. 2.4.3: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Concealed drip grooves to soffits and shadow gaps between areas of render contribute to the perception of a composition of distinct planes and volumes rather than an amorphous enclosure.

Fig. 2.4.4: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Some elements of the external form are continuous between the exterior and interior of the building, and the detailing of weathering junctions at the point of transition visually supports this perception.

Fig. 2.4.5: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. Other elements that are distinctly located within the exterior or interior are articulated with scale, material and detail that contributes to the impression that they form part of the same sculptural composition.

The treatment of the Composite House as a series of sculptural objects of varying scales can be traced to the Hackney House (2002) project, where the rear extension is treated as two large sculptural volumes, one white rendered and one timber-clad, and the interior is divided by a smaller-scale white volume that accommodates a joinery unit. In all of the projects that follow Hackney House, the building form is treated as a series of large and small-scale sculptural forms. The relationship of these forms to Composite House are most clearly evident in *Elegant Shed* (2003), *Open End* (2004), *Semi-detached* (2005), *Diorama* (2005), *Tabula Rasa* (2006), *Victorian Hoarding* (2004), *Pavilion* (2005), *Terrace House* (2005), *Landscaper* (2007), and *Sleeper* (2007). A similar sculptural treatment of form can also be discerned in interior commercial projects such as *Smoke and Mirrors* (2002), *Public House* (2006), *Interior Street* (2007) and *Striated Space* (2008); and in domestic interiors such as *Karntner House* (2005), *Lightbox* (2005), *Artefact* (2007) and *Stereoscope* (2008). The design of the un-built *Extrapolation House* (2007) shows the development of this conception of form into a freestanding building, where the site becomes the surrounding houses, rather than the house within which the project is located. Shadow gaps were first used to support the perception of distinctions between parts of the sculptural compositions in the interior of *Public House*, and have since been used in this way in numerous interiors, including those in *In the Fold* (2006), *Sleeper* (2007), *Striated Space* (2008) and *Stereoscope* (2008). *Composite House* was the first deployment of this technique in relation to external form.

Fig. 2.4.6: Hackney House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2002. The timber-clad volume to the right of the photograph encloses the kitchen of Hackney House, nestling alongside the white volume of the open-plan living and dining space. The rectilinear white volume is articulated to appear continuous from the render of the exterior to the plaster of the interior, and the frameless openings to the ceiling accentuate this perception by appearing as voids in a plastic solid. The full-height joinery unit, in the background to the centre of the image, appears as a smaller-scale element of the same composition.



2.4.6



2.4.7

Fig. 2.4.7: Semi-detached, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The external form of Semi-detached is articulated as a large-scale L-shaped sculptural element, continuous with the ceiling and main wall of the open-plan interior space.





2.4.8



2.4.9



2.4.10

Fig. 2.4.8: Tabula Rasa, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2006. A single rectilinear volume defines the external form of Tabula Rasa and is incised by two rectangular openings of different sizes.

Fig. 2.4.9: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. Timber cladding to a component of the original Victorian building forms a sculptural volume continuous with the floor surface of the exterior space. The cladding conceals the frame of a bathroom window on the left-hand side of the photograph, contributing to the perception of the timber volume as a plastic solid.

Fig. 2.4.10: Pavilion, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The stacked and interlocking white rectilinear external forms of Pavilion are a clear precedent for Composite House.

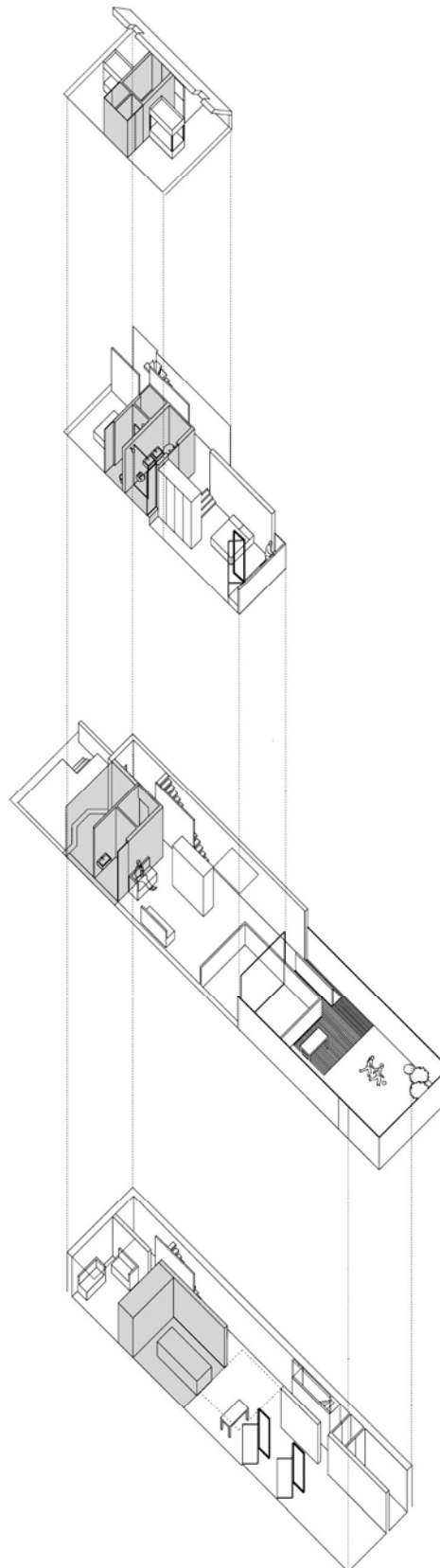
## 2.5 Space

Like the physical components discussed in the preceding chapters, the origins of the spatial arrangements of Composite House can be traced through the preceding built work, and their further development is discernible in the subsequent projects. In the projects where substantive components of the original buildings that form the site are retained, the perfunctory role of spatial enclosures as furnishings is most evident in these existing elements, which are intended to be only functional and perform no sculptural role in the architectural composition. While most of the spaces in Composite House have been treated sculpturally and with the intention of eliciting an emotional or intellectual response in addition to their functional role, some of the smaller spaces are distinctly posited as performing only a role equivalent to furnishings. This understanding of my own design work illuminates an understanding of the spatial composition of the Müller House, and its origins in Loos's preceding projects.

At one level, the spaces of Composite House can be understood as discrete floor levels, each of which is a single, open-plan, horizontal space that is loosely divided into separate zones by rectilinear planes and volumes. Depending upon the functions that are accommodated, some of these zones allow for the possibility of total enclosure, while others permit the movement of views, light, sound and people to and from adjacent zones. The bedrooms are an example of the former, while the latter can be observed in the internal and external spaces of the ground floor. This horizontal ordering system is also reinforced by the materiality of the floor surfaces. To the lower-ground floor, the concrete floor of the interior creates a sense of exteriority, while the timber floor of the external courtyard lends it an interior spatial quality.

Fig. 2.5.1: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The shading shows the large rectilinear volumes around which the spatial arrangement of each floor is structured. The smaller volumes and planes contribute to defining soft edges between zones of the open-plan floor plans.

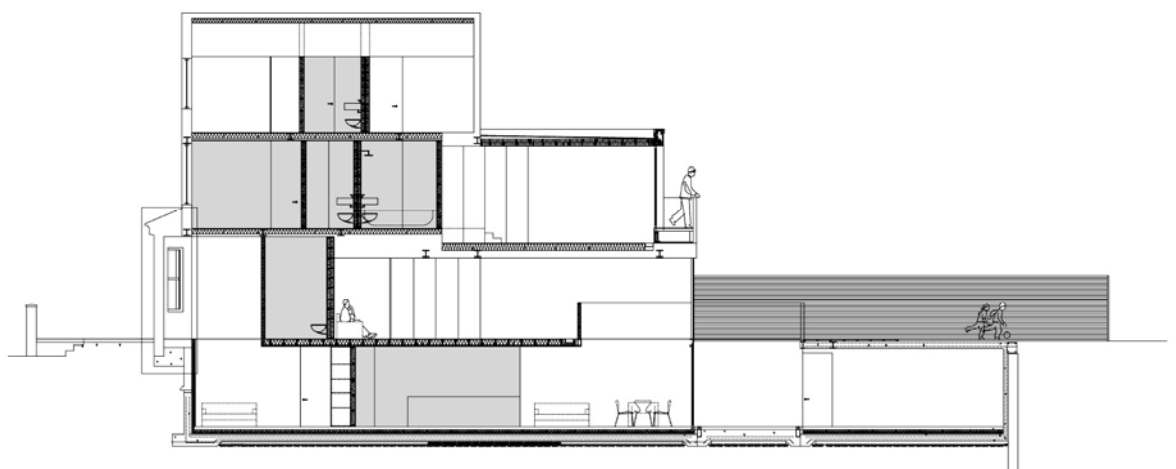


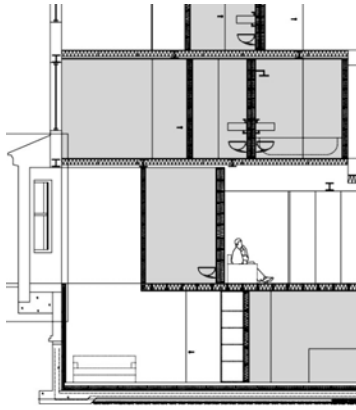


A spatial ordering system also operates in the vertical dimension, where the character of spaces is defined by their ceiling height in relation to adjacent spaces. The entire zone of the dining space is defined by a two-storey void, which provides it with a ceiling height that is double that of the adjacent kitchen and circulation space. Through opposite means, the lowered floor level of the master bedroom similarly delineates this space from the bathroom and hallway, albeit with a less pronounced variation than the dining area. Conversely, at the street end of the lower-ground floor, the playroom is not spatially defined by the ceiling or floor level—which is enclosed by the rectilinear plane and volume of the hallway wall and kitchen respectively—but a double-height space over a portion of the room gives it a distinct spatial character from the rest of the house.

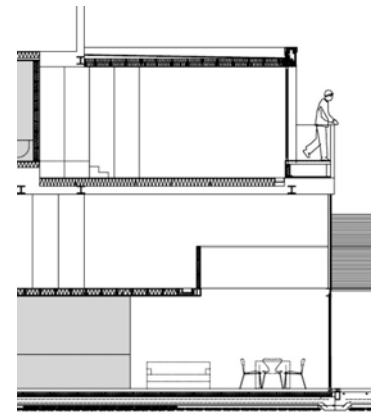
Fig. 2.5.2: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The shading of this section shows the rectilinear volumes that define the horizontal distribution of space as outlined above. Note that the volume shown on the axonometric of the first floor (Fig 2.5.1) shows the volume as perceived when the door to the front bedroom is open and concealed, while this section shows the impression created when the door is closed. This section shows that on the second floor the vertical spatial arrangement is defined by the same rectilinear volume that determines the horizontal arrangement. On the first floor, however, the section reveals that changes of level render visible vertically the volume that defines the horizontal arrangement. The same is true to the front of the lower-ground floor; however, to the rear, the vertical spatial ordering works separately from the system of volumes defining the horizontal arrangement.

## 2.5.2





2.5.3



2.5.4

Fig. 2.5.3: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. While almost completely enclosed, the open spatial character of the lower-ground-floor playroom is created by a double-height space, which covers almost half of the floor area and results in a ceiling height greater than the depth of the room.

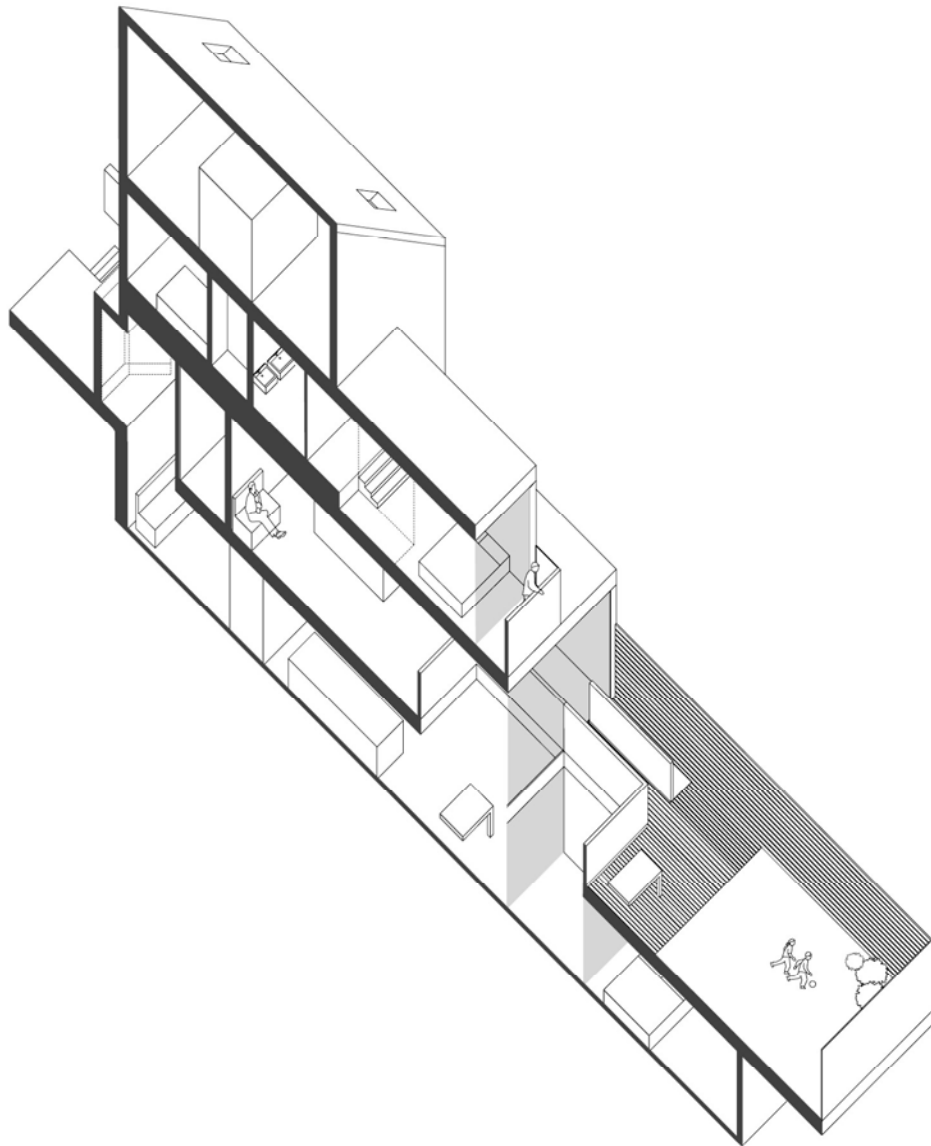
Fig. 2.5.4: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The master bedroom is defined as distinct from the rest of the first floor by changes in the floor and ceiling level. Conversely on the lower-ground floor, a soft edge is created between the dining space and the open-plan kitchen and living space by the change of ceiling level.

However, Composite House can also be understood spatially as an overall composition of space that operates in both horizontal and vertical dimensions. This is in part simply the summation of the effects of the systems that define the spaces of the house horizontally and vertically, but also a function of their combination in three dimensions. Depending upon the occupation of the spaces above and adjacent to the dining space, for example, it may feel more or less connected to the lower-ground-floor kitchen, courtyard, or playroom; or to the ground-floor living spaces. While the playroom, unlike the dining space, does not permit views or the movement of people between levels of the house, the occupation of the adjacent spaces in both dimensions is similarly registered—predominantly by the movement of light from the exterior of the ground floor.

Fig. 2.5.5: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. The double-height space of the lower-ground-floor playroom is more distinctly separated from the ground-floor spaces than the double-height space to the living and dining areas at the rear of the house. While the design of the playroom does not allow views or the transfer of noise from the ground-floor interior spaces, the two-storey void lends a degree of exteriority to the room by admitting light and noise from the street through the ground-floor bay window, and permitting views of the sky,



2.5.5



## 2.5.6

Fig. 2.5.6: Composite House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2008. This sectional axonometric shows the interaction of the horizontal and vertical spatial ordering systems, particularly between the interior spaces of the ground and lower-ground floors, and the exterior spaces of the first, ground and lower-ground floors.

The Pavilion (2005) project is a notable precursor for both the interiorized courtyard space of Composite House and the change of level in the master bedroom. Pavilion is also an earlier example of the use of concrete and timber floor materials to pervert preconceptions of internal and external spatial character—as deployed in the concrete interior floor of the lower-ground level of Composite House, and the timber external floor surface to the ground floor. This device can also be observed in the preceding Diorama project. Similar changes of floor level can be seen between the casual living and kitchen and dining areas of Hackney House (2002), the entry area and kitchen of Open End (2004), the living room and bedroom of Karntner House (2005), the bar and dining room of Public House (2006), and the dining and casual living areas of Pavilion. The Sleeper project (2007) is the clearest general precedent for the use in Composite House of rectilinear planes and volumes to loosely define distinct spaces in open-plan floors. The use of a joinery unit as a small-scale sculptural element to divide zones of an open-plan space in Hackney House (2002) is particularly reminiscent of the master bedroom and ground-floor living space in Composite House.

The most obvious precursors of the subterranean level of Composite House are the Light Box (2005) and One Up One Down (2004) projects, which both incorporated basements. While neither of these projects encompassed the substantial redesign of the levels of above, the use of roof glazing at the front of Light Box informed the design of the double-height space to the front of Composite House, and the small, decked lightwells of One Up One Down are related to the treatment of the Composite House courtyard. The changes of ceiling level in Hackney House (2002) are also a precursor to the double-height spaces in Composite House, which although less pronounced in their articulation, similarly serve to create a distinct character between the zones of the open-plan space that they divide. While mirror is not used in Composite House to create the impression of space, the use of mirror in Karntner House (2005) and Artefact (2007) is clearly related to the understanding of Loos's use of mirror proposed here, particularly his Kärntner Bar (1908).

Fig. 2.5.7: Pavilion, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. Concrete floor finishes contribute to an exterior quality to the interior spaces of Pavilion, while the interior character of the courtyard and terrace is heightened by the use of visually warmer timber floor finishes. A change of level creates a soft edge between the dining and casual living areas of the open-plan space, while contributing further to the perception that each is external to the other's interiority—particularly in contrast to the absence of a change of level at the actual threshold between inside and outside.



2.5.7

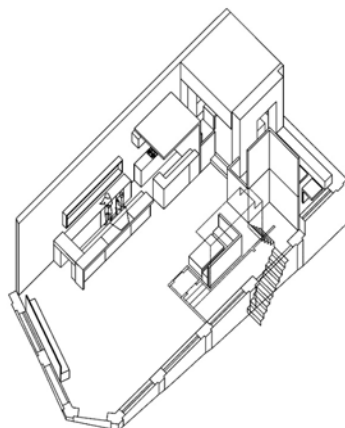


Fig. 2.5.8: Public House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2006. At the rear of the ground floor two changes of floor level define the dining area from the bar, and two dining sections from one another. These divisions are reinforced by three different ceiling levels, which are loosely aligned with the changes of floor level.

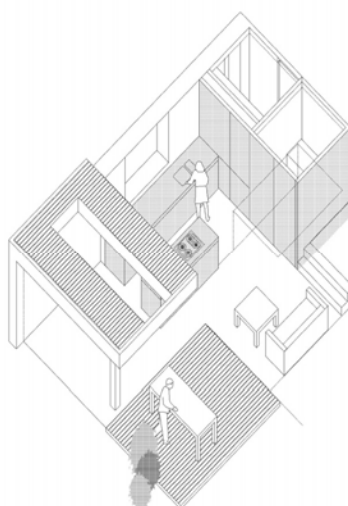
Fig. 2.5.9: Open End, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2004. A change of floor level distinguishes the entry area from a casual living area, and this space is in turn separated visually from the open-plan kitchen by a change of ceiling level.

Fig. 2.5.10: Pavilion, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. The open-plan kitchen and dining area is divided by a change in ceiling level that defines zones for each. Similarly, the dining and casual living areas are loosely delineated by changes in both floor and ceiling levels.

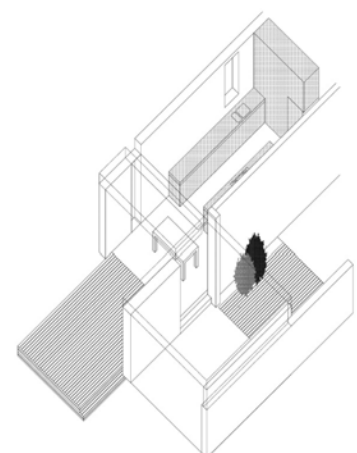
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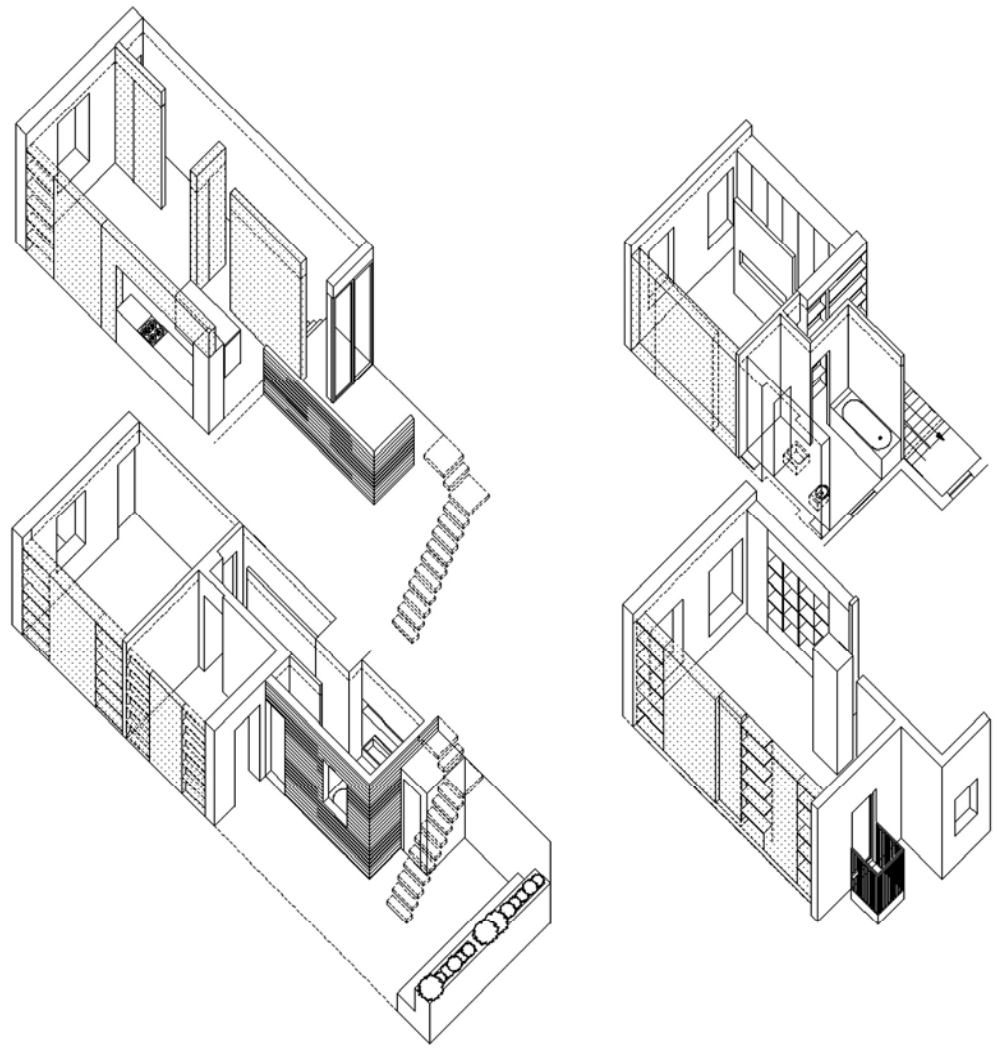


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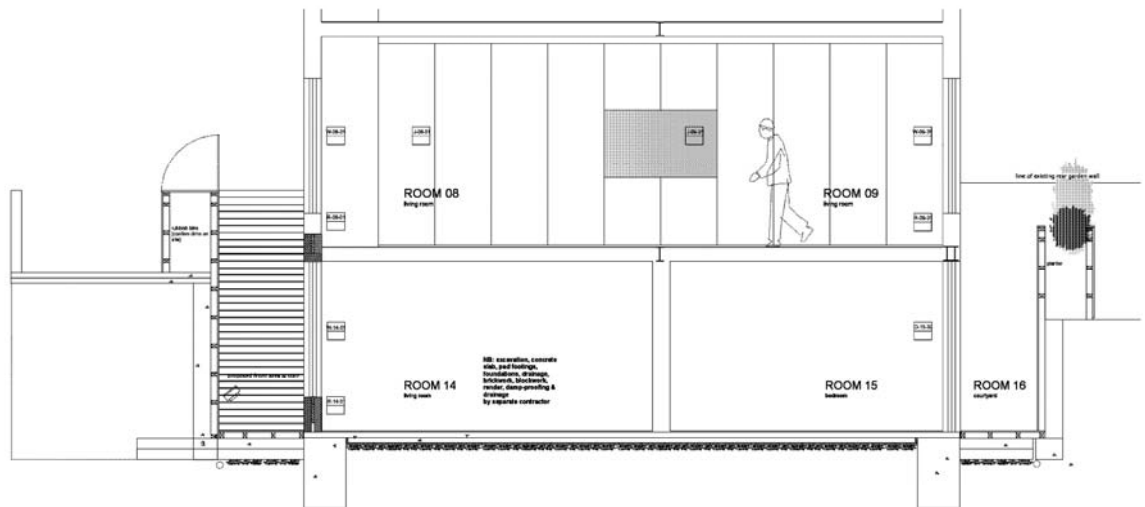
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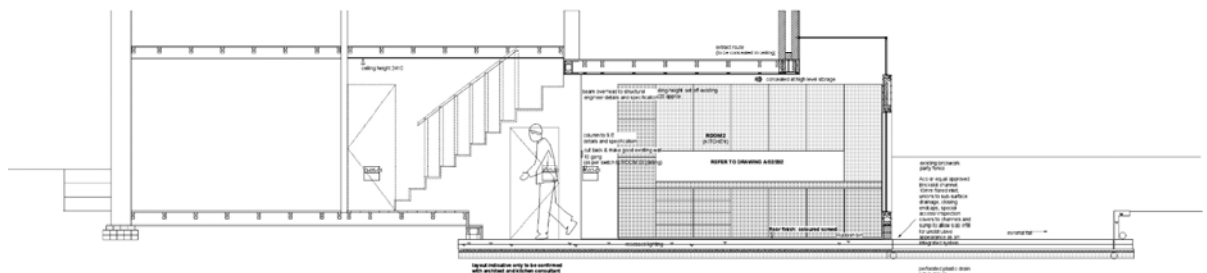


2.5.11

Fig. 2.5.11: Sleeper, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. The shaded areas of this axonometric represent the rectilinear volumes and planes that are utilised to define the spaces of each of the open-plan floors.



## 2.5.12



## 2.5.13

Fig. 2.5.12: One Up One Down, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2004. The subterranean level of One Up One Down incorporated small, decked lightwells similar to the Composite House courtyard.

Fig. 2.5.13: Hackney House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2002. The changes of ceiling level serve to create a distinct character between the zones of the open-plan space that they divide.



2.5.14

Fig. 2.5.14: Karntner House, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2005. Mirror above the central volume dividing the open-plan kitchen, living and dining space and master bedroom creates the impression of a single continuous space.



2.5.15

Fig. 2.5.15: Artefact, William Tozer Architecture and Design, 2007. Mirror to the kitchen splash-back creates a visual doubling of the kitchen and living space.

## Conclusion

With regard to all of the groupings of building components discussed above in relation to Composite House and my other design work in practice, it is the suppression of the perception of function that facilitates a reading of them as sculptural. However, each grouping has specific characteristics that determine the particularities of the way it is articulated in order for this manipulation of perception to be effective.

The function of walls, floors and ceilings is revealed by the perception of junctions and materials about which the viewer is likely to have preconceptions. Skirtings signal the junctions between walls and floors, cornices the junctions between walls and ceilings, and architraves the junctions between walls and other building elements. The replacement of these junctions with butt joints and shadow gaps can diminish or preclude the perception of these junctions, but only if deployed in such a manner that they do not simply replace the traditional treatments. A shadow gap will be perceived as an inverted skirting, cornice or architrave if it simply fills the role of the traditional detail, but can conversely be used to communicate continuity of elements passing through one another. Similarly, a butt junction can facilitate the perception of continuity of an element that would normally be perceived as composed of separate components—such as a wall and ceiling, or two walls at right angles to one another. Different materials generate certain perceptions due to preconceptions of their use, and this can be exploited to generate the perception of a sculptural composition, such as decking used as wall cladding. Similarly, walls that appear larger than a storey of a building can appear sculptural due to the preconception that walls serve to enclose rooms, and rooflights can be articulated in the same way as windows to allow walls and ceilings to appear as continuous sculptural compositions.

Staircases appear as furnishings when their function is made apparent through the expression of structure and junctions such as nosings, raked risers, handrails and guardings. In order to appear as sculptural, the structure and junctions of staircases can be concealed to the stair itself or to the adjoining walls, ceilings or floors, or hewn of the same material as these or other building elements. Similarly, joinery and fixtures can be either expressed as furnishings on the surface of other building elements, or concealed into, above, below or behind other building elements. The articulation of windows and doors is more complex due to their relatively unique status as moving parts in the building. Windows and doors can appear as part of the sculptural composition of a building when they are both open and closed, or they can be articulated as furnishings when in one state and sculptural in the other. Due to the transparent nature of glass, it is only the frames of glazed doors and windows that need to be concealed in order to suppress their function and allow a sculptural reading. Conversely, solid doors can be subsumed into the sculptural composition of walls by treating them in a continuous material, and the reflective qualities of glass can be utilized to create the perception of continuity and symmetry. For all types of windows and doors, the mechanisms and ironmongery that facilitate their movement also need to be concealed to allow their perception as sculptural elements. The physical characteristics of external form are similar to those of walls, floors and ceilings, but due

to the requirement to weatherproof the building, the nature of the junctions that must be concealed to allow a sculptural reading is very different. Weathering edges, drip lines, sills, lintels, and header courses perform vital weatherproofing functions and so cannot be eliminated, but they can be either concealed or substituted with other details to create the perception of continuity of sculptural composition between interior and exterior. While these impediments to a sculptural reading relate to the inherent function of external form to isolate the interior physically from the exterior, this same requirement creates the opposite impediment to the treatment of the external elevations as anything other than a single sculptural form. In order to articulate a building as a composition of a number of discrete forms, the perception of separate elements can be established through changes of material and shadow gaps, without compromising the hermetic weatherproof enclosure.

As it has no physical parameters of its own, the perception of space as sculptural requires the manipulation of the other building elements that create it. The use in the interior of a building of materials that have exterior connotations can create a sense of exteriority to an internal space, and vice versa. Mirror and glass can be utilized to create the sense of spatial continuity or separation by exploiting their qualities of reflection and transparency—although this is distinct from the use of these materials to create the impression of a sculptural composition of another physical building element such as walls, floors and ceilings. The perception of space without a physical enclosure can be facilitated by partial alignments of walls, floors and ceilings, changes of ceiling and floor levels, materials and lighting. Space could be understood as a furnishing of the building where it simply serves to physically enclose a distinct function, and sculptural where its enclosure is only perceived due to the composition of other building elements. These arrangements of building elements may also constitute sculptural compositions in themselves, or they may constitute functional furnishings acting sculpturally only in service of the desired perception of space.

The specificities of each grouping of building types and the consequent particularities of the manner in which each is articulated in my own design work guides the investigations into Loos's work in the following chapters. Loos's notions of art and function in architecture are of course distinct from my own conception of sculptural elements and furnishings, but synergies in the overlaps between the two approaches precipitate a new understanding of both the built work and writing of Loos.

**PART TWO: THE MÜLLER HOUSE AND ADOLF LOOS**

The Müller House was selected as a research subject due to its widely recognized status as Loos's masterwork; the date of its construction in relation to the publication of his key essays on architecture, art, function and ornament; and the fact that it has been fully restored to its original condition and is open to the public. The pivotal status of the Müller House is particularly important given the selection of my design research subject, Composite House, the design of which can be seen as a composition of building components designed in isolation for preceding smaller projects. Utilizing the observations of the design research to structure an historical and theoretical reexamination of Loos, it was necessary to select a subject where this strategy was likely to be most productive. Constructed near the end of Loos's career, the Müller House clearly possesses significant potential in this regard, and its connections to preceding projects are more pronounced than the projects that follow it chronologically.

Of the five essays selected as pivotal in the development of Loos's views on architecture, art, function and ornament, the 'Ornament and Education' essay has the latest publication date, 1924. The construction of the Müller House, completed in 1930, consequently allows for consideration of the reciprocal relationship between all of the essays and the buildings. From a practical perspective, many of Loos's buildings have been demolished or are now in private ownership that prohibits close primary examination of the architecture. The Müller House has been relatively recently and painstakingly restored to its original condition and is open to the public by appointment. Furthermore, partly due to the reconstruction process, the house has been exhaustively documented by comparison to many of Loos's other projects, for which a very limited selection of drawings and photographs is available.

Loos's clients, the Müllers, were phenomenally wealthy industrialists who wished to build a house in an affluent central suburb of Prague, and had admired Loos's designs for numerous houses in Vienna. By the time of receiving the commission, Loos was accustomed to working remotely with a number of staff on projects in different cities, and the Müller House was no exception. The most notable figure alongside Loos on the project was Lhota, and while various claims have been made that he acted as Loos's partner or collaborator in the design, it seems clear—as is presented in the preceding and following chapters—that he acted to facilitate Loos's design. While Loos's earlier designs were met with shock from all quarters, by the time of the completion of the Müller House, he was a renowned figure in the established modern architectural fraternity. Consequently, acclaim was received from architects and architectural critics almost as soon as the building was completed. However, modern architecture remained—as it does to this day to a lesser extent—unpalatable to many members of the public, and the house attracted considerable derision in the popular press, and had a very difficult path through the planning process. In the more than eighty years since its construction, the Müller House has been the subject of a vast array of publications and is now classed as a national monument, but remains comparatively unknown outside of architectural circles.



Part Two examines in the Müller House each of the groups building elements identified in the design research in Part One, and traces their development through the preceding and subsequent projects. Each investigation is paired with an analysis of one of the five selected essays by Loos—chosen due to intensities in the development of the particular building component under consideration around the date of its publication. This part of the research seeks to identify and interrogate the relationship between the design of Loos's buildings and simultaneous changes in his written argument on the role of art, function and ornament in the practice of architecture.

**Chapter Three**      **ART AND ORNAMENT**

The first decade of Loos's work, between 1900 and 1910, encompassed a large number of apartment interiors, and is particularly illuminating of the development of his approach to the design of the walls, ceilings and floors of the Müller House. As interiors, these projects by definition encompassed little or no engagement with exterior form or external windows and doors—and while they of course dealt also with space and staircases, joinery and fixtures, these elements are more central to the projects later in his career. Conversely, walls, floors and ceilings obviously continued to form part of Loos's projects, and the development of some of the modes of articulation of these building elements in the Müller House can only be traced through his later building projects. Nonetheless, this early period of Loos's work illustrates particular intensity in the development of his design strategy for walls, floors and ceilings, with some degree of isolation from the other building elements through which this research is structured. The commencement of this first decade of Loos's built work coincides with the publication of 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay in 1900. Loos's use of ornamentation on many of the walls, floors and ceilings of his projects presents a challenge to the widespread view that 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay is a straightforward statement against art in architecture, in which Loos supposedly equates art with ornament. While the examination of the Müller House and Loos's other buildings tests whether the walls, floors and ceilings of his buildings can be read as sculptural elements or functional furnishings, this essay is examined for evidence that Loos himself understood architecture in this way, and used the terms 'art' and 'function' respectively to make an equivalent delineation. This facilitates an alternative reading in which 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay can instead be understood as a Loosian argument for architecture as a form of art—and ornament as a mechanism for signifying a building element as only functional, rather than performing a compositional role also.

**3.1**      **Walls, Ceilings and Floors**

As set out in the 'Architecture and Art' chapter, the walls, floors and ceilings of the Composite House project are predominantly treated as sculptural objects at a variety of scales, but some are given the status of furnishings through being posited as curated found objects. The 'Architecture and Art' chapter traces the development of this design strategy through the projects that precede and follow Composite House, and reveals the manner in which the specific qualities of walls, floors and ceilings determine the way that this strategy is implemented in relation to these particular building elements. In order to set up the perception of walls, floors and ceilings as sculptural, it is necessary to conceal or background the appearance of characteristics that will trigger the opposite impression—that they are simply building components that perform the function of forming enclosures around spaces. At a small scale these include details such as skirtings, cornices and architraves that traditionally punctuate the junctions of walls, floors and ceilings to one another and to other building elements—and at a larger scale, it is the fact that these building elements can generally only be perceived at the

scale of each floor of the building. The design strategy of designating walls, ceilings and floors as either sculptural elements or furnishings, is in this chapter utilized as a research methodology through which to reexamine these elements of the Müller House (1930), which are variously articulated as stark planes of a single material, or ornamented with paneling, skirtings, cornices, and architraves. While Loos's techniques for addressing the perception of these building elements are of course different to those seen in Composite House, the design research focuses on the particular issues of junctions and scale identified above. This analysis provides a detailed test of the hypothesis that Loos's architecture can be understood as similarly divided into sculptural elements and furnishings, and so offers an alternative to the prevailing conception of Loos as an early functionalist and his deployments of ornament as mere aberrations.

Due to the absence of skirtings, cornices and architraves, many of the white-painted interior walls of the Müller House can be read as a continuation of the massive and planar, rendered and white-painted composition of the exterior. However, these walls have a greater visual intensity due to the articulation of their surfaces with columns. Walls of this type are most evident in the living room, dining room, and hall, but can be glimpsed throughout the rest of the house. While most of these unadorned white walls read as planes that are part of a large-scale composition, the outer faces of the walls of the boudoir also possess an autonomous quality as a smaller-scale sculptural volume due to the undercroft created by the staircase to the anteroom. A similar visual effect is created by the treatment of the openings between the dining room and staircase as unadorned rectangular punctures in the plane of the white wall.

Fig. 3.1.1: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The wall separating the main staircase from the dining room, viewed from the staircase and looking through to the living room.

Fig. 3.1.2: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The white wall and under-croft to the boudoir can be seen to the right of the image, viewed from the bottom of the staircase that leads from the living room to the dining room.

Fig. 3.1.3: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The timber veneered walls of the boudoir, looking through the open door to the staircase down into the living room.



3.1.1



3.1.2



3.1.3

A number of stone-clad interior walls of the Müller House are also articulated as smaller-scale, sculptural elements. While the green Cipolin marble that lines the living room could be understood as a form of traditional wainscoting, the absence of decorative surface elements, particularly at its junctions with the wall and floor, enables it to be read as a sculptural composition in the form of a continuous folding and stepping surface. Rather than being visually interrupted by functional incursions, this massive and planar form is manipulated to accommodate the stair guarding, fireplace, seat and radiators. While located on the outside of the building, the travertine-lined walls of the porch enclosure are inconsistent with the treatment of the exterior and can be more readily interpreted as a continuation of the small-scale sculptural elements of the interior—here articulated to accommodate a seat, planter, and coal chute. The treatment of the walls of the boudoir in timber veneer operates in the same way as the stone walls, allowing the perception of small-scale stepped, folded and incised rectilinear sculptural forms. The wall that forms the guarding of the staircase between the two levels of the boudoir bears a strong resemblance, albeit at a smaller scale, to the marble wall that separates the main staircase from the living area. These smaller-scale sculptural forms of white paint-finish, stone and timber are distinct from but interact with the large-scale white form of the building as it is expressed in the interior.

Fig. 3.1.4: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The Cipolin marble walls of the living room, adjacent to the boudoir entrance.

Fig. 3.1.5: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Frameless openings in one of the marble living room walls provide views into the adjacent dining room, and accommodate two aquariums.



3.1.4



3.1.5

Many of the interior walls of the Müller House, however, do not possess a sculptural quality and can instead be understood as functional furnishings of the architectural composition. This distinction is visually communicated through junction details, the expression of fixtures and fittings, or the application of surface ornaments. As outlined above, the white, stone and timber walls that form part of the sculptural composition of the Müller House are articulated as unbounded planes of a single plastic, massive and planar material. In some cases, however, Loos signifies the role of the white walls of the Müller House as functional rather than sculptural, through the addition of recognizable building elements that clearly distinguish them from the abstract planes. This is perhaps most evident in the hallway of the bedroom level, where skirting boards and door frames of a contrasting material and colour signal a different visual role for these white walls than those to the immediately adjacent dining room, where openings are expressed as unadorned voids. The same can be said of the blue and yellow skirting boards and dado rails that are affixed to the white walls of the children's rooms, and the red tiling at the top and bottom of the entry area walls. While the design of the skirting and architraves is perfunctory in the hallway, children's rooms, and entry area, the ornamental white skirting boards and cornices in the master bedroom similarly serve to signal the walls as functional furnishings of the sculptural architectural composition.

A relationship can also be discerned between Loos's deployment of functional fixtures and fittings and the respective roles of the walls of the Müller House as either furnishings or sculptural elements. Just as they are not finished with skirting boards, cornices or architraves at their junctions, the small-scale sculptural walls clad with stone and timber veneer are

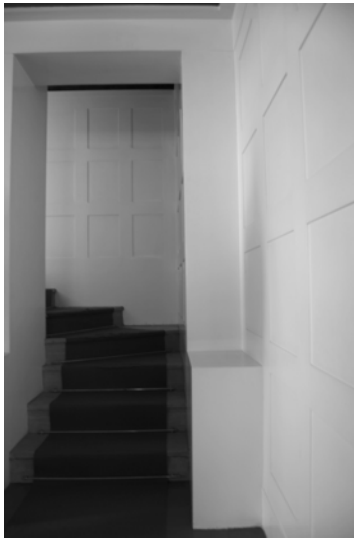
comparatively free of visible functional components such as light switches, door handles, and exposed radiators. Where fixtures and fittings do appear on these walls, they are either placed in concealed locations or specified of materials that diminish their visual impact on the compositional role of the wall, or the fixture or fitting is set in contrast to the wall as a detached furnishing in itself. The door handles and light switches on the timber paneling of the boudoir are examples of this treatment. Conversely, walls that Loos has assigned the role of furnishings through the deployment of skirting boards, architraves and cornices, also bear a disproportionate share of the fixtures and fittings, as can be observed in the hallway. Despite accommodating fixtures and fittings, some of the white walls of the Müller House retain a sculptural role by dwarfing the scale of the functional elements with their mass and scale. The relative visual neutrality of the white paint finish of these walls affords them a degree of ambiguity, allowing them to slip between sculptural or functional roles in the building, depending upon how they are viewed.

In addition to junction details and fixtures and fittings, Loos treats some walls with tiling, paneling or colour to similarly visually assign them the role of furnishings rather than sculptural elements. Appearing in the bathrooms and the entry area, tiling resists a sculptural reading of these walls by clearly announcing itself visually as a building material and so assigning them the a functional status akin to unfixed furnishings. This effect is heightened by the fact that they do not cover the entire surface of the walls to which they are fixed, but rather terminate at a dado line or skirting or cornice. The traditional form of the white-painted, timber wall paneling to the entry area and anteroom similarly signals that these walls do not perform a compositional role in the sculptural arrangement of the planes and volumes of the Müller House. Patterned wallpaper in the master bedroom perhaps most clearly assigns the status of furnishing to the walls to which it is affixed, visually equating them to the bedspread and curtains, which are finished in matching fabric. The walls of the summer breakfast room are similarly finished with decorative covering, albeit considerably more muted than the master bedroom but contained within a green and black perimeter frame that sits slightly short of the room height, lending each wall the appearance of a decorative panel. The blue paint finish to children's rooms also precludes a sculptural reading of these walls as planes in the composition of the house, by terminating at a mid-level yellow dado rail. Like the wallpaper and fabric to the master bedroom, the matching of the paint finishes of the walls of the children's rooms to the radiators and tables, chairs and beds further signifies the role of these walls as furnishings.

Fig. 3.1.6: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Timber panelling to the walls of the anteroom and the staircase to the living room.

Fig. 3.1.7: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Patterned wallpaper and matching bedspread in the master bedroom.

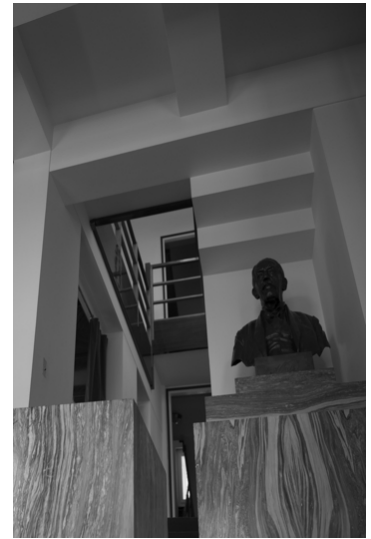
Fig. 3.1.8: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The underside of the main staircase expressed as sculptural articulation of the ceiling of the living room.



3.1.6



3.1.7



3.1.8

As with the walls, the large-scale, massive and planar form of the exterior of the Müller House is given expression in plain white ceilings throughout most of the interior, unbounded by cornices at their junctions with walls and other building elements. Similarly, there are a number of ceiling planes clad in timber and stone that can be understood as smaller-scale sculptural elements. The boudoir ceiling is articulated as a series of rectilinear sculptural volumes of timber veneer, and by concealing a step in the floor of the bedroom level above, they preserve the uninterrupted plane of the white-painted ceiling in the larger-scale composition. The sculptural forms of the ceiling also read as continuous with the walls and joinery of the same material, rather than as discrete horizontal elements. While rectilinear, the materiality and insubstantial proportions of the travertine-clad plane that forms the entry porch on the south elevation is inconsistent with the rest of the exterior articulation of the Müller House. Instead, it can be understood as an extension of one of the smaller-scale sculptural compositions of stone and timber that occur repeatedly in the interior.

Fig. 3.1.9: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The timber ceiling steps down over the day bed area of the boudoir.

Fig. 3.1.10: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The step in the ceiling over the seating area of the boudoir accommodates a change of floor level to the bedroom above.



3.1.9

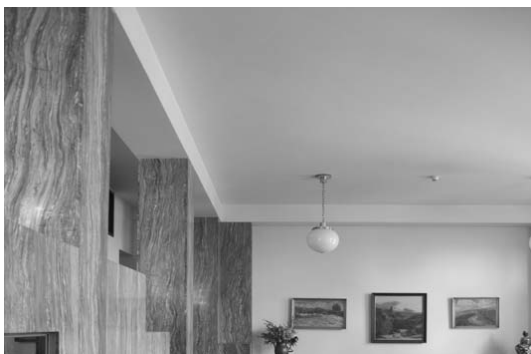


3.1.10

Fig. 3.1.11: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The continuous white plane of the living room ceiling.

Fig. 3.1.12: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Rooflight openings in the white ceiling over the landing on the bedroom level.

3.1.11



3.1.12





A number of ceilings in the Müller House assume the status of furnishings, due to junction details and surface finishes that preclude a sculptural reading. While the ceiling to the master bedroom has a smooth, white-painted plaster finish like those in the living room and boudoir, a decorative cornice resists a reading of the ceiling as a horizontal sculptural plane. While materially similar to the sculptural ceiling volumes of the boudoir, the traditional paneling and decorative perimeter cornice gives the timber veneer dining room ceiling the status of a furnishing rather than a sculptural element. The blue paint finish and white cornice to the anteroom ceiling similarly exclude it from the abstract composition of the ceiling planes to the adjacent living room and boudoir spaces. Unlike with the walls, fixtures and fittings are not deployed to designate the role of ceilings as furnishings or sculptural elements—the only items affixed to the ceilings are light fittings, all of which are expressed as furnishings in themselves and distinct from the building. However, it should be noted that the light fitting attached to the ceiling of the entry porch contributes to a reading of this element as part of the interior.

Fig. 3.1.13: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. An ornate cornice defines the perimeter of the ceiling of the master bedroom.

Fig. 3.1.14: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Traditional panelling and a perimeter cornice to the dining room ceiling.

3.1.13



3.1.14



The timber floors of the dining room, hallway and master bedroom of the Müller House are finished with timber that runs from wall to wall without any perimeter articulation, and so read as unbounded horizontal planes in the sculptural composition of the building. Fitted blue carpet to the boudoir similarly runs wall-to-wall, giving the impression that the floor is a massive and plastic sculptural volume. This perception is heightened by the change of material to the risers of the staircase to the sitting niche, which appear to reveal the timber interior of this blue volume. The continuation of the travertine stone of the porch as a pathway to the pedestrian street entry can be seen as a continuation of the interior floor, and as an elongated sculptural plane. Like the dining room, hallway and master bedroom, the living room floor is finished with timber. However, the parquet to the living room is finished with a decorative dark inlay detail to the perimeter, and so reads as a furnishing rather than a sculptural plane or volume. The plain linoleum of the children's playroom floor and xyolite of the kitchen floor, and the un-patterned tiled floors of entry, anteroom, and bathrooms could be read as sculptural elements due to their articulation as simple unbounded planes, but their red colour assigns them the status of furnishings by connecting them visually with the wall-mounted radiators. Conversely, while the blue carpet runner to the stairs matches the fitted felt carpet to the boudoir and library, its articulation is so different that it reads as distinct from this sculptural element and instead appears as a furnishing akin to the unfixed rugs to the living room.

Fig. 3.1.15: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 387. The perimeter banding to the parquet floor of the living room, visible during a temporary removal of the carpets.

### 3.1.15

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Fig. 3.1.16: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Girsa and Hanzl, 15. Cropped to highlight the colour-matching of the red, wall-mounted radiators and floor.

Fig. 3.1.17: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Girsa and Hanzl, 12. The unbounded plane of the timber floor is foregrounded in this cropped photograph of the master bedroom.

Fig. 3.1.18: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Girsa and Hanzl, 13. This cropped image of the boudoir directs focus to the continuous treatment of the blue floor finish.

In many of Loos's early apartment projects, walls of marble and other stone are articulated as planes and volumes that can be read as sculptural compositions resembling those in the Müller House. The marble lining of the living room of the Müller House can be traced to the Rudolf Kraus Apartment of 1905–07, but was also deployed in the Wilhelm Hirsch Apartment, which commenced in the same year. In both projects, low-level projections in the marble—like those that sit either side of the entry to the living room of the Müller House—are utilized to accommodate interior planting. The Kraus project also incorporates aquariums in the marble wall lining, closely resembling those in the wall that separates the dining room from the living room of the Müller House. Stone wall paneling is also featured in the Bellak Apartment of 1907 and the Friedmann Apartment of 1906–07, but is articulated simply as a cladding material, and is not stepped or used to frame openings. As with the Müller House, stone is given the form of wainscoting in the Bellak Apartment of 1907–13 terminating below the ceiling height. In Loos's later domestic work, The Villa Strasser of 1918–19 incorporates a 'cut-away' corner to a marble volume in music salon, and stone again appears in the form of wainscoting in the 1929 Josef Vogl Apartment in Pilsen. The cut-away corner device is repeated in the articulation of the marble to the left-hand side of the built-in seat in the living room of the Müller House. Built-in seating to the Beck Apartment of 1928, which is positioned along one wall, more closely resembles the seat in the Müller House living room.

Fig. 3.1.19: Villa Strasser, Loos, 1919, from Bock, 213. Image cropped to show corner detail.

Fig. 3.1.20: Kraus Apartment, Loos, 1905–07, from Bock, ALA 3121, 55. Stone wall paneling.

3.1.19

3.1.20

The use of stone also has early origins in Loos's shops, cafés and bars; and the treatment of the lower levels of the external elevations of the Goldman and Salatsch building of 1909–11 could be understood as an exterior deployment of the same device. The Knize store (1913), in particular, featured marble wall cladding and columns in a similar composition to the Müller House living room. The manifestation of timber walls as sculptural elements in the Müller House also has its origins in the first decade of Loos's work. The use of flat timber veneer like that in the Müller House boudoir can be traced to the Kärntner Bar of 1908, and also appears in both the Goldman and Salatsch building of 1909–11 and the Knize store of 1910–13. The built-in bench seating of the Müller House boudoir can be read as part of the sculptural composition of the timber wall treatment into which it is integrated, and has its origin in the Kärntner Bar of 1908. Loos's later projects provide evidence of the continued development of sculptural treatments of timber wall cladding towards the manifestations that appear in the Müller House. Plain timber wall paneling features in the inglenook of the Scheu House of 1912–13—bearing a strong resemblance to the Müller House boudoir—and in the Mandl Villa of 1916. The library of the Rufer House of 1922 exhibits further development of the device into full-height plain timber veneer wall paneling and integrated stepped boxing, seemingly a precursor of its deployment in the Müller House. The Tzara House of 1925–26 incorporates timber wall paneling very similar to that seen in the Müller House, although some photographs of the living room show mechanical fixings around the perimeter of the panels, suggesting that the adhesive fixing may have failed. No visible fixings are evident in the use of plain timber veneer cladding to the walls and built-in seating of the Moller House (1928) dining room and study—a deployment of the material closely resembling its use in the boudoir of the Müller House. The treatment of the sitting niches is also very similar in the Moller and Müller houses, but while in the former Loos uses timber to define surfaces and volumes, in the latter he uses a combination of stone and timber.

Fig. 3.1.21: Knize Store, Loos, 1913, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 605. Image cropped to focus on freestanding planes of stone paneling.

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Fig. 3.1.22: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Albertina Museum, Vienna, Sarnitz, 68. Image cropped to focus on the use of flat timber veneer on some of the interior walls of the Moller House.

Fig. 3.1.23: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 592. The flat timber paneling to the walls of the Tzara House living room is highlighted by this cropped photograph.

Simultaneous to the sculptural elements outlined above, Loos's early work shows the development of a number of devices that he utilizes in the Müller House to signify walls as furnishings. While integrated into the walls, the appearances of built-in seating in Loos's early work can be more readily understood as furnishings rather than sculptural elements, due to the incorporation of traditional paneling or junction details—as is evident in the Turnowsky Apartment of 1900, Loos's own apartment of 1903, the Georg Weiss Apartment of 1904, the bay window of the dining room of the A. Kraus Apartment of 1905, and the corner nook seating of the Friedrich Boskovits Apartment One (1905). White-painted traditional timber paneling, resembling that which clads the walls of the Müller House anteroom, appears in the Herman and Eugenie Scharzwald Apartment of 1905–09, and is also featured in a number of other apartments, but often not painted and incorporating more ornate detailing. Rather than a progressive removal of ornamentation, Loos's later projects illustrate the development of an increasing repertoire of devices for distinguishing between the elements of his buildings that operate as furnishings rather than sculptural elements. Bench seating in the bay window of the Scheu House of 1912–13 is articulated with timber paneling like that of the earlier projects, as is nook seating around the fireplace of the Lowenbach Apartment of 1913. Other projects featuring traditional wall paneling similar to that in the Müller House anteroom include the Mandl Villa of 1916, the Rosenfeld House of 1917, and the Rufer House of 1922. The Strasser Villa of 1918–19 features white-painted timber wall paneling extensively throughout, including the vestibule where it is also used to form a seat—in an arrangement very similar to Müller anteroom. Low boxings of the same material as the wall paneling extend to conceal stringers to the staircases, in a similar manner to the marble elements in the Müller living room. Meanwhile, the use of curtains between the dining room and staircase of the Müller House has precursors in the curtain that separates the raised space off the living room of the 1916–18 Mandl House, and the dividing curtain between the two levels of the living space of the Tzara House (1926). While finished with plain timber veneer, the L-shaped built-in seating of Loos's Werkbund housing of 1930 can be more readily understood as a furnishing rather than a sculptural element—due to the exposed legs, which set up a strong visual relationship with the freestanding dining table and chairs.

In many cases, the ceilings of Loos's early projects take the form of unadorned, white planes—continuous with the walls, and appearing to take the form of a larger-scale, sculptural white volume that sits behind the smaller sculptural elements and furnishings of the interior ceiling. In the case of both Loos's own apartment and the Goldman and Salatsch building (1911), the latter take the form of timber beams above which the plane of the ceiling appears to pass. This articulation is repeated in many of the later projects, including the Tzara House (1928) and the Khuner Country Houses (1930), but there appears to be no precedent in the preceding work for the expansion of this strategy into the lowered timber volumes and planes of the Müller House boudoir. By contrast, in both his earlier and later work, Loos frequently treats white-painted plastered ceilings and timber-veneered ceilings as furnishings rather than sculptural elements. A gridded, lacquered timber veneer ceiling like that in the Müller House dining room can be

seen in the A. Kraus Apartment (1905), and also appears in the library of the Villa Karma (1906), and the Steiner House (1910). The ceiling of the upper level of the Knize Store (1913) similarly incorporates an ornamental cornice at its perimeter and at its junctions with beams. Classical ornament is deployed on the ceilings of The Rosenfeld House of 1917, while the Friedrich Boskovits Apartments One and Two (1905) incorporate classical cornices. Classical elements also feature in the interior of the Duschnitz Villa (1918), but the music salon and dining room are notably unornamented and finished from floor to ceiling in marble cladding. It is notable, however, that these projects were reconstructions and interior fit-outs of classical and traditional buildings.

Fig. 3.1.24: Khuner Country Houses, 1930, Loos, from Sarnitz, 79. Photograph from Albertina Museum, Vienna. The ceiling appears as a continuous white plane passing above the timber beams.

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Fig. 3.1.25: Scheu House, Loos, 1913, from Bock, 170. Image cropped to concentrate on the lowered ceiling of the inglenook—showing the white ceiling as a continuous plane that appears to pass above the down-stand timber beams

Fig. 3.1.26: Villa Karma, Loos, 1906, from Sarnitz, 28. Photograph by Schezen/Esto, Mamaroneck, NY. The decorative perimeter and traditional paneling of the library ceiling.

