



ADRIAN JAMES ARCHITECTS SANDPATH

Sandpath in Beckley, Oxfordshire, is intended to demonstrate how limitations on size, appearance and budget can be turned to advantage if treated as an opportunity. The scheme, designed by Adrian James Architects, replaces a decrepit chalet bungalow in the Oxford Green Belt and had to conform to strict height and volume limits. At the same time the budget for the young family client was very tight. To meet these parameters, the architect conceived a simple and easily buildable solution wrapped in the most efficient envelope that was viable.

A cuboid shape was chosen to maximise the occupiable space within the permitted height limit. Bay windows and other forms of external adornment were eschewed in favour of purity and simplicity. The envelope is constructed from highly insulated SIPs panels – a logical solution for a straightforward rectilinear building.

Making use of the fall across the site, a

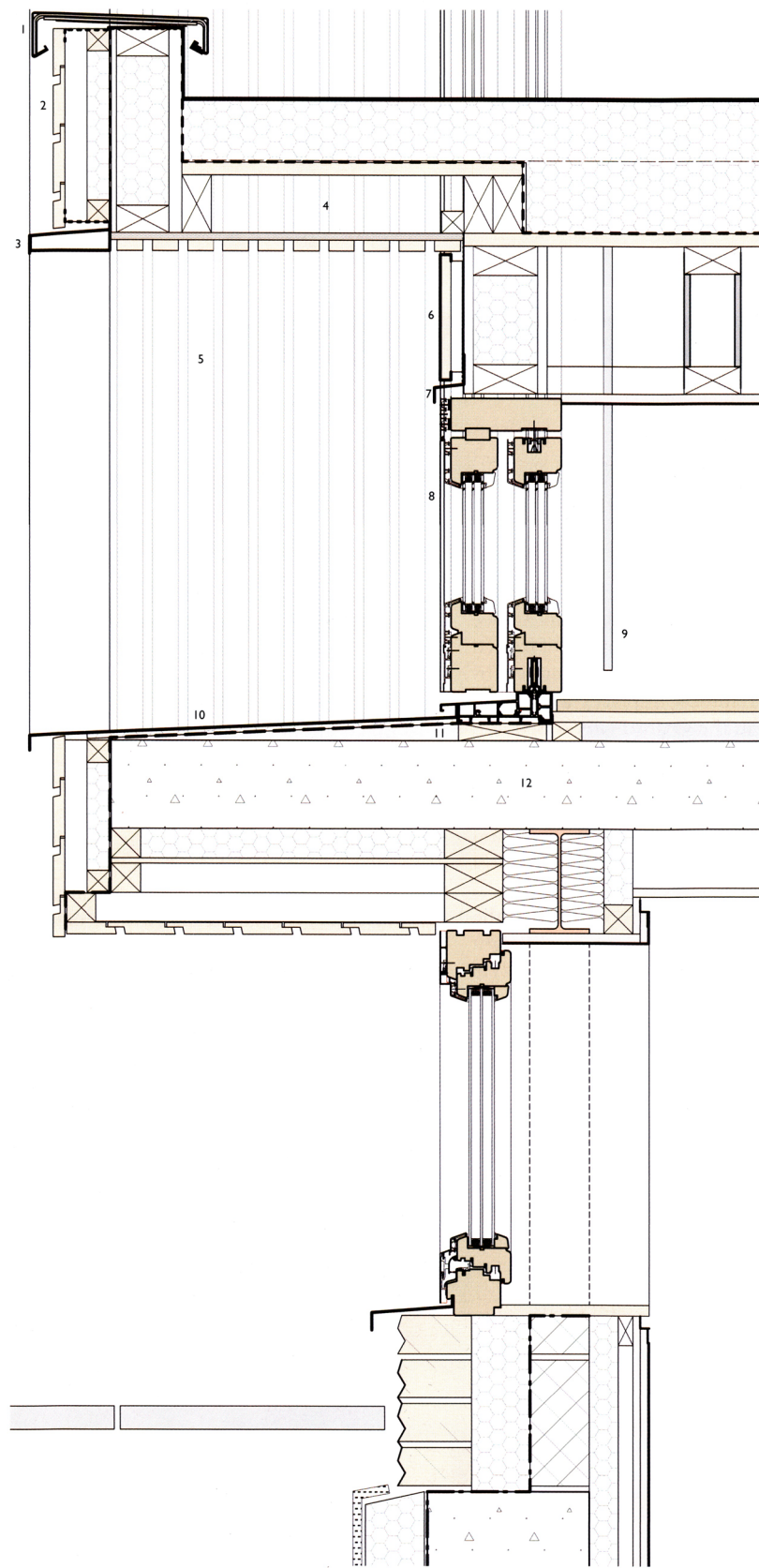
half-basement absorbs the ancillary utility and storage spaces, leaving the two main floors solely for living spaces. There are no dividing walls between kitchen, staircase and entrance hall to increase the sense of spaciousness.

