

Norton Summit House

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My body of work is primarily based on modern contextual Architecture which capitalises the harmonious relationship between dwellings and the landscape. I aimed to create a modern design that portrayed and fulfilled elements of effective contextual Architecture and an ideal family home. Specifically, I explored methods that were able to adapt physically, visually and environmentally with the surroundings.

I commenced my project by exploring external sources describing some of the attributes associated with contextual architecture. This helped me familiarise the concept I was hoping to achieve. I spent some time analysing a range of empty blocks of land in South Australia on Real Estate websites.

Finally, I came across a particular block of land that contained a steep driveway which concluded at a vast area of flat empty land that overlooked the view of Adelaide. By having a large area to work with, I was allowed to make flexible decisions, leaving my options open for alternative designs.

My design is divided into three levels. The floorplan of the design forms an 'L' shape that is curved around the bend of the mountain. The first level is situated vertically below ground facing North with the roof sitting in line with the flat land. As I planned to allocate the garden on the flat land, I made it my priority to ensure the view of the city can be seen from the backyard. Therefore, this inspired me to position the first level below ground, so it didn't interfere with the view from the garden. The third level is positioned horizontally on the flat land facing East. The second level is the core of the design as it acts as the link to the first and third levels. The second level represents the bend in the letter L. All levels have minimal impact with the landscape as they all overhang the mountain, therefore enabling me to achieve Glen Murcutt's concept of 'touching the Earth lightly'.

Multiple designs in the same location were further analysed. I uncovered that the main entertainment spaces in every home such as the lounge/dining area were allocated facing towards the view of the city. I additionally noted that all bedrooms were placed on the Northern side of the house to maximise the Northern sunlight. Before finalising my plan, I ensured every room obtained some form of meaning and positioning so no rooms could be subjected as irrelevant. My critical thinking capability was challenged, which helped me identify missing elements that were crucial in my design such as maintaining a bathroom on every floor to provide easy accessibility for the homeowners.

Once the floorplan was completed, I began to interpret more modern organic architectural designs. I was particularly fascinated and inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water which articulated the close relationship between the design and surroundings. Precisely, I was intrigued by the simple yet aesthetic use of vertical and horizontal elements. The vertical elements reference the nearby trees whilst the horizontal elements replicate the horizontal rock formation the design sits on. My design was constructed using the software program Sketchup.

The view of the city became an integral contribution to my design. Moreover, I made the most of the opportunity by exploiting large windows all around the house, in particular, the main entertainment areas. To protect the home from overheating in the Summer, I placed vertical elements above the

window frame that acted as an overhang. I also installed louvres above the bedroom windows to control the amount of light that can enter in Summer. Nevertheless, in the Winter, the design would hope to draw as much of the sun's energy as possible so the design can be naturally heated.

Moreover, the design can run off clean renewable energy that is generated through solar panels which is an excellent sustainable method for saving money. As a result of adopting a flat roof, constraints associated with ponding can ascend. Therefore, I applied a slight tilt of about 4 degrees for all the roofs which would successfully remove the rainwater into a gutter and through a downpipe.

A challenging aspect of my design was selecting materials and colours that would effectively work well together and maintain a strong connection with the environment. I decided to use tungsten colour as the main exterior colour. The colour is a balance of light and dark grey which I find does not have a dominant impact over the surroundings. I didn't want to use a darker shade of grey as they are good conductors of heat, therefore, the design would have been consistently warm which is not ideal. Alongside the colour tungsten, I also used local materials including stone, wood, brick, and concrete which helped attain a very strong organic relationship with the environment.

The garden was a key feature in maintaining the greenery throughout the landscape. I didn't use all of the flat land as I felt there wasn't a need to extend the backyard even more. The aim was to convey a sense of relaxation and calmness that was achieved through several quiet spaces including a gazebo, outdoor patio and pond. I assigned a similar colour coordination to the garden without being too repetitive. I also assured the pool and balcony were appropriately secured with high glass railing to ensure the safety of children in particular. A basketball court additionally accounts for children's entertainment.

I feel that I have successfully fulfilled the concept of contextual Architecture through my design which furthermore reflects an ideal family home. The use of versatile colours is visually able to harmonise with the natural landscape. Physically, the design has minimal impact on the landscape, hence, enabling the design to 'touch the Earth lightly'. Finally, the home is very sustainable as solar panels permits the design to run off clean, renewable energy generated from the sun's energy.

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