Fig. 3.1.27: Knize Store, Loos, 1913, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 376. The decorative perimeter of the ceiling of the upper level.

The manner in which a number of the floors of the Müller House are articulated can be traced from the projects of Loos's first decade of practice and through the rest of his career. An unbounded parquet floor that features in the Café Museum project (1899) closely resembles those to the master bedroom and dining room of the Müller House. Loos uses parquet floors extensively throughout his career but it is not until the later projects, such as the Moller House (1928), that he incorporates banding around the perimeter like that in the living room of the Müller House—signaling its status as functional rather than appearing as a continuous sculptural plane. The Knize Store (1913) features wall-to-wall green carpet on the first floor, resembling the blue felt carpet to the library and boudoir of the Müller House. Red tiles in the vestibule and piano mezzanine of the Villa Strasser (1919) are the most direct precedent for the red tiles that appear in the entrance, anteroom and bathrooms of the Müller House; but the black and white tiles of the much earlier Kärntner Bar (1908) are clearly articulated as a functional furnishing of the space. The Villa Strasser also features a red carpet runner, the design of which closely resembles the blue carpet runners in the Müller House.

Fig. 3.1.28: Kärntner Bar, Loos, 1908, from Bock, 125. Image cropped to focus on tiled floor.

Fig. 3.1.29: Knize Store, Loos, 1913, from Bock, 147. Image cropped to feature the green wall-to-wall floor finish on the upper level.

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Fig. 3.1.30: Café Museum, Loos, 1899, from Bock, 109. Image cropped to feature the unbounded parquet floor.

Fig. 3.1.31: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Bock, 235. Photograph by M. Gravot, Paris, ca. 1930, ALA 2634. Cropped to focus on parquet floor of the study, showing the absence of perimeter banding.

Fig. 3.1.32: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 385. The parquet floor of the Moller House dining room, visually bounded by a contrasting perimeter.

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The above analysis of the walls, ceilings and floors of the Müller House as sculptural elements and furnishings questions the common conception of Loos as an early functionalist and his interior deployments of ornament as mere aberrations. This widespread understanding of Loos is so established that while attempting to take a neutral descriptive tone, the otherwise highly revisionist Van Duzer and Kleinman distance the interior of the Müller House from its exterior form, describing the internal expression of the white building volume as if it were merely structural, and outlining the distinction of the treatment here from general modernist ideas of expressing structure.<sup>1</sup> However, Van Duzer and Kleinman note the importance of visual perception of the Müller House interior as an object in space—‘Everything is explicit, everything is on the surface ... The only lines that exist are the edges of the floors and ceilings, and the perimeter of the building envelope. The only measurements worth noting begin and end at the exposed faces of the cladding’.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the research methodology deployed here—reexamining the Müller House in terms of the role of its walls, ceilings and floors—extends from Van Duzer and Kleinman’s observation of the importance of this type of analysis, and its absence from existing scholarship.

Existing explicit analysis of the walls, ceilings and floors of the Müller House is rare, and while Gravagnuolo is clearly referring to the walls, ceilings and floors of the Müller House when he describes the wide and diverse use of colour in the interior of the Müller House, he comments simply that, ‘The emphasis on colors reveals the gay side of living to be an ultimate goal of Loos’ design’.<sup>3</sup> Gravagnuolo’s wording suggests that he views the use of colour in Loos’s work as somewhat frivolous, and this is borne out by the fact that there he devotes no further discussion to colour. Van Duzer and Kleinman note the widespread tendency for existing research on Loos to eschew detailed investigation in favour of ‘formal analysis’ that is ‘flawed by imprecision’, and motivated by ‘the belief that the true building is buried within the thickness of the walls, that the weighty structure, in all its material specificity, is but a coarse shadow of a meaningful, intrinsic, geometric order’.<sup>4</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman ostensibly set out to provide a more reliable set of ‘base information’ about the Müller House, upon which future analyses may be based, rather than setting out their own. However, when Van Duzer and Kleinman inevitably venture into their own analysis, their own observations are similarly generalized—remarking that ‘a relatively simple formative principle underlies the development of the highly complex spatial puzzle of the interior. The footprint is dissected into three roughly equal rectangular areas which step in a spiral up the slope of the terrain’.<sup>5</sup> Writing in Van Duzer’s introduction, John Hejduk makes specific reference to the marble walls of the living room but is similarly ‘flawed by imprecision’, exchanging ‘formal analysis’ for abstract analysis by entering into an esoteric discussion of the veining of the marble—‘like lightening flashes in a dark sky ... the synapses of the architect’s brain’.<sup>6</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman also make specific reference to the columns of

<sup>1</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 203.

<sup>4</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 17.

<sup>5</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 14–15.

the living room walls—describing the complete concealment of two of the columns, and remarking that the other two columns are subsumed into the composition of the living room—but they cite August Perret's statement that 'one who builds a fake column commits a crime',<sup>7</sup> seemingly deferring again to the widespread conception of Loos as a functionalist, staunchly opposed to ornament. Bock proposes that a cross-axial proportioning is evident both in the plans of the Müller House and in the design of some of the individual rooms. This amounts to implicit commentary on the design of the walls, ceilings and floors that enclose the spaces of these plans and rooms, but clearly constitutes another form of search for geometric order through formal analysis, as critiqued by Van Duzer and Kleinman. It is difficult to discern whether the discrepancies in the dimensions of the drawings that Bock presents are accidental or manipulated to progress his proportional argument, but significant variations in the width and thickness of walls, ceilings and floors are evident in his sections and plans by comparison to those reproduced elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

Fig. 3.1.33: Perspective drawing, Loos, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 123. Examples of Loos's coloured perspective drawings of his interiors significantly predate his use of colour in his interiors, suggesting that he drew colour to delineate the planes of his compositions. It consequently seems reasonable to conclude that the materials used—whether lavish stone and timber, or simple paint finishes—serve to support the sculptural articulation described in the drawings, rather than indicating that Loos felt the materials had intrinsic value per se.

### 3.1.33

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<sup>7</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29. Van Duzer and Kleinman cite August Perret's lecture delivered at the one-hundred-year anniversary of Helsinki University of Technology. It is speculated here that this may be the origin of the widespread misquotation of Loos's *Ornament and Crime* as 'ornament is a crime'.

<sup>8</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 260, 262–263.

Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 81–83.

### 3.2 'The Poor Little Rich Man'

Loos's use of ornamentation on many of the walls, floors and ceilings of his projects presents a challenge to the widespread view that 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay of 1900 is a straightforward statement against art in architecture, in which Loos equates art with ornament. The hypothesis investigated above—that Loos's buildings can be understood through the design strategy of positing walls, ceilings and floors as sculptural elements or furnishings—facilitates an alternative reading of the essay, in which Loos himself understood architecture in this way. This reading suggests that Loos used the terms 'art' and 'function' respectively to make an equivalent delineation, and the essay can instead be understood as a Loosian argument for architecture as a form of art, and ornament as a mechanism for signifying a building element as being only functional. While it is clearly not possible to definitively determine Loos's intentions from this form of analysis, the alternative hypothesis proposed here is pursued on the basis that it allows a reading of the essay more consistent with observations of his built work than the prevailing interpretation—and is tested by investigating the extent to which this reading can be sustained within the internal reasoning of the essay and in relation to his other essays.

Written in 1900, 'The Poor Little Rich Man' predates Loos's other essays and the vast majority of his built projects, and deals explicitly with the issue of art in architecture. The essay tells the story of a wealthy man with everything—money, possessions, a faithful wife, children—who is loved by his friends for it, but recognizes that art serves to make people without all of these things happy, and so commissions an interior architect to turn his house into a work of art. "Bring me art, art under my own roof! Money doesn't matter!" declares the Rich Man, discussing bringing art in to his home as if it is a distinguished guest: "It shall be received in my home like a Queen who has come to reside with me".<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that the subject of the essay is described as 'a renowned interior architect',<sup>10</sup> implying that Loos defines their work—a thinly veiled reference to that of his Secessionist contemporaries—differently from that of an architect, such as himself. Consequently, while Loos has not yet refined his terminology—or perhaps even his ideas—at the time of writing 'The Poor Little Rich Man', at least some of Loos's uses of the term 'art' in this essay would seem likely to in fact be unqualified references to 'applied art', the term he uses in relation to the work of the Secessionists in his later essays. This reading is in part facilitated by the fact that 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay is atypical of Loos's essays in that rather than being written in the first person, it is instead largely presented from the perspective of a narrator who purports to function as a detached observer—and it is in fact the narrator and the client he portrays who use the term 'art' to describe 'applied art'. Rather than being explicit in this essay, Loos's views are present in a consistently sarcastic and mocking tone that can be detected in the manner in which the words of the earnest narrator are

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Girsa and Hanzl, *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, 27.

<sup>9</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' in *Architect, Critic, Dandy*, ed. Sarnitz, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

presented. On this basis, Loos's views can be read as diametrically opposed to those of the client, and generally the narrator also. In particular, Loos's views on the role of art in architecture can consequently be understood as contrary to those of the client and narrator of 'The Poor Little Rich Man', rather than as a blanket dismissal of any such relationship. The walls, floors and ceilings of the Müller House, and all of Loos's other projects discussed above, are clearly the product of his own relationship with each particular client. This period of intensity in the development of Loos's design of these building components coincides with Loos's discussion of the dynamic of this relationship in 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay.

The narrator remarks frankly that, 'The architect needn't be told twice. He went to the man's house and immediately threw out all of his furniture',<sup>11</sup> but the mocking tone suggests that Loos believes this is folly, and new furniture will not achieve the objective of bringing art into the house. While Loos was often called upon to propose furniture for his clients, his selections were intentionally eclectic and treated as distinct from the design of his buildings. By contrast, for the Poor Rich Man's house, 'The architect ... had thought of everything in advance',<sup>12</sup> building in or including all of the furniture in his design, so that, 'There was a definite place for even the very smallest case, made especially for it'.<sup>13</sup> Loos mocks this approach through his narrator, who describes how the Poor Rich Man interacts with the house in the wrong way—putting a book into the pigeonhole designated for the newspaper, for example. Loos thus aligns furnishings with function, and distinguishes them from art. Loos also equates the design of the rooms, and in particular the walls, of the Poor Rich Man's house with its furnishings—the narrator noting that, 'Every room was a complete individual symphony of colour. Walls, furniture, and fabrics were all composed sophisticatedly into perfect harmony [with] each other. Each appliance had its proper place, and was connected to the others in the most wonderful combinations'.<sup>14</sup> In doing so, Loos assigns the entirety of the architecture of the Poor Rich Man's house the status of a furnishing, and so defines it as an object of function rather than art.

'You have never seen the likes of art that was captured and well cared for inside of the four corners of that rich man's home', remarks the narrator, describing the work of the 'floorers, lackers, painters, masons, tressilbuilders, carpenters, installers, potters, wallpaper-hangers, and sculptors'.<sup>15</sup> But the narrator's suggestion that the work of these craftspeople is 'art' should again not be confused with the opinion held by Loos. It would be difficult to interpret the suggestion that 'art' is 'captured and well cared for' in the Rich Man's house as anything other than derisory, particularly as it can be connected with Loos's contrasting notions of the house as a site of complacent comfort, and art as an unsettling phenomena, in his later 'Architecture' and 'Art and Architecture' essays respectively. Loos clearly casts what purports to be art in the Rich Man's house as comfortable, and so outside of his definition of art: 'Art everywhere he looked. Art in everything and anything. When he turned a door handle he grabbed hold of art, when he

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<sup>11</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

<sup>12</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 19.

<sup>13</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 19.

<sup>14</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

<sup>15</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

sank into a chair he sank into art, when he buried his tired bones under the pillows he burrowed into art, his feet sank in art when he walked across the carpet. He indulged himself with outrageous fervour in art'. The suggestion that the materials, fixtures and fittings are 'sophisticated' and in 'perfect harmony' is similarly back-handed,<sup>16</sup> suggesting that these are not characteristics that Loos believes architecture should possess. It is noteworthy that 'sculptors' are included alongside 'installers' and 'potters' in the narrator's description of the 'art' of the Rich Man's house, suggesting that Loos also equates sculpture with furnishings—as a part of the art that is contained within architecture—and so distinguishes it from the role of art in architecture.

If Loos is understood as defining the 'art' of the Rich Man's house as a furnishing, and so an object of function rather than art, Loos's own views on the role of art in architecture can be defined as the counter position to those proposed by the client and narrator portrayed in the essay. In this way, the narrator's assertion that the Poor Rich Man's house 'wasn't common architectural art'<sup>17</sup> can be read as sarcastic—a suggestion that the house was not architectural art at all, but simply a collection of ornamented, functional objects or furnishings. The narrator's description of the design of the rooms as individually designed can similarly be interpreted as suggesting that Loos proposes that in order for architecture to function as art, it must be designed as a whole. His portrayal of the Rich Man's house as a collection of disparate, designed fixtures, fittings and finishes, sits in stark contrast to the Müller House and Loos's early apartment projects, where motifs and elements relate to one another and are repeated throughout. While Loos's architecture can be understood as art in itself, the Rich Man's house is portrayed as a receptacle for art: 'Could you live in an art gallery?' asks the curator, observing that 'We can't hide the fact however, that he tried to be home as little as possible. Now and then one needs a break from so much art'.<sup>18</sup> This interpretation is supported by the fact that the essay then proceeds with a discussion of nostalgia for personal possessions and the importance of the memories attached to them, which the Rich Man's house, filled with objects by its interior architect, clearly cannot accommodate. Instead, when the rich man requests the architect's advice as to where to place his birthday gifts, he is not only chastised for receiving them at all, but also for wearing his slippers outside the bedroom—'art requires sacrifice. He sacrificed a lot'.<sup>19</sup>

By the same form of analysis, when the narrator remarks that, 'The architect had forgotten nothing, absolutely nothing',<sup>20</sup> it seems reasonable to conclude that Loos does not believe that the art of architecture should be this prescriptive. Loos portrays the house as something that the Rich Man is to passively observe, the narrator remarking that 'he devoted a great deal of his time to studying his dwelling. For everything had to be learned; he saw this soon enough. There was much to be noted'.<sup>21</sup> Loos's inference is that as a form of art, architecture should require

<sup>16</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

<sup>17</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

<sup>18</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 20.

<sup>19</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 20.

<sup>20</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

<sup>21</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 19.



interaction with its observer or inhabitant. The observation ‘that it would be clear to anyone’<sup>22</sup> suggests that Loos believes that clarity of meaning is not a characteristic of art, at least not as it pertains to architecture. Rather than being open-ended and inspiring thought and interaction, Loos believes the house is prescriptive and so notes that ‘The domicile was comfortable, but ... hard mental work’. It is clear that Loos does not mean that it is hard work in the sense of being intellectually challenging, as the narrator compares the experience of the house to ‘sitting in “Tristan and Isolde” for months at a time’,<sup>23</sup> a relatively frivolous and light-hearted piece of theatrical entertainment telling the legend of twelfth-century adultery between a Cornish knight and an Irish princess. Similarly, making reference to his own respect for classical music as an art form, Loos mocks the Rich Man and his architect by noting through the narrator that the bells in his house were modified to play Wagner and Beethoven, the street outside was altered so that the wheels of carts played music as they passed by, and a request was made for the tram bells be replaced with ‘the characteristic motif of Parsifal bells’.<sup>24</sup> Loos portrays the house as a superficial representation of art, rather than art itself. ‘All the competent art critics were full of praise for the man who had opened up the new area of “art as basic commodity”’,<sup>25</sup> states Loos’s narrator, inferring both that art critics need to be more than just ‘competent’ and that art should not be treated as a commodity.

Reexamining ‘The Poor Little Rich Man’ as a discussion of architecture as a form of art allows for the discussion of the role of the client to be interpreted as commentary on the role of commissioning in the production of architecture by comparison to other art forms. Tournikiotis describes Loos’s work as an ‘attack against the pseudo-sophistication of bourgeois aestheticism’<sup>26</sup> and remarks that ‘The Poor Little Rich Man’ essay is clearly a critique of Secessionist society.<sup>27</sup> However, these observations about the particularities of Loos’s situation in Vienna can be understood as a critique of the limitations of the patron-architect relationship more generally—as the ‘signs of the generally deceptive nature of society’, and masking of ‘emptiness and spiritual poverty’<sup>28</sup>—are universally applicable. The essay portrays the Rich Man as the passive recipient of a lavish building, and it is a clear implication that Loos believes his own client should not be comfortable in his buildings in the lazy and ultimately soul-destroying manner of the Rich Man—but rather, should be unsettled, provoked and challenged. Both the Müller House and the apartment projects contemporaneous to the essay provide evidence that Loos saw the role of the architect as divided into two completely separate realms—the provision of professional services, and art practice. The rooms of the Müller House are clearly designed to accommodate all of the members of the client’s family, their parents, and their servants; but the spaces and forms of the house are unconnected with the Müllers and without doubt drawn from a vocabulary developed through the apartments of Loos’s early work, and the projects of the intervening years.

<sup>22</sup> Loos, ‘The Poor Little Rich Man,’ 18.

<sup>23</sup> Loos, ‘The Poor Little Rich Man,’ 20.

<sup>24</sup> Loos, ‘The Poor Little Rich Man,’ 19.

<sup>25</sup> Loos, ‘The Poor Little Rich Man,’ 19.

<sup>26</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 32.

Loos is almost certainly voicing a degree of frustration with the reception of his own work when the narrator remarks that, 'People praised, and were envious of'<sup>29</sup> the Poor Rich Man's architect. Unlike Loos and his own work, 'The Art periodicals glorified his name as one of the foremost patrons of the arts. His rooms were used as public examples, studied, described, explained'.<sup>30</sup> It would seem reasonable to conclude that Loos is arguing that the media's interest in architecture is superficial—he appears well aware of what would be required of his work in order to achieve this attention, but is making it clear that he is completely unprepared to compromise his work to do so. The narrator's question, 'Who could blame [the Rich Man] for collecting strength in restaurants, cafes'<sup>31</sup> is most likely a reference to Loos's completion of the Café Museum the previous year. The reference also connects to Loos's belief in architecture as a cultural endeavor that should be conducted in relation to other cultural activity—not in isolated contemplation, whether in a rarified architectural journal, or disconnected from the world in one's own home. Loos's essay ends with the Rich Man deeply unhappy due to the poverty of the art that surrounds him in the form of architecture—'Now is the time to learn to walk about with one's own corpse. Indeed! He is finished! He is complete!'<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Tournikiotis, *Adolf Loos*, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

<sup>30</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 18.

<sup>31</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 20.

<sup>32</sup> Loos, 'The Poor Little Rich Man,' 20.

### Conclusion

Loos's use of ornamentation on many of the walls, ceilings and floors of his projects cannot be reconciled with the widespread view that he was opposed to art and ornament in architecture. Loos's articulation of these components of the Müller House is clearly quite different to the treatment of walls, ceilings and floors of Composite House, but the application of my own design strategy to an understanding of Loos's building demonstrates that the Müller House can be interpreted in this way. In my own work, new walls, floors and ceilings are consistently treated as sculptural elements, and functional and ornamental components are absent or visually separated from these sculptural elements in order to sustain this reading. However, decorative details to existing walls, floors and ceilings are retained in order to signify their role as furnishings—unless these details can be entirely removed, and the elements appropriated into the new sculptural composition. A similar strategy is evident in Loos's buildings where he is working with existing buildings as the site of his projects—but in both these refurbishment projects, and his new-build houses, Loos's approach diverges from my own in that he also adds new components with decorative details in order to separate them from the composition of the sculptural walls, floors and ceilings that he considers art. A survey of Loos's body of built work indicates that it is largely in his early apartment and shop interiors that the compositions of walls, ceilings and floors that appear in the Müller House are developed. The relationship between an architect and client affects the design of all of the groups of building components identified in this research, but the accessibility of decisions regarding the appearance of walls, floors and ceilings, and the relative lack of technical considerations, makes its impact most discernible here. This is reflected in the title of 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay, with which walls, floors and ceilings are paired. Analysis of 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay, contemporaneous to these projects, reveals that Loos's terminology 'art' and 'ornament' can be understood as correlating closely with my own use of the terms 'sculptural' and 'furnishing' respectively. Loos's handling of junctions, materiality and scale, in relation to the walls, ceilings and floors of these early projects, precipitates the conclusion here—that 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay is an argument for architecture as a form of art, and for ornament as a mechanism for signifying a building element as only functional rather than performing a compositional role also. This reading is more coherent—both internally to the essay, and in relation to his built work—than the prevalent interpretation of 'The Poor Little Rich Man' as a straightforward statement against art in architecture, in which Loos equates art with ornament.

**Chapter Four** ORNAMENT AND CULTURE

The detailed analysis of the staircases, joinery and fixtures of Composite House in Chapter Two is utilized here as a method of analysis for examining the Müller House (1930). Fundamentally, this approach provides another test of the alternate hypothesis that Loos's work can be understood as composed of sculptural elements and functional furnishings, by simply attempting to sustain this reading through the investigation of another set of elements of Loos's buildings. However, the repetition of the methodology in relation to a different set of building elements also serves as a mechanism for examining how small and incremental changes in the expression of Loos's written ideas may have developed to address issues that he faced through his contemporaneous built work. While staircases, joinery and fittings clearly feature in Loos's buildings throughout his career, the manner in which he articulates these elements in the Müller House appears to have its origin in the built projects that immediately precede 'Ornament and Crime', and in the buildings of the decade following its publication. In particular, staircases inevitably form a greater part of his house projects than the predominantly single-level apartments preceding them. These elements can be traced relatively unaltered from the projects of this period to the culmination of his career, and so it seems pertinent to reconsider the ideas of 'Ornament and Crime' as informed by his deployment of them in his buildings, and vice versa. The essay is here viewed as an attempt to rationalize the preceding apartments and small commercial projects, and an analysis of the deployment of staircases, joinery and fixtures as both furnishings and sculptural elements in the built work that precedes and follows the 'Ornament and Crime' essay sheds light on the role that Loos is proposing for ornament. Loos notes that 'Lack of ornamentation is a sign of intellectual strength' that allows one to 'concentrate ... inventive power on other things'—and while he does not explicitly link his ideas on ornament and art in 'Ornament and Crime', the descriptions of 'art' in Loos's subsequent 'Architecture' essay could be seen as evidence that this is the intellectual and inventive pursuit to which he alludes here. The title of this chapter, 'Ornament and Culture', is shorthand for the specific aspect of the hypothesis investigated through the investigation of 'Ornament and Crime' and Loos's treatment of staircases, joinery and fixtures—that Loos understands ornament as a product of culture.

**4.1** Staircases, Joinery and Fixtures

Through discussion of detailed examples from Composite House, Section Two of the 'Architecture and Art' chapter sets out the manner in which the particular characteristics of staircases, joinery and fixtures determine the deployment of the design strategy of sculptural elements and functional furnishings. As with walls, floors and ceilings, it is necessary to conceal or background the articulation of junctions, which also visually announce the functional status of staircases, joinery and fixtures, for them to appear as sculptural elements in an architectural composition. Similarly, enabling their perception at a scale larger than their functional role also

facilitates a sculptural reading. However, the scale and junctions of staircases, joinery and fixtures are distinct from those of other building elements and so require a particular manifestation of the overall design strategy. Moreover, there are characteristics of the widespread articulation of staircases, joinery and fixtures that are not shared by walls, floors and ceilings or most other building elements—such as the expression of structure—that are instrumental in defining their perception as either sculptural elements or furnishings. The concealment or expression of handles, taps, lighting fittings, switches and sensors; and the stringers, nosings, raked risers, handrails, guarding of staircases; are specific examples of these distinct and particular characteristics. As a new-build project, the re-reading of the Müller House in these terms could be seen as more directly informed by examples of these elements from Composite House. However, Loos's design methods for designating some of the staircases, joinery and fixtures of the Müller House as furnishings is in some respects more akin to the found-object examples from my own design work.

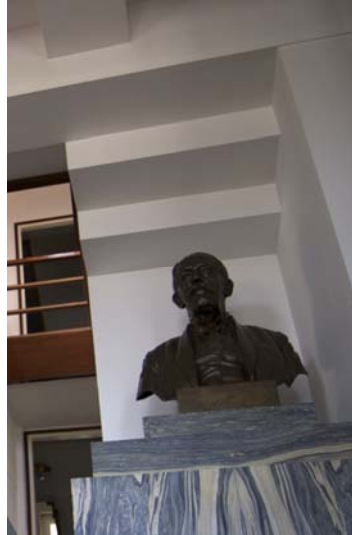
Fig 4.1.1: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The staircase connecting the two levels of the boudoir.

Fig 4.1.2: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Stepping in the living room ceiling concealing the underside of the top flight of the main staircase.

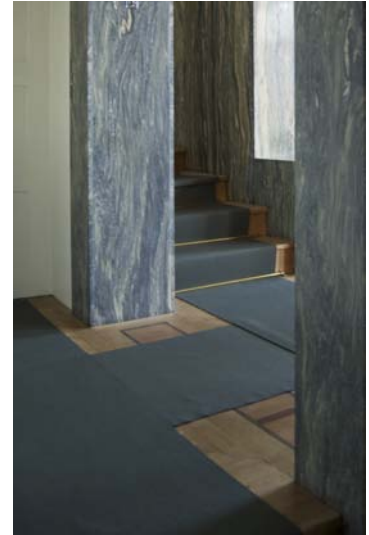
Fig. 4.1.3: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. A carpet runner on the staircase from the living room to the boudoir.



4.1.1



4.1.2



4.1.3

In the Müller House, the staircase within the boudoir reads distinctly as part of the sculptural composition of the sitting niche due to the continuity of the tread material with the floor, the concealment of the stringers, and the articulation of the guarding as unadorned timber planes of joinery and walls. Similarly, the underside of the top flight of the main staircase is articulated as part of the composition of the white volume of the building, expressed as stepping in the ceiling of the living room. Exposure of the treads would have given the staircase the appearance of a functional furnishing, and by stepping the ceiling rather than introducing a single white boxing, Loos is also able to disguise as compositional the similarly staggered plinths of marble below—providing head height to the staircase that connects the anteroom and the living room, without compromising the linear arrangement of the marble wall lining.

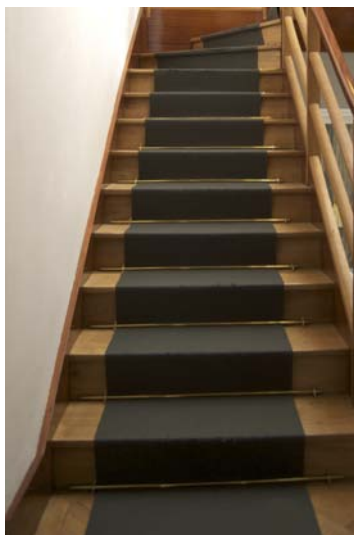
By contrast, while the main staircase that connects the split-level living and dining space with the bedroom level is finished in the same timber as these floors, it reads quite separately from them due to the expressed detailing of its stringers and the use of a carpet runner that, like the coloured walls, demarcates the staircase as a functional building component rather than as part of Loos's sculptural composition. Similarly, the handrails and guarding are of a perfunctory design, rather than attempting to take on a compositional role. The steel bars that guard the opening between the main staircase landing and the dining room are of a distinctly different design to the timber handrails and guarding on the bedroom level, but are clearly articulated as a continuation of the building language of the staircase, not the sculptural language of the white wall. The staircases from the anteroom to living room, and from the living room to the dining level and boudoir, resemble that of boudoir sitting niche, in the sense that their stringers are concealed by the timber or stone wall paneling, which also performs the role of guarding. However, in contrast to the stepped white ceiling and stone, the carpet runners to the stair treads to some degree announce all three staircases as functional building components, and so undermine their sculptural potential. Consequently, the concealment of all their other functional notation appears primarily motivated by the desire to avoid visual compromises to the stone and timber planes of the walls to which they are attached, rather than the desire to cast the staircases themselves as compositional.

Fig. 4.1.4: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Carpet runner and exposed stringers and balustrade on the staircase between the dining room and bedroom levels.

Fig. 4.1.5: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The staircase from the anteroom to the living room is adorned with a carpet runner but detailed with concealed stringers.

Fig. 4.1.6: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Concealed stringers and a carpet runner on the staircase connecting the living space to the dining room.

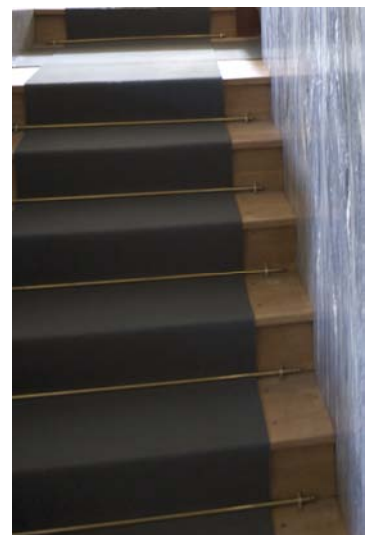
4.1.4



4.1.5



4.1.6



The cupboards and door that separate the dining room from the kitchen are integrated into the building rather than expressed as distinct furnishings like those in the children's rooms and kitchen, but they are less continuous with the building fabric and less sculptural in their articulation than those in the boudoir. In the boudoir, the glass-fronted cabinets and a glass display cabinet are presented as furnishings in the room, but the open shelves and door to the living room are seamlessly appropriated into the composition of the timber-veneered walls and ceilings. Their forms fold directly from them, and by comparison to the dining room, they are predominantly devoid of visible fixtures and fittings. By contrast, the timber-veneered dining room units are distinguished from the adjoining walls by their materiality—and while finished in a similar material to the ceiling, their detailing creates a clear distinction between them and the ceiling, which itself is articulated more as a furnishing, as outlined in the previous chapter. The prominence of visible functional fittings—such as the handles, hinges, light fittings and stone work-surface—also contributes to a reading of them as a functional building component or furnishing, rather than part of the sculptural architectural composition.

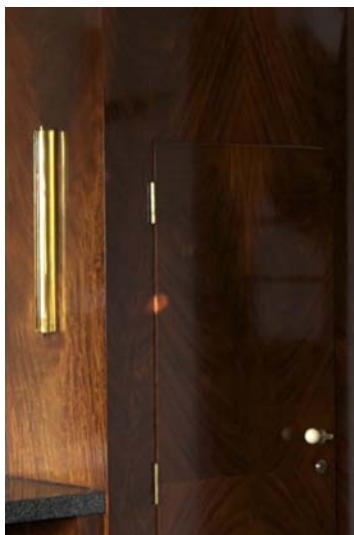
Fig. 4.1.7: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The timber-veneered cupboard door in the dining room matches the adjacent door to the kitchen.

Fig. 4.1.8: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The form and colour paint finish of the joinery in the children's playroom distinguishes it from the building.

Fig. 4.1.9: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. In the boudoir, the glass cabinets appear to be freestanding, while the open shelves are fully integrated into the planes of the walls.

Fig. 4.1.10: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Contrasting in colour from the walls and ceiling, and freestanding or finishing short of the room dimensions, the kitchen units appear as functional furnishings in the kitchen.

4.1.7



4.1.8



4.1.9







4.1.10

The wardrobes in the two dressing rooms of the master bedroom could be described as similar to the boudoir in the sense that they are fully integrated into the structure of the room; however, they also bear a resemblance to the stone wainscoting in the living room, in that they wrap around the room to a dado height, and so should perhaps be considered a hybrid of the two devices. The dressing tables, however, are articulated quite differently, and while finished in timber veneer they belong more comfortably in the realm of furnishings, like the joinery units to the children's rooms and the kitchen. The dark timber joinery that lines the library is more consistent with the articulation of the boudoir in the sense that it reads as a continuous surface wrapping around the room. While the lowered timber ceilings of the boudoir are reduced to downstand beams in the library, the fact that these run around the perimeter of the room and span across it creates the impression of a timber volume perforated by large apertures in the walls and ceiling. These apertures accommodate mirrors, a fireplace and glass-fronted cabinets in the walls, and on the ceiling reveal glimpses of the large-scale white sculptural volume of the house. Amidst the white and timber sculptural composition, the mirrors, glass-fronted cabinets and ornamented fireplace operate as furnishings. The green and black paint finish to the summer breakfast room joinery is visually integrated with the articulation walls, but this is not analogous to the use of timber veneer in the boudoir, because here both the joinery and the wall panels assume the status of furnishings, rather than together forming a single abstract sculptural composition.

Fig. 4.1.11: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Timber-veneered wardrobes and desks in the dressing rooms.

Fig. 4.1.12: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The library walls are continuously lined with cupboards, shelves, mirrors and a fireplace.

Fig. 4.1.13: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Cupboards, shelves and mirror to the walls of the summer breakfast room.

4.1.11



4.1.12



4.1.13



In the children's room and kitchen, the deployment of colour draws a distinction between the sculptural elements and furnishings. Unlike the joinery in the sitting niche, the cupboards here do not form part of a sculptural composition and their purely functional role is highlighted by the use of paint finishes that suggests a visual equivalency with the freestanding yellow and blue table that furnishes the rooms. In contrast to the concealed heating to the living areas, the radiators in the children's room and entry area are exposed and painted red to clearly distinguish their functional rather than compositional role in the building. The inlaid translucent glass panels that appear in most photographs of the marble wall between the living room and dining room were originally installed as aquariums, and so appeared quite distinctly as functional components furnishing the sculptural planes of the marble walls. Where functional components are attached to the sculptural elements of the interior, they are either concealed—as is the case with the boudoir door and the living room radiators—or articulated as furnishings that are completely distinct from the building, such as the hanging light fittings in the living room, summer breakfast room children's bedroom, dining room, boudoir, and entry porch. As elaborated in the following chapter, the same could be said of the water overflow pipes and vents to the exterior, which are painted yellow to announce their utilitarian status as furnishings, as distinct from the sculptural elevations.

Fig. 4.1.14: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The wall-mounted, red-painted radiators in the children's room.

Fig. 4.1.15: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Aquariums built in to the marble wall of the living room.

Fig. 4.1.16: Müller House, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. A hanging light fitting in the boudoir.

4.1.14



4.1.15



4.1.16



Van Duzer and Kleinman claim an inconsistency between Loos's distinction of the realm of the architect and that of the craftsman, and the fact that he selected all of the furniture for the Müller House—'Loos's built-in pieces and other room-specific cues all but prefigured the choice of furniture and its arrangement'.<sup>1</sup> Unlike most publications, Bock shows furniture on the plans, and like Van Duzer and Kleinman, he maintains that the original furniture was selected by the client and architect. However, it is here argued that Loos's distinction is consistent when the building is understood through the hypothesis that it can be divided into furnishings and sculptural elements, or components of art and function. The use of a decorative motif on the upholstery for the day bed and sitting niche in the boudoir clearly distinguishes these items as furnishings, distinct from the sculptural timber elements of the room, which by contrast incorporate clear light switches in obscured locations. Loos also deployed clear switch plates to other sculptural wall planes, in order to diminish their appearance, rather than announce their utility. It should be noted that while black sockets appear in contemporary photographs of the marble surfaces of the living room, adjacent to the main staircase and the built-in seating, the outlets do not appear to be part of Loos's original design, as they are not evident in the photographs of 1929.<sup>2</sup>

As outlined above, Loos's built-in furniture or joinery is deployed where visual inconsistencies created by the construction of the building require it, in order to bring that portion of the building back into the sculptural composition without simply wasting large areas of space by thickening walls excessively. Conversely, with regard to the freestanding furniture, Loos's layout allowed for at least one possible occupation of a space in order to design it, but clearly does not prescribe that particular arrangement or occupation (Fig. 4.1.17). The fact that the Müller House has successfully accommodated a number of other functions since its inception suggests that van Duzer and Kleinman's criticism is unsustainable.<sup>3</sup> As they comment themselves, Loos's furniture selections seem very neutral, in the sense that he is most concerned with ensuring that they do not read as consistent with the composition of the building or with each other—none of the individual selections seem important in themselves. Referring to the freestanding furniture, Van Duzer and Kleinman themselves note 'their supposed status as perfected types', and observe that 'original photographs show the chairs and chests shifting about'.<sup>4</sup> It seems reasonable to conclude that what was important to Loos was not the individual pieces of furniture selected, but simply that the selection was eclectic and so not perceived as part of the design of the building. Bock refers to the 'soft and intimate atmosphere' of the master bedroom,<sup>5</sup> and it is speculated here that there this may be an example of an architect being given free rein with the more public areas of the building, on the understanding that their client may indulge their personal taste more explicitly in the more private spaces of the house. The same argument

<sup>1</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29.

<sup>2</sup> Rukschcio & Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 614–15.

<sup>3</sup> The Müller House has been occupied as a house, an applied arts museum, a state book publisher, and by the Marxist-Leninist Institute of Czechoslovakia.

<sup>4</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29.

<sup>5</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 272–273.

could be applied to the summer breakfast room, where most of the surfaces of the room are decorated to some degree with ornamental fixtures, fittings and finishes. As with the master bedroom, the furnishings of the summer breakfast room are ornamentally themed, rather than intentionally eclectic as is the case elsewhere in the house.

Fig. 4.1.17: Müller House, 1930, from Safran, Wang and Budny, 76. Living room furniture arrangement.

4.1.17

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The development of Loos's treatment of staircases, joinery and fixtures can be traced through his entire body of built work, but is most illuminated by the buildings of his second decade of practice. Following the trajectory of these elements is illuminating of Loos's emerging conception of their role as art or functional components. For example, the main staircase of the Rufer House (1922) is articulated as a furnishing with the same exposed details as the main staircase of the Müller House, but almost identical earlier examples appear in the Mandl Villa (1918) and the Rosenfeld House (1917). The staircase from the anteroom to the living room of the Müller House has a similarly clear precedent in the Villa Strasser (1919). However, the first appearance of a sculptural treatment of a staircase in Loos's work—like that in the Müller House boudoir—is in the hall of the Moller House (1928).

Fig. 4.1.18: Rufer House, Loos, 1922, from Bock, 222. Photograph by B. Reiffenstein, 1930. Carpet runner, exposed stringers and balustrade to the main staircase.

Fig. 4.1.19: Villa Strasser, Loos, 1919, from Bock, 213. Concealed stringers and expressed nosings to an internal staircase of the Villa Strasser.

Fig. 4.1.20: Moller House, Loos, 1928, Sarnitz, 68. The concealed stringers and rectangular nosings of the staircase to the raised sitting niche.

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Loos's axonometric drawing of the Moller House (1928) provides further evidence that he was developing staircases as a sculptural element. However, this significantly postdates the 'Ornament and Crime' essay, and is instead posited here as a development of the ideas espoused in the later 'Architecture' and 'Art and Architecture' essays (discussed in the 'Art and Crime' and 'Function and Art' chapters)—by which point Loos has revised his conception of architecture as art to allow staircases to be treated as either functional element or art object, more akin to his earlier treatment of walls, floors and ceilings, and joinery. The visual device of a glimpse of a staircase emerging out of the corner of a room—like that between the living room and boudoir of the Müller House—can be seen in Loos's early projects, such as the Villa Karma of 1903–06.

Fig 4.1.21: Villa Karma, Loos, 1906, from Bock, 86. A staircase emerging from the corner of the room.

Fig. 4.1.22: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Safran, Wang and Budny, 68. This axonometric depicts the staircase as a plastic solid of stepped form, at the scale of the whole building.

4.1.21

4.1.22

The joinery of the Müller House has clear precedents in the houses of the decade that precede its construction, but the articulation of these elements can be traced to commercial projects of the earlier period, in which the 'Ornament and Crime' essay is pivotal. Plain, glass-fronted cabinets—like those in the Müller boudoir—feature in the music salon of the Rufer House (1922), but this element, particularly as it appears in the boudoir of the Müller House, also seems to have an origin in the glass cabinets of the much earlier Knize store (1913). The joinery that lines the wall between the Müller House dining room and kitchen appears to be a reworking of an almost identical arrangement in the Tzara House (1926). In the Tzara House, doors also appear either side of cupboards, all hewn of the same timber veneer—although they differ in that the doors are recessed and framed rather than flush. According to the plan, both appear to be doors, but Bock refers to the right-hand door as giving access to the dumb waiter,<sup>6</sup> which would suggest a further similarity to the Müller House, where one is a door leading to the kitchen and the other, although identical, is in fact a cupboard.

Fig. 4.1.23: Knize store, Loos, 1913, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 377. Plain, glass-fronted cabinets.

Fig. 4.1.24: Rufer House, Loos, 1922, from Bock, 223. Photograph by M. Gerlach Jr, 1930. The music salon incorporates plain, glass-fronted cabinets.

Fig. 4.1.25: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Bock, 234. A symmetrical arrangement of glass-paneled doors in the dining room.

4.1.23

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<sup>6</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 234.



The cupboards and shelves of the smoking room of the Moller House are a similarly clear precedent for the joinery that is continuous with the flat timber veneer of the walls and ceiling of the Müller House boudoir. The cupboards to the fourth floor of the Tzara house (1926) also bear a close resemblance to the painted joinery to the upper floors of the Müller House. However, due to the lack of any ornamental articulation, such as the black border of the cupboards to the summer breakfast room of the Müller House, the joinery of the upper levels of the Tzara House reads more as discrete, small-scale sculptural forms, rather than as a furnishings. The Moller House features kitchen cabinets very similar to the design used in the Müller House. However, as with the joinery of the Müller House boudoir, the other joinery of the house also has its origins in significantly earlier commercial projects, in particular the Kärntner Bar (1908). The flat timber joinery of the Kärntner Bar, continuous with the wall cladding and seating, emerges in this earlier period and remains relatively unchanged through its incorporation in the houses for Tzara (1926) and Moller (1928), before appearing in the Müller House.

Fig. 4.1.26: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Bock, 235. Photograph by M. Gravot, 1930. Flat-paneled joinery to the study.

Fig. 4.1.27: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Safran, Wang and Budny, 68. Expressed handles and fittings to the flat-paneled kitchen cupboards.

Fig. 4.1.28: Kärntner Bar, Loos, 1908, from Sarnitz, 69. Flat timber joinery is evident throughout.

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While recessed into the balustrade plane of the sculptural hallway staircase of the Moller House (1928), Loos here deploys an exposed radiator like those in the children's room of the Moller House, rather than concealing it into the composition like those in the living room. Seemingly a precursor of the aquariums in the living room of the Müller House, the Lowenbach apartment of 1913 incorporates paintings set behind glass panels, almost flush with a wall of timber veneer to the main living room wall—and a similar device is also deployed in the marble walls of the Bellak Apartment of 1907. The nook seating around the Lowenbach apartment fireplace is recessed from the main wall of the room, creating a spatial layering similar to the entry to the Müller House living room from the anteroom staircase.

Fig. 4.1.29: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Sarnitz, 68. A wall-mounted radiator adjacent to the staircase to the raised sitting niche.

Fig. 4.1.30: Lowenbach Apartment, Loos, 1913, from Bock, 56. Paintings behind glass panels, set flush with the stone wall cladding.

Fig. 4.1.31: Lowenbach Apartment, Loos, 1913, from Bock, 59. Photograph by M. Gerlach Jr, 1930. Image cropped to focus on fireplace and nook seating recessed from the main living space.

4.1.29

4.1.30

4.1.31

The space of the living room of the Tzara House (1926) is very similar to that in the Müller House, and yet accommodated an entirely different furniture arrangement, further eroding the argument that the Loos relied upon the unfixed furniture of this room to define its spatial character. Van Duzer and Kleinman propose that Loos's agency for U.P. Werke was ironic in relation to Loos's 'diametrically-opposed' belief that 'interiors were to be shaped by the ill-formed habits and incidences of dwelling',<sup>7</sup> and refers to Loos writing on personal possessions and their histories. It is argued here, however, that this is a misunderstanding of Loos, who of course realized that new objects need to be produced in order to become future family heirlooms and sentimental items. Rather, it is proposed that Loos's writing suggests that he would see the furniture of U.P. Werke as the production of culture rather than art, and so aligned with that aspect of his buildings, rather than their capacity as art objects. Loos's income from U.P. Werke was relatively short-lived, however, and plans for Loos to design the company's pavilion at the Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs and his handsome salary came to an end when the company ran into financial difficulty.

Fig. 4.I.32: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Bock, 234. The elongated configuration of the living room, with raised open-plan room on the left and doors to a terrace on the right.

4.I.32

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<sup>7</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 19.

#### 4.2 'Ornament and Crime'

Detailed analysis of Loos's articulation of staircases, joinery and fixtures provides specific illumination of 'Ornament and Crime', which would otherwise—considered in more general terms—appear to be simply a restatement of Loos's sentiments in 'The Poor Little Rich Man'. In support of the conception of Loos as a functionalist modernist, the essay, published in 1908, is widely interpreted as a straightforward statement against ornament in which Loos equates ornament with crime. In a similarly generalist analysis, but in support of the contrary notion espoused here—that Loos understands architecture as a form of art, and ornament as mechanism for signifying elements that fall outside of the realm of art—'Ornament and Crime' could be seen as Loos simply repeating this sentiment, as already presented in 'The Poor Little Rich Man'. However, this chapter aims to ascertain what is specific about the way Loos's ideas are put forward in 'Ornament and Crime', and how this might relate to the simultaneous progression of his building projects. Loos defines ornament as the product of culture in 'Ornament and Crime', and in fact asserts only that the displacement of one from the other is a sign of criminality or degeneracy. The essay can thus be understood as a thinly veiled criticism of the work of his contemporaries as culturally displaced, but Loos does not dismiss ornament outright—recognizing that 'the greatness of our age resides in our very ability to create new ornament'. Dismissing the Secessionist architects as his peers, Loos's work in practice is instead related to the peer group of merchants and creative people who were his friends and clients. This connects Loos's written proposal in 'Ornament and Crime'—that ornament is the product of culture—with the preceding analysis of the deployment of staircases, joinery and fixtures as both furnishings and sculptural elements in the built work that precedes and follows the essay. In these terms, the 'Ornament and Crime' essay not only provides further support for the argument that Loos views art as distinct from ornament, but also proposes that ornament is a product of cultural context.

'Ornament and Crime' commences with a description of the development of a human embryo into a child as analogous to the development of humanity. Given the historical context of the essay, it is unsurprising that the ludicrously condensed analogy is racist in its terminology, tracing the perception of colour and development of philosophy as a single linear progression from the Papuan, through the Germanic tribesman, directly to Socrates and Voltaire. Loos posits ornament as associated with primitive forms of humanity, describing crime as culturally contextual, and remarking that in modern society, 'People with tattoos not in prison are either latent criminals or degenerate aristocrats'.<sup>8</sup> Ornament and decoration are 'the childish babble of painting' and 'a sign of degeneracy in a modern adult',<sup>9</sup> continues Loos, with what on the surface appears to be a straightforward argument for the exclusion of ornament from modernity. Loos laments the lack of preservation of unornamented historical objects,<sup>10</sup> and argues that lack

<sup>8</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 167.

<sup>9</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 167.

<sup>10</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 168.

of ornamentation will lead to greater wealth due to reduction in labour, claiming that, 'These people who lag behind are slowing down the cultural development of the nations and of humanity'.<sup>11</sup> An analogy of gingerbread is used to demonstrate how a lack of ornament could enhance one's enjoyment of it by removing visual distractions from the flavour.<sup>12</sup> 'Lack of ornamentation is a sign of intellectual strength. He concentrates his own inventive power on other things'.<sup>13</sup> Loos lampoons the idea that changing fashions are good for the economy by comparing the process to burning buildings so that they can be rebuilt,<sup>14</sup> and notes that ornament is now only important to those without access to music, which satiates the desire for ornament amongst aristocrats.<sup>15</sup>

The above statements often appear alongside images of the stark exteriors of Loos's buildings in the widespread presentation of the architect as a forefather of functionalist modernism, while images of his interiors are either excluded or presented as simply inconsistent—as if Loos had simply not yet achieved modernist refinement of his interiors also. This viewpoint seems grounded in an assumption that Loos's views on architecture were fully formed when he wrote the essay, despite the fact that 'Ornament and Crime' predates most of the architect's built and written work. 'Ornament and Crime' was written in 1908, after Loos had realized numerous apartments and shop interiors, and was followed by a decade in which he completed further projects of this type, alongside a number of new-build houses. The preceding analysis of the staircases, joinery and furnishings of Loos's buildings sustains the hypothesis that he conceived of his buildings as composed of elements of art and function, and suggests an alternative interpretation of 'Ornament and Crime'—in which Loos argues not for the exclusion of ornament, but that ornament should be a product of culture. Also excluded from the commonplace presentation of Loos as an early practitioner in the linear development of functionalist modernism, are inconsistent aspects of the essay itself, and it is these statements that can be most fruitfully reinterpreted through this hypothesis. These suppressed portions of Loos's writing offer an explanation of the interiors of his buildings that calls into question the manner in which the above statements have been interpreted as the binary corollary of his external building forms. While Loos remarks in 'Ornament and Crime' that decoration is childish and primitive, he also notes that 'all art is erotic'<sup>16</sup> and that modern man uses ornamentation of earlier or foreign cultures as he likes and sees fit—before making the proclamation that 'the greatness of our age resides in our very ability to create new ornament'.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, there is something more nuanced being proposed here than a simple exclusion of ornament, and Loos's distinction is connected with his conception of art as distinct from ornament. The style of an object should endure proportionally to its lifespan, states Loos, giving the examples of a suit, a

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<sup>11</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 170–171.

<sup>12</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 169.

<sup>13</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 175.

<sup>14</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 172.

<sup>15</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 173–175.

<sup>16</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 167.

<sup>17</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 168.

valuable fur, and a desk.<sup>18</sup> When Loos proclaims that 'Modern ornament has no parents and no offspring, no past and no future',<sup>19</sup> he may in fact not be proposing this approach, but on the contrary commenting on the lack of connection of Secessionist ornament to culture and history. Rather than arguing for the exclusion of ornament, it seems more consistent with the observations of Loos's built work to conclude that he is promoting the use of ornament that is proportional to the lifespan of a particular component of a building, and connected to the cultural and historical context within which it is located. It seems likely that it is in fact the Secessionists to whom Loos refers when he comments that, 'Uncultivated people, for whom the greatness of our age is a closed book, greet [ornament] rapturously and then disown it after a short time'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 172.

<sup>19</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 171.

<sup>20</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Crime,' 171.

### Conclusion

The articulation of staircases, joinery and fixtures in my own work variously assigns some of these components the status of sculpture, while others are treated as furnishings. Analysis of the staircases, joinery and fixtures of the Müller House reveals that Loos similarly either suppresses the appearance of functional detail in order to allow these elements to perform a sculptural role, or expresses it in order to assign a functional role akin to my own conception of a building component as a furnishing. Loos's approach differs, however, in that in addition to allowing the expression of functional detail in order to make this distinction, he also deploys ornament to the same end. The Secessionist architects, working contemporaneously to Loos, were peers to one another to some extent by virtue of the fact that their clients were traditional patrons. By contrast, Loos's projects were predominantly business premises and homes for the owners of these businesses, and his peer group was consequently composed of these clients, and his own friends—amongst them, artists, composers and writers. The engagement of this group with craft and contemporary culture connects Loos's buildings with the appearance of these themes in 'Ornament and Crime'. The publication date of 'Ornament and Crime' correlates with Loos's completion of a number of buildings in which the staircases, joinery and fixtures of the Müller House appear to have their clearest design precedents. It appears likely that the specific properties of these building elements prompted Loos to consider the origin and form of the ornament that he deems appropriate to adorn functional elements of architecture. 'Ornament and Crime' is widely considered to be simply another unequivocal statement against ornament in architecture, in which Loos equates ornament with crime. However, as with his other essays, this interpretation requires the dismissal of several of Loos's other statements in the essay, and the continued appearance of ornament in his own buildings. These inconsistencies are addressed if the essay is instead understood as an evolution of the notion that ornament signals a building component as functional. Hence, it is proposed here that Loos—acknowledging the role of structure, junctions and positioning in designing staircases, joinery and fixtures—clarifies in 'Ornament and Crime' that ornament should be the product of contemporary culture, and in particular craft, rather than adapted from historical styles.

## **Chapter Five   ART AND CRIME**

Within the context of the hypothesis that Loos understood architecture as composed of discrete elements of art and function, the 'Architecture' essay of 1910 can be understood as an attempt by Loos to rationalize his handling of interiors in the preceding projects—in order to extrapolate this experience into the exterior resolution of the houses and other projects that he was to execute in the next phase of his built practice. As set out in the 'Art and Ornament' and 'Ornament and Culture' chapters, 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay argues for architecture as a form of art, and ornament as signifying a building component as outside of this realm, while 'Ornament and Crime' proposes that ornament is a product of culture. The 'Architecture' essay reiterates these arguments, but it differs in asserting the importance of separating the roles of architecture as art and function by rallying against the notion of applied art, which attempts to combine the two. This realization in Loos's writing comes at a juncture when Loos is increasingly designing houses, which required him to deal with windows and external doors—which did not form part of the scope of the preceding apartment projects. These projects also required Loos to deal with external form for the first time, but the origin of the articulation of the doors and windows of the Müller House can be most clearly observed in the projects of the period surrounding the publication of the 'Architecture' essay and so they are paired in the following investigation.

### **5.1            Windows and Doors**

In the 'Architecture and Art' chapter it is established that the new windows and doors of Composite House are variously treated as sculptural elements or functional furnishings. As with the other building elements, it is the suppression of the perception of structure and function that facilitates a sculptural reading—and in relation to windows and doors it is frames, hinges, catches, handles and closers that require concealment. However, doors and windows possess a relatively unique status as building elements in that they are moving parts, and so they can be designed to appear as sculptural in one configuration and functional in another. Furthermore, some of the inherent qualities of glass, transparency and reflection, can be utilized to manipulate the perception of doors and windows as belonging to one realm or the other. These specific observations about the articulation of doors and windows are here utilized to structure an investigation into Loos's own treatment of these building elements. In the Müller House (1930), Loos almost exclusively expresses the frames, mullions and handles of doors and windows so as to assign them the status of functional building elements. However, in the projects that precede the Müller House, it is documented below that Loos experimented with a sculptural articulation of doors and windows to the exterior of his buildings, before electing to limit the strategy to the occasional interior element.



Viewed through the lens of my own design strategies, the windows and doors of the Müller House are almost universally treated as functional furnishings of Loos's large-scale and small-scale sculptural compositions, rather than as sculptural elements in themselves. The windows and doors of the Müller House do not aspire to function within the portion of architecture that Loos identifies as art, because while clearly designed—in the sense that consideration has been given to their size and proportion, and the distribution of mullions and panes—their design is completely contained within the parameters of the recognizable building component of a window or door, its frame. However, the openings within which these frames are located seem clearly located within the art realm of Loos's building, assuming the appearance of voids in the massive and planar composition of the external form, as outlined in the 'Function and Art' chapter. Each of the windows of the Müller House is divided into a grid of horizontally elongated panes by mullions in a bright yellow paint finish rather than articulated as uninterrupted glazing as is the case with some windows in Loos's earlier projects.

Fig. 5.1.1: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The east elevation features windows to the basement, dining room, kitchen, dressing room and children's room; and the unglazed opening to the roof terrace.

Fig. 5.1.2: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Windows to the master bedroom, dressing room, bathroom, guest bedroom, and boudoir; visible on the west elevation.

Fig. 5.1.3: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Windows to the library, stairwell, bathrooms, and children's room on the south elevation.

Fig. 5.1.4: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Living room and master bedroom windows on the north elevation.

5.1.1

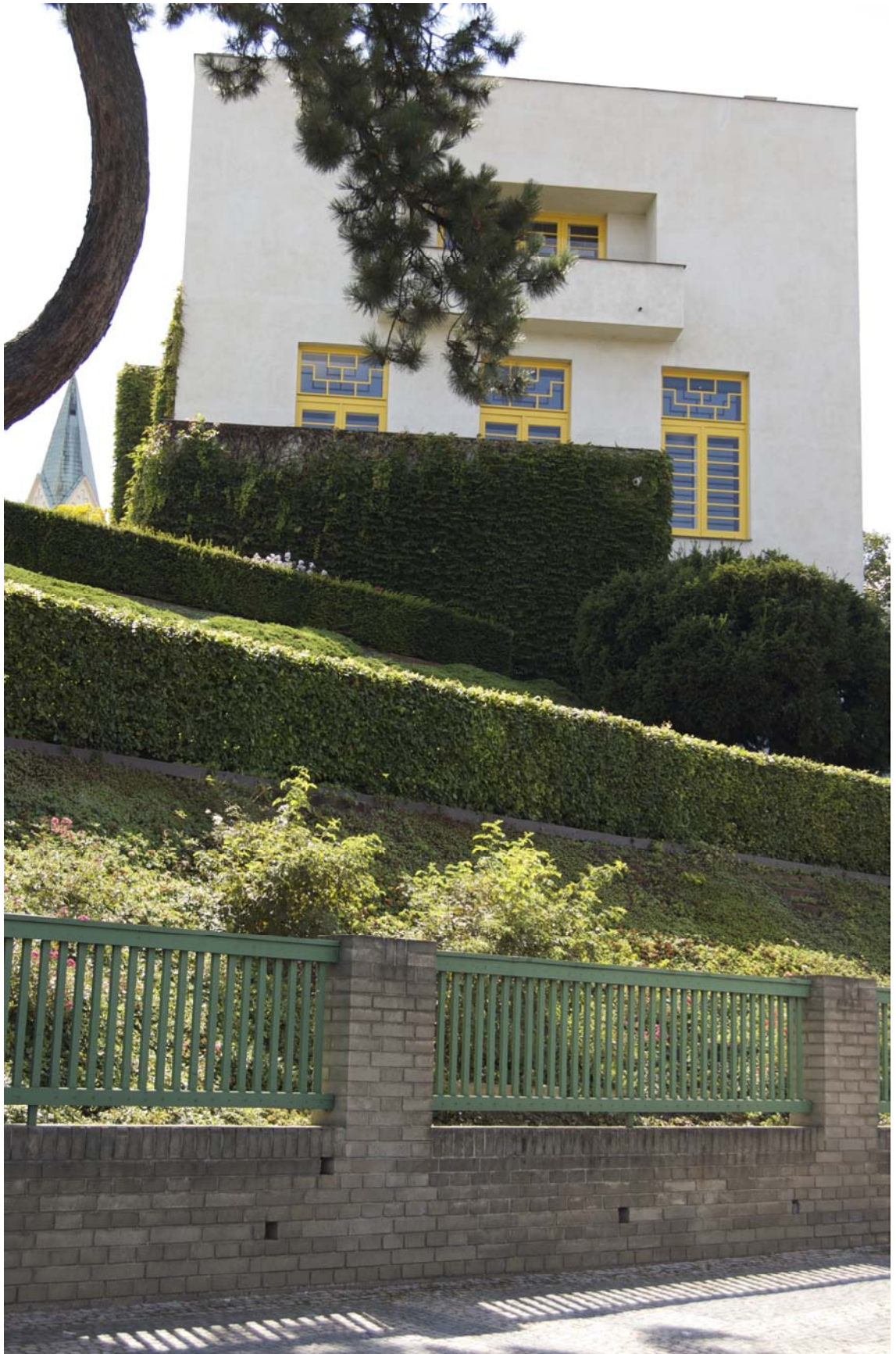


5.1.2



5.1.3





5.1.4

Earlier schemes for the external elevations sustain this reading, regardless of the distribution of the windows proposed, and it is argued that the hypothesis is further supported by the use of an applied decorative motif to the mullions of the upper sections of living room windows to the north elevation. This decorative window frame is unique in the body of Loos's work and it seems clear that Loos was content to treat the windows decoratively, in the same manner as the unfixed furnishings of his interiors. Bock describes the motif as a 'Japanese pattern in the fanlight', also notes the use of 'Japanese ivy' on the East elevation, and presents both in the context of Loos's general interest in Japanese culture.<sup>1</sup> Also rendered in yellow in order to assign them the same perfunctory status, are the external doors, and all the other small functional incursions on the surface of the white, sculptural building form. This demarcation strongly suggests their status as craft furnishings of Loos's art object, rather than as a part of this visual composition.

