

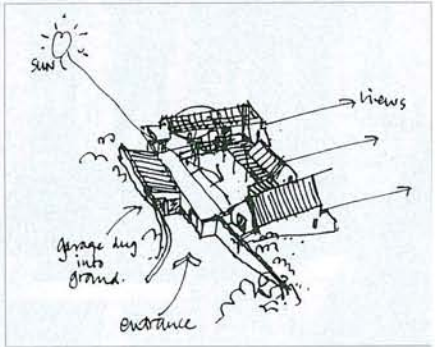
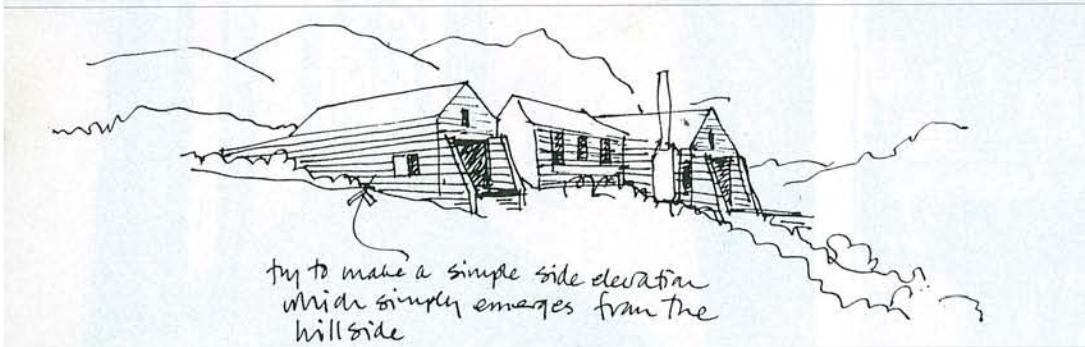
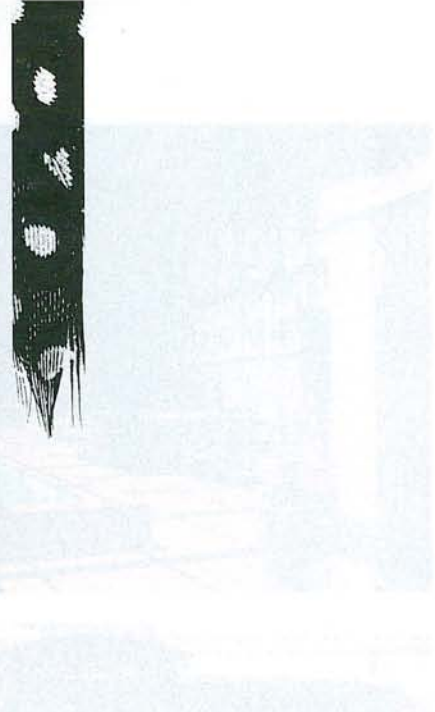
# SOUTH AFRICAN ARCHITECT

FEBRUARY 98



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## BEACH HOUSE, "PHILIPSKRAAL"

**Jane Visser & Mark Thomas Architects**

**T**HE HOUSE is located on one of the last unspoilt parts of Betty's Bay. The brief was for a three-bedroom house with a study, as well as a big dormitory room for children to sleep in. The clients wanted to avoid a large house and preferred the idea of a collection of cottages.

The house is set in a hollow and as we cut into the hill, some shelter from the harsh weather was provided. Sandstone, tinted plaster, charcoal roof and pale grey woodwork were chosen to harmonise with the colours of the veld. The house was conceptualised as a shell with a robust protective exterior and a smooth, light interior. Vaulted ceilings and splayed reveals make the most of the light inside.

By wrapping a one-room-thin house around a courtyard, views from every room are achieved as well as a protected and sunny outdoor space. Four separate cottages, linked by a verandah, garage and wine cellar; living, dining and kitchen; spare bedrooms and sleeping loft and main bedroom and study create a farm aesthetic and a small scale appropriate to the setting.

Wall architecture is the type of language most appropriate for the extreme weather conditions. Small openings with shutters make it easy to batten down the hatches. Only a few large openings have been made and these were done in heavy sections of matte black aluminium to suggest a modern intervention in an old house. The side walls of the house extend to form buttresses which offer wind protection and framed view.

### Citation:

This complex is commendable for its sympathetic response to the land-form and the flora. It also responds well to the specific climatic conditions and views. The decision to re-interpret tradition and to break up the accommodation into a number of buildings to form a courtyard allows for interesting relationships between different functions and spaces and between traditional elements and materials.