

Estuary House

LOCATION: CANTERBURY, NEW ZEALAND

On a challenging site with an extraordinary relationship to the sea we were asked to create a modern urban environment.

The objective was to achieve an ease of living while maintaining private access to sunlight, privacy from neighbours and an openness to the sea.

Concieved as a small house with a spacious feel; a sculptural play of forms. A basalt stone wall with automated cedar gate defines the private from the public domain of the main road. The building backs up to its tall northern neighbour with a copper wrapped sheltering wall/roof, protecting the dynamics of the inside while utilising the shadow zone. A visual link through the dining room gives a transperancy to the form and a connection to the sea from the internal garden area.

The journey from the front door towards the welcoming light of the living space is celebrated by the visual play of the clear storey lit passage, the narrow walled stairway to the sleeping haven and the glint of a shattered glass partition that forms the splashback to the cooking area.

On arrival the dynamics of the unfolding view of the sea across the honed basalt hearth of the fireplace sets the mood of the place. The carefully considered fenestrations capture the tidal flow at the esplanade doorstep along with the more sedate framed views across Monks Bay.

A juxtaposition of materials is used to define the forms. Careful detailing ensures the durability and performance of the building in this harse seaside environment. The interior is kept light and gentle with the soft tones of the Pilularus flooring.

The result is urban living on the edge.