Fig. 5.1.5: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Girsá and Hanzl, 30. One of a number of drawings showing preceding schemes for the south elevation, all featuring windows with exposed frames divided into a grid of panes by horizontal mullions.

Fig. 5.1.6: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The garage door and adjacent electrical enclosure rendered in matching yellow paint finish.

5.1.5

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5.1.6



<sup>1</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 258–259.



Fig. 5.1.7: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The bracket supporting the now disused overhead electrical and telephone connection is also finished in yellow, matching the WC window to the bottom right of the image.

Fig. 5.1.8: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Metal angles with yellow paint finish protecting the wall edges adjacent to the matching garage door.

Fig. 5.1.9: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Two small openings in the walls adjacent to the door to the basement storage, one expressed as a void in the white, sculptural external form; the other rendered in a yellow finish to assign it the status of a furnishing, like the matching doors and windows.

5.1.7



5.1.8



5.1.9



The external 'window' to the east parapet that frames a view from the roof terrace is also unique in Loos's work, and reminiscent of Corbusier's Villa Savoye (1931), the completion of which slightly precedes the Müller House. Unlike the other external windows of the house, but in the same way as the internal openings between the dining room and staircase, it is treated as a void in the sculptural solid of the white rendered external enclosure. These openings are considered further in the 'Function and Art' chapter, as part of the articulation of the external form of the building.

Fig. 5.1.10: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. A remnant of an earlier scheme—incorporating another enclosed room, and refused permission by the council—the wall opening to the roof terrace appears as a void in the sculptural external form of the building like all of the other window openings, but is not furnished by a yellow window.

#### 5.1.10



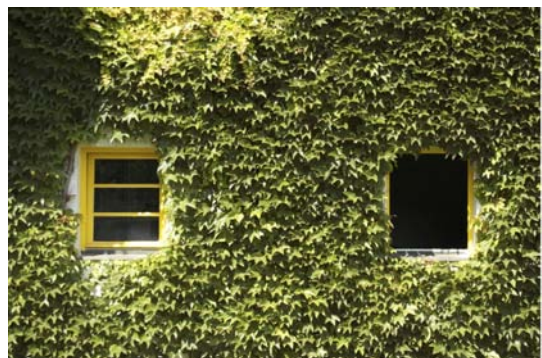
Fig. 5.1.11: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The opening to the roof terrace wall is immediately adjacent to the window to the top-floor darkroom. This adjacency highlights the identical appearance of the two openings in the white, sculptural, external form of the building, but contrasts of the fact that one remains a void, while the other is furnished with yellow window frames and mullions.

Fig. 5.1.12: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Two windows to the basement on the east elevation; one closed and so appearing as a furnishing in the sculptural opening in the external form, and the other open and leaving only the yellow fixed portion of the frame to furnish the void.

5.1.11



5.1.12



The articulation of the opening in the wall of the roof terrace is repeated in the internal walls that separate the dining room from the main staircase and living room. The deployment of this device on both the exterior and interior heightens the perception of the building as a single white, incised form, inhabited by the other sculptural and functional components, such as the windows and doors. This reading is also supported by the articulation of the window between the boudoir and the living room, which is conversely visually linked to the articulation of the other external windows—by the use of a similar decorative motif to that used on the high-level living room windows. Despite their contrasting articulation, these details contribute to the exterior quality of both the dining room and boudoir, and this exteriority is heightened by the addition of curtains in both cases. The use of dark timber paneling on the portions of wall under the openings on the dining room side gives them the appearance of full-height openings with timber furnishings occupying their lower portions, particularly due to the similarity of the paneling to the adjacent cupboard. As a consequence, the appearance of rectangular openings in a plastic solid when viewed from the staircase, dissolves in favour of a reading of columns connecting to a downstand beam in the ceiling. Some photographs of the Müller House show the openings between dining room and staircase closed with solid panels, but these were not original and were inserted to enclose the room during one of the subsequent occupations of the building. The same is true of the curtains that can be seen concealing the aquariums in some photographs of the living room. The interior face of the stairwell rooflight opening is covered with a gridded frame of fenestration, lending it the appearance of a window. However, the mullions are of a different pattern to those on the elevations of the house, and the yellow glass to the perimeter is highly unusual for Loos. In this way, the rooflight could be understood as ornament as cultural quotation, analogous to the unfixed furnishings of the house.

Fig. 5.1.13: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Rooflights to bedroom level.

Fig. 5.1.14: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Frameless openings to the dining room, as viewed from the main staircase.

5.1.13



5.1.14



Leaving aside the perfunctory use of mirror in the anteroom, dressing rooms and bathrooms, it is contended here that mirrors in the Müller House operate as a form of window, and that this is quite distinct from the way in which mirror is used in the Moller House (1928). As with many of Loos's other houses, apartments and shops, the areas of mirror used in the Müller House are divided into a grid of small panes and fixings are visible, creating a grid that does not match but is of similar proportions to the adjacent windows. In the summer breakfast room it should be noted that the proportions of the panels of mirror are elongated by comparison to those in the library. Mirrors in the Müller House are also placed so as to provide sources of light, analogous to windows, and at a height that a viewer can perceive themselves, and so appreciate the mirror as a physical component of building fabric. This is quite distinct from the use of this element in the Moller House and Kärntner Bar (1908), where mirror is used in large frameless sheets that fill the spaces within which they are located. This detailing dissolves their physical presence as objects, and they instead operate purely as a visual effect. The high-level mirror adjacent to the dining room windows, is the only appearance of this technique in the Müller House. While the mirrors in the summer breakfast room and library also create a degree of perception of space beyond, the viewer is made conscious of the viewing experience because, as with a window, they are conscious of looking through a frame.

Fig. 5.1.15: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. A rectangular grid of panels of mirror on the wall of the summer breakfast room.

Fig. 5.1.16: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. High-level frameless mirror adjacent to the dining room windows.

Fig. 5.1.17: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The mirror to the wall of the library is arranged in a grid of squares.

5.1.15



5.1.16



5.1.17





Conversely, the absence of visible frames in the Moller House and Kärntner Bar suppresses this awareness, and the placement of the mirrors at high level prevents viewers from perceiving themselves. Consequently, the mirrors in the Moller House and Kärntner Bar become part of the sculptural composition of the art realm of Loos's buildings—operating as voids and providing a visual doubling of volumes and perception of space—whereas those in the Müller House sit firmly within the realm of functional building component or furnishing.

Some doors in the Müller House are completely concealed or expressed simply as unadorned openings in the walls, others are visible but utilitarian and plain, while some are traditional in appearance. It is argued here that this depends upon whether Loos conceives of the part of the building in which the door is located as sculptural or functional, and whether he elects to take the latter as an opportunity for cultural quotation through ornament. While only a void the size of a door separates the dining room from the staircase, the doors between the living room and boudoir, and the dining room and kitchen are subsumed into the plane of the timber-veneered wall and identifiable only by a change of grain and a discrete handle. The doors between the hallway and the bedrooms, however, are expressed with plain rectilinear dark frames like the white-painted frame of the door between the cloakroom and WC. The door from the porch to the entry area is also expressed as a functional building element, but is detailed like many of the interior doors, supporting the perception of the porch as an interior space, as discussed in the 'Art and Ornament' chapter.

Fig. 5.1.18: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The door between the kitchen and dining room.

Fig. 5.1.19: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Doors are integrated into timber veneer planes on the boudoir walls, but on their other face are expressed as furnishings.

Fig. 5.1.20: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. A relatively utilitarian door.

5.1.18



5.1.19



5.1.20



Like those between the living room and balcony, the internal set of doors between the master bedroom and balcony are traditional in their design and expressed as a functional furnishing. Simple timber-framed, glazed doors separate the anteroom from the entry area, clearly expressed as an inserted functional building component. In some photographs of the Müller House, a similar glazed door is shown adjacent to the dining room, separating the living room from the staircase. However, like the panels to the dining room wall openings described above, this door was not part of the original design and was subsequently removed in the restoration process. The white-painted, timber-framed and glazed doors in the master bedroom clearly fall into the category of functional furnishing rather than sculptural element, but are incongruous with the pared-back appearance of both the external and internal doors throughout. As noted above, the master bedroom of the Müller House exhibits a number of classical and traditional features that are uncharacteristic of the articulation of the rest of the building, and these doors can similarly be understood as ornamented in order to register their functional status.

Fig. 5.1.21: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Glazed, timber-framed doors between the master bedroom and balcony.

Fig. 5.1.22: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 387. A timber-framed, glazed door temporarily inserted between the living room and main staircase.

5.1.21



5.1.22

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Examining the projects that precede the Müller House, it can be seen that Loos experimented with the sculptural articulation of windows and doors to the exterior of his buildings, before later electing to limit the strategy to the occasional small-scale sculptural element of his interiors. However, while there is a strong resemblance to the overall distribution of windows and doors in the projects that immediately precede the Müller House, these components emerge much earlier in Loos's work—broadly contemporaneous with the 'Architecture' essay— and remain relatively unchanged through the intervening period. The window distribution and design of the Müller house is very similar to the Moller House, but the elongated horizontal panes could be seen as a variation of the grid of window mullions of many of Loos's earlier projects, including the Tzara House of 1926, Scheu House of 1912–13, and the Villa Karma of 1903–06.

Fig. 5.1.23: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Bock, 237. The distribution of windows in the Müller House, particularly on the east and north elevations, is similar to those seen on the street elevation of the Moller House.

Fig. 5.1.24: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Bock, 228. The elongated panes of the Müller House have their immediate origin in the windows of the Tzara House.

5.1.23

5.1.24

It is interesting to note that the Steiner House of 1910 has four distinctly different types of glazing—three different proportions of smaller rectangular panes, one of which is elongated as in the Moller (1928) and Müller Houses, and large single panes to the side and rear of the house. It is here proposed that the latter suggests a desire to appropriate the windows into the design of the house as a sculptural art object—a massive and planar volume incised by openings—and the same approach is evident in parts of the Villa Karma (1906). Conversely, the windows of the Steiner House (1910) that are composed of small panes, seem to be articulated to appear as recognizable building forms—furnishings of the large-scale art object rather than a part of it—and so fall into Loos's category of functional elements rather than operating as art. As outlined above, the windows of the Müller House are clearly articulated as functional building elements, furnishing openings articulated as voids in the massive and planar solid of the overall form of the house.

Fig. 5.1.25: Steiner House, Loos, 1910, from Sarnitz, 44. Many of the windows to the side and rear elevations of the Steiner House are articulated with a large single pane of glazing, but they still appear as furnishings in the voids of the external form due to their visible frames and sills.

Fig. 5.1.26: Villa Karma, Loos, 1906, from Sarnitz, 28. Large single panes to the windows of the new library of the Villa Karma.

5.1.25

5.1.26

The Mandl Villa of 1916 demonstrates Loos's increasing use of eccentrically positioned windows placed in openings devoid of detail so as to appear as voids. This type of window articulation is also evident in the Rufer House of 1922. The glazing of windows to the rear elevation of the Moller House of 1928 is significantly larger than to the front elevation, or to any of the windows in the Müller House. This lends these windows a more modern appearance, and they read as part of the sculptural composition of the building, rather than as furnishings of it. While the windows appear more modern in themselves, their manifestation is in some ways less successful in terms of sustaining a reading of the building volume as a sculptural form in its entirety. Because the openings are not completely glazed due to the available technology, the perception of the building as an incised massive and planar solid is actually compromised rather than improved. For the Müller House, Loos abandons this experiment in favour of articulating the windows as functional building components juxtaposed with the sculptural volume. Tournikiotis documents the physical morphology of the various types of windows utilized by Loos in his building projects (Fig 5.1.28).

Fig. 5.1.27: Mandl Villa, Loos, 1916, from Bock, 195. Eccentrically placed window openings similar to those seen in the Müller House.

Fig. 5.1.28: Scheu, Tzara, Winternitz, Bronner Houses, from Tournikiotis, 69. A diagrammatic representation of the window typologies of Loos's houses.

5.1.27

5.1.28

The absence of window and door frames, mullions and balustrades from photographs of Loos's Werkbund houses (1931) in construction supports the argument that Loos sought to articulate window openings as voids in the sculptural external form of a building. Some drawings of the Goldman and Salatsch building (1911) show vertical banding to the stonework, as opposed to the flat white massive and planar volume of the constructed building.<sup>2</sup> The shading is rough and appears hastily added, but could be understood as an experiment with assimilating the voids of the window openings into articulation of the elevation, as is suggested above in relation to Loos's speculative scheme for Josephine Baker (1927). Even more hastily sketched over the elevation are decorative details above and below some of the windows—perhaps intended to illustrate that the openings are contextually proportional to the neighbouring buildings, or simply to demonstrate how unsatisfactory this solution would be.

Fig. 5.1.29: Werkbund Housing, Loos, 1931, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 370. Windows as voids in the sculptural composition of external form, unfurnished by windows and doors during construction.

Fig. 5.1.30: Goldman and Salatsch building, Loos, 1911, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 150. Sketches showing possible attempts to incorporate windows into the banding of stonework.

Fig. 5.1.31: Josephine Baker House, Loos, 1927, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 324. The equivalency of windows and banding of the elevation in model form.

5.1.29

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<sup>2</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 150–151.

The use of models may have been instrumental in Loos's experimentation with the idea of assimilating darkened window voids into the treatment of the elevation, and his limited use of axonometric drawings suggests the transition of this device from model to drawn representation. Loos could have chosen to depict the frames and mullions of the windows and doors in all of his models and drawings, but in some he clearly chooses to express the openings—within which they are contained—as simple voids in the building form. Loos's use of models seems to originate from his time as the Chief Architect of the Housing Estate Authority of Vienna. Following the model of his 1923 terraced housing scheme, there are two prominent examples of Loos using models in relation to his designs for private houses, the Villa for Alexander Moissi of 1923, and the House for Josephine Baker of 1927.<sup>3</sup> Tournikiotis documents the distribution of window openings in the elevations of the Müller House, and while it is not the subject of his analysis, his graphic notation of windows and doors as solid black rectangles in the solid white volumes of Loos's buildings supports the hypothesis put forward here.

Fig. 5.1.32: Villa for Alexander Moissi, Loos, 1923, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 626. Loos's articulation of windows as voids in model form.

Fig. 5.1.33: Fleischner House, Loos, 1931, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 366. Loos's articulation of windows and doors as voids in an axonometric drawing.

Fig. 5.1.34: Rufer House, Loos, 1922, from Tournikiotis, 68. In his elevational analysis of the Rufer House, Tournikiotis depicts Loos's window distribution as voids in the solid of the external form.

5.1.32

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5.1.34

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<sup>3</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 285, 287, 324.

The gridded mirror in the Müller House library appears in the same composition in the Josef Vogl Apartment in Pilsen, similarly positioned above an exposed brick fireplace. The same composition can also be seen in Loos's Knize store interior of 1910–13. A grid of small mirrors is also placed above a fireplace in the Lowenbach Apartment of 1913, and in the Mayer Apartment of 1913. While not used in the same composition, the device of gridded mirror also features in the Goldman and Salatsch building of 1909–1911. Conversely, the Scheu House of 1912–13 features mirror above a brick fireplace, but is here articulated as a single pane. As argued above, it is postulated that Loos would have intended to create a sense of viewing through a window in the other projects, but an illusion of space beyond in the Scheu House. The more extensive deployment of mirror in the apartment projects suggests that Loos may have been attempting to create layers of spatial complexity in small spaces, analogous to those that actually exist in the Müller House and the other house projects. Loos first deployed top-light like that used in the bedroom level hallway of the Müller House, in the Villa Karma of 1903–06. However, top-lighting was subsequently used in the Goldman and Salatsch building, and in the form of a top-lit translucent glass ceiling in the Anglo-Österreichische Bank II project of 1914. The entry area to the Goldman and Salatsch building incorporates a pair of glazed doors with single large panes of glass projecting from wall nibs, bearing a strong resemblance to the design of the Müller House entry. At a smaller scale, the interior composition of a light fitting positioned in front of a window in the Georg Weiss Apartment of 1904, is repeated in the boudoir of the Müller House, where the foreground element of the hanging light fitting accentuates an exterior reading of the window that separates the space from the living room.

Fig. 5.1.35: Knize store, Loos, 1913, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 336. Gridded mirror above the fireplace is a clear precursor of the library and summer breakfast room of the Müller House, while the frameless single pane of mirror to the top right of the photograph is a precedent for the dining room of the Müller House.

Fig. 5.1.36: Anglo-Österreichische Bank II project, Loos, 1914, from Bock, 183. While less ornate than the rooflights in the ceiling of the Müller House stairwell, the gridded roof glazing of this project is one of its ancestors.

5.1.35

5.1.36



## 5.2 'Architecture'

While Loos's treatment of doors and windows is understood as a part of an overall conception of architecture as composed of both art and function, the particular way in which he handles these components is revealing of the distinction that Loos makes in the 'Architecture' essay between art and applied art. The title of this chapter, 'Art and Crime', reflects the fact that this rereading of the 'Architecture' essay suggests that applied art, rather than art per se, is the crime to which Loos refers in the title of the earlier 'Ornament and Crime'. The 'Architecture' essay is commonly cited as further evidence that Loos opposed the idea of architecture as art, but Loos actually clearly locates the discipline within the arts—although recognizing that 'only a very small part of architecture belongs to art'. Vernacular buildings are portrayed as at peace with their surroundings, and architecture as a disruptive force that elicits emotional responses. In the 'Architecture' essay, Loos begins to connect his perception of the inappropriateness to architecture of applied art—which attempts to combine rather than separate ornament and art—to the nature of architectural education and journals, and their reliance upon drawing and photography respectively. The examination of Loos's design of windows and doors as furnishings and sculptural elements suggests that he deploys surface ornament as an expression of craft and culture to signify the former rather than the latter—in stark contrast to the notion of applied art as he sets it out in the essay. The absence of ornament from the sculptural articulation of doors and windows conversely aligns these elements with the emotional and intellectual role Loos proposes for 'art', as opposed to 'applied art'. It could also be argued that Loos sets out in this essay an argument that art plays quite a different role in modern architecture than in preceding periods.

It is proposed above that the 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay can be understood as defining architecture as a composition of discrete elements of function and art, and that 'Ornament and Crime' sets out that the ornament that signifies a component of architecture as functional should be an expression of its cultural context. Loos's selective deployment of ornament in the articulation of the windows and doors of the Müller House and preceding projects, suggests a similar rereading of the 'Architecture' essay as a proclamation against the conception of architecture as applied art, which confuses the functional and art elements of architecture and produces ornament that is culturally disconnected. This sits in stark contrast to the widespread interpretation of the 'Architecture' essay as a statement of architecture's status as provisional, as opposed to the projective quality of art.<sup>4</sup> This reinterpretation also requires a reexamination of Loos's comments in the 'Architecture' essay in relation to architectural education and publishing. Published in 1910, Loos's 'Architecture' essay is broadly contemporaneous with the completion of the Steiner House and sits chronologically after 'Ornament and Crime', but significantly predates 'Art and Architecture'. In the two years between writing 'Ornament and

<sup>4</sup> Frampton, introduction to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang, and Budny, 15.

Sir John Summerson, foreword to *Adolf Loos*, by Safran, Wang and Budny, 10.

Crime' and 'Architecture', Loos completed the Kärntner Bar and prepared initial designs for the Goldman and Salatsch building.

In the 'Architecture' essay, vernacular building is portrayed as at peace with nature, and architecture as disruptive of this peace—whether it is the product of a 'good' or 'bad' architect, in Loos's terms. Loos proposes that vernacular building lacks self-consciousness as simply a crafted product of culture.<sup>5</sup> However, it is argued here that Loos departs from general observation at this point, and that when he notes that architects lack certainty because they lack culture, he is commenting on the work of his contemporaries and the training that they receive, as he sets out later in the essay. Loos seems to be proposing that in designing every aspect of their buildings, his contemporaries prevent them from functioning as an expression of their cultural setting. Loos suggests that this tendency to look backwards or forwards for applied styles is a new development, of the late nineteenth century, and connected with the development of museums and their inherent tendency to favour the collection of objects that are atypical and preserved due to lack of use because of their ornamentation. Until this point, Loos argues, the appearance of buildings was simply a consequence of the time of their production, and they were not consciously designed at all. 'If I could dislodge all ornaments from our old and new houses, so that only naked walls remained, it would certainly be difficult to differentiate the house of the fifteenth century from that of the seventeenth. But any layman could pick out the house of the nineteenth century at first sight',<sup>6</sup> remarks Loos, revealing that his conception of buildings as a product is not limited to their surface ornamentation, but extends also to their massing and overall form. The houses of the nineteenth century are different, argues Loos, because they are disconnected from the culture in which they were produced.

Buildings, Loos proposes, should 'show the style of the twentieth century in its pure form',<sup>7</sup> and he gives the example of 'those products whose producers have not been placed under the supervision of those who wish to distort our culture ... because their craft did not appear noble enough to those lacking in culture for it to be included in their schemes'. Loos argues that while architecture has become rarified and distanced from craft, the production of tailors, luggage-makers, and tool-makers is still a product of the culture within which it is located. The essay proceeds to propose that the blank elevations of Loos's buildings only appear conspicuous because they are in tune with their contemporary culture and craft, while all of their neighbours are not. Loos thus believes that his buildings would have appeared ordinary were it not for the fact that they were located within a contemporary context that was not. 'Are we afraid of uniformity?'<sup>8</sup> enquires Loos, questioning the desire for novelty that motivates the designs of his contemporaries. Rather than the 'nervous vanity' of consciously designing a building, Loos proposes that progressive changes to taste, rules and traditions were the historical

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<sup>5</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' in *Adolf Loos*, Safran, Wang and Budny, 104.

<sup>6</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

<sup>7</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

<sup>8</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

determinants of building form. The inference is that Loos's designs are simply the product of the taste, rules and traditions of late nineteenth-century Europe. Contrasting the popular appeal of buildings historically, Loos observes that 'Today most houses only please two people: the client and the architect'. This observation is ironic, perhaps intentionally so, in light of the reception of Loos's own buildings, and in particular his designs for the Goldman and Salatsch Building that were being widely criticized in Vienna at the time the essay was written. It seems likely that Loos is criticizing the rarified nature of bourgeois taste and its disconnection from the processes of contemporary building and commerce. This presents something of a paradox, in that while Loos is proposing that architecture has diverged from culture, and that architecture should attempt to reestablish its synergy with culture, he also acknowledges that culture has developed around the rarified form of architecture that he identifies—and hence people's distaste for his own buildings. Consequently, it is argued here that Loos is essentially proposing that both architecture and culture will need to be reformed in order to reestablish this synergy. This interpretation is consistent with the fact that Loos did not limit his proclamations to architecture, but wrote on cultural issues generally and preferred to present his work in this broader cultural context, such as his own *Das Andere* publication.

While this essay infers that it is not possible to consciously manufacture culture by looking backwards or forwards in order to design buildings, it is argued here that Loos does not propose that architecture should not be designed. Rather, Loos draws a distinction between building and architecture, defining the latter as part of a sequence of arts, running from drawing, through painting and sculpture, to architecture, and noting that 'Drawing and architecture are the beginning and end of the sequence'.<sup>9</sup> It is argued that when Loos states that 'The house has to please everyone, contrary to the work of art, which does not',<sup>10</sup> he is not intending to exclude architecture from the realm of art, but rather to define its specific qualities by comparison to other forms of art. Loos describes the 'work of art' as private, functionless, revolutionary, uncomfortable and responsible to no one, and 'the house' as public, functional, conservative, comfortable and responsible. It is argued that Loos uses the term 'house' as synonymous with 'architecture', and that this section of the essay sets out to explain the difficulties of architecture operating as a work of art because of the simultaneous requirement that it must also function as a building. Loos has outlined earlier in the essay how he proposes that architecture's role as a building should be given form, and it is proposed that here he sets out the considerations that need to be given to the capacity of architecture as a form of art.

In response to his rhetorical question, 'Does it follow that the house has nothing in common with art and is architecture not to be included amongst the arts?' Loos appears to answer frankly, 'That is so. Only a very small part of architecture belongs to art: the tomb and the monument'.<sup>11</sup> This statement is often cited as evidence that Loos excluded his own buildings from the realm of

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<sup>9</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>10</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 107.

<sup>11</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 108.

art, but it is postulated here that this is at one level simply a criticism of the thinking of his contemporaries rather than a proclamation of his own opinion; while at another level, draws a subtle distinction between the two parts of architecture as he posits it—function and art. Loos uses the tomb and monument, both unencumbered by inhabitation, to represent the part of architecture not inhibited by the functional requirements of building. It is argued that Loos proposes that this ‘small part of architecture’ that is art exists in all architecture, but aside from these two examples, exists alongside the functional building—‘Everything else that fulfills a function is to be excluded from the domain of art’.<sup>12</sup> The statement that ‘The work of art shows people new directions and thinks of the future’, should not be seen as undermining the reading proposed here due to Loos’s earlier statement that architecture should be a product of contemporary culture, rather than looking forward or back. The earlier statement refers to the design of the part of architecture that is functional building, not the ‘small part’ that is art. When Loos asserts that, ‘The amalgamation of art and craft has caused both [the architect and artist], as well as humanity, infinite damage’, it is proposed that he is referring to the capacity of architecture to be both art and craft simultaneously—but separately, rather than combined in ‘the deceitful catch-phrase of “applied-art”’.<sup>13</sup> This notion of the separation of art and craft seems fairly explicit when Loos states that ‘to give art a material function is a profanation of the highest order’<sup>14</sup> but it is clear that he is referring to a separation within the discipline of architecture when he observes that, ‘Architecture arouses sentiments in man. The architect’s task therefore, is to make those sentiments more precise ... This is architecture’.<sup>15</sup> The description of architecture as provoking an emotional response is closely aligned with Loos’s descriptions of the function of art in this essay and others, and so supports the reading that he is referring to a dichotomy within architecture, rather than a division between architecture and art. ‘As there are tasteful and tasteless buildings, man assumes that the former are produced by artists, the latter by non-artists’—but, notes Loos: ‘Here one is confusing art with culture’.<sup>16</sup>

Loos is most explicit about his attitudes to the teaching of architecture, and the role of drawing and the media in the ‘Architecture’ essay. Arguing that architectural styles cannot be invented, Loos proclaims that the ‘horrifying intellectual monsters’ who are trained by architecture schools to do so are at odds with the craftsman, ‘a modern, cultivated man’ who ‘did not have or need knowledge to draw ornament’.<sup>17</sup> Loos links the rise of the architect to the development of the museum and its inherent bias for ornament due to the preservation of unused ornamental objects. The architect is portrayed by Loos as a rarified figure divorced from the act of building. ‘The mason, the builder was given a superior’ in the form of the architect, observes Loos— ‘The builder was only capable of building houses in the style of his time. But he who had the ability to build in any past style, he who had lost contact with his time, the one who was uprooted and

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<sup>12</sup> Loos, ‘Architecture,’ 108.

<sup>13</sup> Loos, ‘Architecture,’ 108.

<sup>14</sup> Loos, ‘Architecture,’ 108.

<sup>15</sup> Loos, ‘Architecture,’ 108.

<sup>16</sup> Loos, ‘Architecture,’ 108.

<sup>17</sup> Loos, ‘Architecture,’ 104.

remoulded, he became the dominant man, he was the architect'.<sup>18</sup> Loos also refers to architects looking both backwards or forwards, and his notion that this focus renders the work of architects as culturally disconnected is pertinent in relation to contemporary architecture, which seems fixated with the idea of creating a new form of architecture that represents or even precipitates a new or future form of living. 'The architect derived everything from books', observes Loos, remarking on the dangerously selective body of knowledge of the new profession's 'colossal library of literature [that] provided him with all that was worth knowing'.<sup>19</sup> Loos is also critical of architectural journals in disconnecting architects from culture, noting that 'One cannot imagine how poisonous the immense number of publications have been to our urban culture, how they have prevented us from looking at ourselves ... It was an abomination. And this abomination grew infinitely. Everyone was striving to see his work immortalized in the new publications and the great number of architectural magazines which catered for the vain requirements of the architect. Thus it has remained until this day'.<sup>20</sup> Loos is undoubtedly intending to draw a contrast to his own publication, *Das Andere*, which set out to present architecture in the context of culture more generally. Referring to the general lack of interest of architectural journals in his own work, Loos laments that 'I have to forego the honour of being published in the various architectural magazines', and mocks that consequently, 'I have been denied the satisfaction of my vanity'.<sup>21</sup> However, Loos then refers to the inclusion of one of his projects in 'Dekorative Kunst', again supporting the interpretation that he is happy to have his work published in a culturally connected context. Loos criticizes the ineffectiveness of the publishing of photographic reproductions by comparison to the 'power of the example',<sup>22</sup> by which he presumably means the experience of the building first-hand. However, he acknowledges that this effect may have been diminished by the advent of post, telegraph and newspapers. 'I contend: a real building makes no impression as an illustration reproduced two-dimensionally', asserts Loos—'It is my greatest pride that the interiors which I have created are totally ineffective in photographs. I am proud of the fact that the inhabitants of my spaces do not recognize their own apartments in the photographs'.<sup>23</sup> It is speculated here that Loos is in essence criticizing the failure of orthodox photography to convey the first-hand experience of a building—as his own preference for particular photographers, stage setting of his buildings for photography, and use of montage would suggest that he believed in the power of photographic representation. Moreover, it is argued that Loos's use of photography is, rather than an endorsement of photography per se, an acknowledgment that one can take evocative photographs of architecture regardless of whether or not they are descriptive of the aspects that are evocative in the experience of the building first-hand. It is for their culturally disconnected use of both photography and text that

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<sup>18</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>19</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>20</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>21</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

<sup>22</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

<sup>23</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

Loos labels the architectural journals 'false prophets' who have failed to recognize fundamental changes in architecture in his time because they could only recognize a style by its ornament.<sup>24</sup>

Loos questions the ability of technical college students and draughtsmen to draw much better than the old masters or craftsmen, and complains that, 'The art of building has been degraded by the architect into a graphic art'. 'The greatest number of jobs does not go to the person who is the builder, but to him whose work cuts the best figure on paper', observes Loos, concluding that 'those two are opposites'.<sup>25</sup> Loos is not drawing a distinction between architects and craftsmen here, but between architects who build the best buildings, and those who draw the best buildings. Considering his own disinterest in drawing and his limited ability to do so well, Loos is surely here connecting his own practice of architecture with the craftsman, proposing architecture as a form of art practice whose medium is the craft of building. 'The best draughtsman can be a bad architect, the best architect can be a bad draughtsman', proclaims Loos.<sup>26</sup> The diminutive role that Loos proposes for drawing is made clear when he notes that 'For the old masters, however, the drawing was merely a means of communicating with the craftsmen who were carrying out the work, just as the poet has to make himself understood through the written word'.<sup>27</sup> To demonstrate that he considers drawing only a means to the end of building, Loos extends the analogy, remarking that 'we are not, as yet, so cultureless that we teach a young boy poetry by means of calligraphy'.<sup>28</sup> These observations provide a point of connection between Loos's otherwise disparate ideas on the relationships between drawing and building, and ornament and building—just as drawing is a mechanism for describing a building, Loos views architectural form as a means towards the end of communicating an artistic idea through building. It is argued here that Loos proposes that creating a drawing or ornament as an end in itself is to circumvent the capacity of architecture to function as art, as 'every work of art possesses such strong internal laws that it can only appear in its own form'. This aligns closely with Robin Evan's notion of the distinct quality of architecture as art due to the fact that it is of the world and so is perceived differently to a sculpture or painting.<sup>29</sup> 'The realization in stone, iron and glass of an architectural drawing, taken literally, even though one would have to admit to the drawing as being a graphic work of art, is a horrifying sight; and there are many such graphic artists amongst architects', remarks Loos—'The mark of a building which is truly established is that it remains ineffective in two dimensions'.<sup>30</sup> Loos gives the example of how drawings of the Palazzo Pitti would fail as a competition entry despite being a very powerful space to experience, and concludes that 'it is the dashing draughtsman who rules today. It is no longer the craftsman's tools that create the forms, but the pencil'.

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<sup>24</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

<sup>25</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>26</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>27</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>28</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 105.

<sup>29</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, xxi.

<sup>30</sup> Loos, 'Architecture,' 106.

### Conclusion

Due to the requirement for them to open and close and to weatherproof and soundproof a building, there are comparatively greater functional demands on windows and doors than exist in relation to more static elements such as walls, floors and ceilings, and staircases, joinery, and fixtures. It is for these technical reasons that fewer attempts are made in my own built work to appropriate doors and windows into the sculptural composition of a building—particularly to the exterior—and so most are expressed as functional furnishings. However, with increasing experience and budgets, the sculptural articulation of windows and doors has appeared increasingly in my own work, as is evidenced by Composite House. By contrast, while Loos appears to have made progressive attempts to articulate windows and doors into the art realm of his buildings, he increasingly chose not to do so—instead treating these elements as functional, and signifying this role with contemporary or historical ornament. In light of the experience of my own design work, it seems reasonable to conclude that Loos's decision to do so was most likely due to the technical demands of windows and doors, and the inability of the technology available to him to convincingly articulate these components as art. Thus, the 'Architecture' essay—which derides architectural publishing and the teaching of architecture from books rather than through practice—connects Loos's own writing to his articulation of windows and doors, which is particularly grounded in practice-based experience. Considering Loos's articulation of windows and doors in an analysis of the 'Architecture' essay offers a deeper understanding of both Loos's writing and built work—rather than another set of contradictions between the two, as is assumed by much existing scholarship. The investigation set out in this chapter yields evidence that Loos, recognizing the unique issues of movement, reflection and transparency demanded by doors and windows, uses the 'Architecture' essay to clarify that it is only the deployment of 'applied art' in architecture to which he objects, rather than art per se.

## **Chapter Six** FUNCTION AND ART

While the 'Art and Architecture' essay of 1920 is widely understood as further evidence that Loos excluded architecture from the realm of art, the analysis of Loos's treatment of external form through the hypothesis of furnishings and sculptural elements provides an alternate reading of the essay that is more readily reconciled with Loos's built work. In these terms, the 'Art and Architecture' essay of 1920 can instead be understood as an attempt to distinguish more explicitly between art, applied art, and ornament. In this essay Loos seems to arrive at the notion of architecture's conflicting requirements to be both practical and useful, and confronting and challenging—and the projects that follow the 'Art and Architecture' essay demonstrate increasingly clear distinctions between the components of his buildings that Loos considers to be art, and those that he deems functional. Loos is thus understood as setting out a conception of architecture as both functional and artistic, but asserting the importance of separating the two roles, rather than combining them in the guise of 'applied art'—an explicit statement of the inherent problem of the commissioning process, a theme implied much earlier in 'The Story of the Poor Rich Man'.

### 6.1 External Form

In relation to Composite House, it is set out in the 'Architecture and Art' chapter that in order to suppress the perception of structure and function of external form it is necessary to articulate elevations as if they are hewn of a continuous and plastic material—as the autonomous expression of building materials and junctions between them will circumvent a reading of compositions at the scale of the whole building. Furthermore, an external building form can be more readily perceived as sculptural if it extends freely from interior to exterior, rather than reading as simply an enclosure for the internal spaces and forms. The exterior of the Müller House (1930) can be understood as a massive and planar, white, rectilinear, sculptural volume with incised openings. The development of this sculptural treatment of external form can be traced through Loos's work, particularly during the second and third decades in which he executed a large number of new-build houses. The use of ornamentation in the articulation of the external elevations of Loos's renovation projects can similarly be understood through the research by design, by reference to the found-object treatment of the buildings that form the sites of Composite House and the preceding and subsequent projects. In Loos's work, however, the hypothesis can also be extended to a number of his new-build projects, which also exhibit experimentation with the expression of external form that could be understood as furnishings.

The exterior of the Müller House can be understood as a massive and planar, white, rectilinear, sculptural volume within which the doors and windows appear as incised openings. Although simply a retaining wall to the driveway enclosing a storage space, the projection to the basement ground level of the north elevation forms part of this composition, but its blank



elevation and asymmetric positioning to the south elevation adds to its sculptural quality. The enclosure to the opposite side of the building forms the living room balcony and an enclosure to the basement wine cellar, and enhances the perception of the house as a sculptural object by extending beyond the main building line. As discussed in the 'Art and Ornament' chapter, this sculptural form continues into the interior in the form of plain white walls and ceilings, and is most clearly discerned in the living room, dining room, boudoir and hall, while to the rest of the house can only be observed in glimpses. Drawings document progressive alterations to the south elevation of the Müller House—some in response to planning requirements and others to internal arrangements, but all are variations on the design of a massive and planar solid, incised by window openings.<sup>1</sup>

Fig. 6.1.1: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The east and north elevations, on the left and right of the photograph respectively.

#### 6.1.1



<sup>1</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 48.

The notion of the exterior form of the Müller House as a sculptural object is to some degree an extrapolation of Van Duzer and Kleinman's description of the importance of visual perception of the Müller House as an object in space—'Everything is explicit, everything is on the surface ... The only lines that exist are the edges of the floors and ceilings, and the perimeter of the building envelope. The only measurements worth noting begin and end at the exposed faces of the cladding'.<sup>2</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman also to some degree advance an argument against a functionalist reading of the exterior, observing 'the hand of the architect is operating on the exterior', and noting that, 'These facades demonstrate a measured capacity for slack'.<sup>3</sup> However, Van Duzer and Kleinman propose this evidence in support of a reading of the exterior as 'clothing' of the otherwise unrelated interiors, describing the internal expression of the white building volume as if it were merely structural, and outlining the distinction of the treatment in the Müller House from general modernist ideas of expressing structure.<sup>4</sup>

Fig. 6.1.2: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. Close-up of the east elevation.

Fig. 6.1.3: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. North and east elevations.

Fig. 6.1.4: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. West and north elevations.

6.1.2



6.1.3



6.1.4



<sup>2</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 47. While Van Duzer and Kleinman propose that these manipulations are two-dimensional and aim to achieve symmetry, it is argued here that Loos's objective was to circumvent a reading of the elevation as an expression of the functional elements of the interior—particularly the staircase, which is more legible in earlier versions of the elevation.

<sup>4</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29. Van Duzer and Kleinman describe the complete concealment of two of the columns and the other two as being subsumed into composition of the living room, citing August Perret's lecture delivered at one-hundred-year anniversary of Helsinki University of Technology—'one who builds a fake column commits a

Similarly, Van Duzer and Kleinman seek to explain the asymmetric positioning of the rear terrace through the metaphor of a mask, rather than simply as an abstract composition resulting from accommodating the staircase between the terrace and the retaining wall to the garage.<sup>5</sup> Gravagnuolo also alludes to the possibility of understanding the Müller House as a sculptural form—describing the Müller House as a cubic volume, and noting the suspended ‘parallelepiped’ form of the balcony, the cut-out windows, and the solid parapets that extend the surfaces of walls.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Julius Posener comments that ‘the whole complex including the garage on the right side forms a dynamic composition’.<sup>7</sup> Conversely, Bock’s analysis of the exterior of the Müller House is more typical of most scholarship on Loos in seeking an underlying logic in order to resist an aesthetic reading—proposing that the east elevation starts from a line of symmetry about the centre of the dining room window,<sup>8</sup> and detecting a cross-axial proportioning system in relation to the south elevation, evidenced by the ‘set back at the left corner to have the staircase windows in the line of symmetry’.<sup>9</sup> Bock proposes the same symmetry exists in the north elevation, symmetrical about the centre of the living room doors, and mirroring his interpretation of the east elevation, he identifies a line of symmetry about the centre of the guest room window on the west elevation also.<sup>10</sup>

Fig. 6.1.5: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The north elevation, as viewed from the garden, showing the living room balcony clad in vegetation, the white balcony to the master bedroom above, and the walls forming the balustrade to the external staircase and the driveway retaining. From this view the external form of the building appears as an abstract composition of overlapping and stacked, rectangular volumes of a variety of sizes.

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crime’. It is speculated here that this may be the origin of the widespread misquotation of Loos’s *Ornament and Crime* as ‘ornament is a crime’.

<sup>5</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 51. Van Duzer and Kleinman to this point argue for the symmetry of the facades as evidence of the operation of the mask, only to here cite the asymmetry of the terrace as evidence of the mask also. While the argument espoused here concurs with Van Duzer in Kleinman in recognizing that Loos is motivated by visual concerns, Loos seems equally comfortable working with both symmetry and asymmetry.

<sup>6</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 201.

<sup>7</sup> Posener, ‘The Müller Villa,’ in *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, Girska and Hanzl, 51.

<sup>8</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 259.

<sup>9</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 260.

<sup>10</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 260.



6.1.5

It is notable that Gravagnuolo, like the vast majority of publications on Loos, excludes the west elevation—which is notably less compositional and more utilitarian than the others. This would at first seem inconsistent with the argument that existing analyses of Loos have attempted to appropriate his work into the modernist canon, as the elevation would support a functionalist reading more than the others. However, it is proposed here that the absence of photographs of this elevation is predominantly the consequence of an act of curation on the part of the architect, as Loos commissioned a photographer to travel to Prague to document the project in a particular way, and these images have been the dominant representation of the building ever since. Like most architectural photography, the Müller House is predominantly recorded as a finished object and in isolation from its surroundings. However, photographs showing the house during construction reveal its brick construction, and views from the house down the valley, to the castle, and of the surrounding traditional and prosperous neighbourhood of Stresovice.<sup>11</sup> These photographs reveal how the external form of the Müller House was informed by issues of privacy, views, and the design of an architectural object in space, all of which were very different to Loos's urban Viennese houses. Van Duzer and Kleinman explain the limited dissemination of photographs of the interior of the Müller House, remarking that 'Loos's exteriors were generally palatable to historians bent on demonstrating the homogeneity of the Modern Movement, and select views of his prismatic "boxes" were produced in several key publications. But the interiors were deemed anachronistic'.<sup>12</sup> Drawn representations of the Müller House exhibit slight variations that may represent the bias of the author in relation to the argument they are proposing, or simply inadequacies of the information available. There are minor discrepancies between the section published by Bock and those that are presented by Van Duzer and Kleinman, and Girsá and Hanzl, specifically the absence of the volume to the left-hand side of the roof enclosure.<sup>13</sup> This may simply have been omitted as it is not visible in photographic views of this elevation, or perhaps to perpetuate the notion that this is a functionalist modern exterior. Containing services, these volumes are in fact more 'functional' than any other elements of the exterior but due to their positioning are given no compositional visual role in Loos's exterior volume.

Fig. 6.I.6: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Ksandr, 140. Photograph by Parik, 1929. The living room, dining room, anteroom and boudoir during construction.

Fig. 6.I.7: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Ksandr, 28. Photograph by Parik, 1929. The Müller House during construction.

<sup>11</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 351.

Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 30–31.

Girsá and Hanzl, *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, 1, 3.

<sup>12</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 16

<sup>13</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 259.

Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 86.

Girsá and Hanzl, *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, 6.

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6.1.6

6.1.7

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Many of the compositional issues discussed in the preceding chapters, with regard to the design of the interior, are equally applicable to the understanding of the external form advanced here. However, the exterior of the Müller House is also to some degree a direct consequence of the planning process, and the manner in which it was negotiated by both Loos and his client. The extreme wealth of Loos's client for the Müller House is likely to have had a major impact on the progress of the planning consent,<sup>14</sup> and the influence of Müller on the appeal to the Province President should not be underestimated. The success of the appeal seems otherwise inconceivable in light of the fact that work was not halted in spite of an order that it was illegal. Under any other circumstances one of Loos's clients would have been very unlikely to risk the financial consequences of proceeding without consent in place, and the fact that the building was already largely completed while the consent was being considered is very likely to have influenced its success. The appearance of the house in the landscape as a one-to-one model of the application drawings would have significantly aided the planners in visualizing the unorthodox design, and so is likely to have assisted the passage of the application. The lack of speculative production in architecture by comparison to other art forms—due to the scale and consequent cost of the medium—is one limitation on innovation by comparison to other art media. However, the wealth of the Müllers made this approach viable, and the council may also have seen it as futile to resist the development in its entirety, due to the fact that this client clearly had almost unlimited resources to pursue the application. Unthinkable for clients without the Müllers' extreme wealth, the project was ostensibly completed at risk of being condemned—as it is documented that, 'Just four weeks after the permit was officially granted, the building was closed, the partition walls were under construction, and the installation of the heating, sewage and gas was nearing completion'.<sup>15</sup>

The progress of the Müller House through the planning process is discussed at length in the existing literature, but only Van Duzer and Kleinman acknowledge that this may have implicated the design of the external form. Like most other publications on Loos's Müller House, Gravagnuolo's monograph relays the 'anecdote by the architect Willy Hoffman in which he recalls that "ten planning commissions rejected the project, because it did not take the rather mediocre neighbouring houses into account, and only on the eleventh attempt did it receive official approval"'.<sup>16</sup> Schezen concurs that 'Loos's original scheme for the house was rejected because the board felt the exterior was too austere and not contextual', and notes as if it were a matter of fact that 'It took eleven appeals to the board (from January to December 1929) to get the drawings approved'.<sup>17</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman point out that this is a widespread falsehood that can be traced to 'a 1930 newspaper review of the villa in the Prager Tagblatt, [in which] the architect Willy Hoffman reported that "it is incomprehensible why ten building commissions,

<sup>14</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 22. Van Duzer and Kleinman note that civil engineering firm of Müller and Kapsa employed nearly ten thousand people, but do not discuss the impact of this on the progress of the project.

<sup>15</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29.

<sup>16</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 201.

<sup>17</sup> Schezen, *Architecture, 1903–1932*, 142.

apparently out of a consideration for a highly mediocre neighbourhood, rejected the building ten times and only after the eleventh appeal to the commission ... was it possible to push the permit through the building office”.<sup>18</sup> Van Duzer and Kleiman also note that this is only one of ‘the pantheon of popular Loosian anecdotes’, and that the house was neither refused permission on aesthetic grounds, nor is there any evidence of ten appeals. Referring to the austere Germanic stereotype of Loos, Van Duzer and Kleinman remark that ‘The popularity of this account no doubt stems from its compatibility with the image of Loos’.

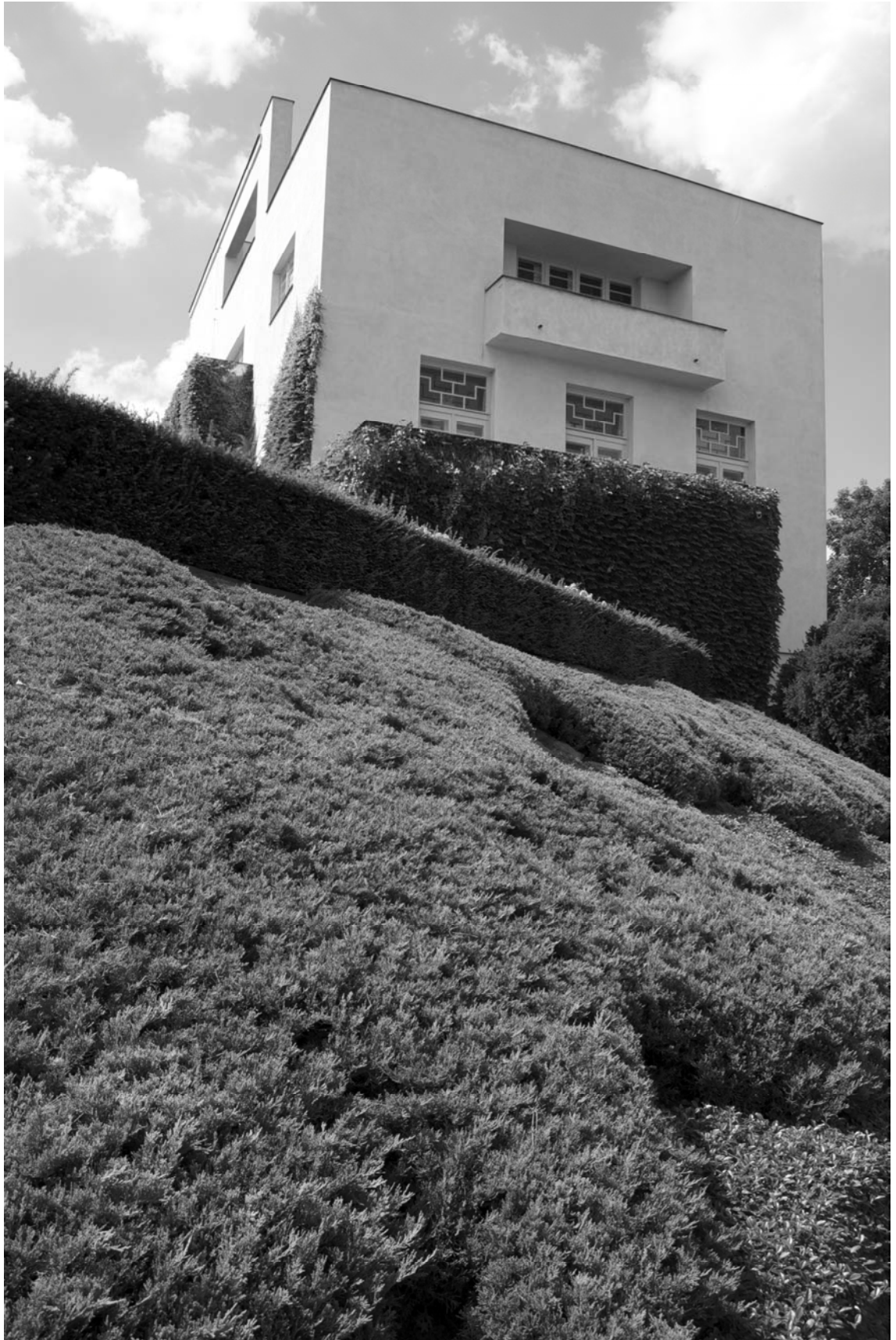
Similarly, while many commentators have posited theoretical explanations for the stepping complexity of the Müller House, only Van Duzer and Kleinman recognize that this and the building’s striking verticality on a sprawling site, is at least as much simply a function of the requirement that the building meet planning restrictions requiring that it cover no more than twenty percent of the site and be no more than two storeys in height. Van Duzer and Kleinman also recognize that Müller’s powerful position as a client may well have influenced the planning process and that he dealt directly with the city officials in obtaining the approvals.<sup>19</sup> With reference to the planning requirement that the building not be more than two storeys, Van Duzer and Kleinman note ‘Loos’s rather devious system of labeling plans’ as a first floor with an uninhabited roof terrace above, and ground floor and various ‘basement’ levels below.

Fig. 6.1.8: Müller House, Loos, 1930. Photograph by Tozer, 2009. The north elevation viewed from the bottom of the garden, showing the verticality of the house in relation to the size of the site, in order to comply with planning restrictions on its footprint.

<sup>18</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 28.

<sup>19</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 26.





6.1.8

In Loos's work, the treatment of a building exterior as a white, massive and planar surface or volume first appears in the front elevation of the Café Museum project of 1899. The windows of the café continue the proportion of the elevations of the building above, but are articulated as furnishings to the voids in this volume. The Steiner House is the first occurrence in Loos's domestic work of a white massive and planar exterior elevation, but this treatment is limited to the rear of the building. However, the regular articulation of the windows of the Steiner House gives this elevation the appearance of a pared back building, and so thwarts a reading of it as a sculptural composition like the Moller and Müller Houses. The broadly contemporaneous Goldman and Salatsch building of 1909–1911 demonstrates the same pared-back white massive and planar elevational treatment at a much larger scale. The Horner House of 1912 also features white massive and planar elevations and the asymmetric distribution of windows to the front elevation starts to make a sculptural reading more tenable.

Fig. 6.1.9: Café Museum, Loos, 1899, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 66. The white street elevation of the Café Museum recalls the marble wainscoting treatment to the interior walls of the living room walls of the Müller House.

Fig. 6.1.10: Steiner House, Loos, 1910, from Bock, 139. Rear elevation.

Fig. 6.1.11: Horner House, Loos, 1912, from Bock, 165. Side elevation.

6.1.9

6.1.10

6.1.11

The Scheu House of 1912–13 also features white massive and planar volumes, but reverts to regular window positioning. The asymmetric distribution of the building volumes, however, gives the Scheu house a sculptural appearance at least equal to the Horner House. However, unlike the Moller House (1928) and Müller House, the composition of the Scheu House building form is expressed as the stepping of a single volume, rather than as a layering and interpenetration of volumes. The Mandl Villa of 1916 combines eccentric positioning with a massive and planar building form. The use of classical ornament on the exterior of the Rosenfeld House of 1917 can be explained by the fact that this project was a reconstruction and interior fit-out, and the same is true of the traditional appearance of the Duschnitz Villa. Loos's terraced housing scheme of 1920 was flat-roofed and the dividing walls between the houses were articulated as separate planes of brick, distinct from the timber cladding of the elevations. The traditional windows are quite distinct from the overall building forms, and can once again be understood a product of cultural craft furnishing the elevations. The building volume of the Rufer House of 1922 is articulated convincingly as a single massive and planar solid, incised by the window openings—but is finished with overhanging eaves and a pitched pediment, and a classical frieze is attached to the elevation. In the terms set out above, the latter features can be understood as external furnishings of the sculptural composition.

Fig. 6.1.12: Scheu House, Loos, 1913, from Bock, 167. Rear elevation.

Fig. 6.1.13: Mandl Villa, Loos, 1916, from Bock, 195. Street elevation.

Fig. 6.1.14: Rufer House, Loos, 1922, from Bock, 19. Street elevation.

6.1.12

6.1.13

6.1.14

Gravagnuolo acknowledges that the Müller House is to some extent a reworking of the Moller House (1928), noting similarities in the cut-out windows, distribution and structure of interior, [and] the solid parapets that extend the surfaces of walls.<sup>20</sup> However, Gravagnuolo records a number of particular divergences from the Moller House, namely the formal coherence of the exterior of the Müller House by comparison to the frontality of the Moller House. Sapák's assertion that the rear elevation of the Steiner House is Loos's 'purest' and 'the decisive moment in Loos's creative work',<sup>21</sup> supports the consideration of the project as part of the trajectory leading to the external form of the Müller House. There is indeed a striking resemblance between the east elevation of the Müller House and the front elevation of the Moller House, where a first-floor balcony projects from the cubic volume of the house. This device can also be traced to the Tzara House (1926) where it is deployed in reverse, taking the form of recessed balconies. As with the Moller and Müller Houses, the recessed rectilinear balcony to the upper level of the Tzara House reads as a manipulation of the sculptural building form, rather than as a furnishing of this volume, as is the case with the windows. The recessed balcony to the lower levels is chamfered and reads as an inversion of a traditional bay window.

Fig. 6.I.15: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Bock, 228. Street elevation.

Fig. 6.I.16: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Bock, 237. Street elevation.

6.I.15

6.I.16

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<sup>20</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 201.

<sup>21</sup> Sapák, 'Adolf Loos,' in *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, Girsá and Hanzl, 64. Sapák continues that, 'Its impact on subsequent events was bigger than any of his other work. Steiner's villa occupies the same place in the final architectural creation as 'Ornament and Crime' does in Loos's general thinking ... Additionally the garden front represents an entirely new canon of proportion which 'startled' Loos himself for some time'. Sapák traces this treatment through the lineage of the Moller House, Moissi House, and the house for Josephine Baker.

The projecting balcony to the north elevation of the bedroom level of the Müller House also recalls the front elevation of the Moller House (1928) in a truncated form, while the recess above it is a more exaggerated version of the slightly recessed section of elevation that surrounds the windows above the balcony of the Moller House. This deep recess also recalls the street elevation of the Tzara House (1926), and so this element of the Müller House could be seen as a hybrid of this element of the two preceding projects. The street elevation of the Tzara House of 1925–26 is clearly articulated as two volumes, the rendered upper levels and the brick volume of the lower levels. Due to its terraced setting, one side elevation is absent and the other is articulated as visually neutral. The rear of the building, however, is completely rendered and stepped, and a corner of the ‘covered terrace’ is chamfered. Both the stepping and the openings to the covered terrace are atypical of Loos’s articulation of his building exteriors, but the form bears a strong resemblance to the sculptural volumes of many of his interiors. This observation also supports a reading of the lower levels of the Goldman and Salatsch building (1911) in this way.

