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JONATHAN BELL

1 CENTURY HOUSE

- 1 View from garden – Marsh View is the radical reconstruction of an existing bungalow, extended to form a home and studio.
- 2 A concrete ramp rises up to the entrance, at left. The small entrance hall doubles up as a dye room.
- 3 The towering brick chimney on the west façade, shown shortly after completion, gives the main room a lofty ceiling, at the top of which is a skylight.



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Marsh View is a house that will grow into its landscape, a small family home with an unconventional exterior, a generous interior and an extensive use of vernacular materials that identify the building with its Norfolk surroundings. It occupies the site of a bungalow with few, if any, redeeming features. This was demolished, retaining the south and east walls as the basis of the new-build. Despite its respect for vernacular traditions, planning permission in this designated area of outstanding natural beauty was granted only on appeal.

Lynch's client, Alison Mitchell, a weaver, wanted a weekend retreat.



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They discussed the idea of a residence that would be a series of spaces and views rather than a set of conventional rooms. Mitchell wanted 'a tall section of roofing with a skylight at the top so the full moon would cast shadows into this high-up void', and Lynch responded by creating a 7.5-metre (25-foot) chimney stack as the house's pivotal feature. This stark brick chimney is met by two painted softwood-clad walls, the roof sloping steeply up to the corner. From the adjacent water meadows the chimney is like a tower, a man-made feature punctuating this flat landscape just like the nearby church spire and

timber mill. This elevation shields a south-facing courtyard, accessed by broad sliding glass doors from the living room. Two ponds have been dug: the 'evening pond', at the edge of the site, and the 'morning pond', nestling in the angle of the Z-shaped floor plan by the front entrance.

Inside, the main space is towering, as Mitchell requested, with a wedgelike rooflight, an oculus soaking the room in daylight and creating a place to watch the stars at night. From the entrance-cum-dye-room at the southern end of the property, one enters a kitchen and dining area, which leads to a study and the inside/outside space created

MARSH VIEW HOUSE

Norfolk, UK

2003

Lynch Architects





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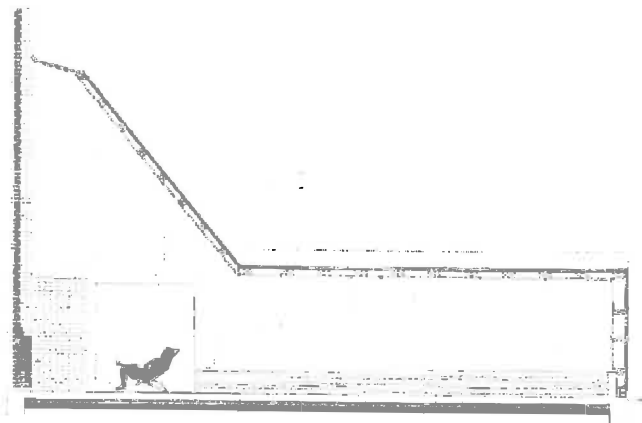


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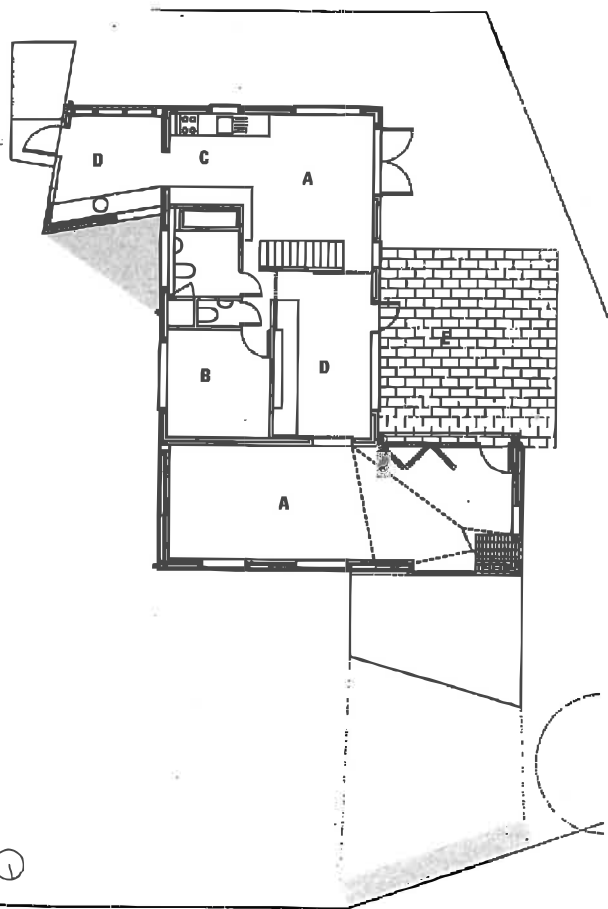


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- 4 The living room rises steeply to the oculus in the northern corner of the building.
- 5 Daylight floods in, illuminating the fireplace in the corner.
- 6 While the exterior is black-painted softwood planks, the interior is lined with plywood, with a concrete floor throughout.
- 7 Section through studio room.
- 8 Ground-floor plan: [A] living room, [B] bedroom, [C] kitchen, [D] studio, [E] terrace.



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by re-using the existing terrace. On the first floor are two bedrooms, although there are sleeping arrangements for eight in total.

Natural lighting is gathered from as many points as possible, including rooflights and corner windows, with no central mullions. The internal cladding is plywood, as is the structural skin, an economical way of creating the large parabolic roof. Rooms are divided by full-height sliding plywood doors, hung from ceiling-mounted tracks. The external brickwork is blackened, in a nod to local vernacular. The aesthetic was not a sop to the planning process, but stemmed from a genuine

fascination with the roughness of the construction process, the sense of an unfinished object, constantly weathering, a toughness of spirit that addresses both landscape and ideas of the home. Marsh View is far from contemporary views of innovative architecture: it uses tried and tested technology, with experimentation dedicated to reducing costs. It is not focused only on traditional materials, but on an almost unfashionable notion of domesticity that places the hearth at the centre of the home. It is unique yet familiar, a building established to continue an ongoing narrative.