

Will Bruder deStudio
Denton Corker Marshall David Langston-Jones

Glenn Murcutt

Zaha Hadid



UME

10

UME 10

Denton Corker Marshall
2 Farmhouse
Kyneton, Victoria, Australia

The (Im)possibility of Slowness
10 Richard Francis-Jones

Will Bruder
14 Byrne Residence
North Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

Zaha Hadid
28 LF one, Landes-Gartenschau 1999
Weil am Rhein, Germany

deStudio
40 Cafe de Paris Pavilions
Via Veneto, Rome, Italy

Glenn Murcutt
46 Arthur and Yvonne Boyd Education Centre
Riversdale, New South Wales, Australia

David Langston-Jones
62 Two houses
Holloway Beach, Cairns, Queensland, Australia

Byrne Residence
North Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
Will Bruder

Architect:
William P. Bruder
architect llc
Project team:
Will Bruder,
Tim Christ,
Jack DeBarolo III
Clients:
Bill and Carol Byrne
Structural engineers:
Rudow & Berry
Mechanical engineers:
Otterbein Engineering
Electrical engineers:
C.A. Energy Designs
General contractor:
Bill Byrne
Photographs:
Bill Timmerman
Design: 1994-1995
Construction:
1996-1998

Architect's statement

In its scale, sculptural form and simplicity of materials, the Byrne residence is an organic architectural statement that blends with its desert setting.

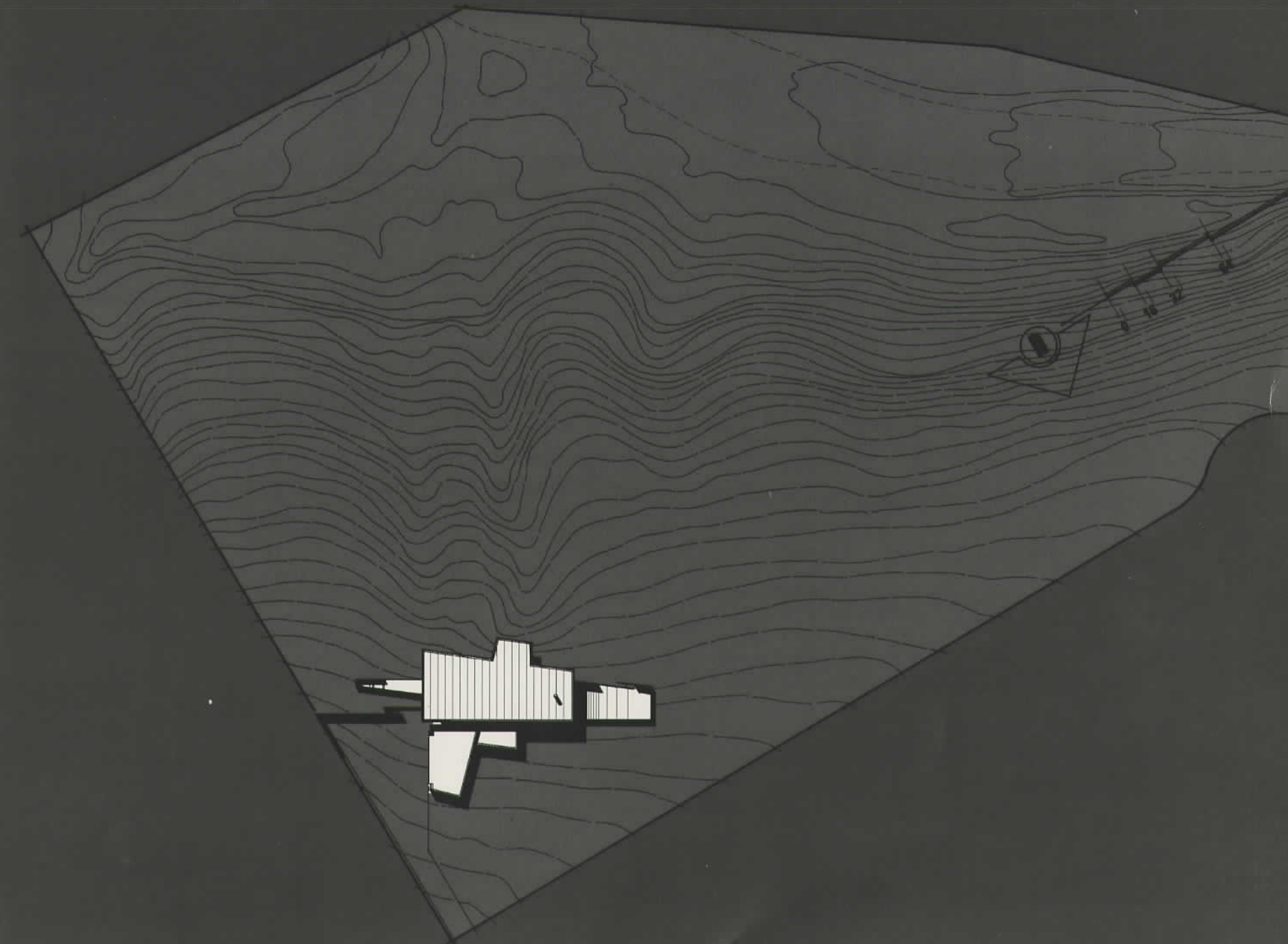
The sculptural design concept is to create a metaphorical series of abstract canyon walls of concrete masonry that emerge like geological gestures from the natural desert site. The concrete masonry and metal-clad frame wall elements embrace the residence's main entry, living, and circulation/gallery spaces. The walls give focus to the angular geometry of the plan as it grows from the asymmetrical, tapering alignments of the canyon walls. These elements visually extend the design out into the undisturbed desert site, creating interesting outdoor living spaces and courtyards.