While the Müller House is the result of the serial development of design ideas developed through previous houses, Loos’s drawings of large-scale projects, both pre-dating and post-dating the Müller House, frequently feature historical quotation. This is often cited as evidence that Loos considered ornament appropriate for public buildings but not for houses, and it has been argued that the blank facades of his houses operate as a mask to the public behind which the inhabitants can conduct their private lives, while the public buildings communicate their function to the public realm.<sup>22</sup> However, this seems inconsistent with the fact that historical quotation also appears in drawings of Loos’s un-built houses, and occasionally appears on the elevations of constructed houses. The latter generally only occurs in a very reduced form, and as isolated surface ornament applied to otherwise rectilinear abstract sculptural forms.<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to note that if one excludes the ornamentation and pitched roof, drawings of the un-built Konstandt House of 1919 bear a striking resemblance to the rear elevation of the earlier Steiner House, which was built but unadorned and flat-roofed.<sup>24</sup> Loos may well have prepared this as a tactical drawing to convince the planning department of the appropriateness of the

<sup>22</sup> Schezen, *Architecture 1903–1932*, 142. Schezen notes that this ‘has been the subject of numerous essays and continual scholarship’.

Beatriz Colomina, *Sexuality and Space* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996) x–x. Colomina, *Sexuality and Space*, 73, 79, 93–94. Extending from Loos’s interest in theatre and fashion respectively, Colomina portrays the inhabitants of Loos’s houses as ‘actors’, and describes the elevations as a ‘mask’.

Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995). Wigley proposes that Loos’s comments on fashion in his essays can be applied directly to an understanding of the design of his buildings.

Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 44. Despite setting out to as much as possible document the Müller House in a neutral manner, Van Duzer and Kleinman also proceed to argue for fashion as a metaphor for Loos’s architecture. ‘The Charge of the Partially Obscured’ essay proposes that Loos was not a ‘proto-functionalist’ because of the attitude that he ‘reserved for the wrapped body’ and seem to infer that Loos selected clothing as a topic that resisted functionalist analysis as a way of explaining his architecture.

<sup>23</sup> A classical frieze features on the otherwise unornamented elevation of the Rufer House.

<sup>24</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 240.

scale and proportion of the house, before removing the classical applied ornament. In addition to tactical moves in Loos's drawings, there are also aspects of a number of Loos's buildings that seem likely to be the result of the architect negotiating the planning process.

Another example of Loos's likely maneuvering in relation to planning issues is the articulation of the windows of the Mandl Villa (1918), where a white perimeter is incorporated to some of the windows, the rest of which are expressed as voids in a solid. This only occurs to the street elevation, suggesting that it might have been the result of negotiations with the planning commission. It is also speculated here that the recessed, chamfered balcony to the lower levels of the Tzara House may have been a device for appeasing the planners, as in a drawn elevation it could of course be very readily misread as a traditional projecting bay.

Fig. 6.1.17: Konstandt House, Loos, 1919, from Bock, 227. Photograph by M. Gerlach Jr, 1930.

Fig. 6.1.18: Steiner House, Loos, 1910, from Bock, 139. Rear elevation.

6.1.17

6.1.18

Loos's designs for country houses also illuminate the central hypothesis because, unlike his urban houses, the exterior forms generally reference vernacular building form, and so operate as functional furnishings in their entirety, rather than attempting to operate as sculpture. It is probable that this genre simply required more practice by Loos in order to achieve the same level of mastery as his urban projects, but it also seems likely from Loos's writing that he conceived of the balance between building and architecture differently in these projects—a product of craft inflected by moments of art, rather than an art object furnished by the products of craft.<sup>25</sup> The Spanner House of 1924 features unusual vertically striped cladding to its exterior, zig-zag motifs to window shutters, and a projecting window bay. However, if one excludes the shutters and bay window—which can be understood as furnishings, or ornamented elements of function within Loos's understanding of architecture as outlined above—the building can be understood as three interlocking rectilinear volumes. However, it is perhaps the un-built Josephine Baker House of 1927 that most closely resembles the Müller House as a massive and planar solid with incised openings.

This casts the Spanner House alongside Loos's urban houses and distinct from his other country houses, as a sculptural form or art object, furnished with ornamented functional components. The Spanner House also incorporates a 'plant pot for covering the façade with Japanese ivy',<sup>26</sup> a device that is repeated in a number of Loos projects, including the Müller House. Loos may have used the planting simply to blend his building with the landscape, but it is postulated here that Loos considered the vegetation as another cladding material, intending for the ivy to be trained and manicured to cover only certain planes and volumes to reinforce the composition of his building forms. While the planting does not seem to have been maintained in this way, it is clear that the rendered lower volume of the Spanner House could be more clearly distinguished from the other two volumes by doing so. The same could be said of the volume that encloses the basement storage and ground-floor living room terrace to the northeast of the Müller House. The east elevation of the Müller House is also adorned with climbing plants, and it is mooted that Loos may have intended for this to be maintained so as to define this elevation as a separate plane, distinct from the main building volume. This would reinforce the unique articulation of the opening to the roof terrace, and the projection of the dining room volume that projects through it.

Fig. 6.I.19: Spanner House, Loos, 1924, from Schezen, 121.

Fig. 6.I.20: Josephine Baker House, Loos, 1927, from Rukschcio and Schachel, 240.

Fig. 6.I.21: Sugar Refinery, Loos, 1919, from Sarnitz, 64.

<sup>25</sup> Loos, 'Heimatkunst,' in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 110.

<sup>26</sup> Bock, *Works and Projects*, 224–227.

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Given the observed widespread bias for scale as an indicator of architectural significance, it is curious that a large sugar refinery project that Loos completed fairly early in his career is very seldom published.<sup>27</sup> Contemporary photographs make the project appear largely inconsistent with Loos's other built work, but it should be noted that the deterioration and consequent general absence of the original white render finish has revealed the brickwork and lintels, giving the elevations a very different appearance to the original stark design. The scale of the project is particularly remarkable given that it was constructed during World War One, a time during which his other commissions consisted of apartment interiors, a canteen and alterations to a house. Discussion of the project may have been suppressed because it does not sit comfortably with the widespread portrayal of Loos as an architect who created small projects of great significance, or the widespread claim that Loos considered ornament appropriate in the public domain. The Goldman and Salatsch building (1911) in Michaelerplatz is often cited to support the latter claim, pointing to the pared-back elevation of the apartments and the decorative façade to the commercial levels. In line with the analysis proposed here, however, it is argued that the building could be more consistently understood as a sculptural building form—the massive and planar white volume—furnished by decorative building components such as the columns, cornices and roof form.

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<sup>27</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 161.



## 6.2 'Art and Architecture'

While it is in the 'Architecture' essay that Loos sets out that the notion of applied art confuses architecture's components of art and function—as set out in the 'Art and Crime' chapter—it is in this chapter argued that Loos's refinements to these distinctions in the 'Art and Architecture' essay emerge to address the conception, production and reception of the external forms of his buildings. While various aspects of Loos's articulation of the external form of the Müller House can be traced from the beginning of his built work, it is not until after the 'Architecture' essay that they are combined and deployed as a consistent design strategy. Loos's houses of the 1920s utilize external form as a large-scale sculptural composition that is furnished with various ornamental and functional components, usually in the form of windows and doors, as outlined in the 'Art and Crime' chapter. 'Art and Architecture' was written in 1920, after the completion of a number of Loos's house projects, and provides insights into the nature of the distinctions between the terms 'ornament', 'art', and 'applied art' to which Loos refers in 'The Poor Little Rich Man', 'Ornament and Crime', and 'Architecture'. While 'Art and Architecture' similarly deals at length with the notion of 'applied art', the essay differs significantly from the preceding 'Architecture' essay in distinguishing between architecture conceived of as 'applied art', and architecture as 'art' per se. While this is to some extent a response to the reception of the 'Architecture' essay, the built work of the intervening decade suggests increasing clarity of Loos's own conception of the terminology.

'The effect of works of genius on their contemporaries is not one of beauty, but of terror', states Loos in 'Art and Architecture', continuing that, 'They are not destined for our generation. But ordinary people have the right to surround themselves with objects they find beautiful, for they have need of such objects'.<sup>28</sup> Loos seems to be contrasting the confronting and challenging nature of art, with the reaffirming experience of ornament, particularly with regard to furniture, as he makes explicit in the earlier 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay of 1900. However, Loos does not seem to be proposing a divide between art and architecture, but rather defining architecture as composed of both art and function. 'Art exists—the future. Industry exists—the present. But industrial art, applied art does not exist', Loos clarifies.<sup>29</sup> Loos is not arguing for the consignment of architecture to one category or the other, but that its two aspects are quite distinct and should be not combined. Where Loos's Secessionist contemporaries were applying ornament to the surfaces of their buildings, Loos proposed that a building should perform quite separately its roles as a work of art and an object of use. This idea is fairly explicit when Loos links his conception of art to his notion of ornamentation appropriate to the lifespan of an object, declaring that, 'It is industry that produces the objects we use and wear out ... But a work of art should not be worn out by use. It is eternal. It should not be put to practical use so as not to lose its value. It should have the time it needs to fulfill its mission. It should last until such time as, by

<sup>28</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' in *On Architecture*, ed. Adolf Opel and Daniel Opel, 139.

<sup>29</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 139.

continually being seen, it has imposed itself on mankind'.<sup>30</sup> Analyzed in isolation, this statement has been generally understood as a statement of Loos's belief in the separation of art and architecture, but pursuing the hypothesis proposed here, it can be argued that Loos is in essence proposing that architecture is the aspect of building that is not concerned with use. Reading the essay more broadly, in relation to the general public reception of Loos's work, it is even more difficult to contend that the statement is not referring to architecture, when he continues that art 'will never become ugly because it has never been beautiful'.<sup>31</sup> Loos's statement is in essence a defence of his 'ugly' buildings as art, and an attack on the Secessionist buildings as applied art.<sup>32</sup> This interpretation resonates with the discussion of the influence of planning regulation on external form, as set out generally in Part One, and discussed in relation to the Müller House in the first section of this chapter.

'After it has been used, a work of industrial art will be abandoned and mocked by posterity ... Works of industrial art go out of fashion', declares Loos.<sup>33</sup> While Loos uses fashion analogies for architecture, it is here argued that this statement should not be seen as arguing that architecture is a form of industrial art. Loos uses references to fashion in relation to aspects of his buildings that are craft-based products of cultural production, not in relation to the art capacity of architecture. Loos uses the term 'industrial art' interchangeably with 'applied art', and is clear that he does not position his own architecture in this realm. When Loos remarks that 'people with antimodern tastes ... the back-markers of humanity ... regret the passing of times when objects of everyday use were still works of art', he is not suggesting that this was historically the case and that he proposes a change, but on the contrary that this was never the case and that those who believe this 'are mere fools'.<sup>34</sup> Loos contrasts these misguided but harmless historicists, with 'The dangerous ones ... who want to bring back old times by demanding modern art in objects of everyday use'.<sup>35</sup> Instead, Loos proposes that objects of everyday use were not historically ornamented with the art of 'old times', but that their ornamentation was the consequence of cultural craft, an unconscious product of the time in which they were created. Similarly, when Loos proclaims that 'Architecture was an art', it is argued here that he is not proposing that it now should not be—rather that it should continue to be so, but that the application of art to functional buildings does not make them art. Referring to the applied art approach of his contemporaries, Loos proposes that architecture 'nowadays it is no more an art than tattooing or shoemaking', arguing that this is because 'works of architecture are made to be used and worn out, they are made to please contemporary society'.<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, Loos proposes that 'a work of art is destined for the future'<sup>37</sup>—the art role of architecture endures in spite of the continual obsolescence of its functional aspect.

<sup>30</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 139.

<sup>31</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 139.

<sup>32</sup> Sarnitz, *Architect, Critic, Dandy*, 37. Loos's Goldman and Salatsch building on Michaelerplatz, for example, 'was represented as an eyesore for the Vienna press' and generally 'pilloried'.

<sup>33</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 139.

<sup>34</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 139.

<sup>35</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 140.

<sup>36</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 140.

In the 'Art and Architecture' essay Loos proclaims that 'I am an architect myself and the struggle to reach this truth was painful. But I have finished struggling and today I am a happy man. I know I am a craftsman whose task is to serve mankind and the present'.<sup>38</sup> While the widespread view concludes that with this statement, Loos is resigning himself to the fact that architecture is not a form of art, the hypothesis proposed here suggests that Loos is instead simply recognizing the dual role of the architect to provide both the functional building and a piece of creative work. This art aspect of the work of an architect originates from the creative agenda of the architect, and is quite unrelated to delivering the requirements of the commissioning client—'But the very fact that I know that art exists. I know about art. I know that it cannot be created on demand, that it exists within itself'. His reference to his own painful struggle is posited here as a reference to his development of this understanding through his design work in practice. Loos's reference to the fact that art 'cannot be created on demand' can be seen as a reference to not only the compromising reliance of architects upon commissions from clients, but also the way in which factors such as the planning and building control process constrain the production of architecture by comparison to other art forms.

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<sup>37</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 140.

<sup>38</sup> Loos, 'Art and Architecture,' 141.

## Conclusion

External building form is exclusively treated sculpturally in my own design work—expressed as a series of volumes and planes of various materials. It is only in the articulation of some of the existing building volumes that constitute the sites that functional detail is expressed, giving them the same status as the elements of the interior that are deemed furnishings. A similar divide exists in Loos's work, where the Müller House appears to be articulated entirely compositionally as art in Loos's terms, but the exteriors of earlier refurbishment projects are generally left unaltered as ornamented functional containers for his interior projects. However, Loos's treatment of external form differs in that he experimented with the articulation of new building form as both an art object and as a functional element, and with the application of contained ornament to otherwise unornamented sculptural building forms. My research by design in practice suggests that the particular qualities of external form have a role in determining the way Loos articulated his building forms as either art or functional element. Namely, that external form is inherently perceived in the context of surrounding buildings and landscape, and is consequently subject to regulation and controls that are not exercised upon the other—predominantly interior—building components, which are entirely within the control of the architect and client. External form is clearly the building component featured in this research that is most influenced by regulatory control, through the planning consent process. This observation is central to the pairing of external form with the 'Art and Architecture' essay, which discusses the affronting experience of observing art, and questions the assumption that art should be beautiful. There is considerable consensus that in 'Art and Architecture' Loos sets out a clear statement of the differences between the two disciplines, but this is again problematic in relation to Loos's own work in practice. Building upon the analyses of the preceding chapters, the essay can instead be understood, through his contemporaneous articulation of external building form, as continued clarification of the particular qualities of architecture as art. From this standpoint, it is here posited that Loos further refines his distinctions between art, applied art, ornament and function, in order to address the challenges of thresholds, junctions and weatherproofing—all of which are presented by the design of external form. While various aspects of Loos's articulation of the external form of the Müller House can be traced from the beginning of his built work, it is not until after the 'Art and Architecture' essay that they are combined and deployed as a consistent design strategy.

## **Chapter Seven**      **ART AND EDUCATION**

Like the other building elements, space—although less tangible in physical terms—possesses specific characteristics that affect the manner in which it is articulated. The ‘Architecture and Art’ chapter sets out how this articulation affects the perception of space in Composite House as either sculptural or simply functional, furnishing the sculptural arrangement of other elements. Fundamentally, this analysis reveals that space functions sculpturally where the arrangement of physical building components serves to define a space in order for it to elicit an emotional response—whereas space assumes the status of a furnishing when it conversely operates either as simply a functional enclosure, or in service of other building components in order to facilitate a sculptural reading of them. In Composite House, sculptural space is only partially enclosed physically and instead is given shape through changes of floor and ceiling level, and material and lighting. These characteristics and mechanisms are used to structure the investigation into the handling of space in the Müller House (1930) and Loos’s other projects.

### **7.1 Space**

While the widespread conception of Loos as a proto-functionalist places great importance on the *Raumplan*, it is important to note that Loos never uses the term, or even refers to space explicitly in his essays. Consequently, this prevailing hypothesis is based entirely upon observation of Loos’s built work. By contrast, the alternative hypothesis proposed here—that Loos understands architecture as composed of discrete elements of art and function—is tested by examining the changes in Loos’s writing that occur contemporaneously with the most pronounced period of change in the spatial resolution of his projects. While a lineage for some of the more perfunctory spatial arrangements of the Müller House can be traced through Loos’s early apartment and commercial interior projects, the Müller House contains a number of unusual spatial arrangements that have their origin in the houses of the twelve years preceding its completion. This period clearly overlaps with the ‘Art and Architecture’ essay and the buildings that sit alongside its analysis in relation to a discussion of external form in the ‘Function and Art’ chapter. However, there is a stronger correlation of innovations in the spatial arrangements of his buildings and the ‘Ornament and Education’ essay of 1924, which represents something of a watershed in Loos’s treatment of space. It is argued here that it is in this essay that Loos subtly amends his notion of architecture as a composition of elements of both art and function to encompass space—as either contributing to the confronting, challenging or otherwise emotive qualities of his buildings, or simply forming functional enclosures respectively. The former emerges in the projects that immediately precede the ‘Ornament and Education’ essay, and become more pronounced and developed in the projects that follow, including the Müller House.

While each of the interior spaces of the Müller House operates autonomously to some degree, it is argued that the spaces in the building can also be understood collectively—and that they are located within a single spatial ordering system prescribed by the large-scale, white building volume that constitutes the external form and a number of the wall and ceiling planes. In these terms, the space of the dining room, living room and boudoir can be read as a single open-plan space defined by the vertical and horizontal planes of the large-scale building volume, but divided into distinct zones by changes in ceiling and floor levels, and variations in the material palette. It could be argued that the zones of the living room are defined by the unfixed furniture, but this analysis could really only be applied to this room, as all the other rooms of the house are either so small that their occupation is singular in function, or the furniture is built in. Furthermore, the use of furniture to define functions within an open-plan space is an almost universal device in modern architecture, and Loos's reliance upon this is actually far less pronounced than most, as his rooms are loosely divided into zones by small-scale architectural moves—in the floors, walls, ceilings, joinery, fixtures and fittings—as outlined in the preceding chapters. Regardless, the unfixed furniture of the Müller House is articulated as distinct from the building and so it is argued that it is unsustainable to read much significance into its distribution, particularly in light of the observation that its arrangement was relatively fluid.

Fig. 7.1.1: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Bock, 262. Floor plan of basement levels showing perfunctory enclosures of different functions.

Fig. 7.1.2: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Bock, 262. Floor plan showing the open-plan living, dining and boudoir spaces, and an arrangement of the unfixed furnishings.

7.1.1

7.1.2

Some versions of the plans of the children's playroom show a wall separating a toilet in the corner of the children's playroom,<sup>1</sup> and this space and the children's bedroom each containing one bed and one desk. While this spatial arrangement might seem to explain from a functional perspective the position of this single window on the southern elevation, this arrangement does not appear to be original—and so would support a compositional explanation of the window opening in relation to the sculptural external form as outlined above. At a larger spatial scale, the site for the Müller House is very sensitive as it can be viewed, and has views, from all sides—to and from the affluent neighbourhood of detached houses, and Prague Castle. However, while the site is particularly prominent, the fact that it is an affluent neighbourhood is typical of Loos's work. The placement of the summer breakfast room and dark room prevents overlooking of the terrace from the neighbouring properties up the hill, while the high-level walls to portions of the sides of the outdoor space provide privacy from the properties to each side. The low walls to the remainder of the terrace afford views over the valley, back towards the centre of Prague.

Fig. 7.1.3: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Bock, 263. The floor plan of the bedroom level shows the children's rooms on the top left, divided into two zones, one of which opens onto a balcony.

Fig. 7.1.4: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Bock, 263. The top-floor plan, showing the partially enclosed roof terrace.

7.1.3

7.1.4

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<sup>1</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 612.

Ksandr is typical in that while recognizing ‘the villa’s status as an important milestone in the artistic and philosophical development of the first half of the twentieth century’, he dismisses the formal development of the house as ‘classicising modernism of the inter-war period’ and instead emphasizes the important contribution of the *Raumplan* of the house to modernism.<sup>2</sup> There is widespread agreement on this point, Schezen similarly remarking that, ‘The Müller House is the most developed example of Loos’s notion of *Raumplan*’.<sup>3</sup> Considered as part of a Modernist trajectory, Loos’s spatial design is widely viewed in functional terms—Gravagnuolo, for example, describes the use of top-light from roof glazing as ‘not just a simple technical device ... but an authentic spatial invention’. The notion that an architectural device might be significant for its visual effect seems abhorrent to Gravagnuolo, who then proceeds with a description of the use of changes of level to define spaces, and the resulting glimpsed views between them.<sup>4</sup> Gravagnuolo summarizes the general spatial distribution of the Müller house as services on the ground floor, a daytime zone on the first floor, and a night-time zone on the second floor. The argument proposed here—that Loos had an emotional conception of the design of space derived from his previous built work—could be seen to extend, however, from Gravagnuolo’s recognition that the Müller House is a ‘calculated and scenic spatial sequence’, and the project in which ‘his way of thinking about space achieves its most mature expression’. ‘The *Raumplan*, is developed in the Müller House to its highest level of complexity and refinement’,<sup>5</sup> concludes Gravagnuolo, quoting Loos as writing ‘the year before that the only “great revolution in the field of architecture [is] the solution of the plan in space”’.<sup>6</sup>

Fig. 7.1.5: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Van Duzer and Kleinman, 80, 82. This exploded axonometric drawing shows the spatial ordering of all levels of the house. Some of the spaces, like those on the basement level, appear to be straightforward enclosures of distinct functions, while others, particularly the open-plan spaces of the dining and living level exhibit more complex spatial characteristics.

<sup>2</sup> Ksandr, ‘Contribution of Karel Lhota,’ in *Reconstruction of Villa Müller*, Girska and Hanzl, 60–61.

<sup>3</sup> Schezen, *Architecture 1903–1932*, 142.

<sup>4</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 202–203.

<sup>5</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 201.

<sup>6</sup> Gravagnuolo, *Adolf Loos*, 201–202.



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Van Duzer and Kleinman similarly describe the Müller House as a series of ‘discrete spatial episodes’,<sup>7</sup> noting that ‘each spatial element of the Raumplan was articulated as an autonomous tectonic unit’.<sup>8</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman also describe the spatial distribution of the house in terms of two distinct types of occupation—one static and one roving—and discuss these by comparison to Le Corbusier’s boxer, and by analogy to a stage performance.<sup>9</sup> The static occupation proposed by Van Duzer and Kleinman is supposedly defined by ‘simple geometric footprints, distinct cladding materials, stabilizing room-specific symmetries, classical proportions, distinct sectional properties, individualized fenestration, bounded ceiling planes, and thresholds marking the point of entry’, and they claim that the furniture supports the static and discrete spatial character of each room. Van Duzer and Kleinman also claim that Loos’s drawings of the house ignore the terrain of the site,<sup>10</sup> but it is noted here that the terrain is in fact recognized in the form of dotted lines on the elevations, and that the entire distribution of the levels and spatial arrangement of the house reflects its setting.

Fig. 7.1.6: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Bock, 261. This lateral section shows, from top to bottom, the summer breakfast room, boudoir and anteroom on the left, and the dark room and dining room on the right.

#### 7.1.6

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<sup>7</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 39. Despite the supposed single voice of this book, this statement seems somewhat inconsistent with the previous essay and suggests that Van Duzer and Kleinman may have individually authored each of the essays. This metaphoric analysis extrapolates from statements on theatre made in Loos’s essays and lectures, and as such seems at odds with the authors’ stated intention to refocus scholarship on documentation of the architectural object.

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#### 7.1.7

Fig. 7.1.7: Müller House, Loos, 1930, from Bock, 260. The longitudinal section shows the discrete enclosures of many of the rooms, and the spatial complexity of other spaces, which are open plan and exhibit changes of floor and ceiling level, and blurring of thresholds.

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<sup>10</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 51.

A number of elements of the spatial complexity of the Müller House can be traced through Loos's earlier projects. Between the lower hall, dining area and music salon of the Rufer House (1922), views are framed through openings formed by massive columns and low boxings—just as is the case with the walls that separate the dining room, living room and staircase in the Müller House. The Mandl House of 1917–18 features an open-plan space zoned into a music room and dining space by a change of level, in a similar manner to the dining room and living room of the Müller House. The Mandl House (1918) also incorporates a galleried space overlooking the hall, a spatial device analogous to the relationship between the boudoir and living area in the Müller House. The split-level arrangement of the Moller House (1928), with low walls forming guarding to steps, very closely resembles the Müller House boudoir.

Fig. 7.1.8: Rufer House, Loos, 1922, from Bock, 220. Views are permitted between the dining room, music salon and lower hall, by the massive and planar columns and portions of wall seen dividing this floor plan.

Fig. 7.1.9: Mandl House, Loos, 1918, from Bock, 196. To the centre of the bottom of this plan, steps can be seen loosely dividing the music and dining areas of the open-plan space.

7.1.8

7.1.9

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#### 7.1.10

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#### 7.1.11

Fig. 7.1.10: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Bock, 239. The section reveals a similar range of spatial typologies to those observed in the Müller House.

Fig. 7.1.11: Moller House, Loos, 1928, from Bock, 240. To the bottom right of the plan, the arrangement of split levels and built-in seating is a clear precursor of the Müller House boudoir.

There are a number of particularly striking similarities between the spatial distribution of the living and dining areas of the Tzara House (1926) and Müller House. Both incorporate an elongated living room, featuring extensive glazing along one side of its length, a centrally positioned door to a terrace, a fireplace to one end, and extensive views through to a raised dining area. In the Tzara House, the boundary between the living and dining rooms is open from floor to ceiling, but like the Müller House, views between the two spaces are framed by massive and planar surrounds that wrap and step around the room—albeit here in timber veneer rather than marble. There is evidence that this spatial arrangement has earlier origins in the Knize store (1913), which also featured marble wall cladding and columns, a fireplace at one end, and windows, doors and a balcony to one long wall. Furthermore, in the living rooms of both the Tzara and Müller House, a white-painted downstand beam runs around the perimeter of the room at high-level, reinforcing the static quality of the space. Furthermore, the high-level window between the hallway and living area of the Tzara House (1926) appears to be a precursor to the window that connects the boudoir and living space of the Müller House, while the deep reveal to the entry door also closely resembles the transition space between the anteroom and living room of the Müller House. It is argued here that the spatial composition of the Tzara House—established by the positioning of the beams, the stepping and wrapping of volumes, and the location of the staircases—is very similar to that found in the living room, dining room and hallway of the Müller House.

Fig. 7.1.12: Tzara House, Loos, 1926, from Bock, 232. The dining room is centrally positioned, but the open-plan, split-level arrangement of the living space and dining room of the Tzara House is almost identical to that of the Müller House.

#### 7.1.12

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One of the most widespread observations of Loos's spatial development of his projects is that his simultaneous development of plan and section is highly unusual,<sup>11</sup> and examples of Loos drawings featuring both plans and sections are presented alongside one another to support this argument.<sup>12</sup> However, it is proposed here that this practice is in fact fairly standard, and that the examples commonly presented are atypical of Loos's drawings—which more frequently featured only plans and elevations, plans and sketches or axonometrics, or a combination of these drawings combined with sections.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it is mooted that the widespread view that sections were unusually important to Loos has been artificially constructed to support the notion that the primary contribution that Loos makes to the accepted functionalist lineage of modernism is the *Raumplan*. Loos did not make his first reference to the idea of three-dimensional space planning until 1928, in an obituary to furniture-maker Joseph Veillich, and it was not until 1930 that Kulka coined the term *Raumplan* in the process of producing a Loos monograph. Loos's remark in *Trotzdem*, that “the project must be designed from the inside out”, is often used to support the notion of the importance of space to Loos above all else, but was in fact made in relation to architectural education, not his own design methodology. Moreover, in the context of his other comments in ‘Ornament and Education’ that it is not possible to teach design, as outlined below, it could be argued that Loos meant that architecture should be the outward manifestation of his students' inner thoughts. The statement could also be taken as a refutation of the notion that Loos's interiors are disconnected from the exterior of his buildings, and in support of the notion set out above—that Loos's buildings can be understood as sculptural compositions operating at a variety of scales. Rather than assuming that the statement relates to Loos's Raumplanning, it is here understood as an explanation for the projection of elements of the interior in the entry porch of the Müller House, and for the white ceiling and wall planes of the interior continuing the massive and planar composition of the large-scale external form.

Van Duzer and Kleinman acknowledge that ‘the Raumplan has become the privileged lens for viewing the evolution of Loos's architectural production without ever having been adequately defined’, noting that ‘Loos never did accord the concept of the Raumplan the privilege, the expanded theoretical treatment, and the renowned rhetorical force of a dedicated essay. In fact, he never actually employed the term at all’.<sup>14</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman construct an argument regarding the spatial organization of Loos's architecture that suggests that the arrangement of space differs significantly from Le Corbusier's in the sense that one moves through the periphery of spaces, rather than through them. It is here argued that this theory seems only to hold in relation to Loos's urban houses, and is unsustainable when one examines the layouts of his apartments and country houses. Instead, it is speculated here that the spatial organization of

<sup>11</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 24. An example of this assumption.

<sup>12</sup> Rukschcio and Schachel, *Leben und Werk*, 144.

Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 37.

<sup>13</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 25.

Sarnitz, *Architect, Critic, Dandy*, 61.

<sup>14</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 38.

Loos's urban houses is likely to be predominantly a function of something far more banal, such as fire regulations, rather than a statement on Loos's attitude to circulation and dwelling. Given that Loos's ostensibly two-storey Khuner house has galleried open-plan living, dining, kitchen and circulation space; perhaps the circulation of the Müller House—which matches that of Loos's tall Viennese houses—owes more to its height than to an abstract notion of roving and static inhabitants. However, the notion proposed here—that many of Loos's ideas initiated from his practice and were developed through his writing—is implied in Van Duzer and Kleinman's observation that 'the concept of the Raumplan had not been synthesized until near the end of Loos's life, long after his most active writing period'.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in relation to Loos's remark in *Trotzdem*, that 'the project must be designed from the inside out', Van Duzer and Kleinman note that, 'This advice was written in the context of teaching students to design and need not be taken as a complete description of Loos's design methodology'. From the above analysis it is here concluded that the notion of the *Raumplan* was developed to describe Loos's articulation of space as art, but fails to recognize that this is but one outcome of Loos's design strategy, rather than a strategy in itself.

Fig. 7.1.13: Khuner Country House, Loos, 1930, from Bock, 274. The horizontal organization of the Khuner Country House is in stark contrast to the spatial arrangement of the Müller House.

#### 7.1.13

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<sup>15</sup> Van Duzer and Kleinman, *A Work of Adolf Loos*, 38.



## 7.2 'Ornament and Education'

The above analysis suggests not only that Loos's understanding of architecture as a combination of function and art extends to his conception of space, but also that his conception of space at least in part precipitates his proposition in the 'Ornament and Education' essay—that architecture cannot be taught, especially through drawing as a detached activity, because he views function and the ornament that signifies it as a product of collective culture that must be participated in through practice, and art as an outcome of innate and individual genius regardless of the collaborative manner in which it is produced. As outlined in the above discussion, Loos's unusual handling of space is widely discussed with reference to drawing—the Raumplan. The relationship between space and drawing connects the above discussion of space with the following analysis of 'Ornament and Education', which addresses the role of drawing more directly than the other essays.

The 'Ornament and Education' essay is in fact a letter to Profesor Morkry, in response to a survey for publication in *Nas Smer (Our Direction)*, the Czech review for drawing and aesthetic education. The essay incorporates a precis of the argument put forward in 'Ornament and Crime' regarding the development of a child into adult as analogous to the development of human civilization, and Loos clarifies that while he 'maintained that the use of ornamentation on objects of practical use would disappear with the development of mankind ... By that I did not mean what some purists have carried *ad absurdum*, namely that ornament should be systematically and consistently eliminated'.<sup>16</sup> The essay then proceeds to argue against the current mode of architectural education, asking the rhetorical question: 'What does modern drawing instruction produce?'—and offering the answer: 'An insolent generation that looks at works of art and proclaims with a certain amount of justification that they did the same kind of thing at school'.<sup>17</sup> Loos seems to be critiquing the focus on proficiency and connecting this with the contemporary reception of modern art as lacking skill, rather than focusing on its confronting qualities. 'And the old method, which produced neat draftsmen who could be trained to do good work as cartographers, or lithographers for calling cards, is it not perhaps responsible for the kind of architects we have today?'<sup>18</sup>—asks Loos rhetorically, suggesting that this focus is not new, but a product of the detachment of architecture from the craft of building. 'Architects [are] people who cannot really draw at all, who cannot express their emotional states through lines',<sup>19</sup> asserts Loos, inferring that architecture should express emotion, and so connecting the discipline with his statements on art elsewhere, as discussed above. Loos continues, 'What they call drawing is an attempt to make their ideas comprehensible to the craftsman who is to carry them out',<sup>20</sup> clarifying that he believes this lack of emotion or art in architecture is largely due to the separation of architects from the process of building, and the consequent focus on

<sup>16</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' in *Selected Essays*, ed. Adolf Opel, 187.

<sup>17</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 184.

<sup>18</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 184.

<sup>19</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 184.

<sup>20</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 184.

communication of abstract ideas. Loos asserts that 'less emphasis should be placed on a vague overall impression and more on precise detail'.<sup>21</sup>

'All objects we call modern are without ornament', proclaims Loos, continuing by qualifying that 'The only objects with ornamentation are those subject to one particular part of humanity—I call the uncultured part of humanity—namely architects'.<sup>22</sup> It is argued here that Loos is criticizing the work of his Viennese contemporaries rather than dismissing architecture in its entirety as incapable of being modern—'Whenever practical objects are produced under the influence of architects, those objects are out of touch with the times, that is to say un-modern. That is of course true of modern architects'.<sup>23</sup> However, the statement could also be interpreted as Loos drawing a distinction between architecture and other objects, on the basis that its enduring nature means that it will inevitably be out of step with contemporary culture at some point. This interpretation is made here by relating the statement to Loos's comments elsewhere that the deployment of ornament should be suitable to the durability of the object, as discussed above. At another level, Loos's words are understood here as a statement delimiting the capacity of architecture to be designed in this manner at all. Loos clarifies this aspect of his argument, remarking, 'Individuals—and that therefore includes architects—are incapable of creating a new form. But architects keep on attempting the impossible, and keep on failing'.<sup>24</sup>

It is posited here that Loos is essentially arguing against the notion of the architect as a designer—'Form and ornament are products of the subconscious collaboration of all members of a particular culture',<sup>25</sup> explains Loos. It is argued that Loos proposes that applied ornament was historically not so much designed as simply an unconscious product of the culture in which it was produced, and that his buildings operate in the same way—as opposed to those of his contemporaries, where the ornament of previous periods has been historicized and consciously applied. When Loos continues that 'Art is the complete opposite. Art is the product of the genius going his own way',<sup>26</sup> it seems fair to conclude that Loos is not making a simple binary contrast between art and architecture. Rather, Loos is proposing that architecture can be art, and simply clarifying that this art does not reside in form—at least not in the sense of applied ornament. In light of Loos's comments on the challenging and confronting nature of art, as discussed above, it would be difficult to argue against the conclusion that Loos posits modern architecture as a form of art when he proclaims here that, 'Lack of ornamentation does not mean lack of attractiveness, but is a new attraction and rouses the public from its lethargy. It is when the mill stops clacking that the miller wakes up'.<sup>27</sup> Loos defines ornament in the modern idiom by arguing that 'ornament scarcely has an aesthetic value any longer' because 'modern

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<sup>21</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 185.

<sup>22</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 185.

<sup>23</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 185.

<sup>24</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 185–6.

<sup>25</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 186.

<sup>26</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 186.

<sup>27</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 186.

luxury relies on preciousness of material and quality of finish rather than on decoration'<sup>28</sup>—and it is argued here that the definitions could be equated with interior and exterior forms of his buildings respectively. It is proposed here that Loos believes that it is 'preciousness of material and quality of finish' that allows the small-scale timber and stone forms to the interior, and the large-scale, massive and planar, white external form of the Müller House respectively to be read as abstract forms, rather than stripped back traditional architecture.

Loos repeatedly asserts in 'Ornament and Education' that he does not believe that it is possible to teach design. When Loos remarks that 'Ornament will disappear of its own accord, and schools should not interfere in this natural process',<sup>29</sup> he is in essence arguing that ornament is a product of culture and so will change with the development of this culture if it is not detached from it. Loos argues that architecture schools should not teach ornament or design, but culture—'The people who invent these ornaments are called designers. In fact, they do not invent them, but put them together according to fashion and demand. The schools do not need to concern themselves with future designers. They will train themselves'.<sup>30</sup> Loos proposes that 'The starting point for drawing instruction should be classical ornamentation', because, 'Our education is based on classical culture. An architect is a bricklayer who has learned Latin'.<sup>31</sup> Loos sees classical ornamentation as part of our collective culture and so 'the genuine, justified ornament of our times for schools to study'.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to read this in light of Loos's earlier observation that form and ornament are the product of culture, whereas art is the product of innate genius.

'Ornament and Education' also retells the story of Perrault winning Louis XIV's prize for the design of the Louvre, as a doctor 'against all the architects of his time'.<sup>33</sup> Loos's description of Perrault as not being an architect is of course misleading, as the notion of the architect as a defined professional is relatively contemporary, but his point is that 'we are all, as consumers, involved with architecture throughout our lives'. It is proposed here that this constitutes another inference from Loos that architectural education should not be necessary to practice. Loos continues with a clear retort to the notion of teaching architecture, remarking that 'All forms of applied technique are dictated by developments in practice'. Loos sets out a conception of the collective will of the consumer compelling the actions of the producer, which supports the notion set out above here that the design of architecture is the product of all of the processes of practice, rather than a rarified act carried out in isolation by the author, and then simply executed.<sup>34</sup> In criticizing the Wiener Werkstätte and the Deutscher Werkbund, an association involved in the establishment of the Bauhaus, Loos illustrates what he sees as misunderstanding this relationship in architects seeking to impose their will upon their clients

<sup>28</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 187.

<sup>29</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 186.

<sup>30</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 186–7.

<sup>31</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 187.

<sup>32</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 187.

<sup>33</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 188.

<sup>34</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 189.

and the public. It is proposed that this is further evidence of the inadequacy of a functionalist explanation of modernism, which posits the practice of architecture as a problem-solution dialectic. In Loos's words, architecture purports to be able "To cure the world of all its ills". Unfortunately, the world refuses to take its medicine. It wants to shape its life itself, and does not want it imposed on it by some league of producers or other'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Loos, 'Ornament and Education,' 189.

### Conclusion

Space differs from the other groupings of building components in that it is not a physical building component, but rather is a more abstract element defined by the parameters of them—between and around the walls, floors and ceilings; staircases, joinery and fixtures; doors and windows; and external forms. That is not to say that space is necessarily the accidental byproduct of these components, but conversely that this becomes the test for whether space is being treated sculpturally or as a furnishing of the sculptural composition—as art or functionally, in Loos's terms. In my own design work, space is understood as functioning sculpturally if the physical building components that enclose it operate in its service, as opposed to space conversely serving simply to define physical components as sculptural. The application of this methodology to an investigation of the spaces of the Müller House further illuminates Loos's conception of art, ornament and function in architecture. While the other chapters predominantly use photography to illustrate the discussion of various building components, this chapter almost exclusively utilizes drawing to represent the spaces of the Müller House and Loos's other projects. This is predominantly due to the fact that it is almost impossible to foreground space over form in photographic representation, due to the intrinsic resonance of the latter with this medium. Drawing is also a central theme of the 'Ornament and Education' essay, with which the discussion of space is paired in this research. While the essay derides teaching architecture through drawing, Loos expressly objects only to drawing that distances the architect from the craft of production in practice. The Loos projects that most clearly exhibit spaces that possess a sculptural or art quality correlate with the writing of 'Ornament and Education', and reconsidering the essay through the design research leads to the conclusion that Loos uses its publication to subtly amend his notion of architecture as a composition of elements of both art and function—and so accommodate the unique character of space as an architectural element. Grappling with the less tangible nature of space, it is here proposed that Loos uses 'Ornament and Education' to recognise the role of innate genius in the creation of art—contrasting it with ornament, which he casts as the product of collective culture and a signifier of function.

## **CONCLUSION**

The preceding analysis assembles from Loos's disconnected statements—on architecture, art, function, and ornament—a coherent Loosian theory of making architecture. Loos is posed as arguing that architecture is composed of elements of art and function, and identifying ornament as a mechanism for signifying the latter; proposing that ornament should be the product of culture and craft; deriding applied art as confusing the distinct roles of art and function in architecture; and questioning the possibility of teaching either aspect of architecture—because art is a function of innate genius, and function can only be understood through participation. The preceding analysis, pairing components of Loos's buildings and his essays, illuminates particular aspects of his conception of art, function, ornament, culture, craft, applied art, and education. The reading of Loos's building components in each of these pairings is informed by my own conception, drawn from design research, of architecture as composed of sculptural elements and furnishings. The walls, floors and ceilings in the Müller House are articulated variously as stark planes of a single material or ornamented with paneling, skirtings and cornices. Read in relation to these building elements, 'The Poor Little Rich Man' essay seems to align the former with art and the latter with function, and defines ornament as a signifier of functional status. Loos's deployment of ornament to signal the functional status of some of his staircases enables an understanding of his statements in 'Ornament and Crime' as an assertion of contemporary culture, and in particular craft, as the appropriate source of this ornament. The notion that Loos argues against applied art as a confusion of the distinct roles of art and function in architecture is established by reexamining the 'Architecture' essay through the lens of changes in Loos's articulation of the windows and doors of his buildings. Loos's distinctions between art, function, ornament, and applied art are further clarified by a study of Loos's treatment of external form before and after the publication of the 'Art and Architecture' essay. Considered alongside Loos's treatment of space in the Müller House and preceding and subsequent projects, the 'Ornament and Education' essay questions whether it is possible to teach architecture, particularly separately from practice. Considered together, Loos buildings and essays provide a model for the development of architectural theory based upon the observation of architects in practice, and as such has the potential to address the concerns of Evans and Schön as set out in the introduction. The approach counters the general retreat into autonomous realms of academic and professional conceptions of architectural practice, and Schön's particular desire that 'research functions not as a distraction from practice but as a development of it'.<sup>1</sup>

This understanding of Loos offers a model of a type of architectural theory that seeks to remain fully engaged with the production of the built environment, using to its advantage rather than resisting the mechanisms of the profession, or operating on the assumption that they are

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<sup>1</sup> Donald A Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (London: Ashgate, 1983), ix.

creatively and intellectually neutral. At the commencement of the research project I expected that the investigation would provide a defence of both the critical role of small projects in the progression of architectural thought more generally, and my existing methods of practicing architecture specifically. However, the research has in fact changed the way I practice architecture, and the issue of scale has become secondary. The conception of architecture as a form of art practice that has emerged supports the notion that scale is irrelevant to architectural significance, because the physical dimensions of a work of art do not limit its emotional or intellectual impact.<sup>2</sup> However, the understanding of the specific characteristics of the art practice of architecture that this research has facilitated suggests that authorship does not demand that the work remain diminutive in size. While previously I had felt compelled to draw all of my projects and manage all of the building sites myself, I have been progressively liberated by my research conclusions to hand over these processes to others, and to plan for the possible expansion of both the practice and the scale of the projects that we undertake. This is not to propose that a larger practice or an increase in the scale of projects is considered necessary to create architecture of significance, but conversely that these factors do not necessarily compromise meaning if they are understood and managed appropriately. Central to this is an appreciation of the role of words, whether spoken or written, in establishing authorship in relation to an architectural project.

An understanding of architecture as an art practice centred on the physical act of drawing inevitably restricts the size of projects to that which can be drawn by an individual author, whether in the studio or on site. Conversely, words have the potential to create and imbue an architectural practice with a distinct design culture regardless of the individual authorship of drawings, and in written form can be most precisely and broadly disseminated. While the rapid growth of a practice generally results in a dilution or loss of design culture with the multiplication of drawing authors, a design culture expressed in written form can more readily resist this normalizing force. In light of this realization, I have consequently given far greater latitude to my staff in drawing projects at all stages, and have personally concentrated on articulating verbally and in writing the design ideas and processes. In addition to this dissertation, this articulation has taken the form of meetings, project text, a revised practice statement, and journal and magazine articles on my own work and the work of others. In particular, having not entered any competitions in the past due to apprehensions about authorship should we be successful, I have been prepared to do so now that a conception of design has been more precisely articulated in writing.<sup>3</sup> The appendix of projects includes examples of this new type of output,

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<sup>2</sup> Ellis Woodman, 'Beyond Babel: The Work of Swiss architect Peter Märkli,' *Building Design*, 27 July (2007). Woodman states that, 'After two decades spent designing houses, Peter Märkli is at last building at a substantial scale'. The assumption underlying Woodman's comment is widespread, and conversely, small building projects are frequently commodified as 'bread and butter' revenue to keep young practices afloat, infantilized as an opportunity for architects to 'cut their teeth', or trivialized by comparison to an architect's 'first real building'.

<sup>3</sup> Hill, *Immaterial Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2006), 37. Hill notes that, 'Sometimes a building is not the best means to explore architectural ideas. Consequently architects, especially famous ones, tend to talk, write and draw a lot as well as build'.

including *Striated Street* (2010), *Public Interpolation* (2010), *London Room* (2010), and *Extrapolation Club* (2011).

As a result of considering Loos's buildings and essays in relative isolation, existing scholarship predominantly portrays him as a modernist concerned with function and practicality, whose writing is a straightforward and repetitive proclamation against ornament and art in architecture—and various aspects of his buildings are dismissed as simply inconsistent with the essays. One of the stated aims of this research is to address a perceived gap between architects' statements and actions, and between architectural practice and education. While existing scholarship suggests that Loos is no different in this respect, this research project establishes that the gaps observed between Loos's built work and essays are the result of the progressive alteration of each as the other suggests new approaches or lines of enquiry. In some instances Loos appears to initiate an idea in his essays that is subsequently explored through his buildings, while in others his built work seems to precipitate a notion that is then expressed and developed in written form. This can be distinguished from the gap to which I referred at the outset, in which architects' theory operates as an unrelated adjunct that sits alongside but distinct from the built work to which it supposedly refers, leaving its observable design process or meaning unelaborated.

While Loos has been widely understood through a functionalist understanding of modernism, the conception of Loos's architecture as a form of art practice, as set out above, opens the possibility of conversely reexamining modern architecture in these terms. As outlined below, such a line of enquiry suggests that the observed gap between architects' stated design methodologies and their enacted processes, and the associated polarization of architectural practice and academia, might originate at the beginning of the modern period. While manifestos are synonymous with the idea of modernist practice, they could be understood less as mechanisms for explaining process and more as a mechanism of persuasion for the resulting architecture. Modernism purported to have changed the way we live, when in reality it predominantly responded to technological and societal changes. Modernist manifestoes tell us little or nothing of the actual processes determining arrangements of form and space, instead describing the supposed efficiencies of these arrangements. It could be argued that the modernist agenda of function and practicality masked the actual changes that were taking place in architecture creatively, particularly in the processes of architectural form-making. Architects would have seen in the emerging building technologies the opportunity to make compositions of their entire buildings in the way that painters, sculptors and other artists do with canvasses, objects and space. Based on issues of function and practicality, architects' stated methodologies in the modern period could thus be understood as almost completely divorced from their enacted creative processes, which appear primarily concerned with the compositional potential—both visual and spatial—of new building technologies and functions. While there were political and economic advantages to be gained by the invention of the functionalist



agenda, it is not suggested here that this was pre-meditated deception—rather simply that their a priori understanding of their own mode of operation is relatively unrelated to this a posteriori analysis of their output.

While modernist manifestos purport to have issues of efficiency at their centre, most simply followed the requirements of industry, technology and society—and in reality, most spatial reordering was the consequence of changes in the way space was occupied, rather than the composition of space itself. Architecture has of course always been functional in the sense that it provides shelter or enclosure for human activity, and the functions that it fulfils have always changed in response to economics, politics and society.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it seems highly questionable that modern architects precipitated a new morphology of buildings following functional concerns.<sup>5</sup> Rather, it seems fairer to conclude that architects were observers of ‘functionalist’ architecture, rather than its authors. From this perspective, it is interesting to consider why architects were so attracted to this architecture borne of new functional requirements, and how they altered it. As building typologies and technologies changed to adapt to new programmatic requirements, architects observed these changes and considered their visual and spatial potential for their medium. While the rhetoric of modernism would have us believe that key sources of inspiration for architectural form were industrial objects such as cars, ships and aeroplanes; these technological innovations immediately precipitated changes to buildings to accommodate them, and so it seems likely that it was in fact the observation of these new building typologies that was the more direct and immediate inspiration for modern architecture. Architecture of course continued to be ‘functionalist’ in the Modern period, and the relationship was perhaps more overt and stated, but it is here proposed to have not been the defining characteristic of modernism, particularly as it fails to explain the radical aesthetic changes in architectural form. Emerging technologies had challenged the traditional role of the architect, arguably rendering the profession an adjunct to engineering solutions making use of new technologies. In this context, it is no surprise that architects might have adopted a way of speaking about their architecture that enabled them to reposition their role more centrally, as giving visual expression to these new technologies. Sigfried Giedion and others have recognized that the motivation of some modernist architects was to counteract many of the dehumanizing aspects of modern life, and the design research into Loos suggests that this could be connected to an alternate explanation for modernist space—In the absence of terrain and views, architectural space was articulated in three dimensions to create promenades, and multi-layered views through buildings that elicit emotional and intellectual responses in their inhabitants.

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<sup>4</sup> Stanford Anderson, ‘The Fiction of Function,’ *Assemblage 2* (February 1987).

S. Anderson, ‘The Fiction of Function,’ 19. Anderson argues that “functionalism” is a weak concept, inadequate for the characterization or analysis of *any* architecture’.

<sup>5</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Functionalism Today,’ in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997), 7. Adorno argues that, ‘the question of functionalism does not coincide with the question of practical function ... The difference between the necessary and the superfluous is inherent in a work, and is not defined by the work’s relationship—or lack of it—to something outside itself’.

While some argument could be made for a functional explanation of modern architecture's spatial arrangements, clearly its forms are motivated by something else. A very incomplete explanation is provided by the argument that modernist form operates as a signifier of the functionality and efficiency of the spaces that it contains. If, as is proposed by this research through a re-examination of Loos, ornament is instead understood as signalling a building component as functional, then prior to the advent of modernism, architecture operated almost exclusively in this way. In these terms, the label 'functionalism' would be more appropriately applied to architecture prior to the advent of modernism, a movement that it is here argued Loos conversely posits as a form of art practice. Assessing architecture in this manner, it seems clear that in the modern period buildings were designed to suppress the appearance of utility so that their components appear sculptural rather than—or at least as much as—functional. A flat roof denies the fact that its function is to keep rain and snow out of a building, while doors and windows are articulated as gaps between its components rather than passages in and out of a building for people, light and ventilation. This analysis of modernist design runs entirely counter to most accepted notions of modernist methodology, which tend to centre on utility. It is postulated that prior to the modern period architecture consisted of the application of ornamental detail to recognizable building volumes, while modernist architecture concerned itself with the aesthetic consideration of the overall composition of these volumes themselves. This constitutes a shift in the role of ornament to the aesthetic arrangement of entire buildings or components of them—as it is here that modern architecture elicits the emotional and intellectual response in its inhabitants and viewers that was previously the domain of ornamentation. The inability of most modernist architects to recognize this shift in the scale of aesthetic consideration is here proposed as the primary explanation for the lack of correlation between architects' stated design methodologies and their buildings.

Commenting on its relationship to art, Evans asserts that, 'Architecture is the exceptional case because, substantial yet representational, it is more equivocally of the world and, at the same time, *about* the world than any other art form'.<sup>6</sup> The physical and inhabitable nature of architecture allows for a multiplicity of perceptions of its observers, contrasting starkly with the precisely controlled views permitted by a sculpture, or even more so, a painting. Evans goes on to cite Giedion's Humanization notion of 1949, which proposed that rational building was no longer quintessentially human and had become a source of alienation from nature and society, and proposes Alvar Aalto as a proponent of a new architecture that championed irrationality.<sup>7</sup> Evans concludes that humanized modernism will need to 'conspire with (rather than represent)' society in order to actually change society, and cites eighteenth-century architecture as an example.<sup>8</sup> Evans's notion of irrationality overlaps with the Loosian distinction between art and function proposed here. The dehumanized architecture described by Giedion and Evans correlates to the architecture described above that actually follows the stated functional

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<sup>6</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, 65.

<sup>7</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, 70.

agendas of modernism, rather than the art processes that it is here proposed are evident from observation of modernist practice. The understanding of Loos's work posited here—as divided into distinct elements of art and function—suggests that what Giedion describes as dehumanized modernism is architecture that conforms to the declared methodology of the movement, but fails to understand its actual mode of operation as a form of art practice. While beyond the scope of this particular research project, similar investigations to this one could be conducted into other modernist architects, extending from the specific conclusions on Loos set out here. These analyses would inevitably reveal a diversity of relationships between architectural practice and art, and in doing so would further define and test the validity of this broader conclusion.

In addition to offering a lens through which to reconsider modernism, the conception of architecture drawn from this design-led research on Loos could also be utilized to reflect upon contemporary architectural practice. Research projects informed by the methodology that I have developed in the course of my own investigation—detailed analysis of mechanisms of practice—could yield a range of historical and theoretical subjects, research methods, and research outcomes as diverse as the breadth of design work undertaken in practice. Similarly, my conclusion that modernism posits architecture as a form of art practice supports further research of this type on contemporary practice—by providing a specific mechanism for understanding subsequent architectural movements as an extension of modern architecture, rather than as a radical departure from it.<sup>9</sup> In *The Projective Cast*, Evans challenges the assumption that geometry should be sought in the composition of drawings or buildings,<sup>10</sup> and instead proposes that we embrace the unstable notion of projection as central, and focus on the connections from 'thinking to imagination, imagination to drawing, drawing to building, and buildings to our eyes'.<sup>11</sup> Evans posits that it is perception in all its manifestations that is significant, not simply the architectural composition that is perceived. Contemporary familiarity with the industrial morphology of early twentieth-century modernist architecture has to some extent diminished our ability to perceive it as art, in the Loosian terms set out in this research. This continual process of visual obsolescence could explain the impulse for contemporary architecture to find new forms. However, Loos's work demonstrates that while some degree of the art resonance of architecture is derived from its relation to an historical context, it is also possible for it to possess an enduring abstract sculptural capacity. The latter potential resides in architecture that does not rely upon difference from the architecture of its setting for its art-like quality, as this setting is obviously ephemeral. In this respect, it can be concluded that the search for architectural innovation in new formal language is an inherently flawed approach—relying upon novelty, and consequently very vulnerable to obsolescence.

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<sup>8</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, 83.

<sup>9</sup> Forty, *Words and Buildings*, 20. This conclusion is to some extent supported by Forty's observation that the discourse of modernist architecture has not yet been overturned. S. Anderson, 'The Fiction of Function,' 19. Anderson observes that the post-modernist opposition to modernism on notion of function is erroneous.

<sup>10</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, xxxi.

<sup>11</sup> Evans, *The Projective Cast*, xxxi–ii.