To make the house not just economical but also special, the architect decided to focus the limited budget on four key areas. First, timber cladding is used for visual warmth, tactility and contextuality. Second, a single large opening to the garden transforms the interior into a light-filled indoor-outdoor space. Third, an ultra-slim stair with flush glass walls creates a sense of openness and weightlessness. Finally, the house incorporates a small but significant cantilever over the forecourt, which enhances its volumetric purity and imbues it with a sense of dynamism. ▷

◁ A cuboid form was adopted to maximise the house's occupiable space within the strict height limit set by the planners.

▽ Open-plan living space with slim-profile, glass balustraded staircase.



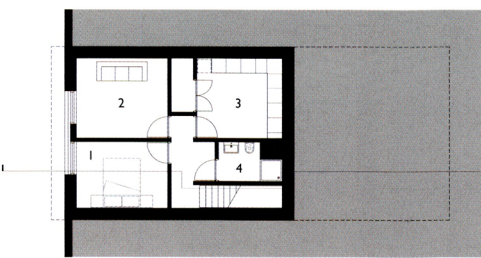
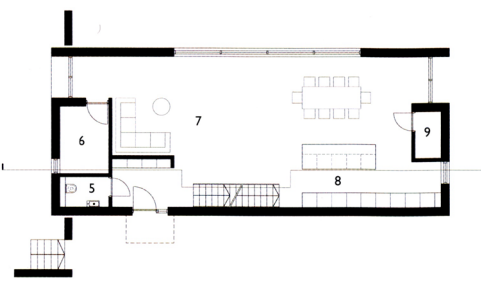
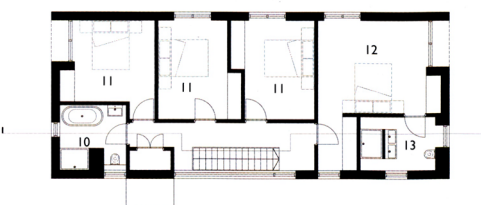
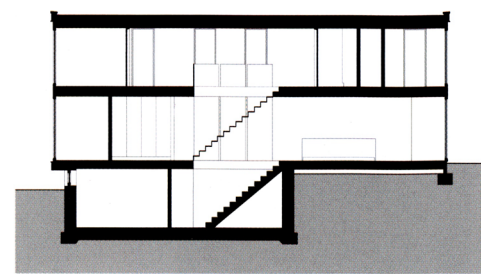


“The cantilever is key”, explains principal Adrian James, “Changing the slope of the site into a step meant the upper-level garden gained privacy from the lower road and forecourt. Better still, it enabled the cuboid volume of the house to hang out, so it gained the implied sixth face – the bottom. The block became fully expressed, investing the house with poise and drama.” □

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△ Detail section through facade. Key: 1 powder-coated capping, 2 shiplap profile timber cladding, 3 powder-coated weathering profile, 4 void for external downlights, 5 painted timber battens on 18mm wbp plywood, 6 powder-coated aluminium cladding board, 7 powder-coated drip profile, 8 composite window system, 9 glass balustrade, 10 powder-coated cill profile, 11 aerogel insulation on screed to falls, 12 in-situ concrete slab.

▷ Cantilevered entrance elevation; long section; basement, ground- and first-floor plans. Key: 1 guest bedroom, 2 games room, 3 utility and plant, 4 bathroom, 5 wc, 6 study, 7 living, 8 kitchen, 9 larder, 10 family bathroom, 11 bedroom, 12 master bedroom, 13 ensuite.



○ Architect Adrian James Architects structure MJA Consulting main contractor Lamburn Geekie SIPS panels Sips UK ASHR, MVHR, UFH, plumbing Earth Save Products windows Lowe & Oliver windows, external doors Allan Brothers front door Urban Front Door cedar cladding Vincent Timber interior doors, linings David Chappel Design ironmongery Thames Fixings glass balustrades, balconies Unique Glass Solutions aluminium trims Trueline EPDM roof Mark Baker kitchen In-House folding sliding doors ID Systems sanitaryware Duravit photos David Fisher.

○ Floor area 234 sqm contract value £349,000 contract type bespoke contract management contract duration 40 weeks.