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**PROJECT LIST**

	<b>residential</b>	<b>commercial</b>	<b>civic</b>
2002	Hackney House	Smoke and Mirrors	
2003	Elegant Shed		
2004	One Up One Down Open End Victorian Hoarding		
2005	Diorama Karntner House Light Box Terrace House Pavilion Semi-detached		
2006	In the Fold  Tabula Rasa	Public House	
2007	Artefact Sleeper Landscaper Extrapolation House  Karntner House 2	Interior Street Autonomous Fragment	
2008	Stereoscope  Composite House Bridge	Striated Space	
2009	Aggregate House Serial Terrace Furnished Space	Interpolation House Laneway	
2010	Agora		Striated Street Public Interpolation London Room
2011			Extrapolation Club

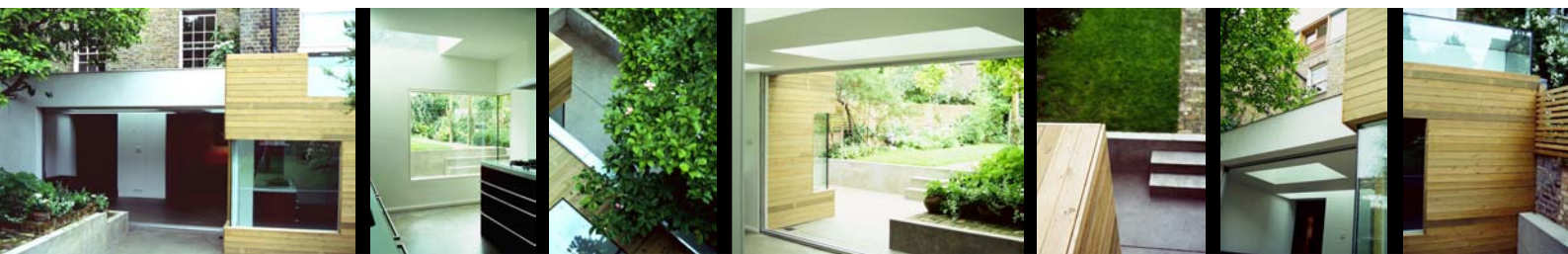
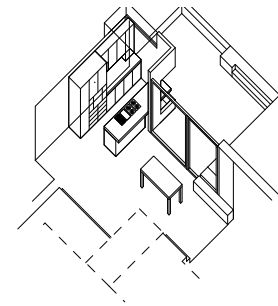
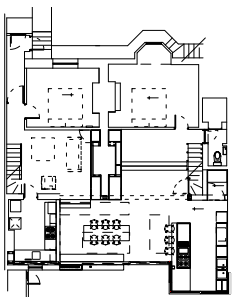
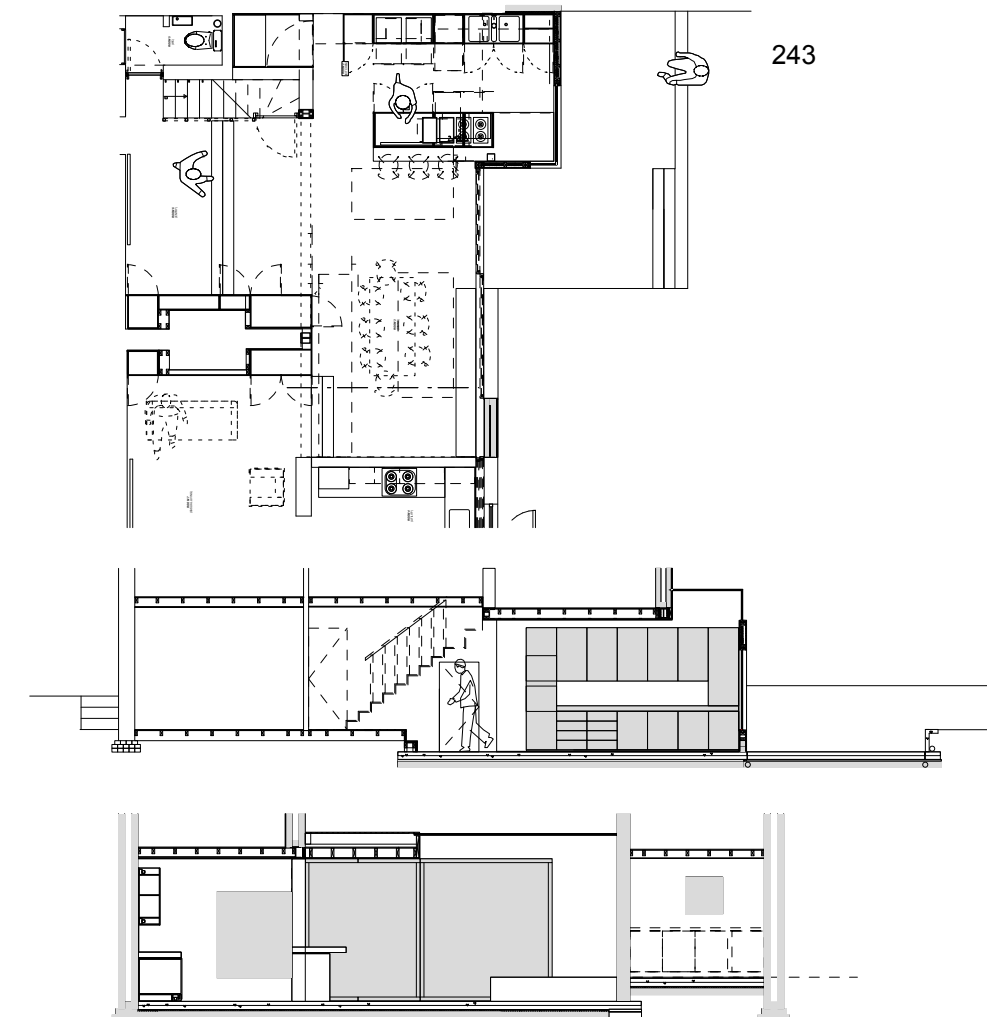
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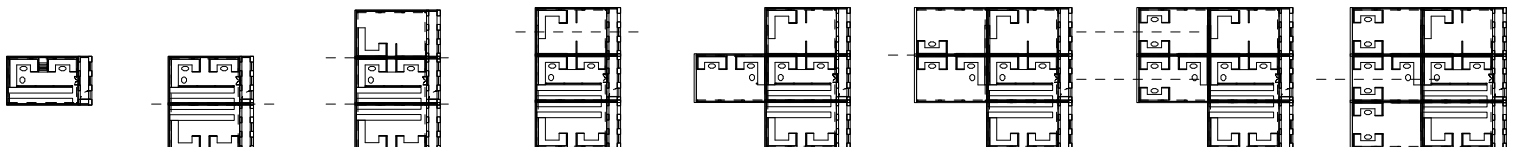
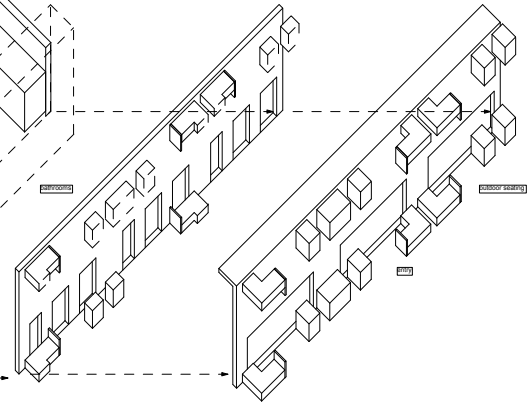
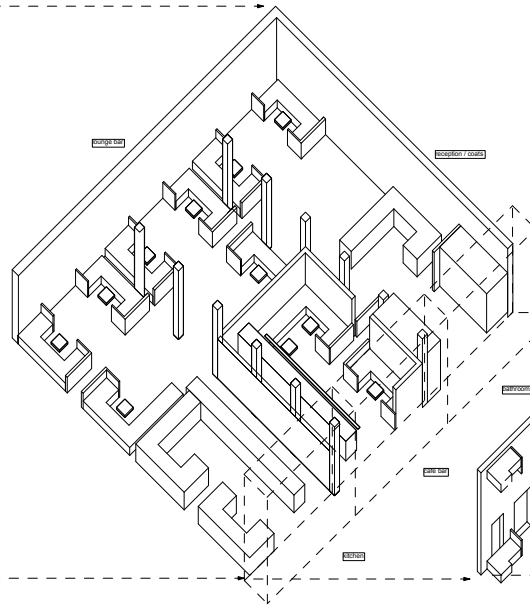
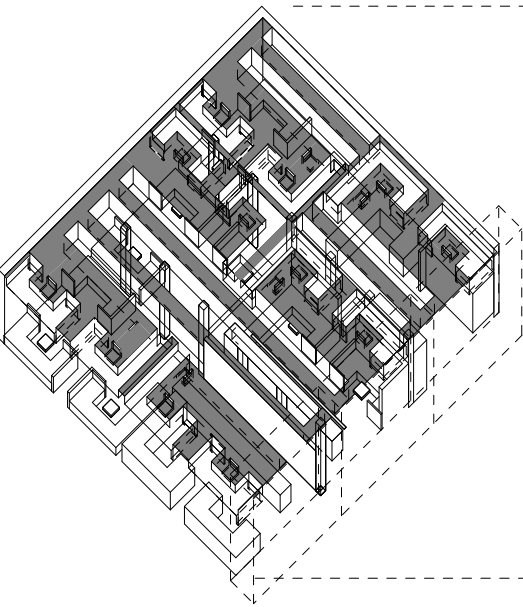
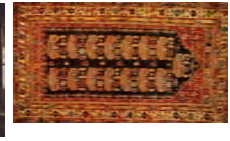
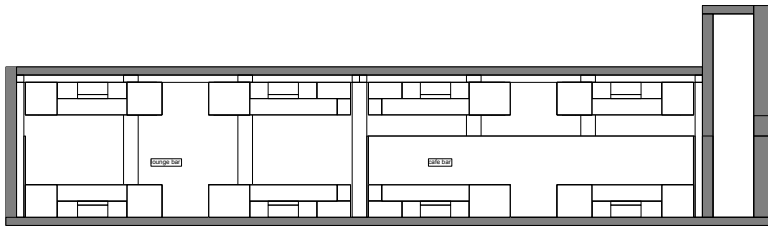
### hackney house

The scheme joins together two terrace houses and can perhaps best be understood as a rationalisation of the existing Victorian situation. The design draws upon and abstracts the proportions and scale of the two houses. In order to prevent the new space appearing as an adjunctive corridor connecting the two existing dwellings, the floor level of the extension was lowered. Stepping down into the extension lends the space autonomy, while also changing the relationship between inside and out.

The building takes on a sculptural form that blurs the boundaries between garden and house and at the level of materials, between ground plane and walls. The roof-lights make abstracted reference to the existing rear elevation of the house, while the kitchen and roof reinterpret the ubiquitous back garden elements of shed and decking.

The preservation of the character of the incised adjoining spaces at the junction between old and new references the installation work of Gordon Matta-Clark.

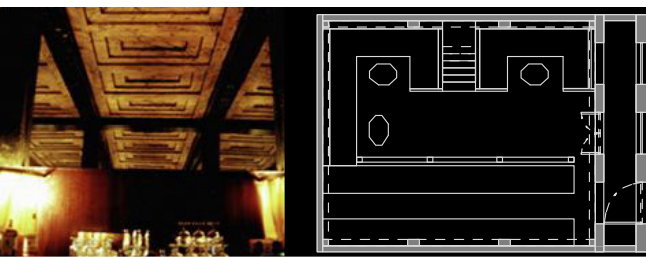




plan



section

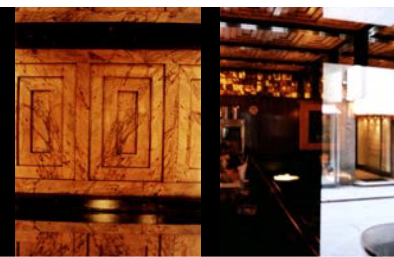


#### smoke and mirrors

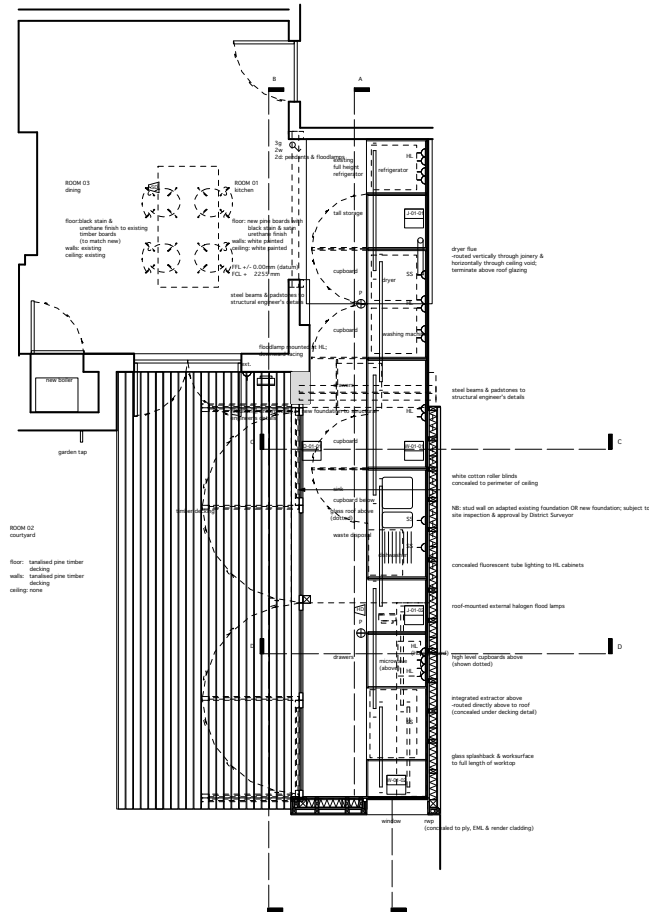
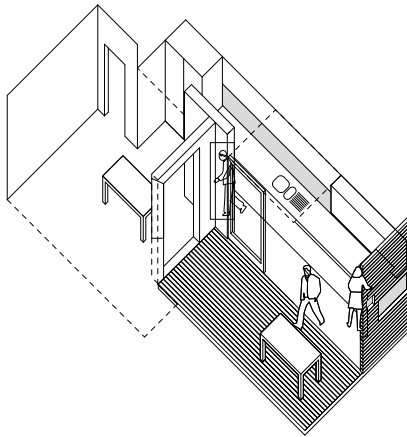
The bar proposal, for a client of Tyler Brule's Winkreative agency, takes as its starting point the Karntner Bar in Vienna, designed by Adolf Loos in the early years of the twentieth century. The new bar attempts to give physical form to the perceived space in Loos's scheme. Where in the Karntner Bar high-level mirrors create the illusion that the bar is only a small room within a much larger space, the form of these connected spaces is speculated upon to provide the other areas required by the new brief.

The actions of mirroring, repetition, layering and illusion are deployed to determine the layout of these new spaces. This design methodology also provides a mechanism for reconfiguring the scheme to different locations, allowing for arrangements of different sizes and horizontal or vertical (basement and ground floor) layouts.

The spatial development and material palette also reflects the Middle Eastern associations of the client.

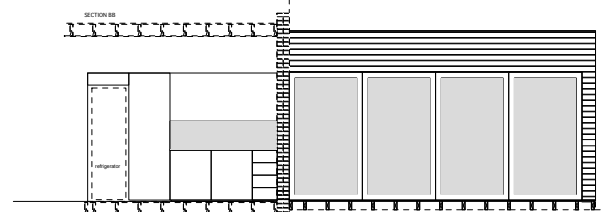
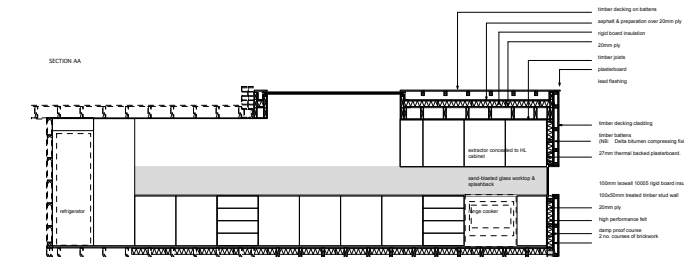


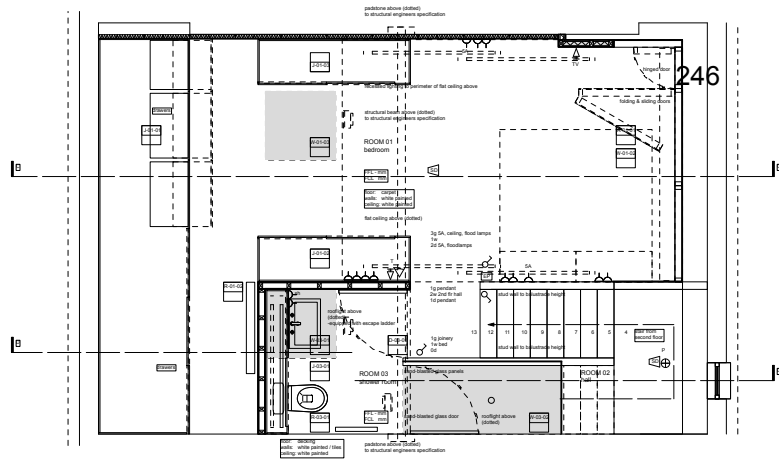




Drawing upon the language of the garden shed, the project accommodates a kitchen and outdoor living space. The extension extrudes a small existing kitchen out into the garden and frames the edge of a courtyard formed between itself and the main house.

A long, modern kitchen with a long white countertop, a sink, and a fruit basket. The kitchen is open to a living area with a large window and a white radiator.





# WILLIAM TOZER architecture & design

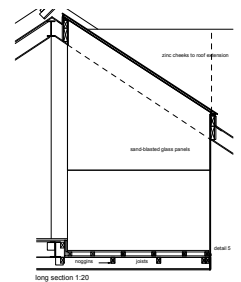
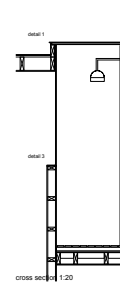
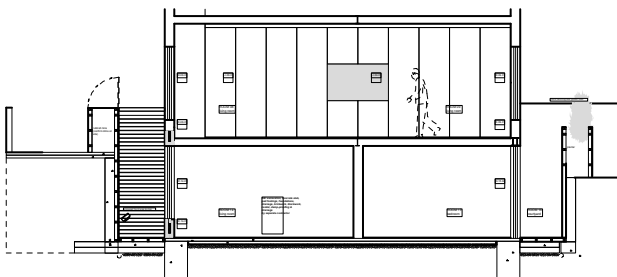
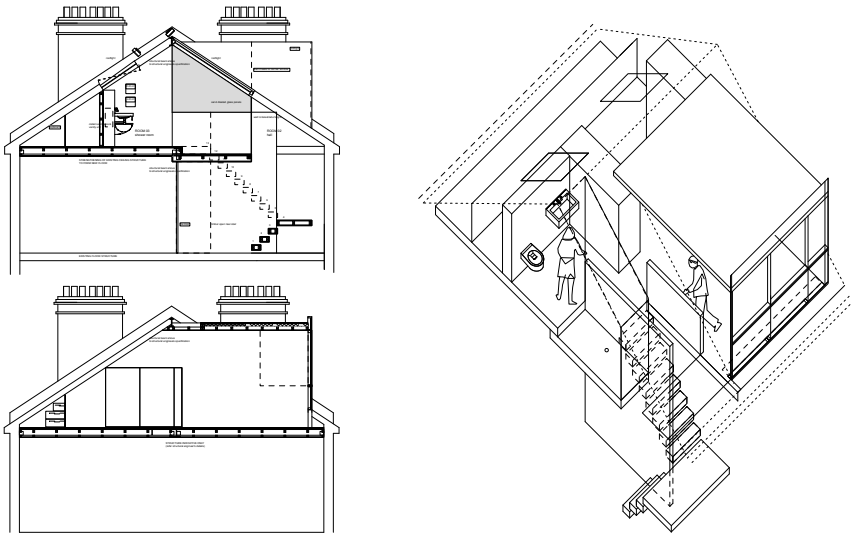
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## One up, One Down

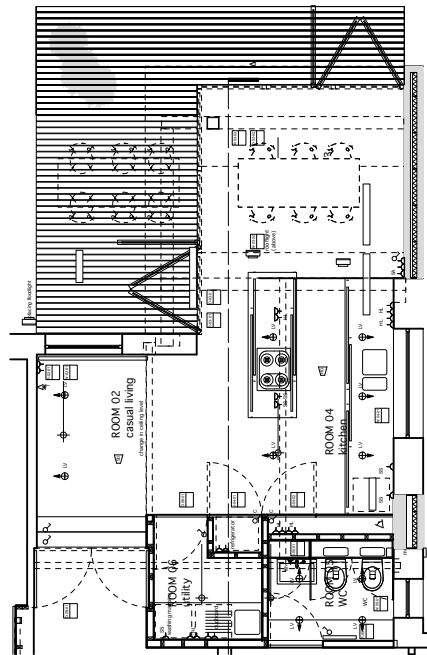
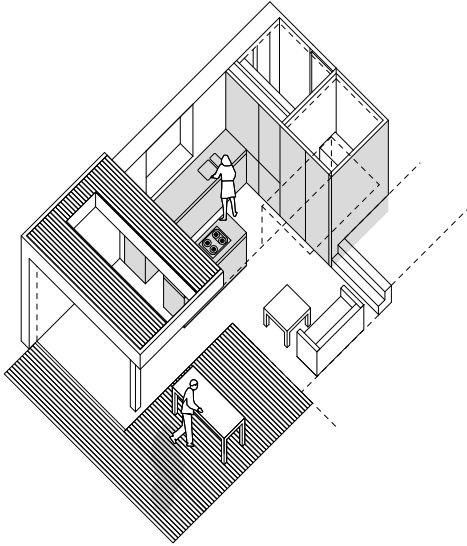
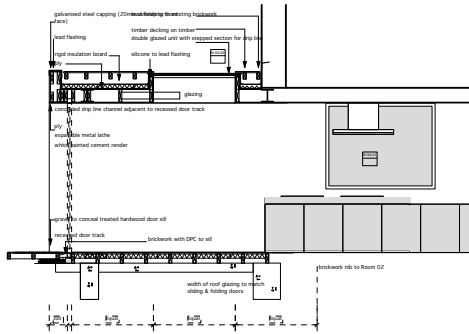
The project encompasses the addition of a lower ground floor and loft level to a Victorian terrace house. The interventions to the levels between the new portions of the house are treated as fragments of a notional whole project of which the two additions are the primary components.

The particularities of English housing stock and planning legislation mean that the bedroom roof extension is a ubiquitous form of architectural intervention and in this project the space assumes the spatial character of a tree house or survey tower. The defensive character of the resulting architecture responds to traditional notions of the bedroom, while the opportunity for voyeurism evokes the fantasy of dreaming.

The shower room design resists the widespread tendency for residential bathrooms to emulate a hotel ensuite. Instead, the incorporation of roof glazing and extensive outward views, together with the use of timber decking, establishes a strong connection with the domestic realm.





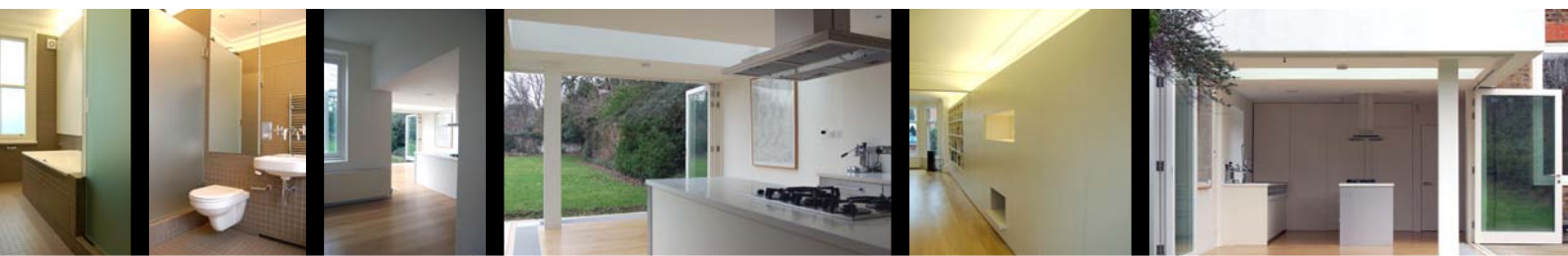


### open end

The project encompassed the design of a substantial rear extension to the rear of an Edwardian detached house. While the form of the building envelope was defined as a neutral rectilinear container, the elevations and roof plan were carefully composed, so as to make abstracted reference to the existing building.

A sense of spatial continuity is heightened by the correlation of external and internal floor levels at the threshold. Conversely, changes in internal floor and ceiling levels define the boundaries between different zones of the open plan space. In order to evoke the open-ended character of a building in construction, the articulation of the external doors gives the appearance of the absence of a component of the building.

The scheme also encompassed significant refurbishment throughout the remainder of the house and these elements are treated as displaced parts of a notional whole project, of which the extension is the predominant manifestation.



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#### Victorian hoarding

The ground floor of this Victorian house is rearranged into an open-plan kitchen, living and dining space through a small rear addition and incisive internal alterations.

Listed Building consent was obtained for an extension that references the form and materials of Victorian houses. The flat roof and white render make reference to the adjacent existing volume, and the scale and proportion of the rear window are drawn from the existing windows above. Similarly, the slate floor is a displaced reference to the roof of the main house.

The design exploits the space between the consent drawings to create an unexpectedly modern design. Recalling a site hoarding, the solid walls that frame the new rear window are hinged panels that allow a panoptic view of the garden when opened. The obscured side elevation is composed entirely of glazed sliding doors, and the 'fifth elevation' - the roof - is entirely glazed.



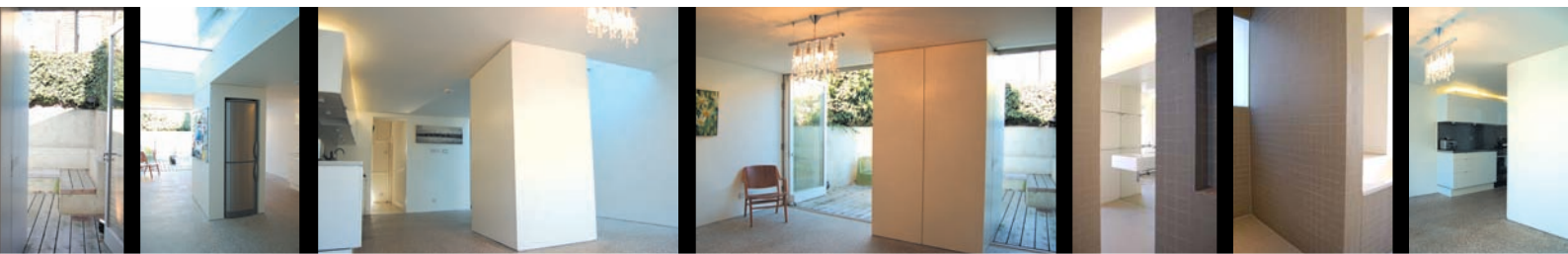
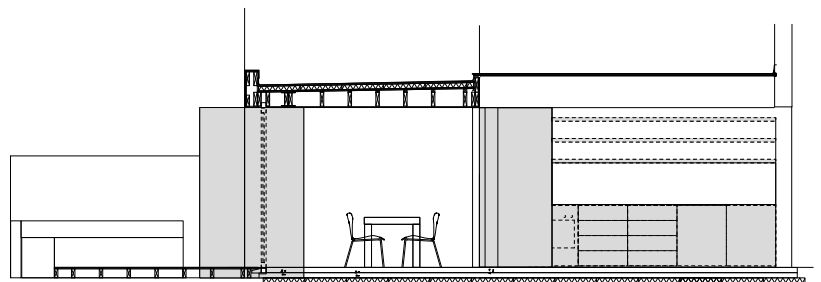
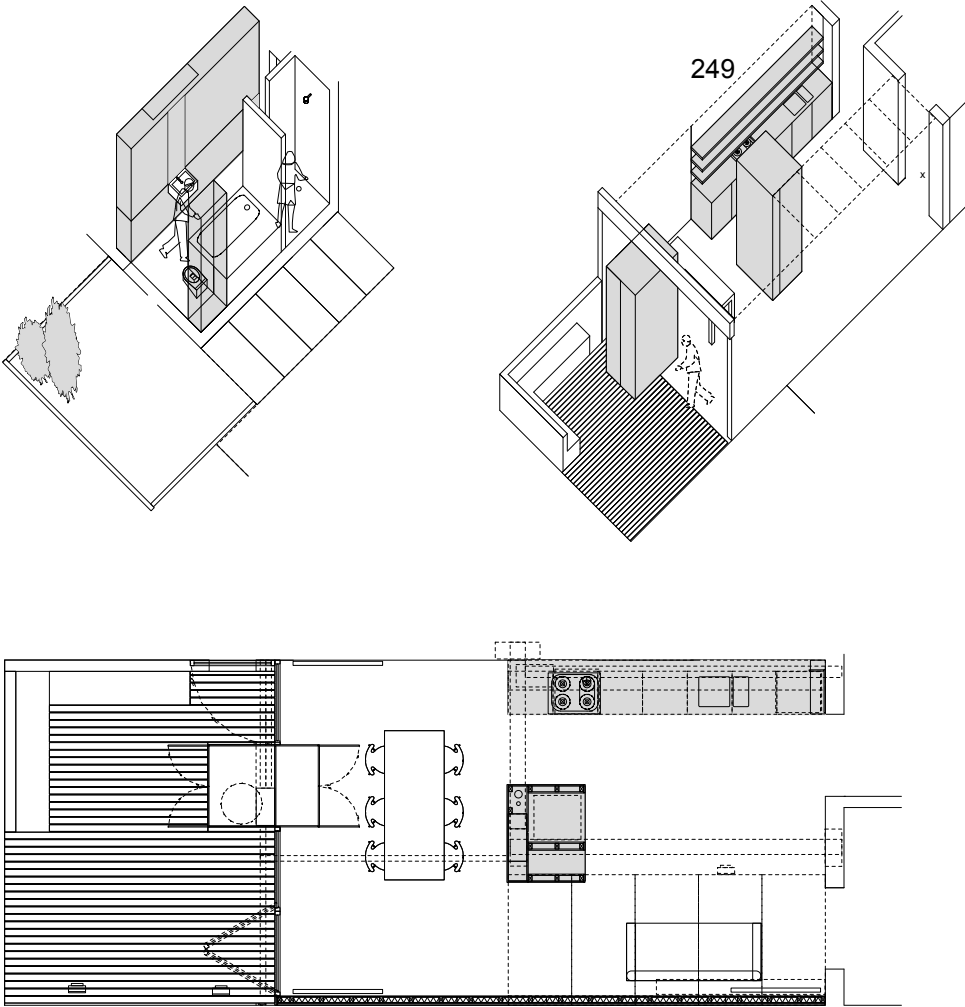


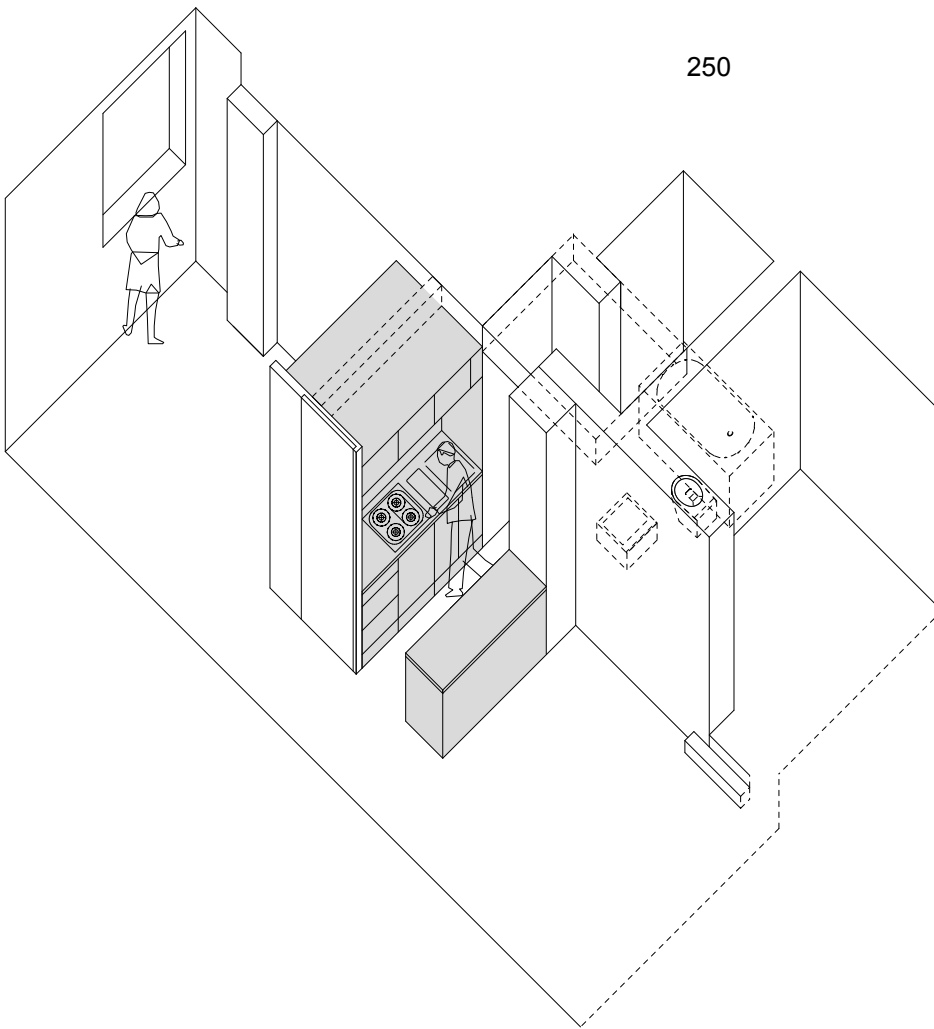
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#### diorama

Two massive and planar volumes loosely divide the open plan space into kitchen, living and dining areas. These volumes conceal structural elements, and provide storage space, and lend a plastic quality to the ceiling the roof and ceiling that sits above them. This is reinforced by the matching rectilinear geometry of the rooflight opening, which gives the ceiling and roof the appearance of an incised solid.

Views through the spaces to a small courtyard are carefully controlled to provide only glimpses and allow partial comprehension. This visual choreography creates an impression of a larger, more complex space. The courtyard is treated as an external room, and this is reinforced by the equivalent sizing of the internal spaces. Furthermore, the concrete internal floor finish has perhaps greater external connotations than the timber that lines the courtyard at the same level as the interior. The bathroom continues the geometry of the extension.



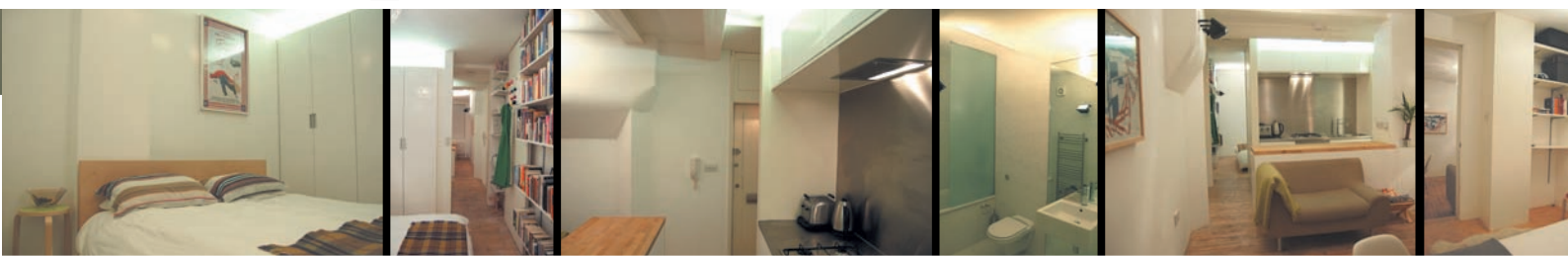
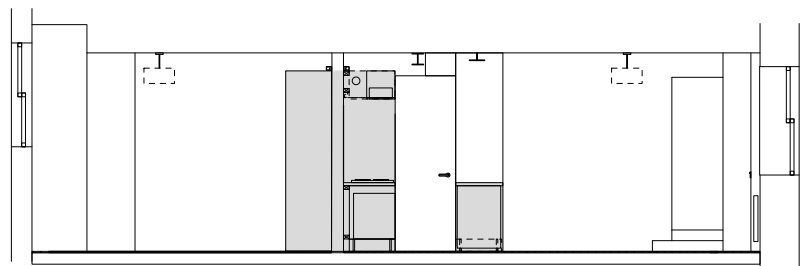
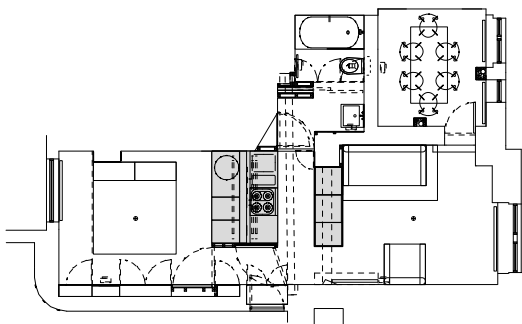

**karntner house**

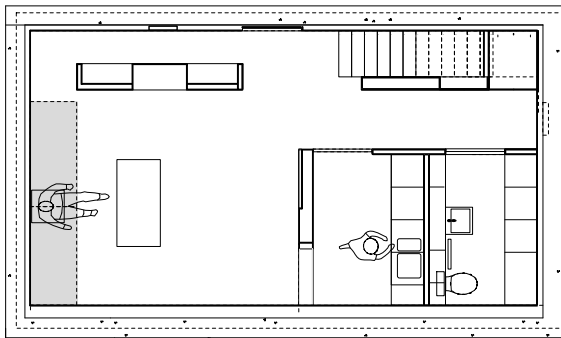
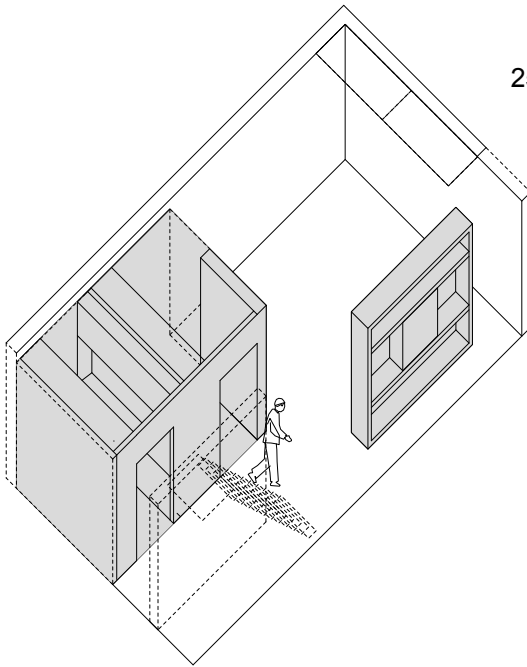
A modern central volume containing the kitchen and wardrobes is located in the middle of an open-plan space, which is treated as an historical found object.

Doors separating the bedroom, fire lobby and kitchen are concealed to heighten the sense of a single open space. This impression is reinforced by mirrors above the kitchen and wardrobe volume, which reflect the adjacent ceiling and structure. Three ceiling levels and two floor levels define the separate zones of the open plan space and reinforce the distinct character of each.

The original Edwardian windows, floorboards, chimneys, columns and beams are retained but re-presented as preserved relics.

White dye and oil to the floorboards captures the appearance of the raw sanded timber. The white lacquer finish of the kitchen and wardrobe volume gives the impression of a single massive and planar solid, which reveals its stainless steel core when incised to form work-surfaces and handles.



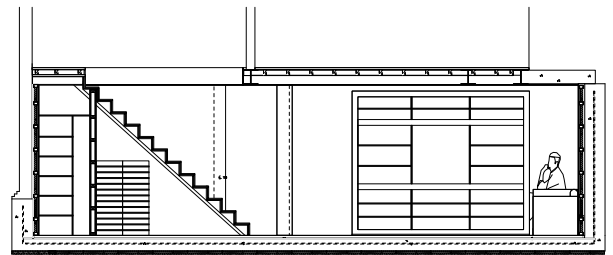
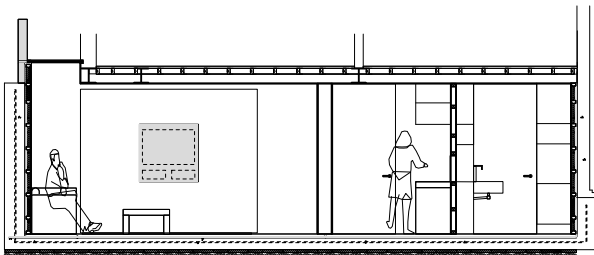


#### light box

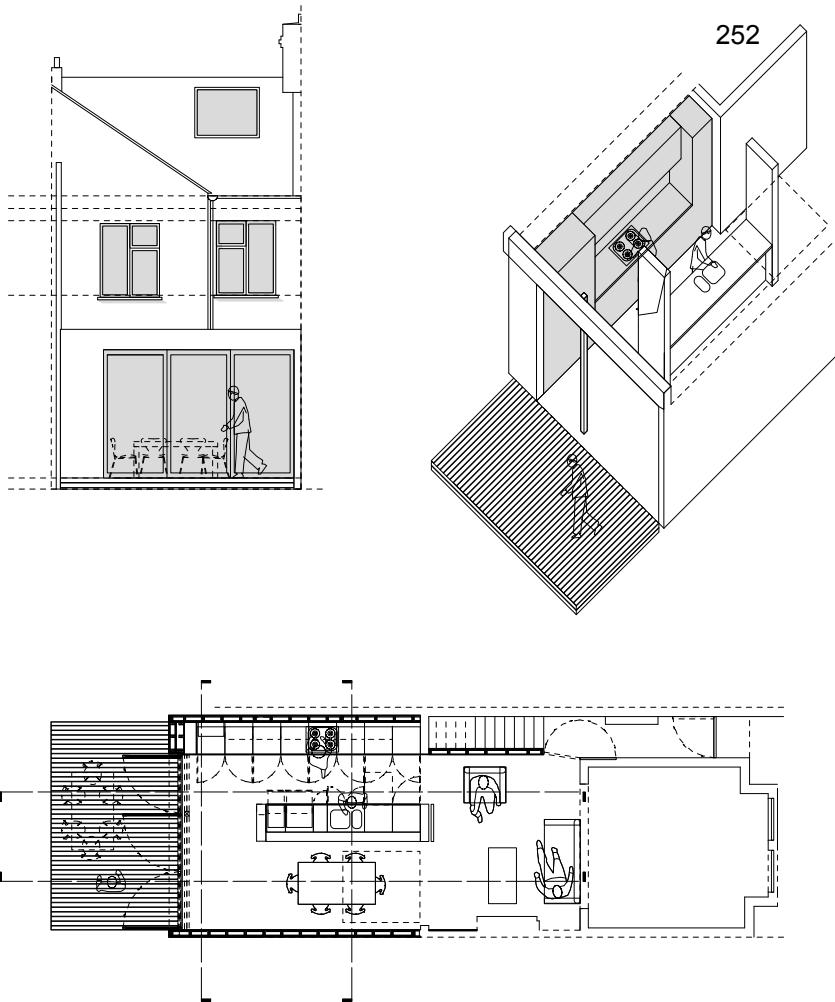
The sole source of natural light for this basement space is pedestrian-loaded glazing to the street frontage, which is reflected off the wall below.

Panels of sand-blasted glass between living, utility and bathroom spaces allow for the penetration of natural light by day and offer concealed sources of artificial light by night. The occupation of each space is registered in the adjacent space through light, shadow and silhouette.

The observation of a coincidental resemblance of the plan to Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion informed a number of subsequent design moves. The top-lit space to the end of the room recalls the interior pool, while the two skins of sand-blasted glass to either side of the utility space reference Mies' central light-well. The timber cladding of the stairs mimics the plastic quality of the pavilion's travertine cladding, while the joinery unit assumes the character of a blade wall.





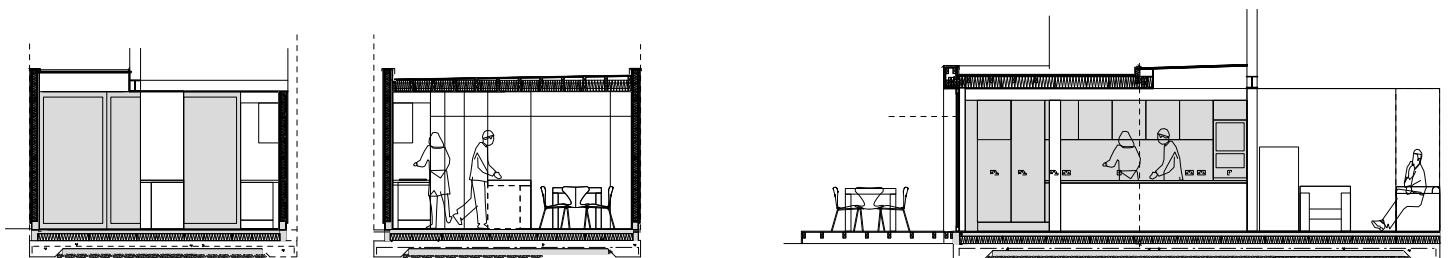


#### terrace house

A terrace to the rear of the house visually continues into the extension to provide an interior space with the character of a terrace. This space provides dining, kitchen and living spaces with framed views to the garden and fields beyond, while excluding views of neighbouring properties.

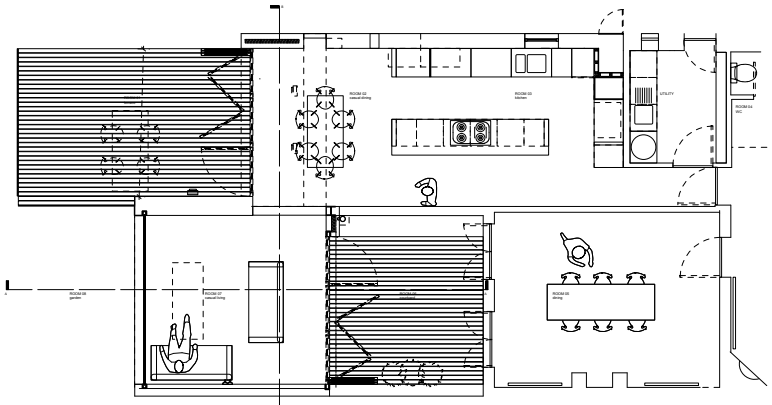
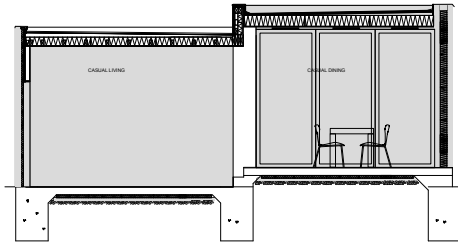
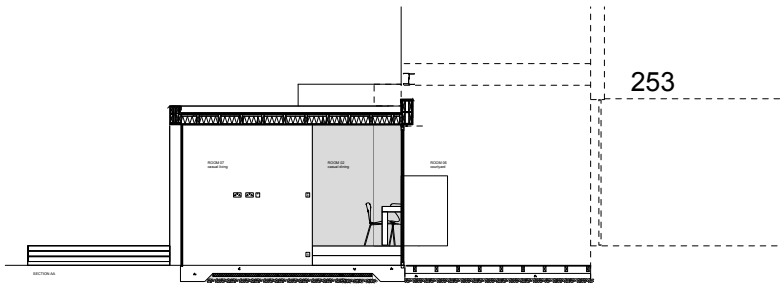
Treated as pieces of architectural furniture, the kitchen units are inserted into the open-plan space to create divisions between dining and living areas. The kitchen island and door frame disguise structural elements, heightening the sense of continuation of the open space of the terrace. The rooflight opening to the rear of the space intensifies the sense of exteriority by providing an unexpected view of the sky. Timber floorboards provide further visual continuity of the terrace from inside to out.

The illumination of the roof glazing registers the occupation of the extension to inhabitants of the upper levels of the house, and vice versa.





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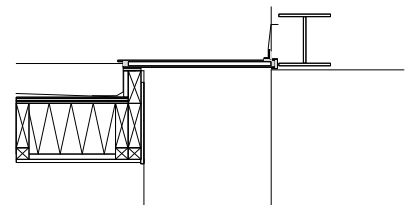
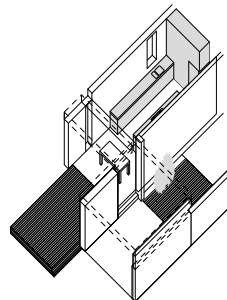
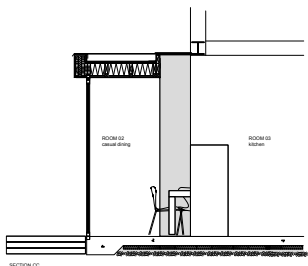


#### pavilion

The end wall of the rear wing of the existing house was removed and the resulting opening to the garden framed by a fragment of ceiling and wall. This crisp building component is separated from the existing house by a slot of obscured glazing and appears to lean against the adjoining new pavilion living space.

The new living space is lowered to the level of the garden, and encloses a courtyard between itself and the existing house. The garden end of the pavilion is formed by a wall of frameless glazing, which mimics the appearance of the adjacent sliding and folding doors when open. These spatial and visual manoeuvres create ambiguities of enclosure and openness, and construction and completion, which are reinforced by the use of concrete and exposed brickwork as surface finishes.

The extension can also be understood as a lens through which views of both the garden and the existing house are mediated.



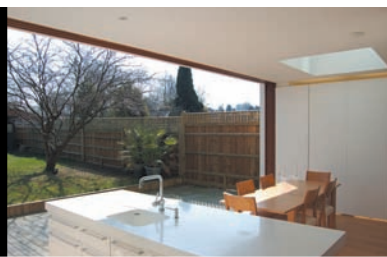
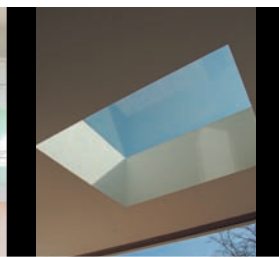
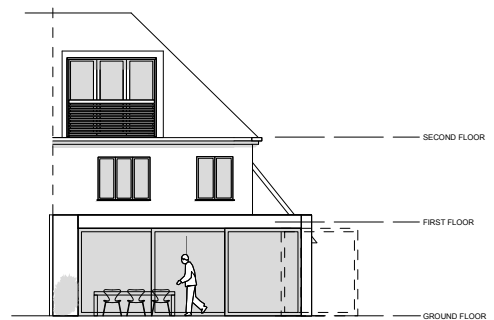
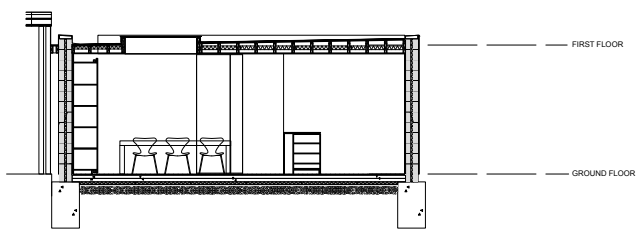
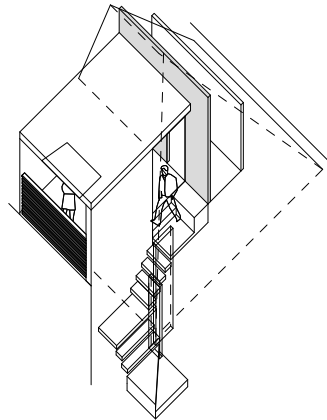
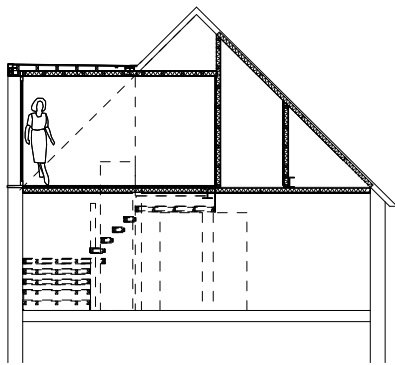
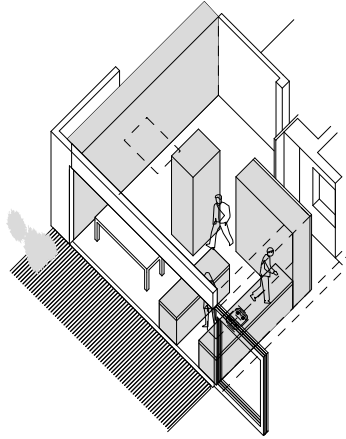
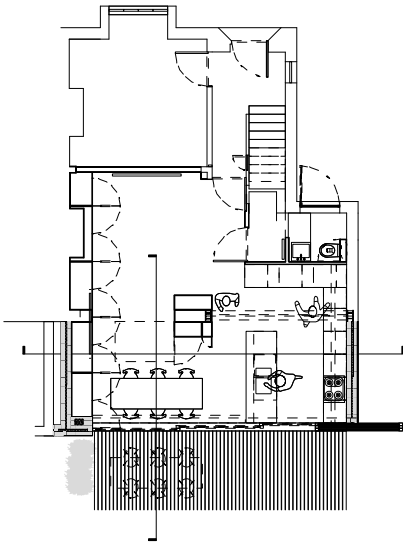
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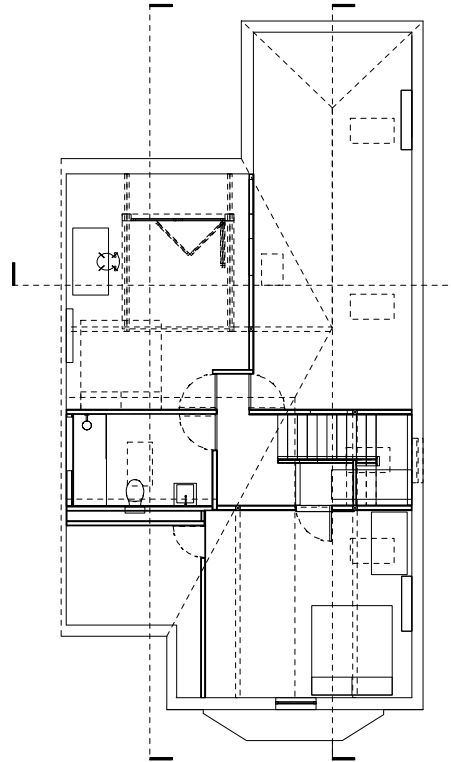
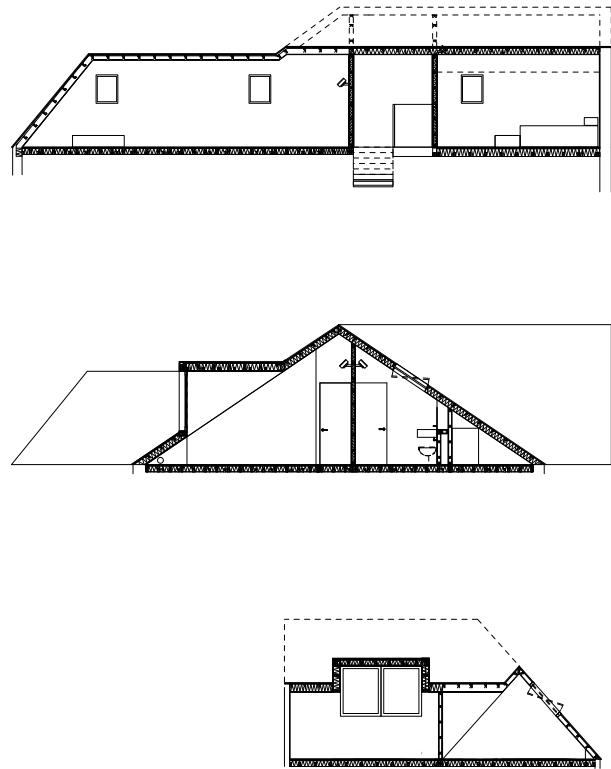
#### semi-detached

A large rear extension brings this semi-detached house into a new relationship with the adjacent garden and reconfigures the adjoining existing spaces. Rooflights and joinery create soft edges, defining zones of the open plan space.

The design can be seen as a redrawing of a number of previous extensions to Victorian and Edwardian houses. While specific to the requirements of the client and this much newer house, the extension also draws upon the history of these previous projects and their contexts. Rather than seeing the act of drawing as subservient to the act of building, the projects are developed serially so that each design emerges from a representation of a previous scheme.

This approach makes productive the inevitable client desire for their project to resemble the architect's previous work. The absence of visible detailing is similarly motivated by a desire for the building to emulate as closely as possible the drawing by which it was represented.

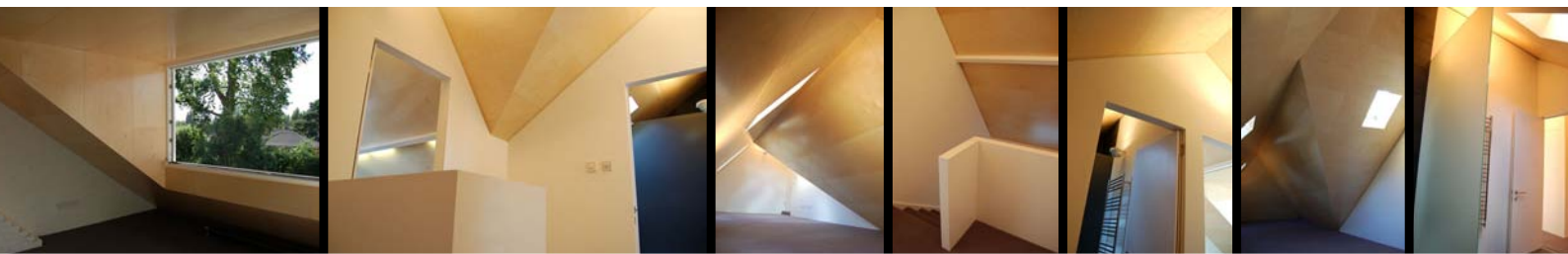




#### In the fold

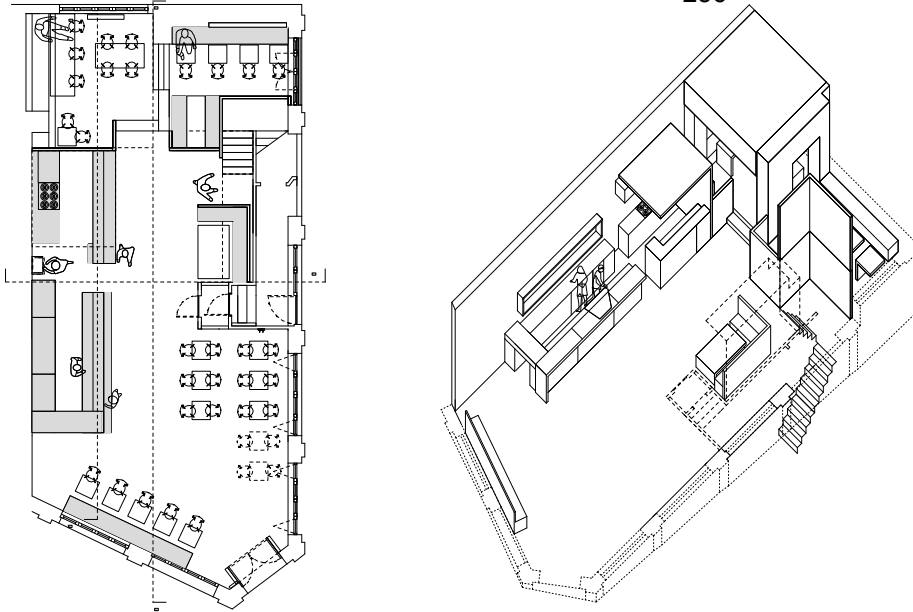
The underside of the existing roof form is battened to conceal its structure and clad with birch-faced plywood so as to appear as a single, folded, abstract surface. Only two of the new structural steels are visible below the form, creating an uncanny appearance as they are clearly inadequate to support the load. Rooflight openings are detailed so as to conceal their frames, supporting the sculptural appearance of the overall form. White rectilinear walls enclose the rooms and are detailed to appear to terminate just below the timber-clad form. Where the new forms meet the existing 'found object' building, brick and floor plates are exposed.

The new space provides two bedrooms, a casual living space and a shower room. Glimpsed views between the spaces create the impression of a loosely divided single open-plan space. A sliding and folding window to the rear bedroom provides panoramic views over the garden.





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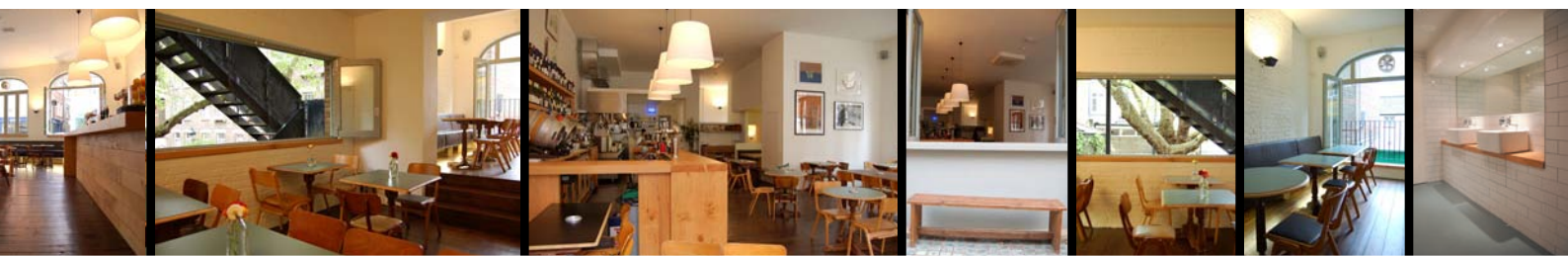
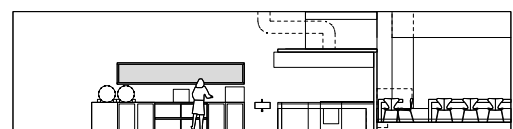
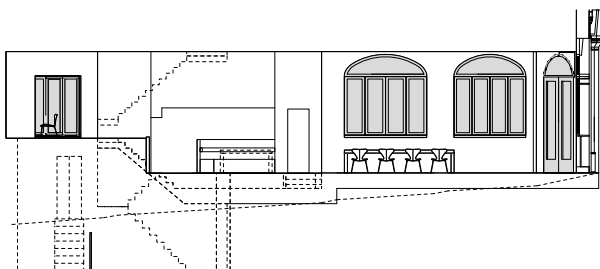


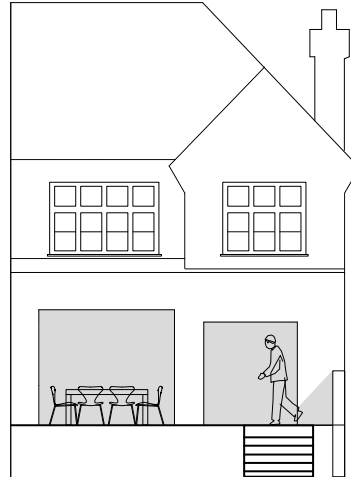
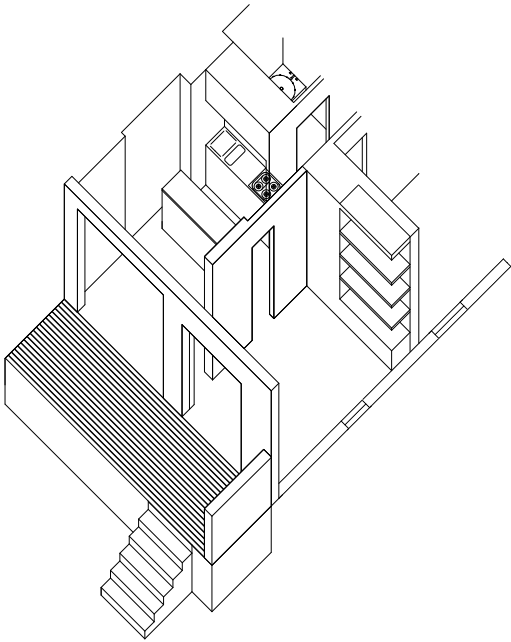
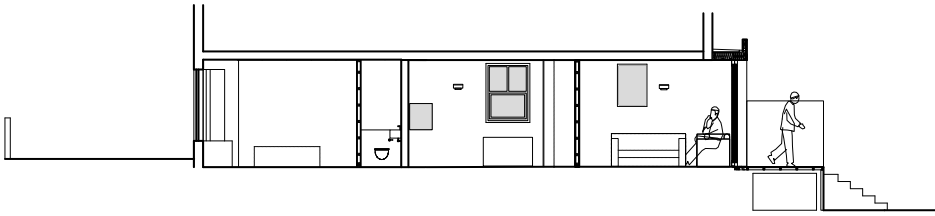
#### public house

Spatial and formal moves developed in preceding private housing projects are reconfigured in a more public context. The design draws upon the history of the pub as meeting place and more specifically, the tradition of screens, mirrors and elaborate ornament.

Leaners at the external threshold create an adjacent internal zone that assumes something of the character of the street. From this space one moves through an area of casual seating, to a series of more private dining spaces, each partially enclosed by screen walls and changes of floor and ceiling level. This hierarchy recalls the Victorian tradition of providing varying degrees of privacy to different customers.

Positioned above eye-level, a mirror behind the bar recalls traditional bar screens, originally intended to prevent eye contact between staff and patrons. Traditional surface ornament is translated into a composition of interlocking massive and planar solids that assume an ornamental quality at a larger scale.

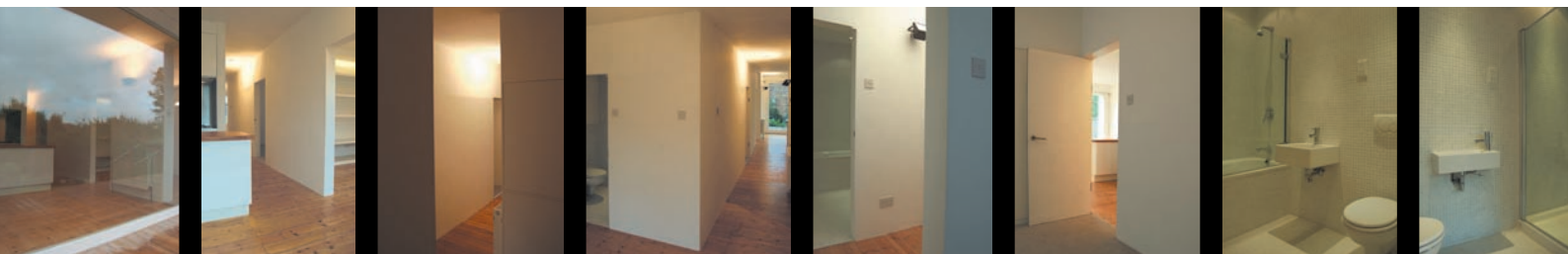



**tabula rasa**

The apartment occupies the ground floor of a mid-twentieth century semi-detached house. The floor plan has been rearranged to create the impression of a single large open-plan space. This space is structured around two large volumes, containing respectively the kitchen, bathroom and utility area; and the second bedroom and a shower room.

The original door and window openings to the rear of the building are enlarged down to the floor to create two fully glazed sliding doors. These doors lead on to a timber-decked terrace, set at the same floor level to create a strong relationship between interior and exterior.

The frames of the sliding doors are concealed, framing painterly views of the garden to the rear and contributing to an impression that the works may not be completed. A patchwork of floorboards and the use of utilitarian floodlamps heighten the impression of the project as a work in progress.

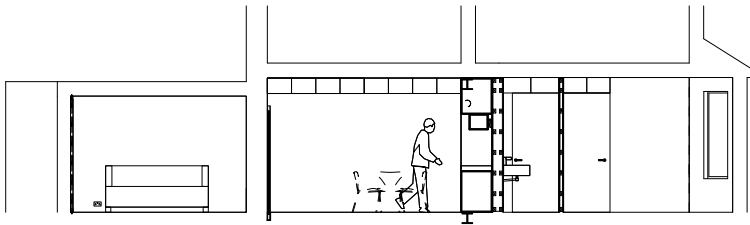
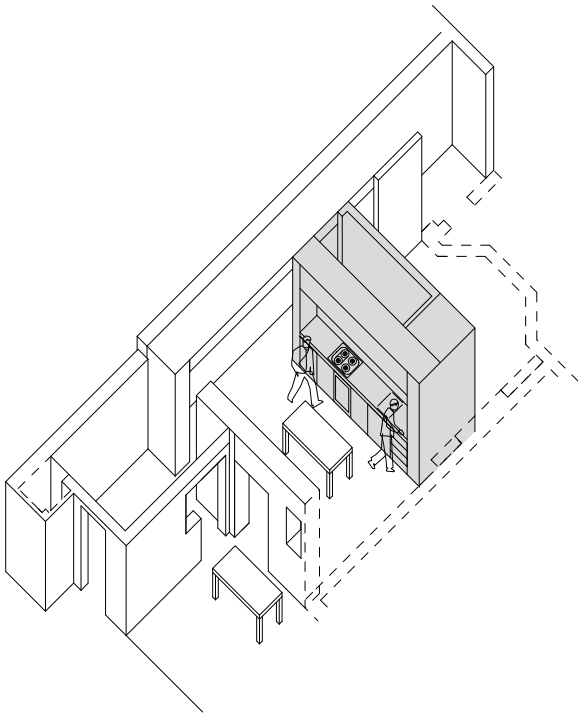


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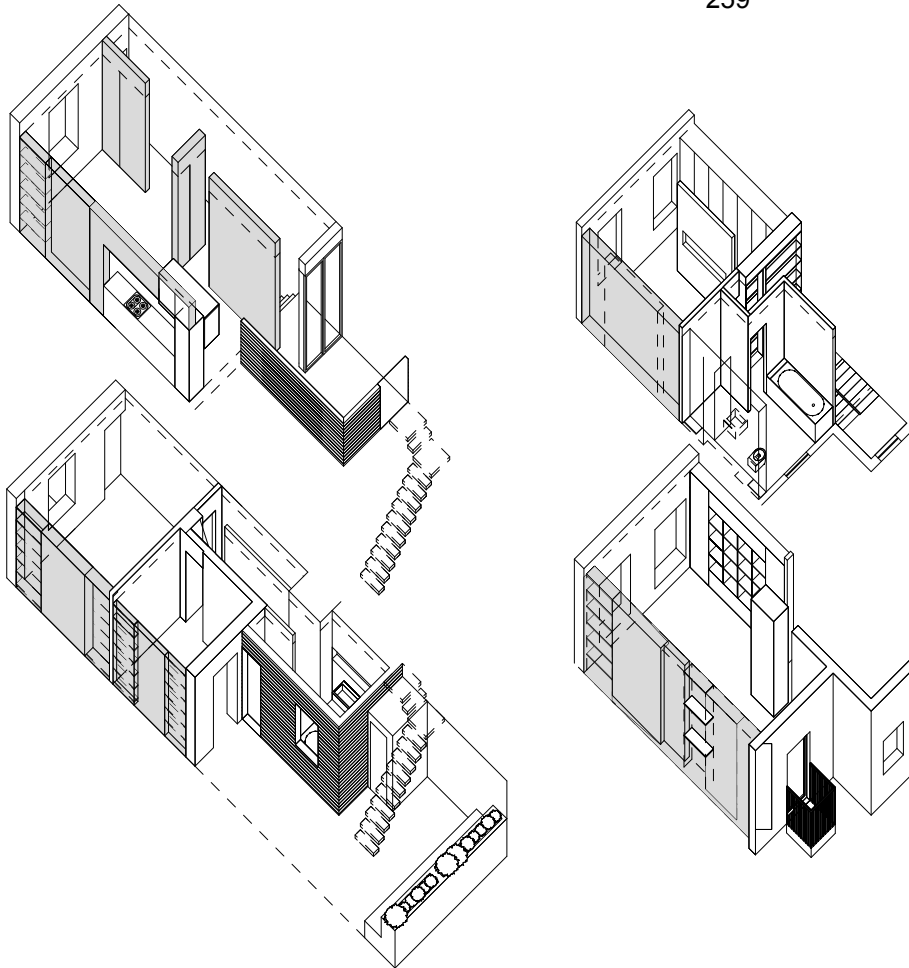
The open-plan space of the apartment is divided into a living, kitchen, dining area and a bedroom by a central volume that houses the kitchen, shower room and wardrobes. A second bedroom occupies an annexed space to the rear of the property and divides the enclosed garden into two connected courtyard spaces.

The continuity of the epoxy floor and the mirrored splashback to the kitchen enhances the sense of a continuous single open-plan space. The extensively mirrored interior of the shower room that occupies the interior of the central volume, creates an uncanny sense of spatial expansion where one expects compression.

The existing Victorian building is preserved unaltered as a found object, but the windows and doors removed and replaced with fixed and sliding glazing with concealed frames. This articulation gives the building a sense of incompleteness and vacancy. The interior reads as a contemporary re-inhabitation of this Victorian artefact.



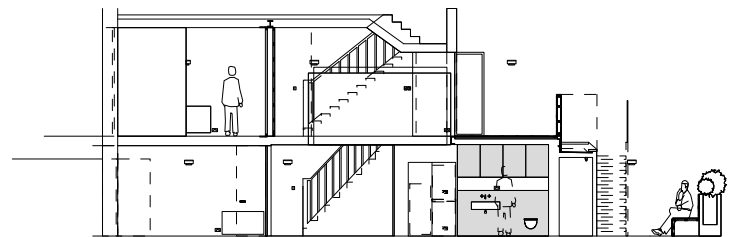
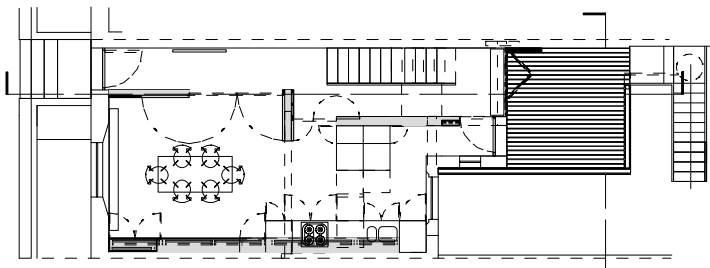
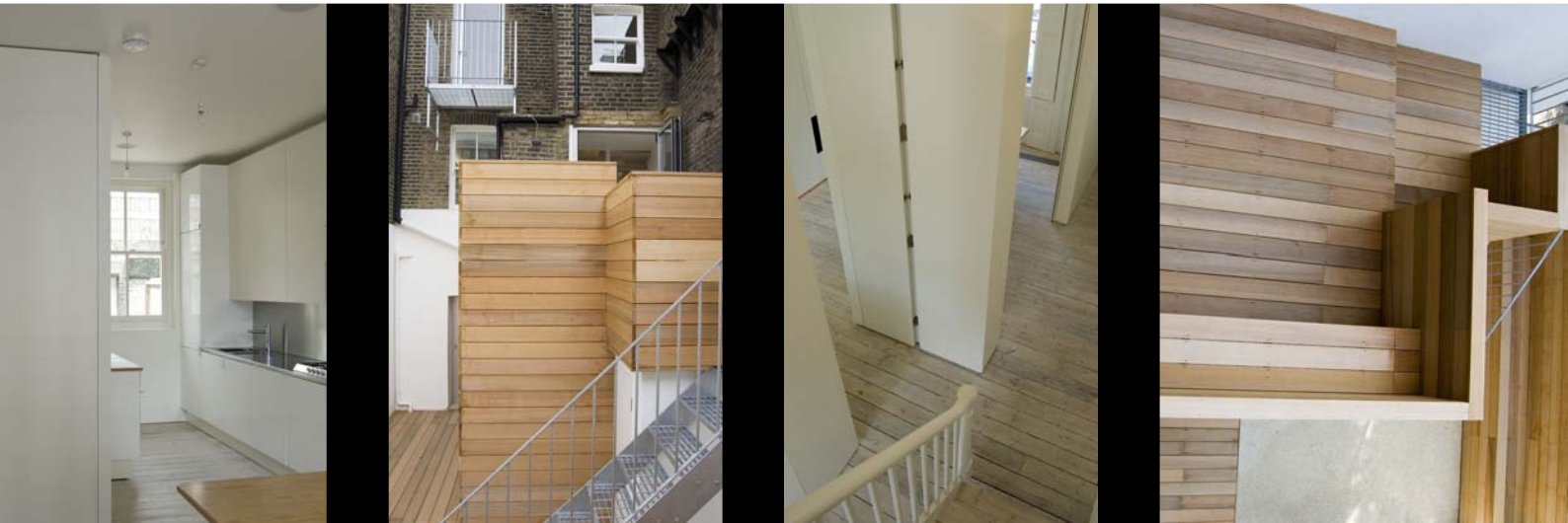


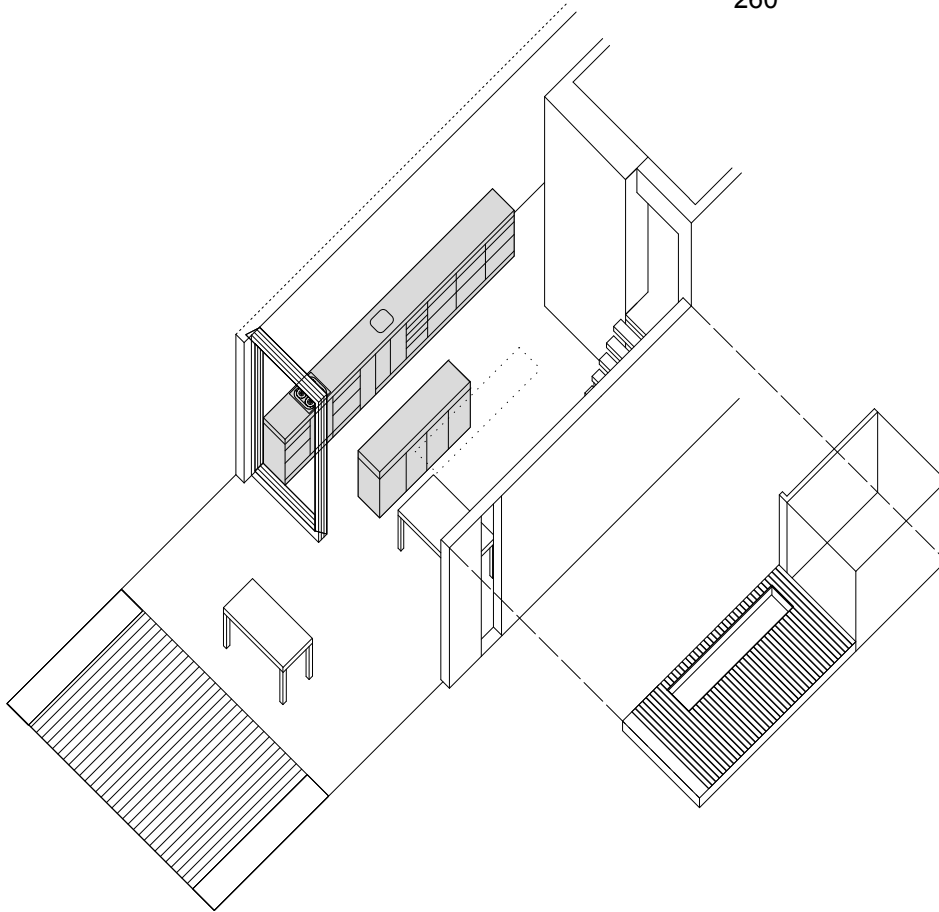


#### sleeper

Galvanised steel and aluminium insertions to the rear elevation of this Victorian terrace house reference the immediately adjacent railway lines. A full-height opening to one of the upper levels frames views of railway tracks, industrial staircases and platforms through a metallic door and balcony. Spatially, the scheme responds to the railway lines through the analogy of an urban river. Views of the tracks are framed to provide vistas and glimpses of passing trains and the timber-clad terrace, walls and decking to the rear reinforce a nautical reading. Raw concrete with exposed shell aggregate to the courtyard further supports this interpretation, while also further referencing the industrial context.

Internally the entire house is reconfigured to provide modern, generally open-plan spaces. This strategy is most evident in the ground floor and this vocabulary of free-standing planes and interlocking pods is deployed to varying degrees throughout the other floors of the building.

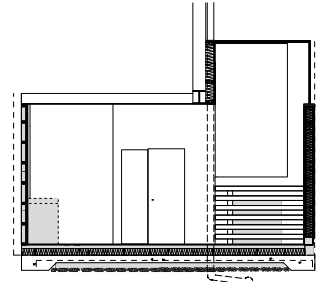
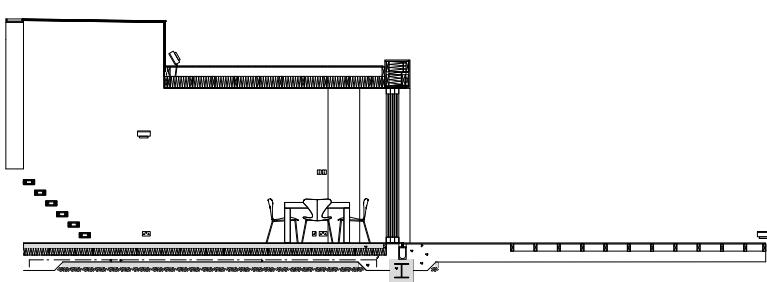




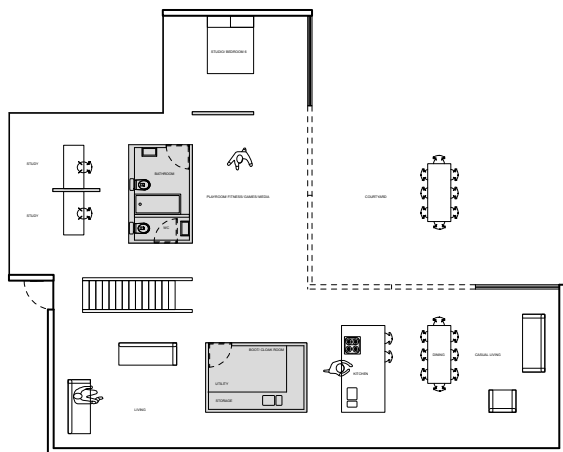
#### landscaper

Roof glazing frames a view of the mass of the upper floors of the house hovering over the new space. Concealed structure transfers the weight of the existing building, the absence of visible structure giving the space a hyperbolic sense of both lightness and strength. From the other approach to the space this roof glazing is positioned so that it is concealed from view, giving the impression that the building is open to the elements like the garden space to the rear.

The material presence of the building is visually reduced to the planes of the ceiling and two walls, while the floor material reads as a continuation of the landscaping. From the upper levels of the house, the decking to the rear of the courtyard reads as a background repetition of the timber cladding that gives a sculptural quality to the roof, further dematerializing the building into the landscaping.







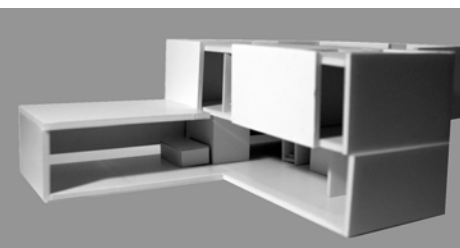
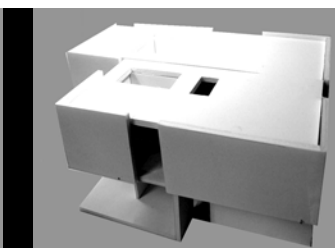
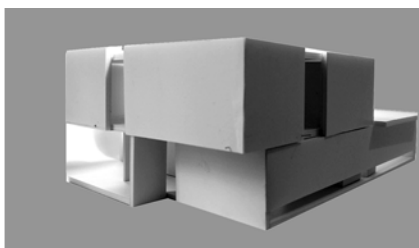
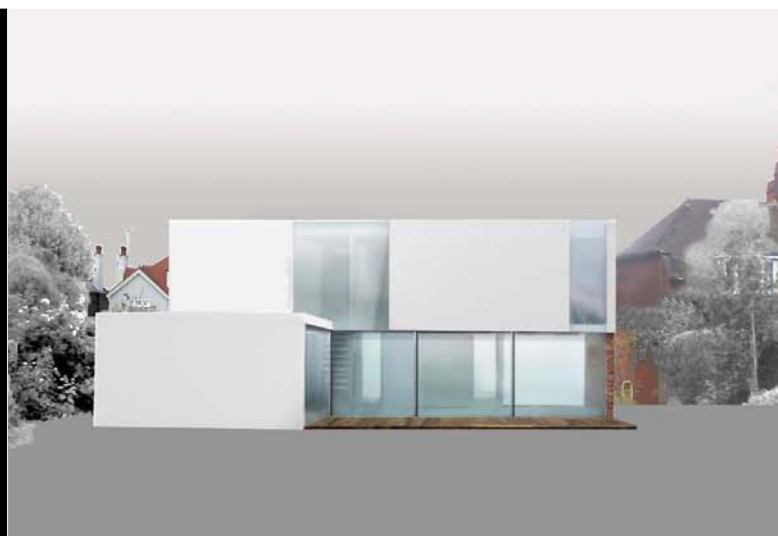
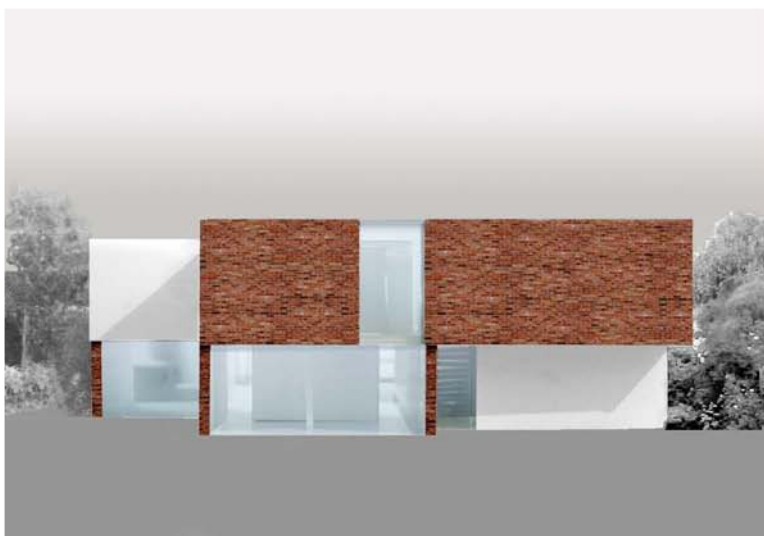
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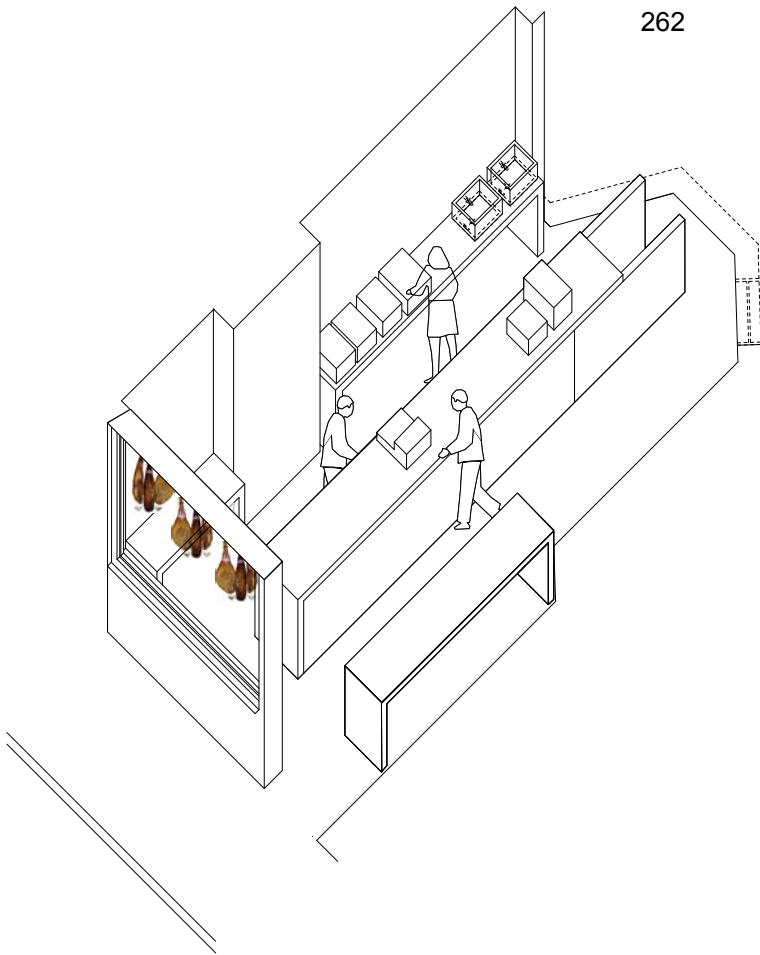
### extrapolation house

This new-build house considers the broader potential of a range of architectural manoeuvres previously explored through additions and alterations to existing buildings.

The proposal draws upon the bulk, position and siting of the existing house on the site. The open-plan spatial arrangement could be utilised as a reconfiguration of the original building envelope and an extension to the rear, but the design allows for these spaces to be enclosed within a sculptural composition of new building forms.

Materials from the existing house and its neighbours are utilized to contextually ground three new rectangular forms, two rendered and one brick. While in the existing buildings these materials are used to define recognizable traditional building volumes and their surface ornamentation, they are here used at the scale of the entire building composition. Rather than recognizable fenestration, windows and doors are defined as gaps between and within the volumes of this modern composition.

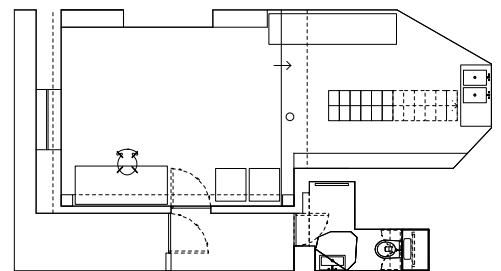
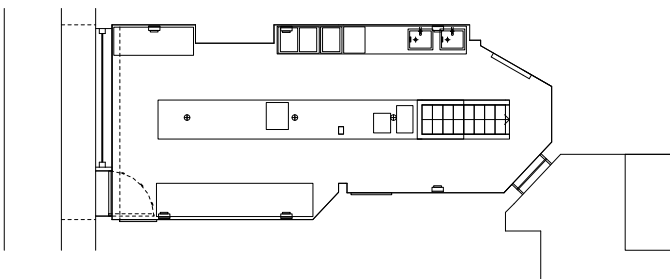




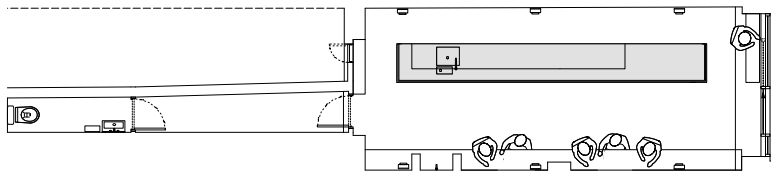
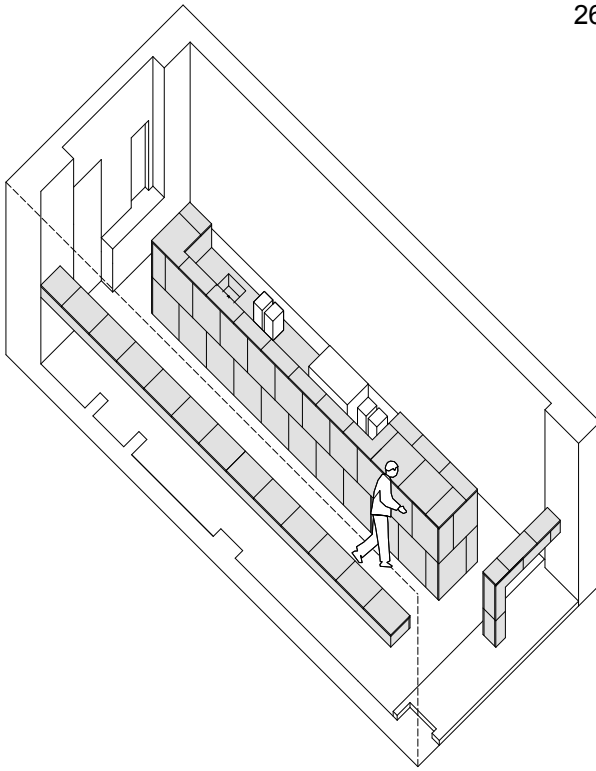
#### interior street

Inspired by the street food and tapas bars of Madrid, the stone floor continues the material of the adjoining pavement into the shop. The material palette of timber and stone also recalls the traditional tapas bar, but the oak and yorkstone are particular to its English setting. The modern interior is positioned inside a Listed Georgian building, and the original features are preserved in their current state, as a register of the site's history.

The service and preparation counters are articulated as free-standing tables so as to further evoke the character of street food. Similarly, the linear placement of the tables supports a reading of the shop as an interiorised laneway. The fixtures and fittings are articulated as furnishings, enhancing the illusion of the shop-fittings as ready-mades. The spacing of the hanging light fittings establishes a rhythm beyond the dimensions of the interior, accentuating spatial connections with the street.



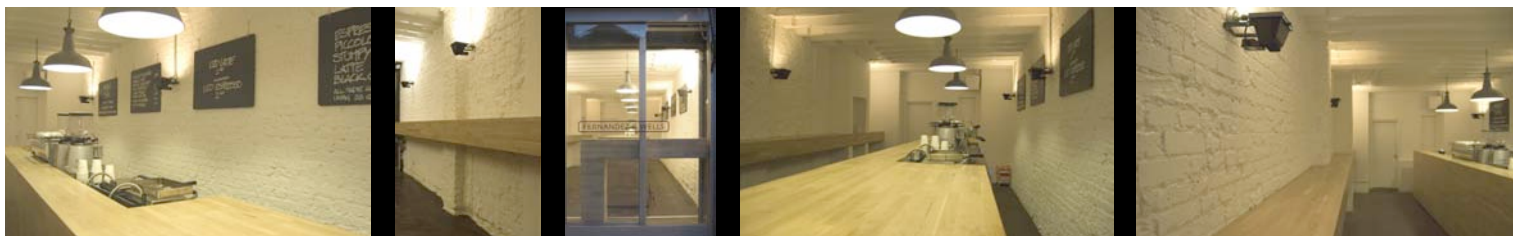
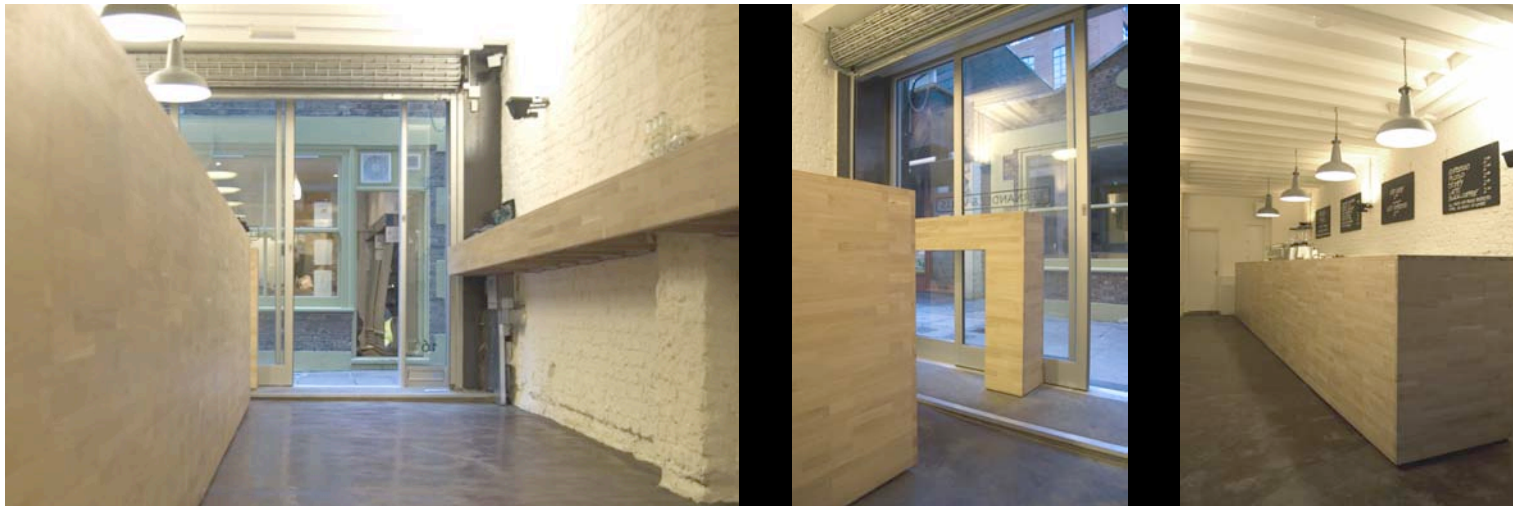
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#### serial terrace

An extension was added to the rear of a terrace house, the interior of which was reconfigured into open-plan spaces throughout. The rear extension draws upon the Victorian tradition of a white rendered rear wing, but redeploys the material in a modernist form that assumes a sculptural quality through the suppression of recognizable building vocabulary. By utilising a relatively neutral rectilinear form, the intervention is not obviously designed, and so its relationship to the original building is ambiguous.

This approach is continued into the interior, where walls are reduced to free-standing vertical planes and volumes by the insertion of concealed fire doors in place of door openings and wall returns; and the replacement of skirtings, architraves and cornices with shadow gaps. The timber and stone floors are similarly articulated horizontally. The timber-decked garden walls and the timber internal staircase are also

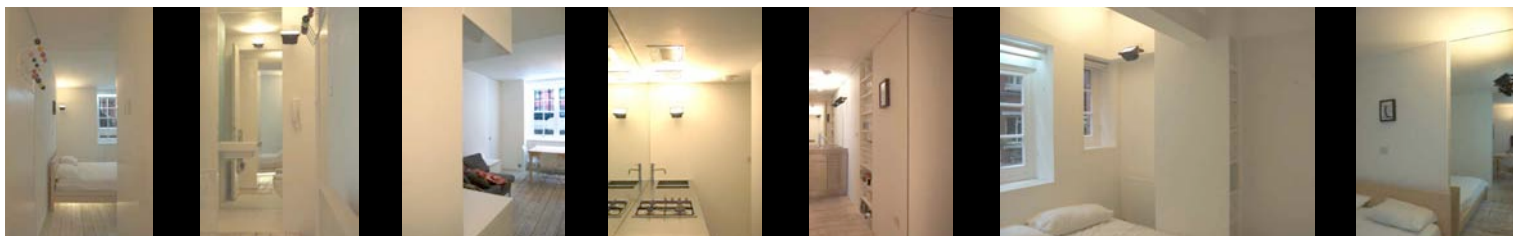
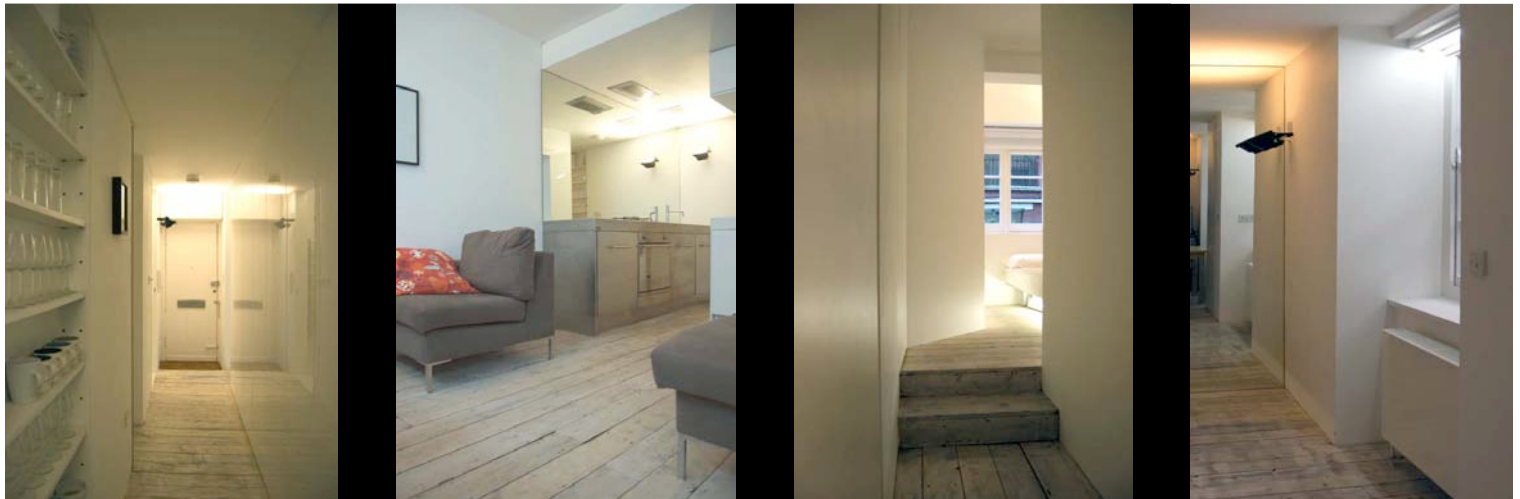


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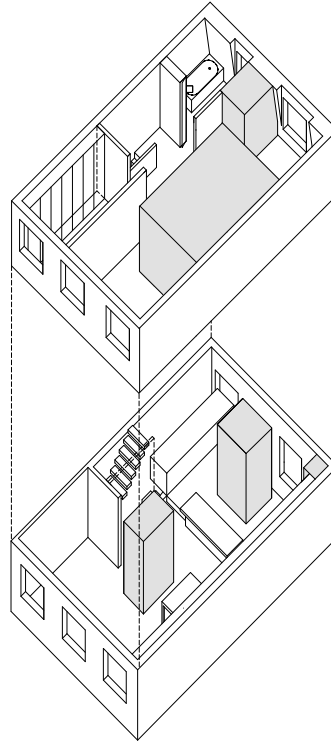
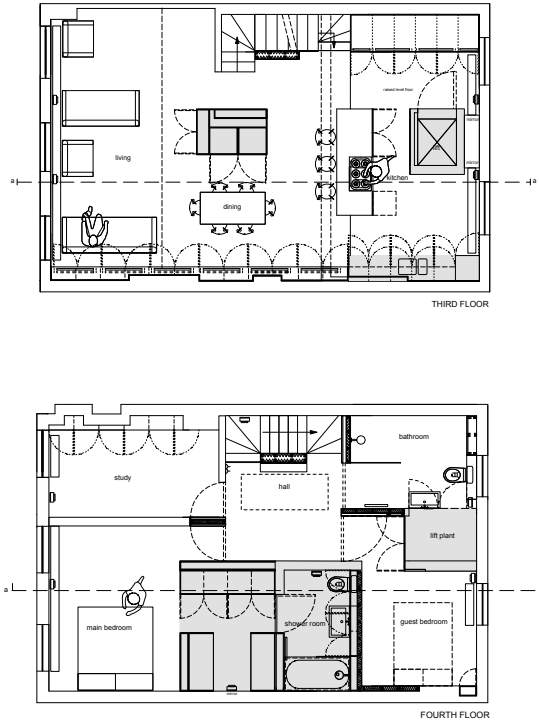
**karntner house 2**

The project was conceived as a permutation of the earlier Karntner House apartment design, using illusions of light and reflection to create the impression of space beyond.

A hallway and two existing rooms of the Edwardian dwelling were opened up into a single open-plan space, with concealed doors that allow a master bedroom to be enclosed. The horizontal plane of a lowered ceiling defines a dressing zone to the master bedroom and provides a soft edge between the living and kitchen areas, while the wall between the master bedroom and living space is articulated as a free-standing vertical plane. A rectangular, sculptural volume encloses kitchen cabinets and bedroom storage, and loosely divides the circulation space from the bedroom and open-plan living, kitchen and dining space. A mirror to the master bedroom mimics the adjacent door openings, while those to the kitchen and bathroom create a visual doubling of these spaces.





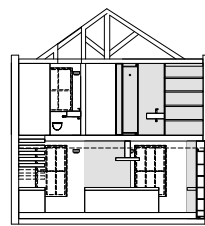
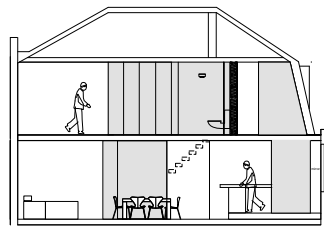


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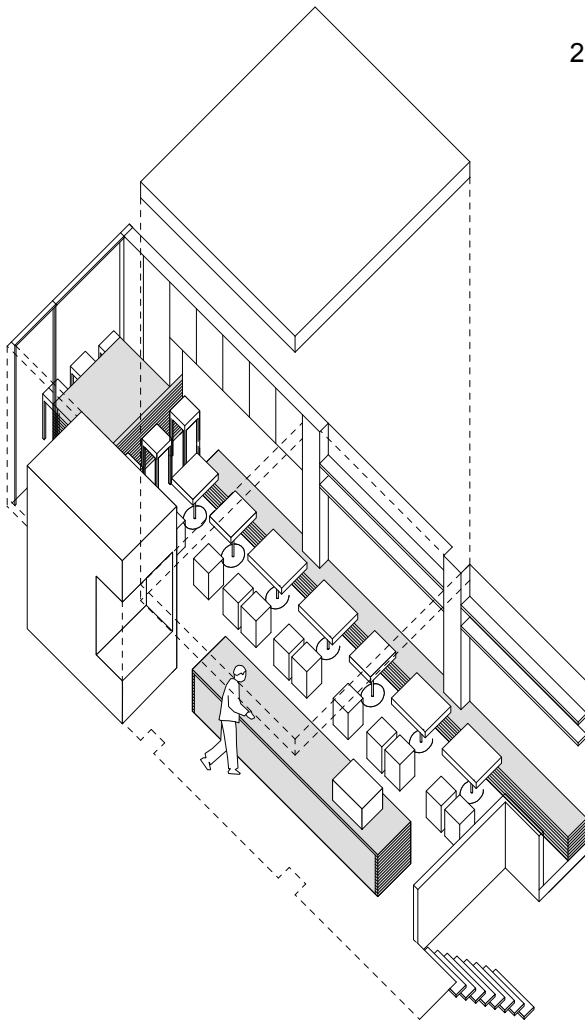
#### stereoscope

Two floors of a terrace house were reconfigured into an open-plan apartment. The exterior walls and roof are articulated as an original, found object; while the interior is loosely divided by rectilinear planes and volumes that define distinct spaces and zones. At the junctions between these elements and the existing building, shadow gap details enhance the sense of their detachment from the original building and one another.

Existing non-rectilinear elements created by the angled wall to the existing roof mansard are appropriated into this design strategy through the use of shadow gap details and mirrors, creating the illusion that they terminate short of the existing walls, or extend through them. The original roof structure is exposed in part of the upper level space, permitting views above the rectilinear lowered ceiling. Mirrors to the roof truss create the impression that this open roof space extends over the entire building footprint.



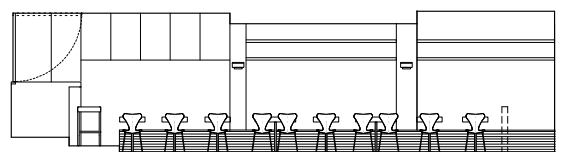
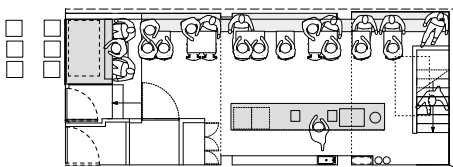
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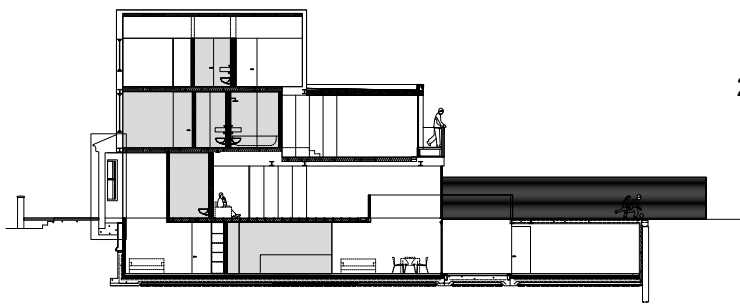


#### striated space

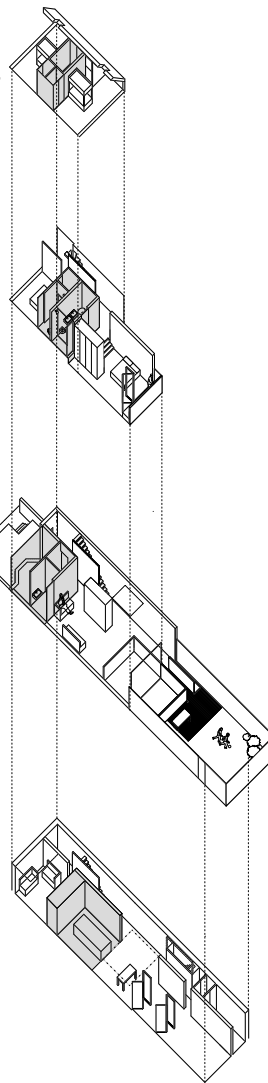
The spatial and formal design strategy was precipitated by ducts that occupy much of the street frontage, venting an electrical sub-station in the basement. Timber slats enclose and disguise the ducts, providing the required permeability while creating a high bar for indoor and outdoor seating. The service counter and bench seating to the interior continue the formal language of the bar, and together these three rectilinear timber volumes divide the space loosely into zones of service, and indoor and outdoor seating.

A distinction is drawn between the modern insertion of sculptural timber volumes and associated white planes that enclose various functional elements, and the existing building into which they have been placed. Through the addition of a white paint finish, the existing ceilings and walls have been curated and brought into a new relationship with the modern insertions, but are otherwise preserved in their raw and partially finished state.





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#### composite house

A selection of spatial and formal devices developed individually in a number of preceding projects are redeployed here in a single composite arrangement. The project can be read as an autonomous composition, but also makes reference to the projects through which its components were serially developed.

The new subterranean level is connected to the interior of the existing house through two double-height spaces, and to the exterior by an internal courtyard. One of the double-height spaces provides a visual and spatial connection to the ground floor, while the other permits views into the dining and kitchen spaces from the galleried living space above. The courtyard blurs the distinction between interior and exterior, and can be appropriated into either the dining space or study, or both.

To both the interior and exterior, the incisive additions are articulated as abstract white planes and volumes that envelop and pass through the original building.



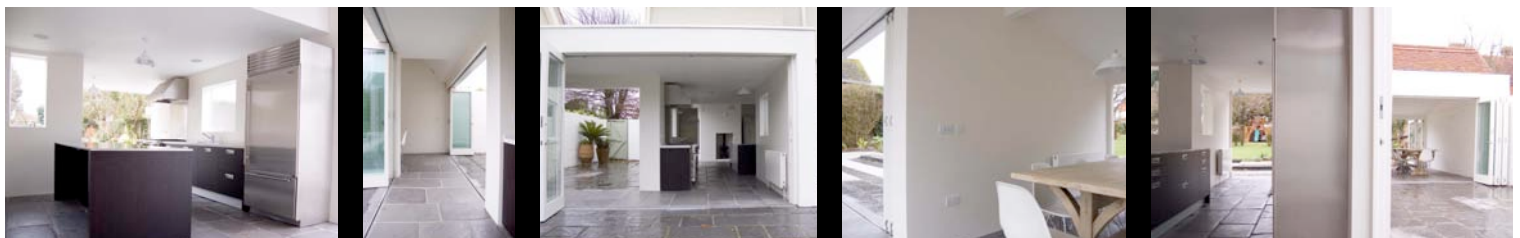
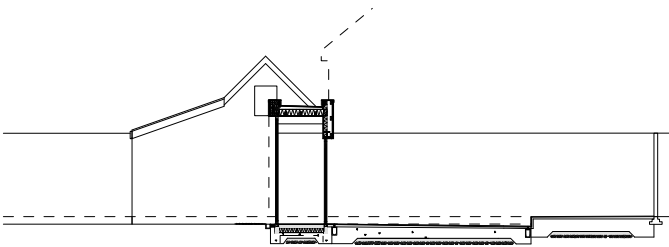
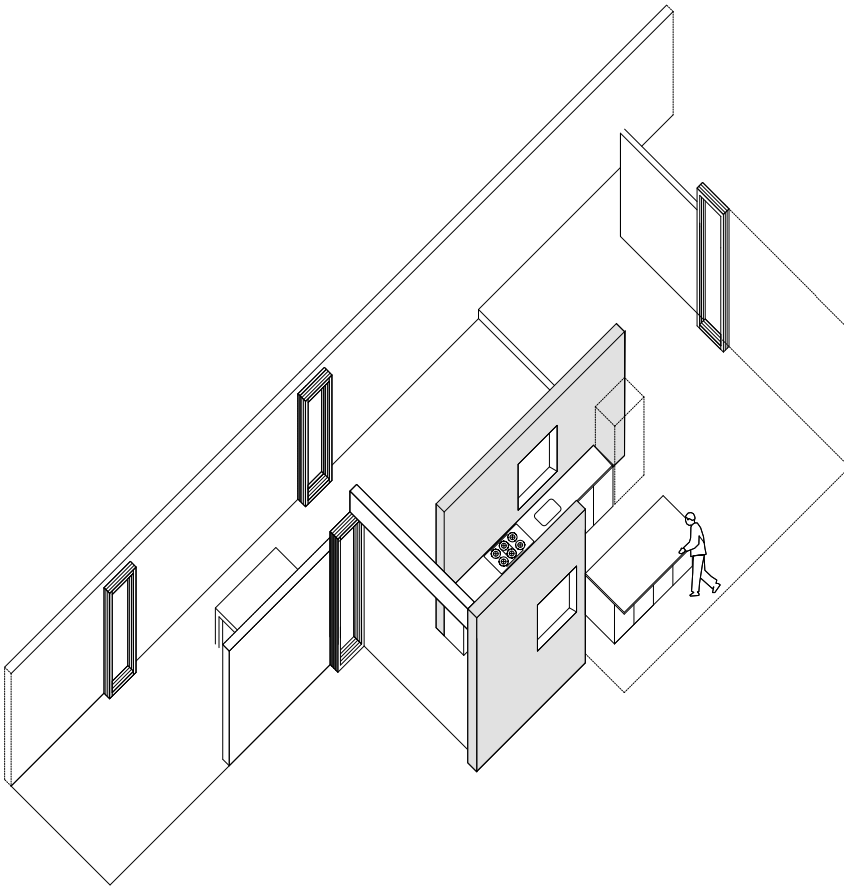


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**bridge**

A small addition connects the house and an original outbuilding into a series of interrelated interior and exterior spaces. A single floor material connects the two terraces, courtyard, and two interior spaces; and a number of full-height window and door openings are introduced to reduce the existing walls to free-standing planes that loosely divide the spaces.

Externally the intervention is very subtle visually, reading simply as the absence of components of the building through the use of doors that slide and fold out of their openings, and frameless glazing to windows. Internally, changes of ceiling level define various zones of the open-plan spaces, while original brickwork and beams are retained and exposed to juxtapose and frame the modern interventions. Referencing the history of the building as a farmhouse, the kitchen is articulated as a collection of contemporized timber workbenches furnishing the room rather than fitted into the building.





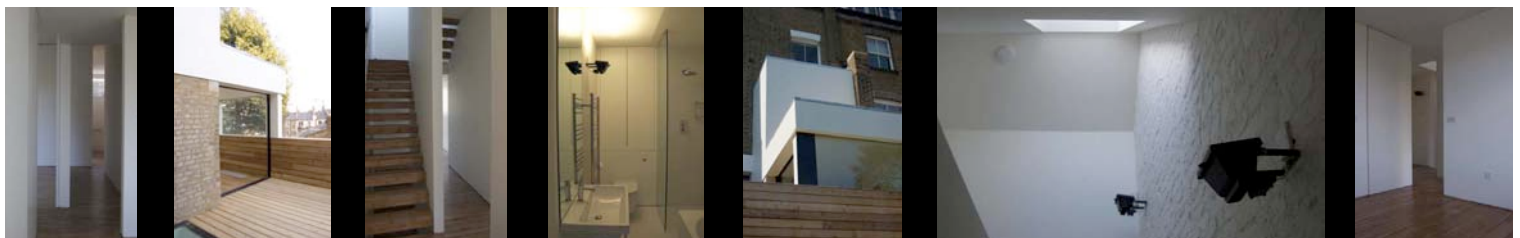
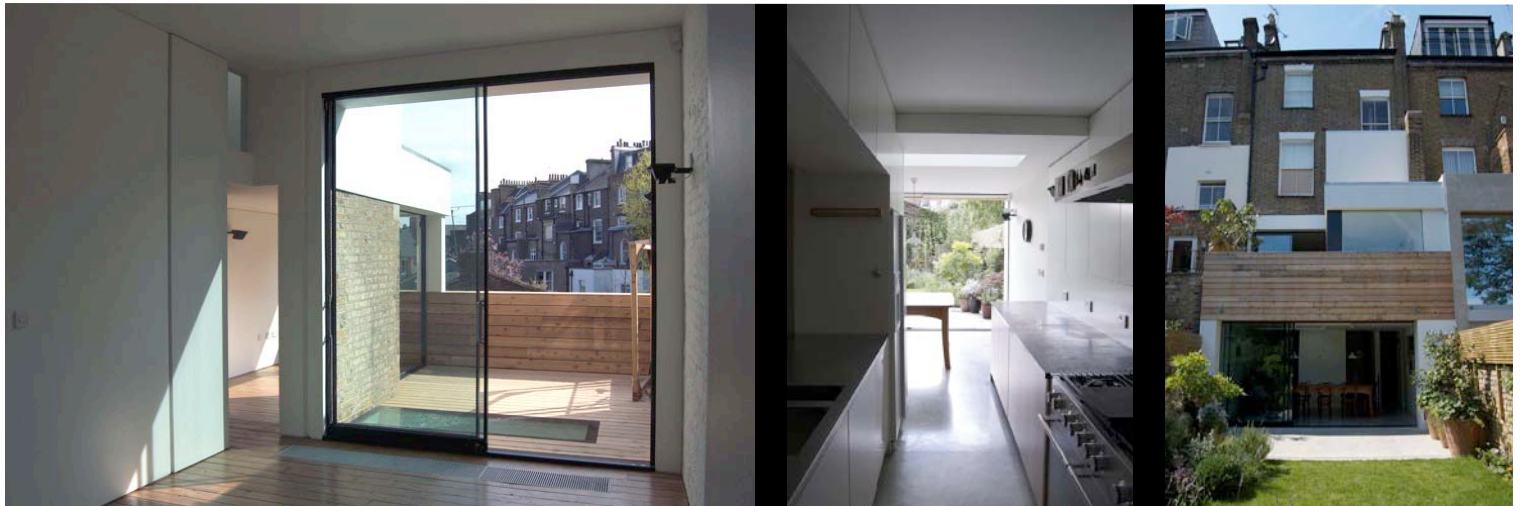
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#### aggregate house

The project is composed of a collection of components serially developed through previous projects, but these components are loosely assembled rather than forming a single coherent composition – allowing visual dominance to oscillate between the original and new elements. To the exterior, a sculptural composition of timber and white render is formed by the new rear extension to the lower-ground floor, the ground floor terrace, and the reworked closet wing. However this composition is relatively diminutive in relation to the original building, which dominates this elevation.

The decking timber of the ground floor terrace is continuous with the cladding of the extension below, lending it the character of an occupied undercroft, rather than a building form per se. The loft extension is articulated as an incision into the original slate roof form, and the interior spaces are defined by planes and rectangular volumes that sit slightly detached from the original building.



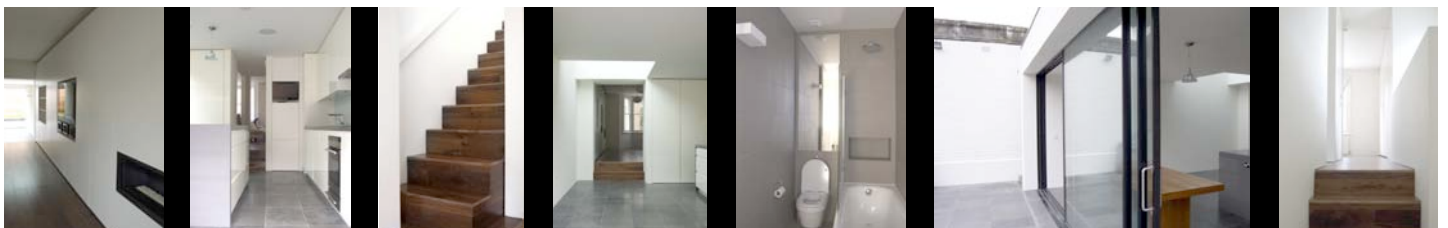
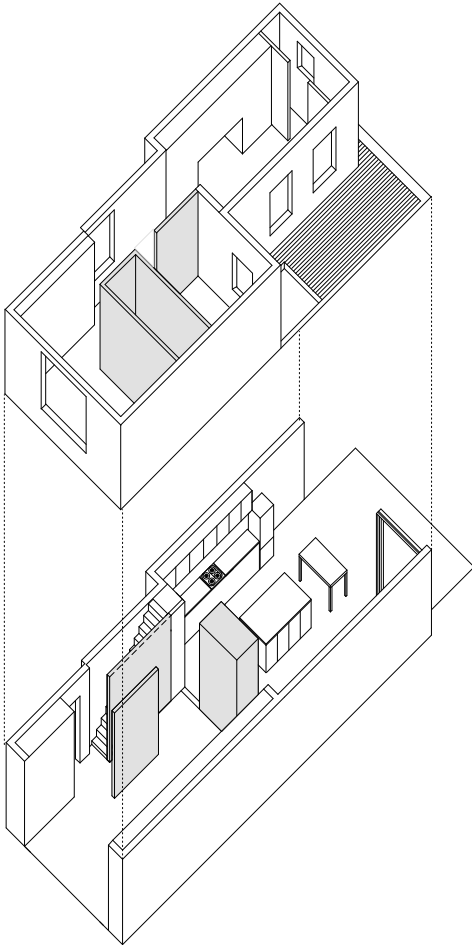
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**serial terrace**

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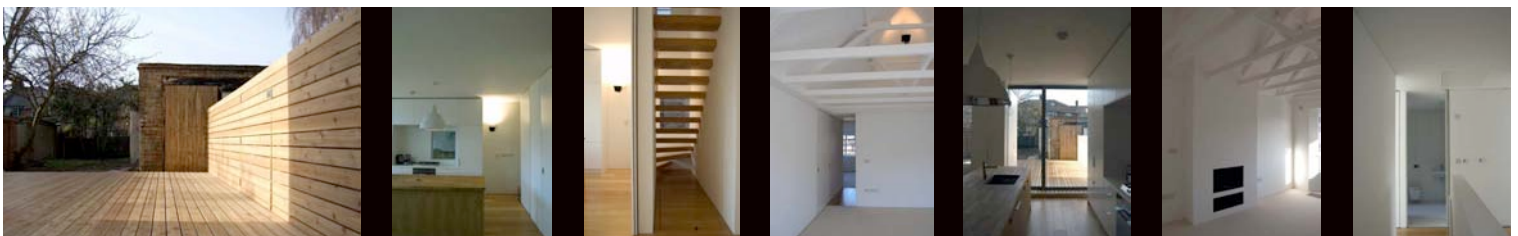
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#### Furnished Space

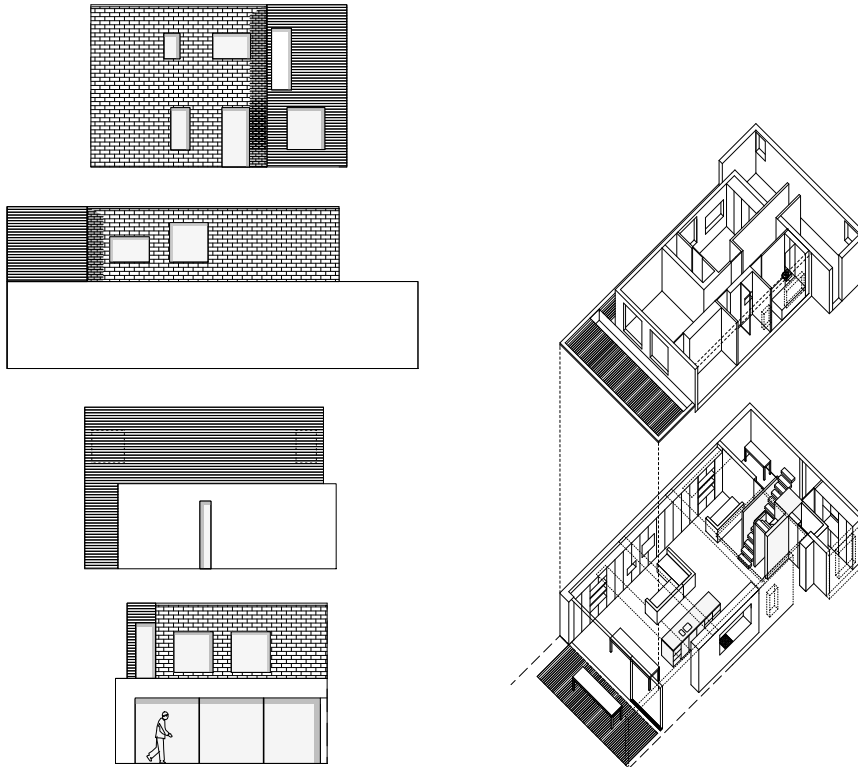
The project eschews an extension in favour of reorganizing the existing internal space of the house and its relationship with the exterior. Both floors are completely open-plan; each divided by only a handful of freestanding planes of white-painted wall, and a collection of objects that are assigned an ambiguous status as both furnishings, and architectural, sculptural elements.

On the first floor, the existing structure of the roof is exposed and white-painted to signal its status as a found-object component of the site, set in juxtaposition to the rectilinear insertions of the new sculptural composition. The ground-floor kitchen is articulated as a collection of three rectilinear, small-scale objects, two full-height and one low-level. The former are white-painted, accommodating the kitchen appliances and storage, and concealing the structural support of the new open rear elevation of the building; while the latter, clad continuously in timber, loosely divides kitchen and dining areas.





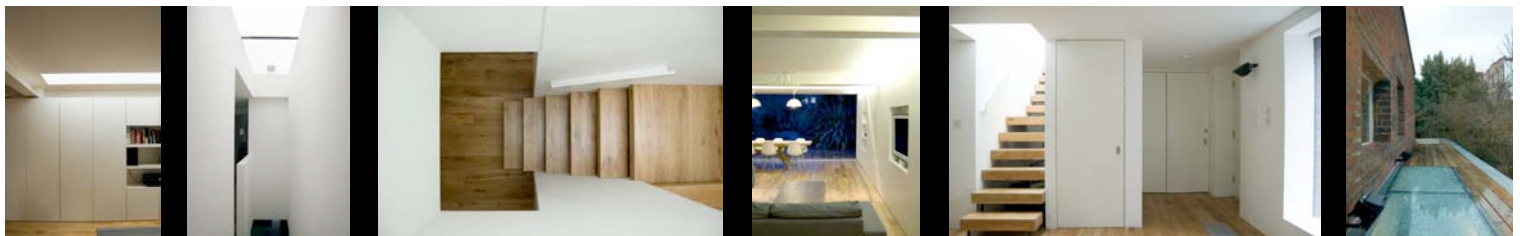
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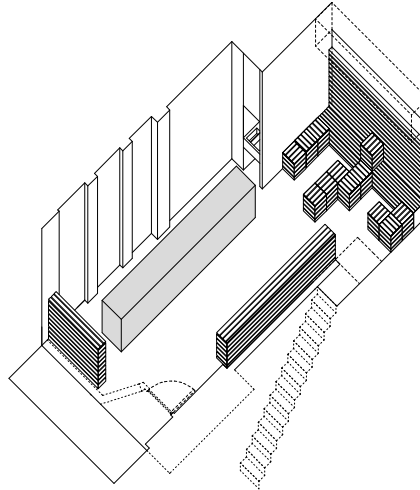
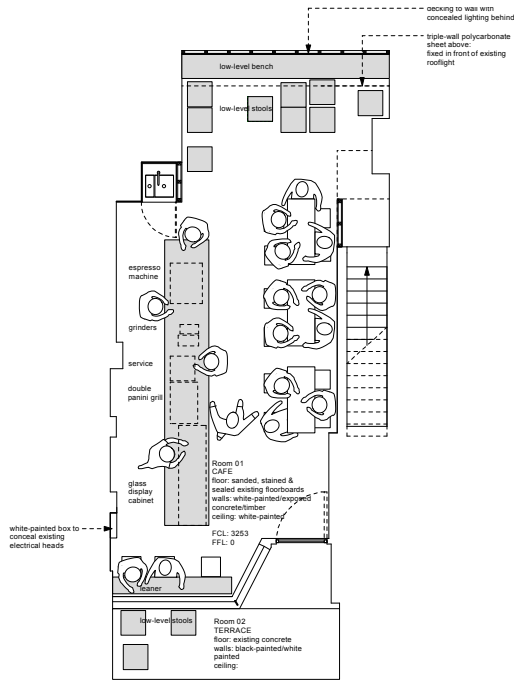
#### interpolation house

Akin to a new-build house, Interpolation House encompassed the redesign of the interior and exterior of an existing brick house in north London. The project draws upon both a catalogue of building parts designed and built in the course of numerous house extension projects, and the vocabulary of our unbuilt Extrapolation House new-build design.

The exterior form of the building is composed of interlocking, rectilinear volumes of brick, render and timber, and window openings are presented as frameless voids in this composition. The interior space of the ground floor is arranged as a single open-plan space divided by a number of white rectilinear planes and volumes that loosely divide the space into zones, and allow the complete separation of a study and utility room. A new top-lit double-height space encloses an open riser staircase and brings natural light into the deep-plan areas of both the ground and first floors.



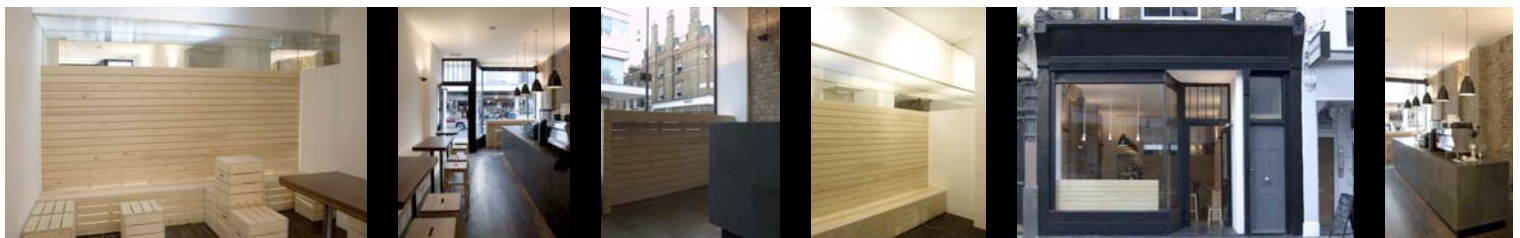
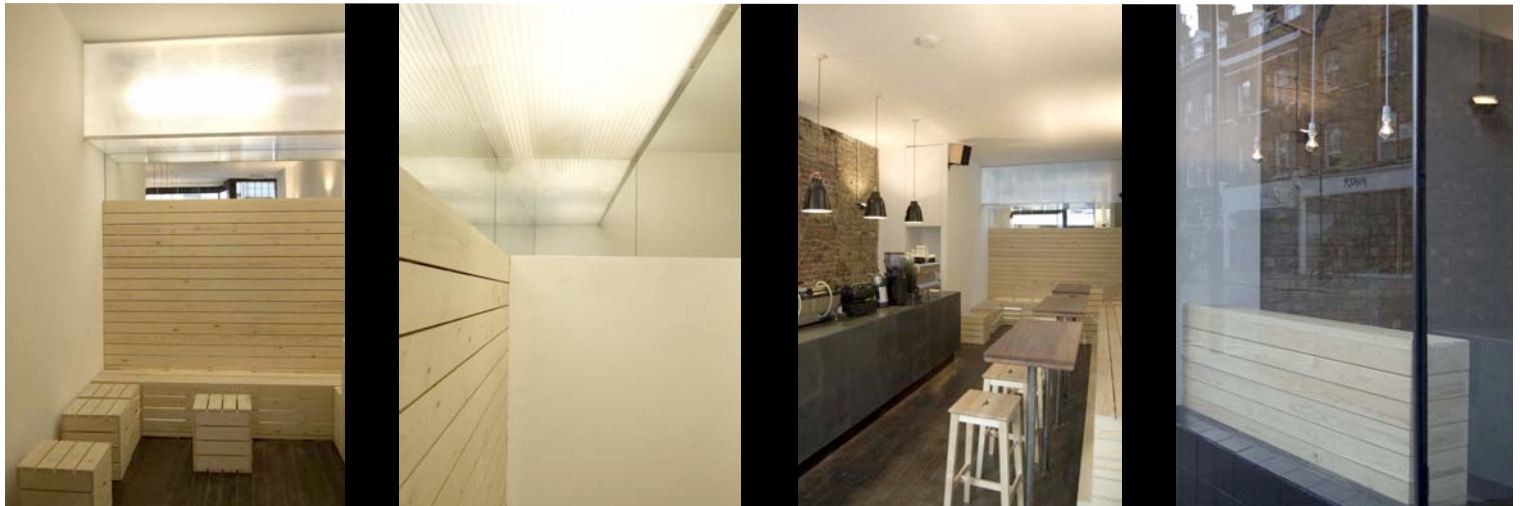
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### laneway

Timber decking and bluestone tiles respectively reference Australia generally and Melbourne in particular, where this type of stone was used extensively in the Victorian era. Boxes of timber decking function as seating and tables, alluding to the ubiquitous reuse of milk crates in contemporary Melbourne cafes. High-level mirror to the rear similarly creates an illusion of infinite space, recalling the flat Australian horizon. The compression of a Melbourne laneway is evoked by the longitudinal arrangement of the service counter and seating through the middle of the space, while the expansive area to the rear mimics the openness of the street to the front.

A number of previously latent elements of the London site are brought to the foreground, including Victorian floorboards, brickwork, and a traditional shop-front. An active tension is established between these found-object components of the existing building, and the transplanted spatial and formal devices that have been introduced.

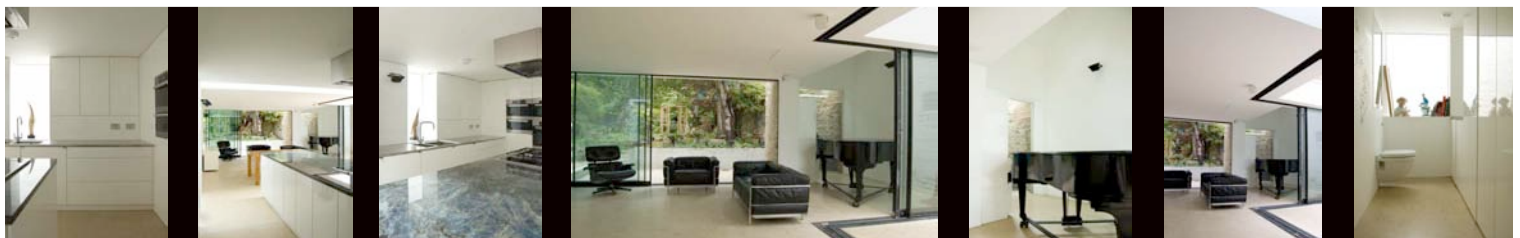
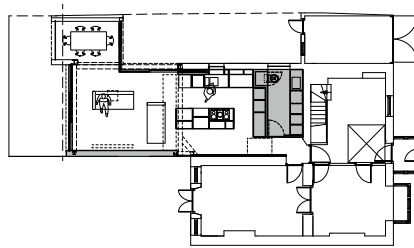
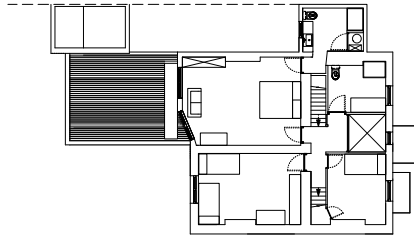
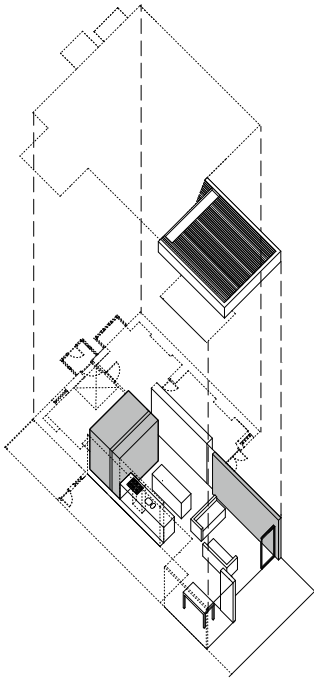


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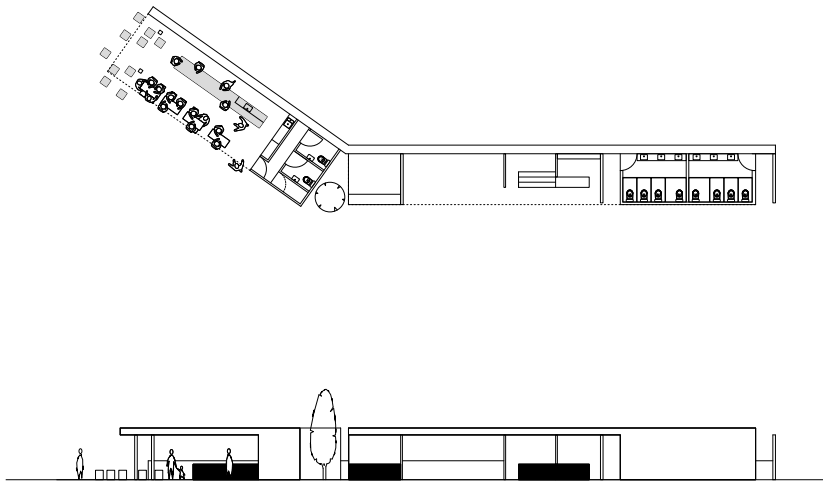
#### Agora

The project comprises an extension to the rear of a stone semi-detached house in Oxford to provide additional living space. A new building connects the house with an original outbuilding, enclosing a courtyard to the side boundary and defining a terrace to the rear. The scheme also encompasses the reconfiguration of the existing spaces to the outbuilding and adjoining areas of the house, which now accommodate the dining space and kitchen and utility area respectively.

Polished concrete to both the internal floors and the surfaces of the courtyard and terrace contribute to a sense of spatial continuity between interior and exterior. A roof-light loosely defines the kitchen from the open-plan casual living space, which is in turn differentiated from the dining space by a change of ceiling level. The outbuilding is presented as a found-object furnishing amidst the sculptural composition of rectilinear planes and volumes.



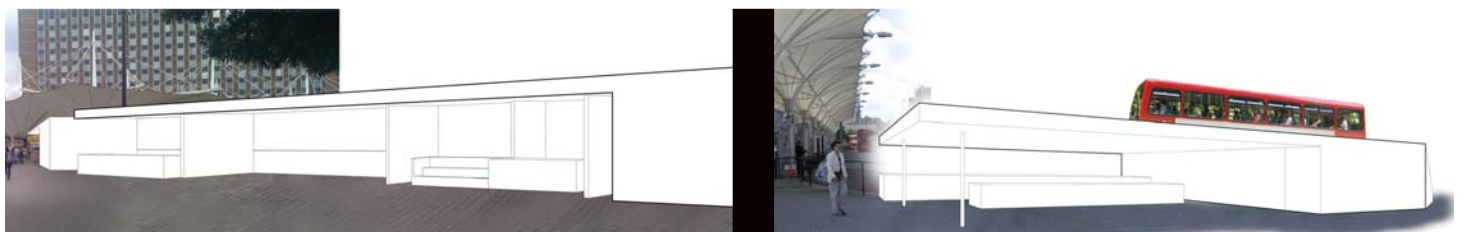




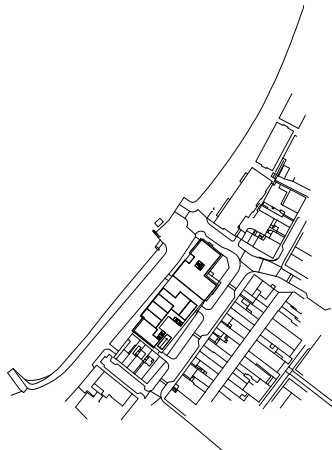
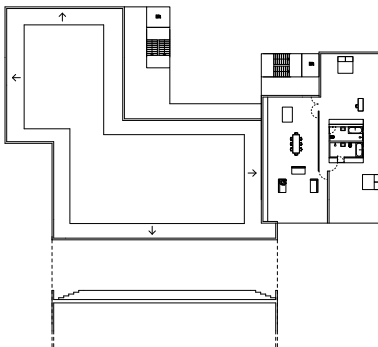
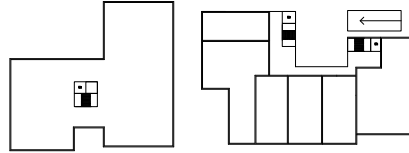
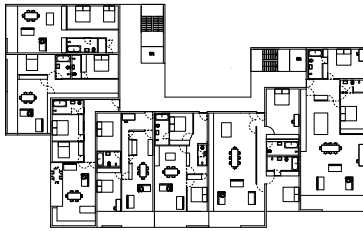
### Striated Street

The design draws upon the forms and spatial arrangements of a number of previous small commercial projects. This approach provides an alternative to directly referencing the immediate context—and is favoured due to the incoherence and alien character of the railway station, piazza and adjacent commercial buildings, in relation to the brick and render vernacular of the surrounding town centre. Similarly, the brief suggests a great diversity of potential functions for the spaces—and so the design strategy provides a mechanism for engendering a specific character, rather aspiring to the folly of generic and infinite flexibility.

The continuity of the piazza paving into the spaces, and the views permitted through them, contribute to the lightweight character of the buildings. This aspect of the design can be understood as a more permanent architectural manifestation of the informality of the existing stalls on the site, and the positive attributes that its current use exhibits.



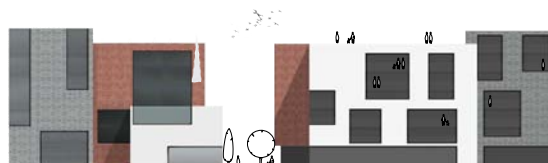
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#### Public Interpolation

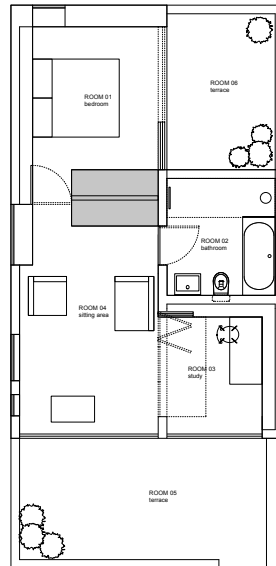
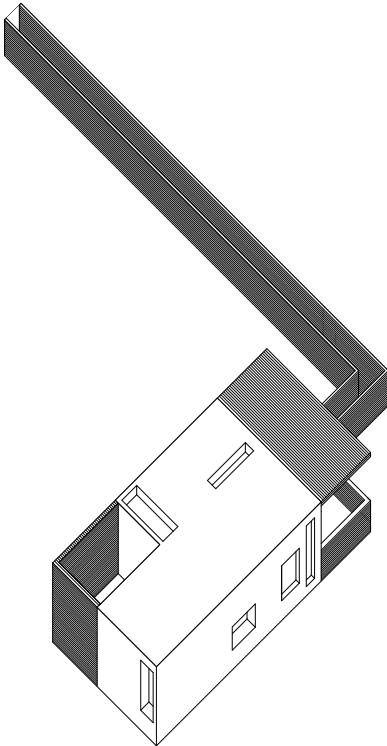
To avoid the repetitious external elevations that are ubiquitous for apartment and office buildings, the composition of the form of the building is informed by an earlier design for a single house. This results in apertures in the external form that disguise the number of levels in the building. The actual openings to the apartments and offices are set back, allowing for balconies in the interstitial space.

The buildings are clad in brick, render and slate, and the massing into two buildings allows for a pedestrianized street through the middle of the site—referencing the building materials and layout of the historic town. The retail floor is set at a half level below the street, spatially mirroring the condition of the sea wall to the ocean—and this device is repeated to the roof of the building. To the rear, water features similarly recall the sea views to the harbour frontage.





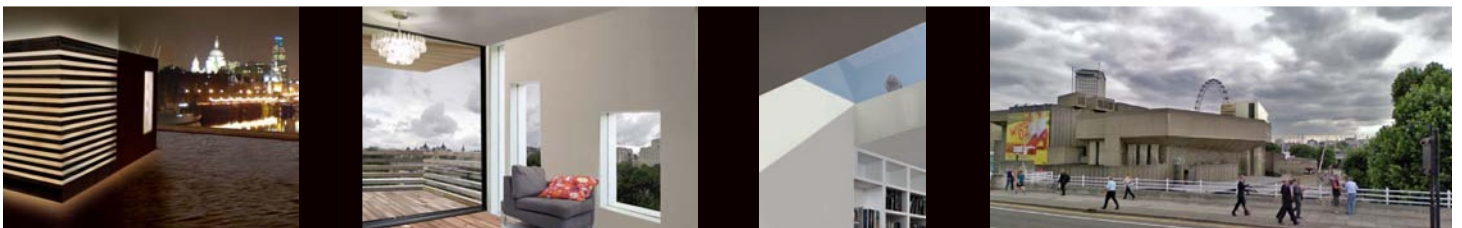
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#### London Room

The scheme takes as its starting point a lower-ground floor flat in a Victorian mansion block in Bloomsbury, London. The footprint of the new design is unchanged from this historical reference, but the interior has been rearranged to suit the requirements of the brief, and contemporary preferences and desires with regard to amenities and open-plan living. While the mansion block flat possessed only two exterior elevations, the new design has an external appearance at every edge, including a roof – but the sculptural articulation of these surfaces is abstracted from the functional window and door openings in the historical precedent. The parapet and external face of the building that forms the new pavilion's site is treated as a reversed and exaggerated version of the spatial condition of the mansion block light-well, which staggers to mediate the relationship of the interior with the street.

White render cladding alludes to another London archetype, the closet wings of Victorian terraces; while the external spaces are clad in timber decking as a reference to the ubiquitous use of this material in the back gardens of these houses. The design does not attempt to deny its urban setting, but in order to operate as a retreat from the bustle of the city, the design eschews panoramic views of the river and skyline in favour of selected, framed views of elements of the surrounding built and natural environment. In particular, roof-lights frame views of the sky and heighten the sound of rain. The timber-screened terraces facilitate a range of spatial experiences, allowing complete privacy, selective views, or panoramas. The roof that forms the ground plane for the new pavilion is flooded with a thin layer of water, addressing its unsightly appearance and setting up a more direct visual relationship between the new scheme and the River Thames.

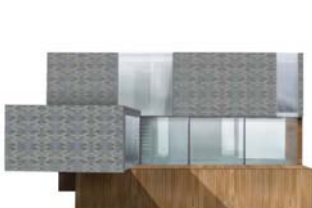
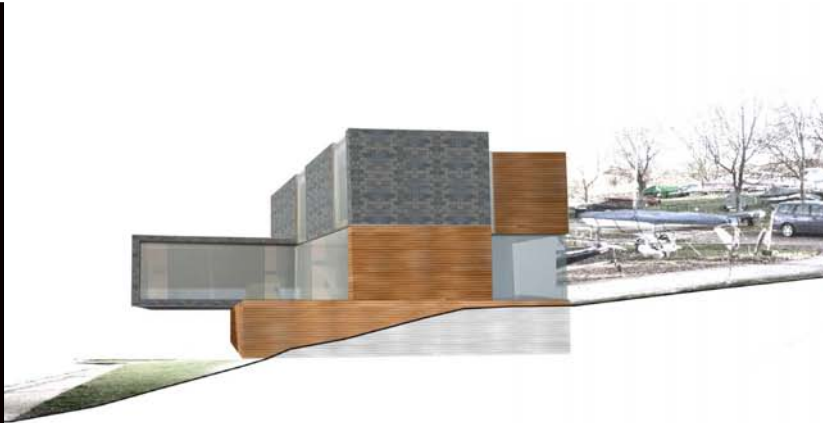
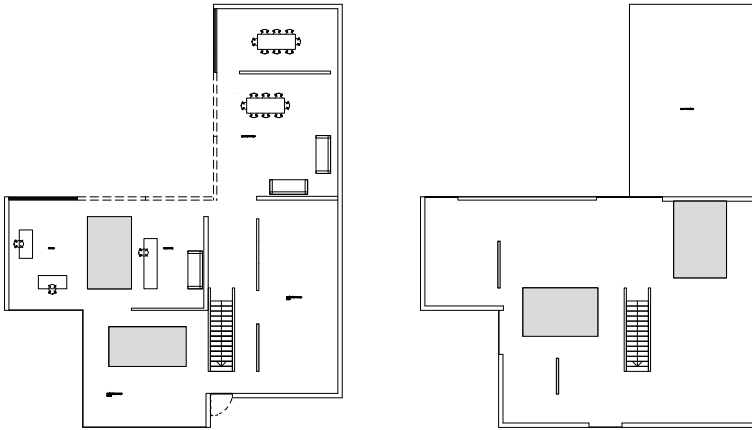


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#### Extrapolation Club

The design conceives of the clubhouse as an oversized dwelling, and the domestic rituals of each room of a house inform the character of the building's spaces. The kitchen is largely open-plan to the bar, dining and event spaces that correlate with the living areas of a home — contributing to the sense of the club as an oversized family. Similarly the changing rooms, toilets and storage areas are modelled on more private domestic spaces such as bedrooms and bathrooms.

The entrance lobby and meeting room are understood as versions of a domestic hallway and study. Timber and slate cladding reference traditional boat building and the local vernacular architecture respectively. The cantilevered meeting room refers, visually and spatially, to the jetties that extend into the lake. A staircase that enters the building from below similarly recalls the experience of entering the cockpit of a yacht from the cabin below.



**Loos:** William Tozer, 'Smoke and Mirrors', *Monument*, issue 36 (June/July 2000): 19.

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The architectural interior has assumed a temporary character in the contemporary setting in which it is difficult to consider such work seriously alongside the production of buildings. Adolf Loos's Kärntner or American Bar in Vienna is a vivid example of a time and place in which a fundamentally different conception of the medium exists. Known simply as the Loos Bar by the residents of Vienna, the project was completed by Adolf Loos in 1907 at the height of Viennese secessionism. In light of Loos's primary legacy of the minimal façade and the three-dimensional plan (*Raumplan*), to many the richness and intensity of the project and its confinement to a small room over one level may seem contradictory. On the contrary, however, the project not only demonstrates notions of modernist space but also extols Loos's attitude to ornamentation in the public realm.

A continuous strip of mirrors that runs around the ceiling level of the bar denies the direct gaze of the viewer but offers a glimpse of an infinite space within which the bar purports to be only a small fragment. The mirrors reflect the quarter and half columns that frame the edges of the bar, projecting a non-existent whole and then extending an endless grid of columns towards an infinite horizon. The modernist landscape of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe exists here within a single small room. Also reflected to infinity are the coffered marble panels of the ceiling. These panels themselves mirror one another through the cutting and unfolding of stone and recede towards their own vanishing point in a successive concentric recession upwards. The cut onyx of the front elevation, now spectacularly illuminated by artificial lighting, seems to celebrate the chaotic beauty of stone while containing it once again within the frame of the modernist grid. Curiously, it is only where four new panels of stone have been inserted to replace a fan removed from the original interior that the patternation of the stone is mirrored.

Entering the bar through the portico to the street one is permitted glimpsed views through glazed panels to the interior beyond while mirrors to the ceiling of the space create a sense of surveillance. Curtains originally concealed the glazed front elevation to the streetscape, providing a mask from behind which patrons could glimpse the theatre of the city beyond. Another curtain to the entry to the main body of the bar acts as a stage curtain from behind which one is presented to the theatre box of booth seating. The disappearance of these curtains and the imposition of a dogleg entry seems almost an appropriate adaptation to the radically

changed social environment within which the bar now finds itself. The glimpsed view has expanded and the boundary between public and private has diminished.

The presentation of Loos's work through glossy imagery seems at odds with his own philosophy of maintaining the distinction between the architectural object and its representation. Loos's refusal to portray his work through photography or prosaic drawings demonstrates both a belief that the phenomenology of architecture defies any other representation and a conviction that architecture should not exist as a drawn condition divorced from the act of building.

Contemporary colour photography flatters Loos's work in a manner that dangerously blurs the distinction between the two conditions. Ultimately, however, the Kärntner Bar remains a project to be enjoyed fully not through the observation of a collection of singular perspectival views but through the simultaneous experience of light, texture and scale through space.

**Terence Riley:** William Tozer, 'Un-Private House,' *Monument*, issue 37 (August/September 2000): 108–109.

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Childhood memories of visiting a family friend rush back as shoes are removed before entering the exhibition space. An odd reminder of the perverseness of the domestic—carpet designed to be walked on, made precious through its newness. Here it is the yellow floor of the gallery space whose newness is to be preserved. A sea of blue elasticised plastic booties on this yellow floor creates an alien landscape. This is not the familiar home, this is a stylised home of the future.

Such curatorial decisions enormously shape the perception of the work contained within an exhibition. In the Viennese installation of 'The Un-Private House', the interests of Vienna's MAK gallery in the everyday and the ordinary are clearly evident in the selection of the furniture on which the highly designed exhibits are displayed.

The exhibition was precipitated by curator, Terrence Riley's interest in the house in relation to a wider body of architectural endeavour and his frustration with the lack of consideration of this field in architectural education. The central role of the house in the development of modernist architectural language and theory is contrasted with the marginalisation of the house as a subject of architectural research in the design studio. Insufficient serious consideration of the contemporary house in the architectural press in favour of large-scale building can be seen as an extension of this dichotomy.

A theme which Riley draws through the work which forms the exhibition is a formalist concern with 'a conjunction of mutually derisive terms: "blobs" versus "boxes"'. Riley suggests that the proponents of complex geometries must transcend a fascination with the new and recognize the importance of making connections to the cultural environment which inevitably frames the built project. These ideas are perhaps most succinctly distilled in the Kramlich Residence and Media Collection by Herzog and de Meuron. The project is 'trying to demonstrate that form is not the issue', says Riley, maintaining that computer technology and mathematics have rendered unsustainable Leonardo da Vinci's distinctions between various types of visible bodies. By

combining the curvilinear and the fragmentary with the Miesian box the project demonstrates that the two approaches are now more accurately seen 'as points on a sliding scale of complexity rather than as fundamentally different types of form'.

The Workhouse by Guthrie and Buresh Architects is compared to the work of Charles and Ray Eames and Schindler in Riley's analysis. The house also evokes early Viennese modernism in both its spatial complexity and its utilisation of the figuration of timber in the place of stone. While recognizing this relationship, Californian modernism is seen by Riley as an important filter on contemporary European architecture. Rem Koolhaas is clearly an example of such influence but also an archetypal figure for the exhibition in that his prominence is based largely upon a collection of houses and relatively small projects.

Representing British architecture in the exhibition and publication is the BV House by Farjadi and Farjadi Architects. The house perverts the traditional local vernacular by using thatching as a cladding material for the external elevations within a contemporary architectural language. Riley views this project as exceptional amongst an architectural community dominated by conservative notions of the countryside and a somewhat single-minded high-tech reactionary position. Drawing attention to the Australian profession, Sean Godsell's Kew House in Melbourne receives brief discussion as a contemporary reinterpretation of the Miesian box.

Sampling a 'period of rather rapid architectural ferment' the exhibition draws together diverse fields of endeavour from a breadth of locations into a coherent narrative concerning architectural production and the dynamic position of the discipline in contemporary society.

'The Un-Private House' is published by the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, 10019. [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org).

**Loos:** William Tozer, 'More or Loos,' *Monument*, issue 43 (August/September 2001): 20.

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'The Latin is driven by horses. The Englishman rides horses in the fox-hunt and on the merry-go-round', proclaimed Adolf Loos in his essay 'Culture' of 1910. This essay and much of Loos's writing and work has been given considerable serious academic consideration in the century that has almost passed since. In light of his close friendships with the likes of surrealist Man Ray and Dadaist Tristan Tzara, however, such outbursts could be seen to justify a revisionist, satirical interpretation of both Loos's building and theory. This is certainly not the stylised polemic of Dadaism, but nonetheless it is a significant contribution to the total overthrow in visual art that the movement precipitated.

A glimpse through the trees that cast shadows across the sparse canvas of the side elevation of the Moller House offers a strikingly preserved vignette of the work of Vienna's pioneering modernist architect. The house is one of a series of residences completed by Loos in the early years of last century. It is ironic, given his strong views on the architectural figuring of a separation between public and private realms, that this private residence is now a foreign embassy and no longer a site for dwelling. Far removed from the intensity of his Kärntner Bar in central Vienna, Loos's houses present a blank face to the street, a mask that conceals the functions of the dwelling behind. This combination of rigidly composed street facade and a rear or side elevation of eccentrically positioned windows characterises the external appearance of the houses. This shift reflects the move from public to private realm, which is reinforced by the idiosyncratic, richly textured, wooden and stone-panelled interiors.

The houses predate the canonical modern works of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe, whose work was to overshadow his own, but in turn demonstrate a sectional complexity unrivalled by his modernist contemporaries and successors. The planning of space in the houses (the *Raumplan*) can perhaps best be understood as landscape—a diversity of views and relationships between adjacent interior and exterior spaces rather than a stack of discrete floor plans. Where much early modernist architecture possesses a single-minded bravado borne of manifesto-making and political manoeuvring, Loos's houses speak quietly of their cultural and political ambitions. The unassuming character of the exteriors of the houses can be seen as the ultimate expression of Loos's aversion to the spectacle and the spectacular, but this quietness can also be seen as a veil for subversion, irony and ridicule.

**Wigglesworth Till:** William Tozer, 'House of Straw,' *Monument*, issue 46 (February/March 2002): 56–61.

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A new house and office in London's borough of Islington by Sarah Wigglesworth Architects was described to me recently as 'an elegant shed'. Recalling David Mitchell's thesis on the development of modernism in New Zealand this observation aligned with my own first-hand perceptions of a distinctly antipodean character. This impression is not surprising given that the design is intentionally rooted in things agricultural. The use of raw materials and the somewhat singular spatial development that constitute this character are reminiscent of the history of the site as an orchard, while also acting as notation for the political alignment of the project.

The scheme is in many ways a showcase for a collection of eco-friendly construction techniques in its presentation of discrete constructional components—sandbags, recycled concrete, cloth, timber and straw bale sit politely alongside one another. The project can be seen as a counterpoint to the Brookes Coombes House by BHMA Architects, the other eco-house recently completed in London to broad acclaim. Where the form of the Brooke Coombes house is a diagram of the eco-house hewn of refined modern materials, the Wigglesworth project can conversely be seen as a diagram of eco-materials contained within a complex architectural composition. The ecological agenda that drives the house, and seems to overarch all the other architectural agendas of the practice, is rooted in a belief that such a mode of operation must become the norm. Tired of the label of 'green architecture', they propose that non-ecologically sensitive architecture should instead be labeled 'red architecture', enabling buildings that deal with issues of ecology as a matter of course to be the subject of intellectual interrogation at other levels.

Jeremy Till and Sarah Wigglesworth believe that 'architecture is about the construction of ideas'. The intellectual complexity of the Stock Orchard Street scheme is a testament to this philosophy, which is in essence a reactionary position to the British notion of the 'idea of construction'. The longstanding obsession of British architecture with the making of things, in corollary with a suspicion of intellectualism can be traced through Arts and Crafts to the High-Tech and the Minimal. Jeremy Till asserts that 'the myth of technological neutrality' by which



much contemporary British architecture is produced leads to the presumption that 'progress is defined through technology'. Instead, he sees the house, and their work more generally, as the manifesting of ideas through space and form. Responding to claims that the project is self-indulgent and contains too many ideas, Wigglesworth and Till assert simply that they 'prefer too many ideas to no ideas at all'. This concern with intellectual underpinnings is no doubt largely the result of extensive teaching, research and writing conducted by both Till and Wigglesworth alongside practice.

In many ways the pair see the project as a distillation of their philosophy of design in its incorporation of both living and working and the rituals that are associated with both activities. The dining table upon which the design began can be seen both as a workspace and eating place, and as a metaphor for the process of design explain Wigglesworth and Till. 'The lay of the table' provides an analogy for the devices by which architects order and categorise space, status and function. The process of dining, in turn, can be seen as evidence of the manner in which occupation and use undermine the rigidity of such an interpretation of the physical and cultural world. The dirty table cloth which results from this disruptive ritual can similarly be seen as both a trace of occupation and a strategy for more sustainable architectural ordering and place-making. This dining table now quite literally assumes a pivotal position between work and home, punctuating the entry space to the house as one moves from the stairwell which separates the two functions.

A stated ambition of the practice is 'to make spaces which are more than just photographs'. This position is motivated by a distaste for minimalism and the popular representation of architecture which both documents and drives this aestheticism. 'Architectural culture is so obsessed with the empty image' frets Till, lamenting the fact that the gate-keepers of success for architects (the press) insist upon such image-making to define the work of the profession. Perhaps it is this imperative, or the preconceptions of the photographer, which has resulted in the images of the Stock Orchard Street scheme conforming to this stereotype. In spite of this imagery, when moving through the house it is clear that a determined eclecticism is in fact the overarching character of both the house and its contents.

'Architects normally put things in categories and then refine them. The less categories you have, the more mature you are', states Till ironically. Where generally 'architects define and protect themselves through these categories', the Stock Orchard Street house can be viewed as a laying bare of such categorisations. There is little attempt to refine the technologies that compose the parts of the scheme, let alone an ambition to disguise or integrate these diverse construction methods. Refinement as a mode of operation is here replaced by a delight in the rawness of each technology. The British architectural tradition of craft is to an extent displaced by an intellectual tradition concerned with the embodiment of ideology and knowledge.

Claiming to 'prefer the everyday to the iconic', Till is quick to add that he does not see this as an alignment with other contemporary proponents of the Everyday—Tony Fretton, Caruso St John, Sergison Bates, David Adjaye and Will Russell et al. Where these local peers of Wigglesworth and Till are concerned with the image of the everyday, their own work is more engaged with the rituals of everyday life. Till is prepared to admit, however, that the house is clearly not everyday in its appearance, but rather a sculptural and iconic piece of architecture clearly at odds with its Victorian terrace neighbours. Recounting the story of a workman digging the road purchasing the first copy of the book of the house, and in the defense of the idea of the Everyday, he hastens to add that 'at another level, the punters love it'.

The project is a case study for the practice's agenda of broadening the representation of women in architecture. Careful to avoid stereotypes of the masculine and feminine, Till claims that the house and office is a distinctly different project for the simple fact that it is a female/male collaboration. Preconceptions of the office as a masculine realm of hard surfaces and slick materials is parodied in a caricature of the traditionally feminine domestic by cladding half of this portion of the building in a giant padded quilt of fabric. The construction method of straw bale can also be discussed as a device for the involvement of women in the construction of the building. Circumventing the requirements of physical strength that generally still preclude women from direct involvement in construction, this lightweight material allows for a closer association with the physical realisation of the architectural form.

The sand-bags which clad the other half of the office block create a sense of defensive positioning. Separating the rest of the site from the adjoining railway line, these concrete-filled bags provide sound protection for the office space. As the bags weather, an undulating wall of concrete will eventually emerge. Suspended on gabion encased columns and springs which dampen the vibration of the passing trains but also permitting framed views through, the massive composition of sand bags and concrete does not attempt to conceal the existence of its industrial neighbours. Standing on the gravel which covers the ground underneath the office, a visitor was reminded of a lake scene in his native Switzerland—the beach underfoot, the expanse of sky and the passing of ships in the form of trains. While appreciating the modernist sensibilities of this massive rectangular form raised defiantly on piloti, this romanticised view was appealing but difficult to embrace as we struggled to maintain a conversation as commuters passed by.

Interpretations of the project are many and varied—a gulag of sand bags, watch tower and exercise yard; a padded cell; a Swiss lakeside beach; a New Zealand bach to name a few. These multiple interpretations, some related to the authors design intentions and others autonomous, are a testament to the richness of the architectural composition. The architects have occupied the project as an office and home in an almost completed state for nearly a year to date and in-situ post-rationalisations and reinterpretations of the relationship of the building to its surroundings and the parts of the scheme to one another continue to drive the completion of scheme. Where the project began with a series of narratives, inhabitation challenges these prospective accounts and prompts a new storytelling that continually redefines the activity of living and working on the site.

**William Russell:** William Tozer, 'How the Other Half Lives,' *Monument*, issue 49, residential special (2002): 58–62.

[Copyright image removed. Refer print version in UCL library.]

Since the split of the London-based architectural partnership, Adjaye and Russell just over a year ago, David Adjaye has been a regular feature of both the architectural press and the weekend newspaper supplements. His new practice has grown quickly, and so has the scale of the work he is undertaking. Meanwhile, Will Russell has been quietly completing his own house just off Brick Lane, East London.

As I wait outside the house for Will to arrive and show me around, what appears to be two German architects stop and point admiringly at the building. As they linger and discuss the finer points of the design, someone more local to surroundings takes advantage of the recessed entry in the absence of public toilets anywhere nearby. The house is situated just off Brick Lane, the famed Indian and Bangladeshi curry house capital of London and home to the equally noteworthy twenty-four hour bagel bakery (I munch on bagel and locks while I wait). As debris from the street market blows around my ankles and other passers-by stop to share a steaming meal from styrofoam atop a bollard to one side of the house, I cannot avoid thinking what an odd context this is for a building of such beguiling beauty. Somehow, the rawness of the materials affords the project a modicum of acceptance, however, which might not be enjoyed by a Chipperfield project had it found itself stranded on this site instead.

When Will Russell returns to the house to meet me, he has his daughter under his arm and in tow is his son Finn, whose name was attached to the project when I first heard of it three years ago. While the house seems now to have assumed the more place-specific title of Bacon Street (sibling rivalry could have been unbearable in years to come had the name stuck), it seems that the Finn House was always tied up implicitly with the idea of creating a setting for Russell's young family. Almost as soon as he arrives, we are engaged in reeling conversation by one of the equally entrenched but less well-lodged locals. Will manoeuvres our polite but swift exit from the discussion with practiced aplomb, allowing us to retreat inside. Stopping first at the top floor to off-load shopping bags, the same street scene within which I had only moments earlier been

ensconced, is observed in a distinctly detached and surreal manner from an enormous sliding plate glass window as if it were merely an episode of *Eastenders*.

Will Russell and David Adjaye cut their teeth with a series of small commercial interiors and residential projects in central London from the mid '90s. The progression of their work can be traced in a walk from Clerkenwell, through Soho to Fitzrovia. What remains of Lunch, a café in Exmouth market, shows the beginnings of a number of spatial devices and a developing attitude to materials. This glorification of everyday materiality is deployed somewhat more elegantly in the Soba noodle house in Soho, while the Social bar (Monument 32) demonstrates remarkable spatial sophistication for a small interior space. A house for Turner-prize winning artist, Chris Ofili (Monument Residential Special 2000), brought the duo more notoriety in 2000 but also signaled the end of their working relationship. It is still too early to clearly distinguish the architectural motivations of David Adjaye from those of Will Russell—both Russell's own residence and the Elektra House completed by Adjaye [Monument Residential Special 2001] were commenced by the partnership. But some differences are, nonetheless, already discernable: While it would be difficult to describe Adjaye's practice as anything other than medium-sized, Russell continues to work from a modest workshop in Shoreditch with a very small team. Similarly, where in Adjaye and Associates, one perceives a distinct determination to dramatically increase the size of both the practice and its projects (currently including a new library building in the London borough of Tower Hamlets), Russell seems content to concentrate on small schemes.

Despite its origins as a collaboration between Russell and Adjaye, it is impossible to see the architect's own house as anything other than autobiographical. The project was sufficiently finished for him to occupy just before Christmas last year but continues to take shape around him. In fact, Russell tends to describe the house as if it will never actually be entirely complete. This attitude brings to mind John Soane's gradual and unending alterations to his own house in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The allusion is strengthened by the appearance of doors half-way up the main space to the lower ground floor, reminiscent of Soane's moving panels and revolutionary spatial inter-penetrations. When I point this out to Will Russell, he immediately recognizes the similarity but lays no claims to an intentional relationship. Originally designed as part of the main house, the lower ground floor is being finished as a separate flat, but will ultimately be reincorporated into the whole. Similarities to Soane could be said to be the limit of the English character of the house, however. The minimal palette of concrete, glass, steel and white painted walls recalls the work of Japanese and European architects more readily than an English lineage. A fascination with details and surfaces—the obsession of both the British High Tech and Minimalist practitioners—is here replaced with an interest in composition, spatial complexity and texture.

The exposed cast concrete which forms many of the building's surfaces, including the floors throughout, has been diamond-ground to expose the texture of the aggregate and a matt sealant applied which affords increased practicality while maintaining the raw character of the material. In the kitchen, cast concrete is also utilized to form the work-surface, lending an industrial character to this dramatic double-height space. Light fittings and other familiar fixtures are almost entirely absent from the house, adding to the sculptural quality of the project. Instead, light permeates from behind, above or below surfaces, casting a soft glow across the spaces. Looking down upon the rear of the house from the roof terrace reveals the glass block roof which covers one half of the main space to the lower-ground floor, and the synthetic black roof membrane which wraps down over the back wall to form a stealthy rear elevation.

The massing and staggered paneling of the street elevations is reminiscent of the award-winning Walsall art gallery by some of Russell's contemporaries, Caruso St John. Questioned on the relationship, Russell explains that the articulation is simply the result of the original composition of the elevation—set up on a grid of a certain proportion—clashing with the standard size of the galvanized sheets when wrapped to form the cladding panels. Rather than reassessing the composition of the facade, the tension created by the juxtaposition was embraced. The panels were custom-made for the project as the unexpected result of a visit from a roofing salesman to the office to show his wares. Russell was unimpressed by the proprietary system, but captured by the potential of the material for greater things. The end product is the culmination of a prolonged collaboration between architect and manufacturer to produce the desired appearance and performance. The house is structured around a concrete frame over which the facade of glass and galvanised steel is wrapped. The space between

structure and surface precipitates the projection of beautiful silhouettes on to the street elevations after nightfall. This lantern-like quality, combined with the tower form, gives the house the appearance of an urban lighthouse—a beacon marking the coastline of the Brick Lane cultural island. Given the conservatism of London planning control, the simple presence of the house in the streetscape is a small miracle. Describing the project as ‘completing the street corner’, Russell explains that the permission for the project was outcome of a prolonged and strategic discussion with the council based upon an in-depth understanding of the area.

Despite its relative small scale (a single residence), one gets the sense that Will Russell has made a significant contribution to British architecture with the completion of this project. While the building is within walking distance of Sarah Featherstone’s house (Monument 43) and almost within a stone’s throw of his own collaboration with David Adjaye for Chris Ofili, it differs substantially by managing to give external form to the urban architecture of this breed of new British architects. Alongside the much larger-scale works of Fretton and Caruso St John, the project shows an equal density and sophistication borne of Russell’s apparent dedication to the house as the basic unit of architectural production. He continues to work on small residential schemes in London, but is also currently designing stores for Alexander McQueen world-wide. The first shop was recently completed in Tokyo and the New York project will follow in its footsteps shortly. This work can be seen as motivated by a desire to extend the experimentation begun with Adjaye and Russell’s small commercial interiors but equally also demonstrates his continued commitment to the importance of the small-scale project.

**Turner Prize:** William Tozer, 'Turner Prize: Tate Britain, London,' *Monument*, issue 54 (April/May 2003): 108.

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One could cynically proclaim that the work of Martin Creed, the winner of last year's prize, was still on display but out of order. But just as the purpose of Creed's empty room (#227: The Lights Going On and Off) was to demonstrate the notion of conceptual art, this year's winner makes the antithetical case for vigorous activity as fine art. The room showcasing Keith Tyson's work encompasses drawing, painting, sculpture and installation.

Both the selection of pieces and the composition of each of Tyson's works, show a disregard for the singular, carefully considered, conceptual gesture and its corollary, controlled and aesthetically sophisticated production. Representing this contrary position in 2003 is Liam Gillick, with a series of architectural works in perspex, aluminium and timber. Given that the context of the gallery is no longer considered a prerequisite to the typology of art, the selection of Gillick's work ahead of that of many architects can perhaps only be understood on the basis of differences of intention and the absence of function.

Intention and function are similarly useful criteria by which to separate the work of Catherine Yass from the images of advertising. While the intense colours and bright, stark compositions recall the structure of print and television media, the product and sales ambition are absent. An alternate methodology for assessing artistic content—the multiplicity of responses elicited—is represented in the work of Fiona Banner. Amongst a number of analyses of her written work *Arsewoman in Wonderland*, Banner describes a similarity between the way the eye moves around the composition and a traditional painted image. Outside of her own interpretations however, the piece can also be seen as an ephemeral graphic composition which with changing proximity of viewing, transforms from a single haze of colour, to an ambiguous figure-ground condition, before finally becoming a collection of distinct words.

**John Pawson:** William Tozer, 'White Knight,' *Monument*, issue 55 (June/July 2003): 90–95.

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The construction of John Pawson's design for a twenty-storey apartment block in Melbourne's St Kilda Road is due for completion in 2004. The project marks the British minimalist architect's first foray into the southern hemisphere and a substantial shift in the scale of his work. Meanwhile in Europe, the completion of the Novy Dvur Monastery the following year will not only cement this shift of scale, but will also introduce his designs to a very different architectural idiom. In corollary with his early collaborator Claudio Silvestrin and contemporary David Chipperfield, John Pawson has been widely attributed with the birth of minimalism. Alongside and preceded by the high-tech movement, minimalism is one of the most widely recognized modes of British architectural production. Since both Chipperfield and Pawson designed Wagamama restaurants in London in the early 1990s, the paths of their work have diverged substantially. The lines of this division are faintly drawn but nonetheless evident in their approaches to almost identical briefs for the two noodle houses. Where Pawson's scheme is more intimate and textural, Chipperfield's is more highly polished and rationalised. Since this momentary convergence of projects, David Chipperfield's career has encompassed a substantial body of work at a commercial and civic scale, while Pawson has continued to work almost exclusively on houses and smaller projects such as galleries and showrooms. Similarly, while Chipperfield has very publicly denounced the restrictive and conservative environment which governs building works in the UK and preferred instead to practise in Europe and Asia, Pawson has worked within these restrictions to create a vast array of finely crafted small projects in his home country.

While Pawson's work is very widely covered in the lifestyle press, the predominance of critical attention upon his work has been authored by Deyan Sudjic. One of Sudjic's essays is featured on Pawson's website and so its observations could fairly be assumed to be close to autobiographic. Responding to one of the essay's observations of his work, however, Pawson says simply that, 'If journalists want to put a name to something, they do so and then figure out what it is'. He explains that the design moves that he makes are instinctive and proceeds to outline the way in which his practice has grown exponentially through a string of projects,

precipitated by admiration for the way he renovated his own house after just one year of architectural study at London's Architectural Association. Despite Pawson's own modest description of his designs, his work is consistently afforded ethereal reverence in the popular press, and Sudjic has described his work as addressing the 'fundamental problems of space, proportion, light and materials'. The description recalls the rhetoric espoused by the modern masters of the early twentieth century, to whom architecture was a problem-solution dialectic of political and social issues. In a contemporary Western, industrialised context, where architectural amenity and utility are broadly available, it is easier to conceive of 'the problem' of architecture as one of 'resolution' rather than 'solution'. In this setting, it would seem that Sedjuc has concluded that the solution to these 'fundamental problems' is the creation of beauty. In Sedjuc's terms, Pawson's pared-back design palette can be seen as the ultimate in architectural resolution, allowing the viewer or inhabitant to experience a heightened perception of proportion, scale and space.

Aesthetic beauty is, however, by no means the only valid 'solution' to the 'problem' of modern architecture. Rather, minimalism is simply the contemporary incarnation of one of many strains of architectural theory originating in the early modern period. Comparisons are often drawn between Pawson's designs and that of Mies van der Rohe and the catch phrase that has become synonymous with his work, 'Less is More'. Both architects' work is stripped of applied ornament and Pawson's use of richly patterned materials such as limestone mirrors Mies's incorporation of travertine and chrome. Indeed, the High Modern rationalised classicism of Mies van der Rohe's designs for wealthy individuals and corporations has a contemporary counterpart in Pawson's work. John Pawson's affection for the work of Luis Barragan to some extent recognizes this relationship, as similarly the impetus for the Mexican architect's work is aesthetic control of form and space, rather than technology or social or political ambitions. This concern for aesthetics is a separate but connected strain of modernism to the technologically or politically motivated work of the likes of Le Corbusier and the Bauhaus, or the philosophically concerned designs of Adolf Loos. For Pawson, modern architecture is concerned with aesthetics and so the new architecture should represent a new aestheticism. But similarly, and equally justifiably, for others the new architecture should represent new technology, current political or social issues, or contemporary philosophy.

Minimalism can perhaps most clearly be traced to the erasure of surface decoration during the early Modern period. While the removal of applied decoration was variously motivated by concerns for utility, or the representation of political change or technological progress, its departure transferred the ornamental function to the building form. Through this decorative surrogacy, architectural forms assumed a sculptural quality that demanded the removal or disguise of functional building elements. Just as Mies sets up an ambiguity between spatial ordering and structural support with the cruciform chrome-plated columns of his Barcelona Pavilion and Tugendhat House, Pawson conceals light switches and sources, omits handles and hides structural support within walls and joinery. As this decorative role for building form can just as readily be assumed by complex geometries and vibrant colours, it is difficult to attribute the rectilinear composition and restrained palette of minimalism to anything other than aesthetic preference. The predisposition for whiteness of Pawson and his fellow minimalists distinguishes the work from both Mies and Barragan, however. A lack of colour instead aligns his work with American modernists such as Schindler and Neutra, whose monochromatic designs were influenced by a view of European modernism through black and white photography. The use of white in Pawson's work is probably as much due to the vagaries of a subjective calming psychological effect, as to intentional reference to a substantial body of modernist architecture. Descriptions of Pawson's buildings that refer to the 'integrity' or 'honesty' of natural materials seem to confuse the aesthetic lineage of his work with an alternate but parallel strain of modernism, which proposes that materials can represent political and social aspirations.

Pawson's Monument One apartment building will bring minimalism in close proximity to Federation Square, which although originally authored by British architects Lab Architecture Studio, has become so inflected by Melbourne that it is representative of the ideas-driven architectural production specific to the city. Where Pawson's work is concerned with reduction to a minimum of materials and forms and the polite relationship of one to another, work distinct to the Melbourne architectural community is typified by the likes of Peter Corrigan and Ashton Raggatt McDougall, whose designs engage with the messiness of popular culture and the multiplicity and complexity of the urban setting. A less pronounced contrast but perhaps a more



compelling dialogue will be on offer, if Pawson's next project in the southern hemisphere should take him to Sydney, the territory of Australia's own minimalists, Burley Katon Halliday and Engelen Moore.

**Mies van der Rohe:** William Tozer, 'Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: 1905–1938, Whitechapel Art Gallery,' *Monument*, issue 56 (August/September 2003): 106–107.

[Copyright image removed. Refer print version in UCL library.]

A recent exhibition at London's Whitechapel Art Gallery showcased the early to mid-career work of twentieth-century master architect Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe. Also providing examples of work that influenced or was influenced by Mies, the exhibition provided a snap-shot of both the origins of the themes present in this phase of his work, and the development of the ideas which were to dominate the period of work which followed.

The designs on show spanned from Mies van der Rohe's arrival in Berlin at the age of nineteen to his departure for the United States thirty-three years later in 1938. Drawings and photographs of his first built design, the 1907 Riehl House, show a generally restrained and orthodox manner. Latent themes of his later work are evident, however, in the dramatic overhanging portion of the house, supported on four columns that are in turn, integrated into the garden wall below. This Semperian conception of a weaving together of surface and structure was to find its full expression many years later, in buildings such as the Illinois Institute of Technology, the Lake Shore Drive apartments and the Seagram Building. This aside, the Riehl House is remarkable for the simple fact that it comes after only two years of professional experience split between work for a Berlin architect and an apprenticeship under furniture designer, Bruno Paul. After a further three years in the office of Peter Behrens, Mies went on to design five similarly Schinkesque houses between starting his own practice in 1911 and the commencement of the First World War.

The scale and transparency of the much-reproduced pencil drawing of Mies van der Rohe's unrealised office scheme for the Friedrichstrasse in Berlin provided a central spectacle to the exhibition. Completed in 1920, the drawing shows clearly the architect's profound understanding of the difference between the concerns of light and shadow that govern a solid architecture, and the issues of reflection and transparency that pertain to an architecture of glass. These revolutionary ideas were not to find their full built expression until the completion of the Seagram Building in New York nearly forty years later. The curator of the exhibition, the New York Museum of Modern Art's head of Architecture and Design, Terence Riley, sees the role of

transparency in Mies van der Rohe's work as central to the development of a typology of contemporary architecture that can be grouped together through Rowe and Slutzky's notion of literal and phenomenal transparency. The inclusion in the exhibition of Thomas Ruff's large format photographs of Mies van der Rohe's work attested to the continued level of contemporary interest in his work.

Recognized alongside his architectural production by the exhibition were Mies van der Rohe's contributions to *G* magazine. It was in this journal that Mies had in 1923 declared himself against formalism and aesthetic speculation and pronounced that, 'Architecture is the will of the age conceived in spatial terms. Living, changing, new'. This statement belies the fact that throughout his career undertones of classicism were always discernible, but its tone is appropriate to the scale of change affected upon modern architecture by his work.

Also included in the exhibition were drawings and photographs of the Hermann Lange and Esters houses, completed by Mies in 1928. These pared back modern designs are typical of Mies's post-war schemes, which are characterised by a dramatic shift towards a more organic architecture and Expressionist affiliations. Alongside Suprematist ideas, which were to find clearer expression in his later work, the projects show the influence upon Mies of the Berlage brick tradition and the early work of Frank Lloyd Wright. Nonetheless, the Lange and Esters houses can be seen as works in progress towards the masterworks of the first half of Mies van der Rohe's career, the Barcelona Pavilion and the Tugendhat House. Accepted wisdom perceives that the Supremacist ideas driving these seminal works were replaced by a concern for monumentality in the planning of Mies van der Rohe's later designs. It would seem that an alternative analysis can be defended that sees the change of spatial organisation as a consequence of a shift of practise from the private to the public realm. Analogous to Adolf Loos's typological distinction, this conclusion is borne out by the contrasting but simultaneous designs for the Lake Shore Drive Apartments and Farnsworth House. Moreover, the IIT campus scheme suggests a shift of the Suprematist composition from space planning to the master plan.

The exhibition design by Fern Green attempted to contextualise the work on display and included a mock-up of a small section of the Barcelona Pavilion. While the coloured display board panels seemed to owe as much to Corbusier as to Mies, commercial design has been so heavily influenced by Mies van der Rohe that a referential quality was almost unavoidable. More ironic was the fact that alongside the exhibition sat the gallery café, designed by Liam Gillick, an entrant in last year's Turner Prize art award. While architecture has clearly become the subject of artistic consideration, it appears that architecture has in turn become the consideration of some artists.

**Adjaye Associates:** William Tozer, 'Trash and Treasure,' *Monument*, residential special (2003): 42–46.

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Adjaye Associates have recently completed a house in Shoreditch for London-based artists Tim Noble and Sue Webster. The so-called Dirty House is the latest project to be completed by the practice headed by David Adjaye and extends a number of themes evident in his earlier work.

Comparisons can readily be made to the Elektra House, David Adjaye's much-publicised first project after his split with previous working partner Will Russell. Both projects present an almost anonymous face to the street, possess a monumental quality and can be seen as controversial departures from accepted models of the modern house. These similarities and many others can be most broadly explained and understood in terms of the practice's concern for conceptual architecture. In general terms, it is this interest in buildings which embody or communicate ideas, which sets the practice apart from a local architectural community whose primary concerns are technological and historical. The titling of Adjaye's projects with their own names, rather than those of their clients' signifies this shift of interest.

The idea which drives this particular project is the client's own artistic interest in rubbish. Tim Noble and Sue Webster are perhaps best known for their compositions of refuse that cast realistic shadow portraits. This notion of the value of discarded material is transferred into the architectural manoeuvre of retaining the shell of the existing warehouse on the site, in spite of the council's preference for it to be demolished and significant tax incentives for constructing an entirely new building. This polemic is further extended by the history of the site, which previously accommodated a pub until it was destroyed in a World War II air raid. As a consequence, the warehouse, and now the Dirty House, is constructed atop a back-filled basement. The thematic is carried through into the structural strategy for the project, which makes use of the existing structure where possible, binding it together with new components as necessary to form a new whole. The almost archaeological approach of encasing the existing building in a protective coating, however, reveals that Adjaye's creative interpretation of rubbish is very different from his clients'. Rather than mimicking Noble and Webster's work, the Dirty

House extends their art practise by putting forward an architectural interpretation that is autonomous but related.

At the level of detail, the coating the architect has chosen for the building is anti-bill posting textured paint, giving the building the status of street furnishing by establishing a dialogue with identically treated lampposts, post boxes and bollards. While this treatment further engages with the idea of detritus, it does so from a defensive position with the aim of repelling further rubbish from accumulating on the surface of the building. The flush-mounted and mirrored windows to street level further extend this idea, by removing window ledges, which might collect refuse—and by refusing or throwing away views into the building. By contrast, the internal courtyard created to the rear of the house preserves the history of the site for simple observation, rather than through the homogenising preservative treatment applied to the facade. Away from the public gaze, small windows to the rear elevation of the top floor are freed from the function of providing privacy and surveillance, and instead frame particular distant views.

The separation of the warehouse elevations and the volumes containing the new functions further extends the defensive appearance established by the street elevations. The exterior wall resembles the outer wall of a castle, to which the interstitial circulation space is the metaphoric moat. From behind the outer wall, one can survey the street unnoticed including observing the local prostitutes applying their make-up in the mirrored windows. The defensive and anonymous relationship of the house to the street can be usefully understood through Adolf Loos's idea of the facade of a house as a mask from the public realm. In the Dirty House, however, the blank facade conceals the work areas of the house, while the top-floor living quarters are articulated as a pavilion that peeks out stealthily from behind the mask. Where for Loos a distinction between work and home was clearly articulated, Adjaye mixes work and living programmes and the architectural languages through which they are expressed. The lower floors contain work spaces based upon the proportions of the Royal College studios in which Noble and Webster trained. A spare bedroom on a mid-level mediates between the verticality of this working zone of the house and the horizontally expansive living zone on the top floor.

Adjaye describes the house as part of a sequence of work, also including the Elektra House, which make use of what he describes as 'poor' materials. Perhaps reacting against the English architectural obsession with construction or the perfection of material surface, Adjaye's work often makes use of low-cost and readily available building materials. Where the Elektra House used as a cladding material coated plywood normally used for concrete formwork and then discarded, the Dirty House incorporates decking board turned upside down and painted as an internal floor finish. Other everyday materials such as plywood flooring and strip lights sit alongside the sleekness of the client-selected Philippe Starck bathroom fittings and door handles of the architect's own design.

The immediate neighbour of the Dirty House is Rachael Whiteread. Unlike Noble and Webster, however, it seems that the artist known for her raw concrete castings has chosen not to see her own house as an extension of her work. Adjaye seems almost disappointed at a missed opportunity, when I reflect upon the apparent orthodoxy of the conversion of the disused synagogue into her studio and home. Only a few minutes walk away is the house of Adjaye's ex-partner Will Russell's, and a few blocks further, the house they worked on together for Chris Ofili. With FAT's house for its founder Sean Griffiths and Sarah Featherstone's own house nearby also, it is clear that the Dirty House sits in the midst of what could fairly be labelled an incubator for the new English house.

**David Chipperfield:** William Tozer, 'Crossing the Divide,' *Monument*, issue 58 (December/January 2003/2004): 86–91.

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'Clearly the artist holds the trump card' says David Chipperfield in answer to the inevitable question about the new building his office has just completed for renowned English artist, Anthony Gormley. The new Gormley Studio, which sits in a light industrial area of London just north of Kings Cross, is one of only a handful of buildings that Chipperfield has completed in England. Alongside the subject of the relationship between artist and architect is the broader issue of the respective roles of art and architecture, and the specificity of the interaction of this particular building and the artwork produced within it. These topics formed the basis of a recent public discussion between Chipperfield and Gormley, chaired by the renowned architectural critic Deyan Sudjic.

Describing the discussion as 'a conversation between an architect and an artist', Sudjic proposed that the main inquiry for the discussion should be 'what architecture and art have in common, if anything'. Positing the situation in less grand terms, Anthony Gormley simply stated that, 'for me the interesting thing is "Why did I choose David?"' Putting aside David Chipperfield's humorous first response—'Because John Pawson was too busy and too expensive'—it is clear from their discussion that Gormley has enormous respect for Chipperfield's work. 'He has an idea of how a building occupies a space ... [and] as an artist I don't think you need a noisy building', says Gormley, explaining why he feels the clean backdrop of minimalism is the appropriate setting for his work. However, when asked why he didn't design the building himself, Gormley offers a response in tune with Chipperfield's own initial jocular answer and cites only the difficulty of negotiating building regulations and technical construction issues. Broadening the discussion to the relationship between art and architecture, Chipperfield observes that, 'Probably the most free commission at the moment is a museum ... but artists constantly complain about the spaces architects create for them'. Reflecting upon this in relation to the crisp white interior of the studio, Chipperfield concludes that, 'If I lament anything, it's that this looks more like a gallery than a studio'. But, while art observation is a pristine activity, the first traces of the detritus of art practise are already beginning to appear on

the floors, walls and ceilings of the space. Moreover, Gormley is quick to reassure the architect that, 'We're going to make it look like a studio. We're going to trash this place'.

Referring to the familiar saw-tooth roof form of the building, Chipperfield remarks cheekily that one of the most notable things about the building is that, 'It's not a conversion. It's actually a new building'. Indeed, approaching the building one could be forgiven for believing that the studio was a careful conversion of an old factory or warehouse. In response, Gormley seems almost to feel the need to leap to the defence of his new studio, and retorts that the form was 'the simplest and most conventional way to bring light into all the spaces evenly'. Responding to this, Chipperfield reflects upon the fact that the building is in many ways a perfect version of an existing space that the artist had searched for unsuccessfully for two years before deciding to commission the construction. Resisting the architect's characterisation of the design as 'a parody of an "as found" industrial building', Gormley later remarks that, 'It came about from examining the existing building that I used to work in. There's something very organic about this solution'. The debate refers to the rejection of the architect's original design for the building—a flat-roofed corrugated steel form that brought shafts of light into the interior. 'I think it should have been a bit tougher', says Chipperfield comparing his original proposal and the completed building'. I gave in on everything to be honest, but I don't see that as being a problem. It's his building'. Alluding to the cause of some of these compromises, Gormley points out that, 'We didn't have any money [and] we have even less now'.

Contemplating the reciprocal relationship between his work and the studio space, Gormley observes that, 'art grows into whatever space is given it' and speculates that the proliferation of large gallery spaces may have caused the recent inflation in the size of modern art. Asked by Sudjic what would happen if he suddenly took up small-scale work, the artist points out that after years of working on enormous sculptural projects, the first thing he made in this new space was jewellery. While it was the scale of his own work that necessitated a space of this magnitude, the studio seems to have satiated this desire—at least momentarily. 'I think it's very important that you go to work. Work is a place of serious endeavour', says Gormley in reply to a question from the floor about his decision not to live in the space and the erosion of the notion of the artist's garret. Referring to the scale of the much of his work, he continues by pointing out that, 'you couldn't get one in your garret without the house falling down ... [it's] a demonstration of what a place like this enables you to do'. With bemusement about the scale of personal, financial and emotional investment that has been made in the new studio, he reflects that some of his best work is done 'when I'm on holiday in the Lake District or in my attic'. 'This space is much too serious for an artist to produce serious work in', jokes Chipperfield.

'I'm humbled and excited by having a building like this', says Gormley, acknowledging that David Chipperfield Architects have brought the studio 'a sense of proportion, a sense of volume, [and] a sense of how a building can possess its site'. Putting aside the complexities of spatial arrangement and construction, and connecting the production of art with the practise of architecture, Chipperfield ponders, 'What should something look like? That is the most difficult question that faces us on every project'.

**Lubetkin:** William Tozer, 'Flat White,' *New Zealand Home and Entertaining*, (February/March 2004): 68–73.

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The Highpoint apartment building in London is still despised by many of the more conservative residents of the surrounding leafy streets of Highgate, but in the sixty-eight years since it was constructed, its admirers have steadily grown in number. Amongst these admirers is current Highpoint homeowner Linda Aitken, a New Zealander now running her own urban design practice in London. Designed by Russian émigré Berthold Lubetkin, the construction of the building was staunchly resisted by the same conservation organisation that now coordinates tours of the building during the annual London Open House week. While the building was lauded by the architectural cognoscenti from its inception, it is no surprise that the scheme met with strong objections from a borough that still prides itself on having much lower densities of residential development than other areas of London.

Lubetkin arrived in England from Paris in the early 1930s and formed the architectural practice Tecton. Alongside Peter Behrens and New Zealander Amyas Connell, Lubetkin provided the initial impetus for the British modern architectural movement. Lubetkin's Tecton collaborator, Denys Lasdun went on to become a major figure in twentieth-century British architecture and the considerable influence of Lubetkin's modernism is evident in buildings such as The Royal Festival Hall on London's South Bank. Lubetkin's Highpoint was the first major building block in this sphere of influence and is undoubtedly a seminal piece of British modernism. While the compact and sensitive interiors are reminiscent of the Villa Savoye by the Swiss luminary Le Corbusier, the clean lines and projecting balconies to the elevations recall the functionalism of the Bauhaus or the rationalism of Terragni. While not a true Corbusian roof-scape, the roof of Highpoint provides a fabulous vantage point from which to survey London. One of these views is framed almost photographically—just as in Corbusier's Villa Savoye—with a window-like opening to a solid wall.

Born in New Zealand's Hawkes Bay, Linda Aitken travelled to London in the early 1980s as part of six months 'OE'. Two decades later, she now lives in London with her two sons and works as



an 'urbanist', designing streetscapes and masterplans for English cities. 'My anxiety about wanting to be an architect is long gone', says Linda, reflecting upon her chosen profession and her education in town planning and urban design in Auckland and Edinburgh respectively. Her practice, Aitken Leclercq is currently working with renowned Dutch architects MVRDV on a master plan for Toxteth in the northern English city of Liverpool. It is Linda's involvement in the design industry that makes her like-minded company for the increasing number of architects and designers who inhabit Highpoint. One of Linda's neighbours is renowned architectural critic, Jeremy Melvin, whose apartment sits directly above hers.

Although the parents of the previous owners of Linda's apartment had been friends of Lubetkin's, it is clear that they did not have a particular affinity with the design of the building. As with many of the apartments, pelmets and heavy curtains had been added to disguise the sliding and folding steel windows, and chandeliers and a fake fireplace had been introduced to soften the clean modern lines of the rooms. However, most of the original features did remain intact, including steel-framed doors, custom-made door handles, built-in cupboards, ceramic tiles and cork flooring. Another revolutionary attribute of the building, which continues to be operational to this day, is the under-floor and ceiling heating. All of these original features are now protected by the Grade One Listed status of the building. An un-missable feature that Linda has added to the apartment seems strangely at home with the Lubetkin design—an enormous back-lit photograph of a Serge Chermayeff building, which fills an entire wall of the living space. Another pioneer of modern architecture, Chermayeff is best known in Britain for his collaboration with Eric Mendelsohn on the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill-on-Sea.

'I think we've gone backwards', says Linda, comparing the revolutionary spatial arrangements of early modern buildings like Highpoint with most contemporary architecture. She remarks that in spite of many people's expectations, the compact, three-bedroom apartment is comfortable for her and her two sons due to its ingenious design. Moreover, with large shared gardens and a swimming pool, the building provides the closest approximation of a New Zealand environment that she can think of anywhere in London. The fact that her Highpoint apartment is drenched in sunlight during the short days of the English winter—at least by comparison to the terraced housing that dominates most of London—supports this observation.

Built-in washing chutes and service lifts to each apartment, and communal spaces on the ground floor indicate an ambition for a shared lifestyle born of the architect's socialist ideology. The presence of maids' quarters on the ground floor, however, suggests that these ambitions were interpreted through a bourgeois conception of this ideal, and the present occupation of the building in discreet dwellings belies this original aspiration. However, the growing population of architects, designers and architecturally aware inhabitants of the building has created a new sense of community at Highpoint. As Linda describes how she and several of her neighbours have discussed converting a small, unused ground-floor space into a communal library, it seems that Lubetkin's social agenda for the building may yet be fulfilled.

**Peter Cook / Spacelab:** William Tozer, 'The Friendly Alien,' *Monument*, issue 60 (April/May 2004): 46–52.

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Visiting the Bartlett in London to interview Chair of the School of Architecture, Peter Cook about the Kunsthhaus project that he and Spacelab collaborator Colin Fournier have recently completed, it is immediately clear that Cook and his Archigram lineage have exerted a fundamental and enduring influence upon the school. The lobby houses an exhibition of work in progress from a current design unit, which the wall text explains, 'investigates the hybrid realm of design and making towards defining alternative modes of practising architecture'. The objects that the students have installed in a derelict building suggest the persistence of a design methodology of constructing fantastical mechanisms and devices, which has its origin in the work of Archigram.

'I've never seen any dividing line between exploratory architecture and mainstream architecture', says Cook when asked how he places the Graz Kunsthhaus in relation to his unbuilt projects with Archigram and the work he has carried out and overseen at the Bartlett and elsewhere in the intervening decades. 'It's all stuff which is build-able ... It's all realisable ... I've only done about 30 competitions and I've won five of them, but this is the only one to come out of the ground. I see it less as research than simply as a building'. Reflecting upon the lack of immediacy of a building project by comparison to a design studio, Cook points out that the Graz Kunsthhaus 'happened relatively fast for a building of its size' and remarks that the necessary planning and building consents came through quickly. Observing a contrast with the speed required by one of his other more frequent activities, exhibition design, he asserts that the time frame 'doesn't surprise me and can be useful'. Reinforcing his belief in the connectedness of the teaching and practise of architecture, Cook asserts, 'When I have a good year design-wise, I know I'm better at teaching'.

Cook uses his new digital camera to explain his view on the futuristic appearance of the Graz Kunsthhaus. 'It has to look as if it's technologic. It emphasises the lens, although it doesn't really need to. Otherwise you might mistake it for your mobile phone'. He points out that in the face of increasing similarity of objects such as cameras, phones, shavers, and music players, each 'has

to somehow announce what it is ... I think we [architects] are in the mannerist business'. By this logic, the futuristic appearance of Spacelab's Kunsthaus can be seen as announcing not only its difference in function from the surrounding buildings and the technical innovations it incorporates, but also the technological ambitions of the architecture. Moreover, just as the Archigram projects of the '60s presented a bleak, post-Armageddon futurism, Spacelab's vision of the future is not the utopian brightly-lit cocoon proposed by the likes of fellow British architects Future Systems. 'My view is that they are sort of abstract architects and I don't think I am', says Cook, claiming that while the Future Systems building for Selfridges in Birmingham is an abstract object entirely alien to its context, the Kunsthaus in Graz is a 'friendly alien'. 'It's an alien which has actually grown out of the site'.

Walking around the Graz Kunsthaus and viewing its relationship to the buildings that it sits amongst, it is difficult not to concur with the sentiment of the 'friendly alien' label. Although geometrically in stark contrast to the built surroundings, the Kunsthaus is sympathetic to the overall scale of the existing context; the seemingly abstract envelope defers deftly to its neighbours, ground-floor views from the building are carefully framed, and it could be argued that the form establishes new relationships between the built form of the city and the morphology of the mountains and river that frame the site. Furthermore, the inflections in the 'roof' surface of the main body of the building—the 'nozzles' and spikes—recall, with a shift of scale, the traditional devices for preventing snow and ice falling into the street in large pieces, as seen on some of the neighbouring roofs.

'I think Frampton's very reactionary', says Cook, admitting to a degree of satisfaction in challenging with a building Kenneth Frampton's assertion in *Modern Architecture, A Critical History*, that the work of Archigram was not 'capable of being realised and appropriated by society' and possessed 'no ... concern [for] social and ecological consequences'. However, says Cook wryly, 'I'm pretty sure he sees it as highly suspect. We're part of the bubble group now. We often find ourselves on the next page from Future System'. Cook's remarks hint at dissatisfaction with the attempts of critics to find a single coherent line through architectural history and contemporary practise. Just as the work of Archigram does not sit comfortably within Frampton's view of the progression of modern architecture, it is flawed to group buildings together by their superficial geometric similarities. Similarly, while a visual likeness can be easily identified between the Graz Kunsthaus and Ron Herron's 1964 Walking City project for Archigram, Cook points out that the two architectural devices that the Spacelab building draws from Archigram's work are the nozzles and the travelator. The respective origins of these elements are the 1963 Living City exhibition at the ICA where a view of Piccadilly Circus was 'trapped' through a tube, and a blacked-out staircase at an Archigram exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford.

The overwhelming feeling that one experiences upon seeing the Graz Kunsthaus in person is incredulity that this simultaneously complex and whimsical building can exist in the face of the many and varied forces of conservatism that act upon the practise of architecture. Perhaps more remarkable than the adventurousness of the client, architect, consultants and regulatory bodies that has made the project possible, is the fact that while the bulbous and contorted form of the building pulsates on the side of the river, whether utilising or passing by the building, the city's inhabitants appear to have already accepted the 'friendly alien' and are seemingly oblivious to its strangeness.

**Libeskind:** William Tozer, 'The Graduate,' *Monument*, issue 62 (August/September 2004): 22–24.

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'I think it's important to use architecture in all contexts', remarks Daniel Libeskind, comparing his recently completed Graduate Centre for London Metropolitan University with his schemes for the Jewish Museum and Ground Zero. 'You have to be interested in a whole range of experiences ... [and] this is a very modest project', he says of the building that now nestles into the chaotic streetscape of fast food vendors and small retailers in north London's Holloway Road. Libeskind's design is part of an ambitious building programme initiated by the university, which should soon also include projects by Rick Mather and Zaha Hadid.

The London Met Graduate Centre is a small project that can perhaps be most usefully understood as part of a body of work, rather than as an autonomous piece of design. The formal language of the building is typical of Libeskind's architecture and is the outcome of his unique but often-repeated design methodology, which centres on poetic drawing. Libeskind's drawings usually take the form of a mass of lines connecting points of significance on or around the site of a scheme. The selection from these drawings of figures from which to make plan form and elevational decisions, and their application, is an intuitive act that reconciles the diagrams with the pragmatic issues of the project. The process produces fragmented, linear (or sometimes curvilinear) geometries with complicated intersections, and consequently his buildings are complex spatial and visual compositions. The graduate centre arrives at forms and spaces of this nature, from starting points of the Orion constellation, and from view lines up and down Holloway Road.

As in his other schemes, the link between built form and design methodology is very clear in the Graduate Centre. Called into question, however, is Libeskind's belief in the ability of his architecture to absorb meaning through this process. In his designs for the Jewish Museum and Ground Zero, the notion of a link between the abstract pattern-making methodology and the investment in the built form of meaning drawn from the inspiration for this process, seems somewhat tenuous and generic. Moreover, using another permutation of this design strategy for the London Metropolitan University building, while maintaining that no weighty significance

should be attached to the inspiration or the resulting forms and spaces, calls into question the claims made for the preceding projects. It would seem more reasonable to conclude that it is Libeskind's intuitive curation of his design methodologies that invests his buildings with emotional, cultural and political significance, not the methodologies themselves. The Graduate Centre contains an entry lobby and staircase, two classrooms and a lecture theatre; and in contrast to the Jewish Museum, these spaces are light, airy and generally functional rather than loaded with meaning. In spite of a close similarity of process, the architect's command of light, proportion, scale and composition clearly differentiates the spaces of the Graduate Centre from those of his other projects.

Libeskind's design processes could be described as simply a mechanism for presenting possibilities within a range of geometry that he intuitively finds interesting. His interest in fractured, complex forms seems motivated by a desire to set his architecture in a distinctly alien relationship with the surrounding built context. While not clearly stated by the architect, this latent ambition seems rooted in a belief in the capacity for architecture to agitate and revitalise its setting. In the case of the Graduate Centre scheme, the geometry is used to create an iconic new face for the restructured university. 'Architecture is about geometry', says Libeskind, 'and how the building looks in the landscape'.

**Herzog and de Meuron:** William Tozer, 'Outside the Box,' *Monument*, issue 64 (December/January 2004/2005): 58–62.

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Herzog and de Meuron leapt to widespread notoriety in the mid nineteen nineties with the realisation of their designs for the Goetz Collection Gallery in Munich and the copper-clad Basel Signal Box. While it is commonplace within the profession for architects to come to prominence only after many years of practice, the freshness of these projects belied the fact that this 'new' practice had already been producing work for two decades. Another decade on, and the work of Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron is still at the forefront of architectural discussion. The practice shares this unusual persistence of prominence with Rem Koolhaas and OMA, and together the two practices have come to almost define the profession in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The latest project by Herzog and de Meuron, the Barcelona Forum building, provides an insight into the current, but seemingly ever-changing, direction of the Swiss practice.

The Barcelona Forum is a cultural festival organised with the intention of showcasing ideas for the future development of the city. The development is located at the point where the coastline of Barcelona is intersected by the Avenida Diagonal, a major boulevard that crosses the city. The regeneration plans aim to build upon the character of the old city and the structure provided by Cerda's nineteenth-century rationalisation. Cleverly, the same buildings that exhibit these plans will soon form key parts of the infrastructure facilitating the regeneration itself. Herzog and de Meuron's building sits alongside projects by other major architects, including Foreign Office Architects, and frames the main entrance to the site. The building contains exhibition spaces, an auditorium, a chapel, a bar and kiosk, and an outdoor market space.

In terms of form, Herzog and de Meuron's projects can be broadly divided into those that exhibit a geometry born of a relationship to established building morphologies, and those whose geometry possesses the qualities of abstract sculpture. The division is by no means clear-cut, but falls broadly along the lines of private (housing and offices et cetera) and public (the likes of museums and retail) respectively. The dark blue, incised, monolithic form of the Barcelona Forum building falls squarely into the second category. The triangular footprint of the building

relates to the geometry of the intersection of site and boulevard, while its materials draw upon the textures and colours of the sea.

While Herzog and de Meuron's use of sculptural form may appear sporadic, it can be usefully understood in the terms set out by Adolf Loos in the early twentieth century and originating in the nineteenth-century writings of Gottfried Semper. The pared back exteriors of Loos's 'private' projects possess a compositional presence derived from their perfected abstraction of accepted building norms, while his small forays into the public arena and his larger competition schemes suggest a tendency for the ornamental and the sculptural. In the work of Herzog and de Meuron, these distinctions in approaches to form are equally marked, but the delineation of their deployment is far less straightforward. This complexity could be attributed to contemporary blurring of the boundaries between public and private realms and a broadened conception of sculpture and ornament.

Almost inevitably, commissions in the public realm have come later in the careers of Herzog and de Meuron, and consequently it would be easy to dismiss the shift in their execution of form and decoration as simply a change in direction and working method. However, the practice continues to produce office and residential work which more comfortably sits in what could be called the 'rarefied vernacular' category, and there is evidence of an interest in abstract sculptural form in their early small-scale and un-built public projects. In the Barcelona Forum building, the rock-like texture of the walls of the abstract form is carried through into the interior surfaces of the outer skin, reinforcing the perception of the building as a single plastic solid from which the spaces and openings have been incised. The display partitions, central core and building services are not concealed by this gesture, however, but rather are articulated as pragmatic insertions. This distinction between architecture as art and architecture as provision for art, is somewhat diminished by the installation of the work, which has also made use of the external walls for display.

Commenting on the debates surrounding 'blob' and 'box' architecture, Terence Riley of MoMA has commented that Herzog and de Meuron's work usefully circumvents this largely redundant categorisation. Nonetheless, many have been quick to collect Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron with Peter Zumthor and others under the label of 'Swiss box architects' due to their apparent concern with materials and space rather than form. Alongside the already completed Tokyo Prada Store and projects such as the soon to be completed Cottbus Technical University Library and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Barcelona Forum building forms part of a new body of abstract sculptural work which renders redundant this and any other simple categorisation of their work.

**Caruso St John:** William Tozer, 'Defence of the Realm,' *Monument*, Residential Special (2005): 26–30.

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Caruso St John received widespread notoriety from their transition into large-scale buildings with the completion of the Walsall Gallery in 2000. The recently constructed Brick House sees their masterly return to the genre of the single residence.

A container hewn almost entirely of brick and enclosed by a roof of similarly singular concrete, the house evokes the two primary origins of architecture—the cave and the tent. 'The cave protects you from this bustling area of London. [It is] a visual representation of the acoustic quietness', concedes Adam Caruso, but he is not prepared to admit to attempting to tackle the very origins of architecture in a single project. Nonetheless, Caruso St John practice architecture in such a committed, idealistic and simultaneously intellectual and humorous manner, that increasingly many would consider them capable of such a feat.

As at Walsall, the Brick House sets out to give one an experience of involvement in the construction of the architecture. Where at Walsall, the visitor observes concrete cast on timber formwork alongside timber panelling which recalls this process, in the Brick House the inhabitant's awareness of the construction is heightened through its material singularity. This is 'an interior where you are enveloped by the construction', says Caruso. The project's namesake brick references the ubiquity of the material in London housing. But the architects concede to this connection only at an intuitive or unconscious level, accrediting the approach more to the fact that the site gives the building no opportunities for rhetorical facades. However, 'the best ideas are those which are partially unconscious', reflects Caruso.

The simplicity of the material palette lends the building an unreal quality, more aligned with the formal qualities of architectural models than with architecture. While this was not a conscious objective for the project, the architects admit inspiration from Thomas Demand, whose photography of architectural models challenges the relationship between architecture and its representation (*Monument* 31). Caruso St John utilize physical models extensively in the development of their projects, and the model-like quality of the Brick House could be seen as a



literal manifestation of this working method. It could be argued that model-making is ostensibly a Modernist methodology, adopted to distance architecture from the Beaux Arts tradition and its reliance upon drawing. However, Caruso St John have strong views on the importance of continuing historical architectural traditions and an aversion to perspective, another form of representation generally aligned with Modernism in its architectural deployment.

The Brick House is clearly a departure in form-making for Caruso St John, from the orthogonal and rectilinear geometry that has characterised their built work to date. The faceted geometry of the project bears a strong resemblance to their scheme for the Nottingham Centre for Visual and Live Art, but it is difficult not to draw a connection with the similarly surprising geometric transition recently observed in the work of Herzog and de Meuron. Caruso points out that in both the Brick House and their Nottingham scheme, the building form could be seen as an expression of the site form and notes that his practice has utilized faceted geometry in many of their competition projects. He also points out that they are currently using curves on another project and rectilinear geometry on several others. He speculates that the shift may be partly simply a consequence of their increasing confidence, but remarks that there seems to be a general interest amongst architects in faceted geometry.

Caruso St John have stated that the plan of the Brick House 'is completely separate from the typologies of the London townhouse or the inner city loft'. 'It's not very typological', asserts Caruso, claiming that even their initial impulse to utilize a courtyard house plan to bring light into the building was thwarted by the footprint of the site, which established a conflict between the size of the courtyard and the living spaces. As a sequence of interior and exterior rooms, however, the house could be understood as a combination of the detached North American suburban house and a small civic building. Contributing to the latter interpretation, is the use of faceted openings in roof of the building, which permit shafts of light into the house and frame fragments of the surrounding buildings. The building's civic character will be furthered by the introduction of two different types of bespoke and sculptural lighting designed by the architects.

While the house is a spatial hybrid and can be read formally as cave and tent, one can equally comprehend the building as synthesis of the typologies of bunker and chapel. London has a long history of siege, from the Blitz, through the IRA, to the city's most recent brush with terrorism. In this context, this interpretation of the Brick House as a new defensive London housing typology seems chillingly appropriate.

**Arup:** William Tozer, 'All Change,' *Monument*, issue 68 (August/September 2005): 24–25.

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Arup's recently completed scheme for Vauxhall bus station in central London takes geometric inspiration from the classic tube map design of Harry Beck. While strong graphics and signage design have long been synonymous with London's transport network, Arup's bus station could be seen as an attempt to manifest these signs through built form. The practice describes the design as a 'metaphor for linear transport' and their winning competition entry proposed a ribbon-like roof dividing into three components to provide shelter, seating and enclosed spaces.

The realised project has been to some extent normalised by the very specific requirements of public transport and health and safety regulations in the public realm. The seating is bespoke, but is a variation on regular seating, rather than an adaptation of the ribbon building form. Similarly, requirements for minimum roof heights have diminished the amplitude of variations in the form (which distinguish waiting areas from bus stops) and required the introduction of more conventional bus shelters below. While Arup have taken considerable care to integrate the servicing elements of the scheme into the building form, it is also difficult to avoid the conclusion that the sculptural gesture would have been better preserved by setting lighting, speakers and other items distinctly apart from the roof.

Spatially, the scheme provides a pedestrian oasis, in an area of London's Southbank that is dominated by cars. Two of the previous six lanes of traffic were removed to accommodate the new bus station, but it would seem that considerable further traffic calming and changes to street furniture will be necessary to reduce the impression of pedestrians being stranded and encircled. Stainless steel cladding, and the inclusion of an external urinal, street lighting and closed circuit television, demonstrates a keen awareness of the architectural robustness required to deal with this marginalised streetscape.

The Vauxhall bus station was the subject of a 2002 Transport for London competition and can be seen as a small-scale example of the restructuring that the organisation is currently undergoing. By comparison to radical plans for the expansion of the transport network into east London, the Vauxhall bus station performs the modest but vital role of improving bus services,

and integrating them with existing train and tube connections. As engineers, Arup have a long record of innovative collaboration with leading architects. The Vauxhall bus station is high-profile evidence that the now multidisciplinary Arup is capable of producing noteworthy architecture of its own.

**Gianni Botsford:** William Tozer, 'Deductive Design,' *Monument*, issue 74 (August/September 2006): 66–69.

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Visiting Gianni Botsford's St John's Mews house, the overwhelming impression is astonishment at the scale of the house and the financial investment that it represents in London's property market. The project is an extension of the architect's design research at London's Architectural Association architecture school, and the result of close collaboration with engineers Ove Arup.

The new building occupies a mews backed on to by the surrounding houses and other buildings. To give an indication of its scale, one elevation alone backs on to half-a-dozen terraced houses, many of which are most likely split into a number of separate dwellings. While it is commonplace for luxury private houses to emulate hotel rooms, this house is more akin to a small hotel in its entirety. Aside from its scale, the building's material palette of concrete, glass and steel suggests the public areas of a hotel. However, where in a hotel one would generally see material variation from the more public areas to the guest rooms, here the 'corporate' material palette is deployed throughout and without variation.

Clearly, this house relies heavily upon furnishings to define the specific character of rooms. It is easier to imagine the interiors filled with desks or perhaps stacks of white towels and gym equipment, but while not in situ at the time of photography, the furnishings are in fact an eclectic collection of antiquities, reflecting the diverse interests of the art-historian owners. One of these items is a bookcase designed by early twentieth-century Viennese architect Adolf Loos. This item recalls two of Loos' writings on architecture, which shed light on the house—'Ornament and Crime' and 'The Poor Little Rich Man'. For Loos, the street elevations of a house were an act of anonymity behind which were concealed rich interiors, whereas for Botsford the building is unforthcoming both externally and internally. 'I think the clients are still coming to terms with what they are living in', says Botsford, 'and [they] need to experience all the seasons to know what works and what doesn't—it needs time'.

'Our starting point was to represent the empty volume of the site as a three-dimensional grid of voxel data points', says Botsford, explaining how three-dimensional pixels were used to model

the performance of light across the site. The architects claim that as a result of that six months research, 'the section became inverted, placing the bedrooms on the ground floor and the living spaces on the first floor'. However, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that this spatial manoeuvre is a fairly unsurprising intuitive move, given the nature of the site. The same could be said for the use of the stairwell, a central courtyard and a lightwell to bring natural light into the lower levels of the house. An unconscious appreciation of traditional courtyard houses could claim equal influence over the spatial arrangement of the house to Botsford's voxel modelling.

While very explicit on the subject of the analytical spatial development of the project, Botsford sees his form-making and material selection as creatively neutral. 'We are attempting to innovate by applying a rational deductive approach, which we call "deductive design"', says the architect. On the contrary, however, it is here that the architect's working method appears most pronounced. Both the glazing that forms the roof and the module that organises the plan and section are grids, and could be seen as giving form to the framework of Botsford's voxel light model. The roof glazing casts a gridded shadow across the concrete walls, which are themselves emblazoned with a grid of pixels in the form of concrete ties. In turn, the honeycomb structure of the translucent floors bears a striking resemblance to physical models of the computer light modelling. Even views out of the house are pixellated through perforated steel screens and the supposedly purely functional fretting to the roof glazing.

The arrangement of spaces skilfully uses the direction of natural light to define the character of one space from another, but views out of the house are almost exclusively to the sky or back into the building. This recalls, David Adjaye's Elektra House in East London, which is also notable for its lack of windows offering views. For Adjaye this gesture edited out most of the surroundings and can be seen as an expression of his interest in the work of installation artist James Turrell. Botsford's functionalist viewpoint would have us believe that the exclusion of views here is simply born of the need for privacy, but perhaps it could be more critically understood as a defensive and territorial gesture.

**100% Design:** William Tozer, '100% Design,' *Monument*, issue 76 (December/January 2006/2007): 102.

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100 % Design is now in its twelfth year and has grown into an event that incorporates 100% Detail, 100% Light and 100% East. Around the week have grown a number of satellite Events, including Designers Block and the Design Trail, and together the events are now part of The London Design Festival.

Since beginning in a marquee in 1995, 100% has grown considerably in size and oscillated between the roles of design show and trade fair. With the inception of Designers Block it seemed that fresh design talent was temporarily sapped away from 100% Design, leaving a predominance of kitchen manufacturers, sanitaryware and the like. 100% responded with the introduction of 100% Detail, enabling the main exhibition to refocus on product design, and introduced discounted stands for young and promising designers. The introduction of 100% Light seems similarly motivated. 100% East appears to be a more direct response to Designers Block, which has always located itself near the studios and shops of London's avant-garde East End. It seemed almost inevitable that through this strategy 100% would draw talent from Designers Block, through the implicit promise of connections to press, manufacturers and distributors that are a function of its scale—and this seems to be the case this year, where Designers Block seems comprehensively outstripped by the offerings of 100%.

From an architectural perspective, it is impossible not to be astonished by the differences of design method and approach between architects and a product designers when visiting a show like 100% Design. Where the adjective 'willful' has become so loaded with negative connotations in the architectural community, the benefits of instinctive making (followed by post-rationalisation and refinement) seem to be fully appreciated by designers. This contrast is of course in part due to the differing procurement methods of buildings and products. Where prototyping is central to the working method of product designers, architects are ostensibly in the process of constructing functioning prototypes. Similarly, while buildings are almost always expected to endure the ravages of time, product design is generally less permanent and may even be consumable. When a product design is enduring, it seems accepted that it may need to

be re-manufactured rather than simply repaired, and that its production may fluctuate as it falls in and out of fashion. Many of the objects on show at 100% Design take the form of design objects that are simply fashionable versions of very familiar designs in unusual colours, materials or shapes, while a number of other designs are clearly more substantial in their practical innovation, creative intensity or sophistication. Among the best in the first category at this year's show were domesticity's Shed Hook coat hook, Yo Yo Ceramics' Is That Plastic? Butter dish, Normann's rubber washing up bowl and brush, Jennifer Newman Studio's outdoor furniture and Factum's cardboard furniture. More befitting the latter description are Sheldon:Cooney's Bulldog Light, Pearson Lloyd's Sistema Horizon modular cabinets, Naught One's Trace side table, Andrew Lang's Cycloc bicycle rack, Molo's pleated paper furniture, Terada Design's Koma stool, and NAos Design's Cordillera shelf.

An invisible filter on participation in forums such as 100% is the cost of exhibiting, and partly as a consequence much of the best work on show during The London Design Festival is not to be seen at the large trade shows. Some of the highlights to be seen elsewhere in this year's programme were the Super Design Market, offering an opportunity to purchase rather than view design objects; Tom Dixon's installation of chairs in Trafalgar Square; and the Traveling Apothecary, offering cures to 'modern ailments such as iPod addiction and celebrity obsession'.

**Borgos Dance:** William Tozer, 'Louise T Blouin Institute: West London,' *Detail*, English edition (January/February 2007): 14–15.

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The Louise T Blouin Institute is a new privately-funded arts and cultural space in west London. The project was initiated by French Canadian Arts Publisher Louise T Blouin McBain, and designed by architects Borgos Dance.

Simon Dance and Etienne Borgos founded their practice in 2001 after working in the offices of minimalist John Pawson and the high-tech Norman Foster respectively. The influence of both practices is evident in the projects of Borgos Dance, but their work has a distinct character of its own and clearly draws from a broader frame of reference. They currently have offices in both London and Barcelona and their practice encompasses architecture, interiors, and furniture. They commenced work on the Louise T Blouin Institute in 2004 after previously designing a number of art fair exhibition stands and then offices for her publishing company, LTB Media.

The building occupies an Edwardian warehouse on a site sandwiched between council housing and a busy highway. While this location might seem an appropriately marginalised location for a gallery, this is a well-connected arts institution and its location also registers this in its proximity to the affluent areas of Notting Hill and Holland Park. Previous occupations of the site have included the manufacturing of coaches for London's royals and aristocrats and car bodies for Rolls Royce, and more recently offices for design and advertising companies.

Load-bearing masonry piers and arches over the windows have been rebuilt to reorder the façade. This reordering is to some extent simply a rationalization of the modifications carried out to the building through its various occupations, but it could also be understood as an attempt to maximize the building's iconic appearance as industrial architecture. This symbolism of industry is clearly a more important allusion for this new arts institute than the messiness of the intervening occupations. On the interior these window openings are treated in an even more iconic fashion, reduced to abstract shapes in the massive and planar envelope of the building. This is facilitated by the internal lining of the building to accommodate concealed insulation, air-



conditioning, lighting and blinds. The traditional composition of panes to the new aluminum-framed double glazed windows further recalls the historical function of the building.

Working with Arup Engineering, Borgos Dance have removed all of the columns from the ground floor by suspending lightweight floors for the upper levels from two 27 metre long, 2.5 metre high roof trusses. The resulting free-space of the ground floor heightens the dominance of the iconic image of a factory space by enabling views from one end of the 42 metre long building to the other. Maintaining this abstract quality, a displacement air-conditioning system is concealed beneath the power-floated concrete of the ground floor, while the ceilings throughout are treated with a render system to improve acoustic performance. Triple-height clear glazing at the junction of the floors and one of the elevations heightens this sense by enabling an unbroken view of the window openings.

A grid of beams to the 10.5 metre high entry space allows for the support of large works of art. This triple-height space punctuates a visitor's entry to the building, creating an interior space at the scale of the exterior streetscape. From this space one moves either into the 4 metre high main gallery space or into the café, which possesses something of the quality of an exterior space through its positioning outside the monolithic form of the main building and the incorporation of a fully-glazed roof. While the angled wall of the entry space functions to announce the imposition of a new function within the existing building, the curved wall of the café space seems somewhat incongruous with the geometry of the rest of the project.

Glare and black-out blinds to all of the windows are automated to respond to the sun to control lighting conditions in the gallery spaces. While each of the window sills incorporates a lighting feature by American artist James Turrell, the varying degrees of opacity created by the architects' use of blinds also recalls the artist's work. The abstract, massive and planar appearance of the windows and shadows and silhouette that they produce also resonate with the work of Turrell, whose work filled the gallery spaces for the opening of the Institute. The building's plant is concealed behind a polycarbonate screen on the roof of the building, also illuminated by Turrell. This screen encloses two translucent glass roof-lights that bring natural light into the top floor. Like the roof of the café space, their sloped form and visible fixings circumvent an abstract resonance, but nonetheless this roof glazing recalls Turrell's Skyspaces.

The sparseness of the Louise T Blouin Institute and a number of other recent gallery projects in London could be interpreted as a reaction against more obviously figured or spectacular proposals for art projects. However, to describe The Institute as a blank canvas because of its lack of overt formal gymnastics would be to exclude the possibility of more subtle forms of figure or spectacle. Like Caruso St John's recent Gagosian gallery in London's Kings Cross, the Louise T Blouin Institute is no less sculptural than Herzog and de Meuron's proposal for the extension of the Tate Modern, but rather its sculptural gestures operate and at different scales. The Louise T Blouin Institute resonates particularly with the work of James Turrell but will undoubtedly also provide a provocative context for the work of many other artists. In this sense the building should not be seen as a rebuke of the importance of the architectural diagram, but rather an example of the importance of the relationship between an architectural diagram and architectural detail.

**Zaha Hadid:** William Tozer, 'Inner Light,' *Monument*, issue 79 (June/July 2007): 60–64.

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Despite her international notoriety, it was not until the completion of the most recent Maggie's Centre that Pritzker Prize winning architect Zaha Hadid had completed a building in the United Kingdom. Facilities for the support of cancer patients and their friends, families and carers, Maggie's Centres are the brainchild of Maggie Keswick Jenks, the late wife of architectural theorist Charles Jencks. Maggie 'had a unique ability to make everyone feel special by giving them the time and space to express and be themselves', says Hadid. 'I hope that the look and feel of the Centre in some way enhances a visitor's experience and provides a warm and welcoming place for them to relax and access the support they need'.

Underlying all practice of architecture is some degree of belief in environmental determinism, the concept that one's environment can elicit behavioral, emotional or intellectual responses in its inhabitants. While this notion generally goes unnoticed and unconsidered by most architects, it would be difficult to overlook in a building where the brief is to promote the well-being of cancer patients and their friends, family and carers, before, during and after their medical treatment. It is rare that a building brief requires that the environment promote anything other than a positive response from its inhabitants, but the Jewish Museum in Berlin is an obvious example, and its architect, Daniel Libeskind, is one of the other well-known names currently being called upon to design Maggie's Centres. This raises interesting questions in relation to the ability of architectural form and space to affect such change, and the appropriateness of different formal and spatial qualities to elicit a rehabilitative response. With the Dundee Maggie's Centre, it seems that Frank Gehry felt the need to depart from his normal curvilinear formal vocabulary to create an appropriate environment. While a large diversity of geometries are evident in Gehry's career, the curvilinear, abstract expressionist phase has dominated in recent decades and so it is difficult to see his Maggie's Centre as anything other than recognition that he felt this vocabulary not sufficiently reassuring. Despite the comparatively dark qualities of her architecture, Hadid has not felt the need to append a detached an element of her normal vocabulary to an otherwise familiar building in the way that Gehry has done. The angular, black Fife Maggie's Centre is unashamedly recognizable as the work of Zaha Hadid.

Hadid is known for the darkly futuristic formalism of her work, and in the Maggie's Centre this is manifested in a black, angular, folded exterior surface perforated by triangular openings to a curvilinear white interior. The contrast between the exterior and interior could be understood as a metaphoric representation of cancer and recovery. Hadid describes the goal of the form as creating an edge to the coal mining hollow that adjoins the site. This hollow is perhaps the inspiration for the sparkling black surface treatment, achieved through the application of black liquid polyurethane with silicone carbide grit. The sculptural quality of the folding gesture is supported by the treatment of the roof and walls in same material, and the articulation of other enclosing elements visually neutral through the use of clear or translucent glass. The folded form seems likely to be a metaphoric gesture of protective enclosure, turning its back defensively on the hospital. Spatially this metaphor is extended to embrace the 'distinctive protective environment' of the coal hollow onto which the Centre opens. The building is conceived as an enhancement of this quality, incorporating 'a wall that gradually rises to separate the public space of the entrance from the private spaces of the terrace. It terminates by wrapping around the southern tip of the Centre as a south-facing terrace which feels shielded and protective'. The architects describe the building as possessing a 'strong directional language' and the form as a 'directional surface [that] moves the visitor'. This language suggests that through the spatial arrangement, Hadid has attempted to give a sense of progression analogous to a patient's treatment, recuperation or self-realisation.

The realization of Zaha Hadid's design for the Fife building is the fifth Maggie's Centre. Another seven centres are planned in the next five years; for Lanarkshire, London, Oxford, Cheltenham, Nottingham, Cambridge and Swansea. Richard Rogers and Daniel Libeskind are among the star architects donating their time to the design of these buildings. Meanwhile, following on from the successful completion of her first building in Britain, we can now also look forward to the scheduled completion in 2008 of Zaha Hadid's design for The Architecture Foundation Building.

**Herzog and de Meuron:** William Tozer, 'Character Lines: Herzog and de Meuron's CaixaForum,' *Monument*, issue 89 (February/March 2009): 82–89.

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The new Caixaforum building by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Herzog and de Meuron shares its site with an historic existing building. The removal of this building would undoubtedly have reduced the construction cost of the project, and little more than the original facade remains. However, the dynamic relationship between the two types of architecture creates a potent composition.

Rusted steel forms the facade of the new building, and its orange shade of brown sets up a visual relationship with the faded terracotta and brick of the original building, without resorting to the familiar conservationist device of matching materials. The form of the addition makes a similar allusion to the original building, extrapolating the pitch of the gabled roofs into forms that pitch and crank in three dimensions. The ornamental quality of this form, and the surface perforations with which it is detailed, perform an analogous role to the surface decoration that adorns the original building. Increasing the height of the building establishes a less diminutive relationship with its contemporary neighbours, and the greenery treatment of the adjacent elevation of one of the neighbouring buildings reinforces the connection of the abstract building form to its context. The language and materiality of the new facade is carried through into some areas of the interior—such as the subterranean auditorium—which is otherwise composed of a contrasting vocabulary of white and steel elements articulated in rectilinear, curvilinear and folded geometry. Within the original building the interaction of the interior with the exterior takes the form of visually neutral frameless glazing, which does not match but is proportional to the removed traditional fenestration. Above the level of the original building, however, the new building envelope takes the form of orthodox black-framed window openings. This gesture seems more convincing where it assumes a relatively neutral rectilinear form, rather than deferring to the geometry of the rusted facade, such as in the stairwell. Plain white surfaces are largely reserved for the predominantly rectilinear walls and ceilings of the galleries and ancillary spaces, but are also applied to the more overtly sculptural curvilinear staircase. The installation of lighting into the underside of this staircase—rather than illuminating it from the adjacent walls or floor as is the case elsewhere in the building—somewhat diminishes its sculptural quality.

Folded geometry is deployed in some areas of the gallery walls, but most extensively in conjunction with the raw steel sheeting to the ceiling of the external undercroft of the building.

The undercroft space is the most dramatic spatial gesture of the project, and is reminiscent of the architects' earlier Barcelona Forum (*Monument* 64). It creates an outdoor public space connected to the street and adjoining square, providing cover from rain or harsh sunshine for snaking queues of visitors. As with the earlier project, however, it seems curious that the programme of the interior of the building does not interact more with this space—an engaging spatial experience left largely uninhabited. This space opens onto open squares to both the north and south of the building, the former of which is framed by the wall of greenery described above, serving to appropriate this square more directly into the spatial ordering of the building. Internally, the spatial distribution could be described as a series of stacked open-plan floor plans, the lower of which have been given something of the character of landscapes through changes of level and meandering circulation. These open-plan spaces are punctuated by the stairwells, which create dramatic voids through the section.

This building is clearly part of a recent trajectory of Herzog and de Meuron projects that also includes the aforementioned Barcelona Forum, the de Young Museum in San Francisco, and the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis. The departure from the rectilinear geometry that characterised their earlier work has alienated many of their previous architectural admirers, but it has been argued by this author (*Architectural Research Quarterly* 12) that the partisan division of architects along lines of geometry stems from the accepted conception of modern architecture as rooted in issues of function, whereas fine art provides a more convincing explanation. The minor reservations about the Caixaforum expressed above to some extent stem from the fact that it is more difficult for architecture to convincingly function as art due to the way in which it is perceived by comparison to other mediums such as painting and sculpture. Herzog and de Meuron's earlier buildings possess ambiguities between found object and designed object, and between function and art, allowing a degree of latitude to their perception as art objects. These ambiguities have become clear divisions in the more recent projects, and the success of these buildings is diminished to some degree at any points of contact between them that are less than perfectly handled.