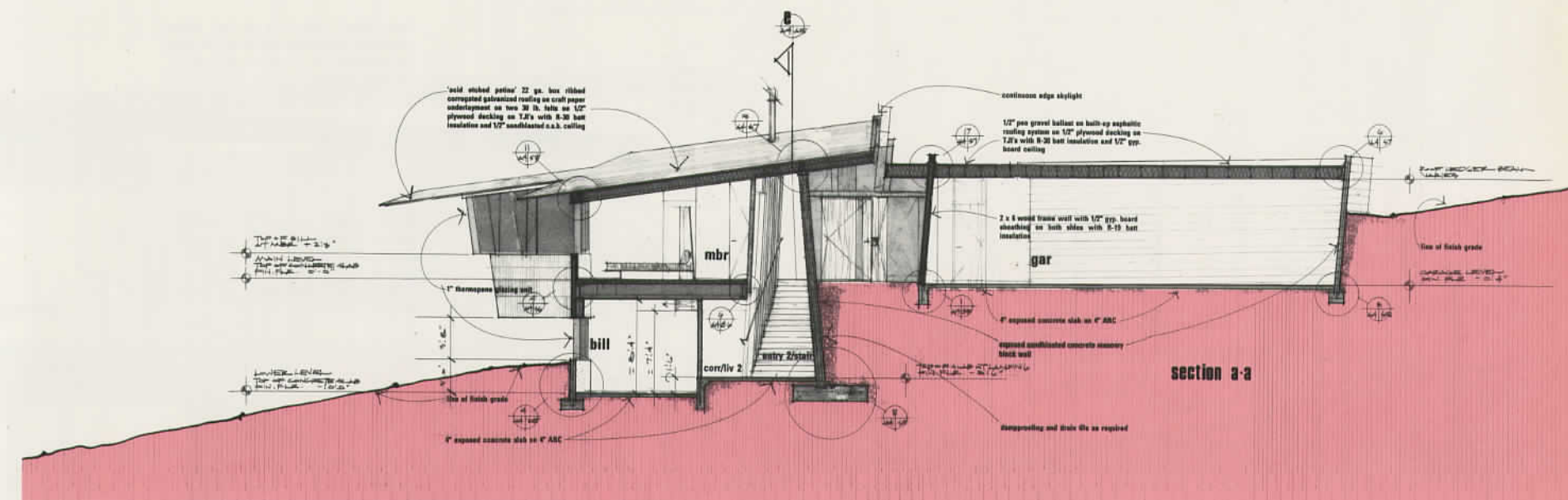
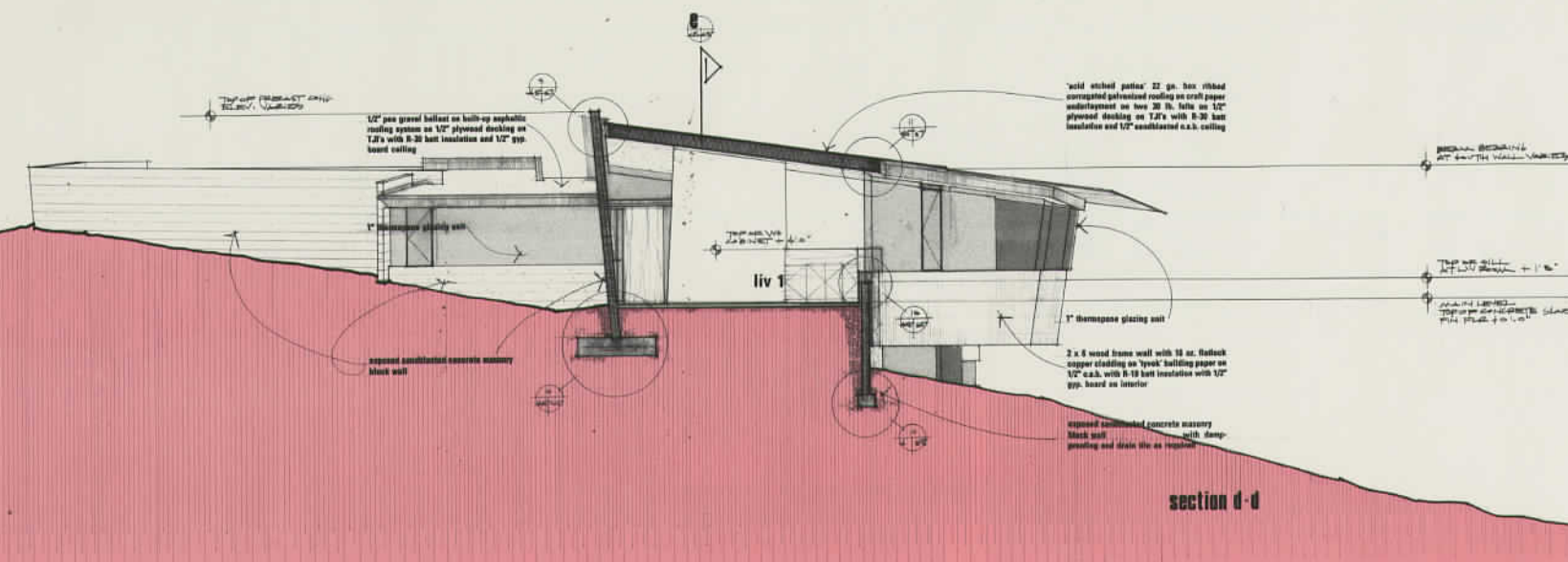
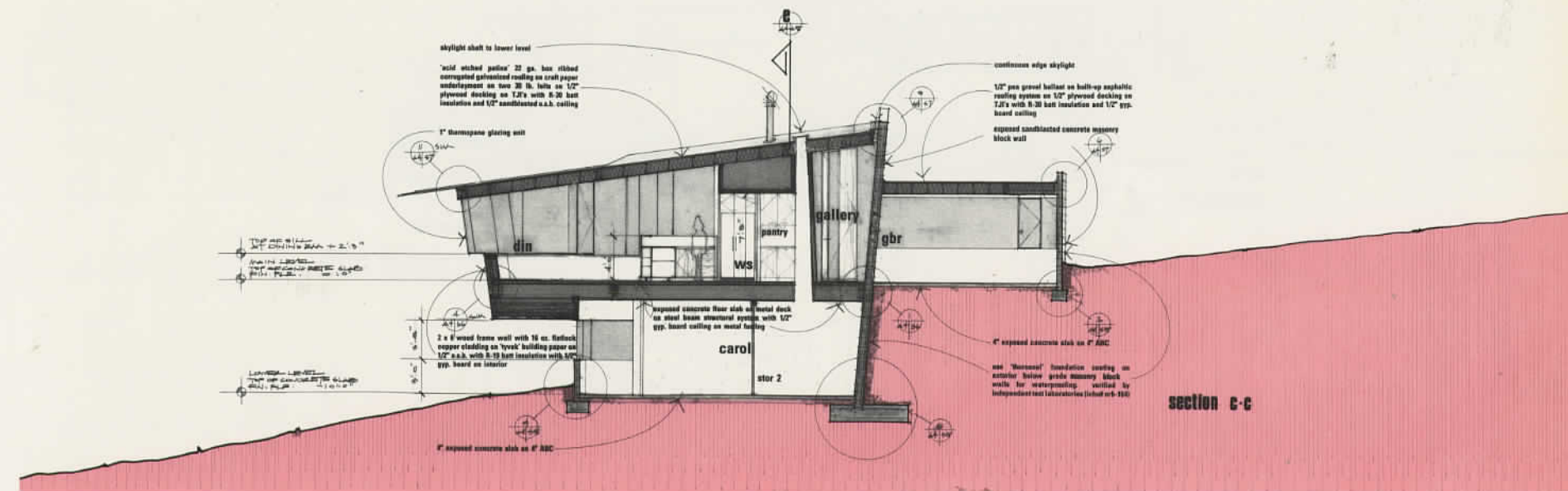
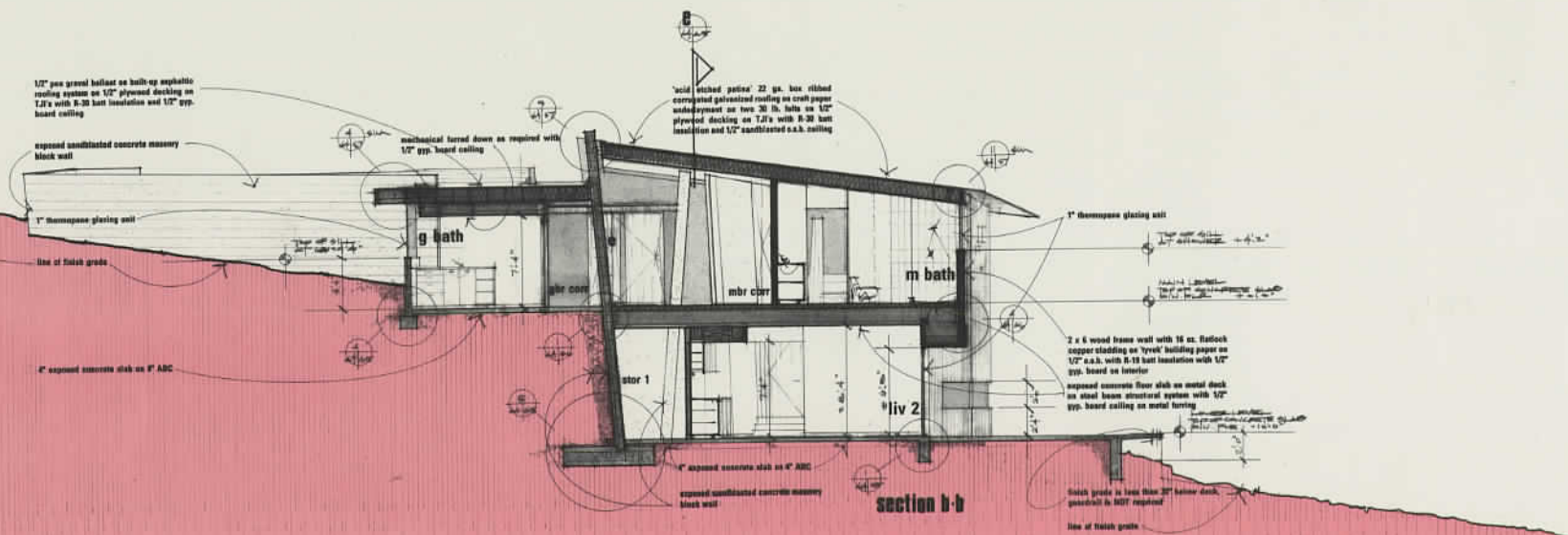
The house is integrated into the natural slope of the site's north-east corner, enabling the building's basic functional needs to be organised on two levels. The lower level is buried into the grade and has a primarily south-western view exposure. The angular orientation of the structure, running parallel to the natural site contours, enhances the relationship with the land while optimising the distant views for all the major main level living spaces. As one moves through the structure, the tilted and leaning masonry canyon walls dramatically frame the desert vistas.

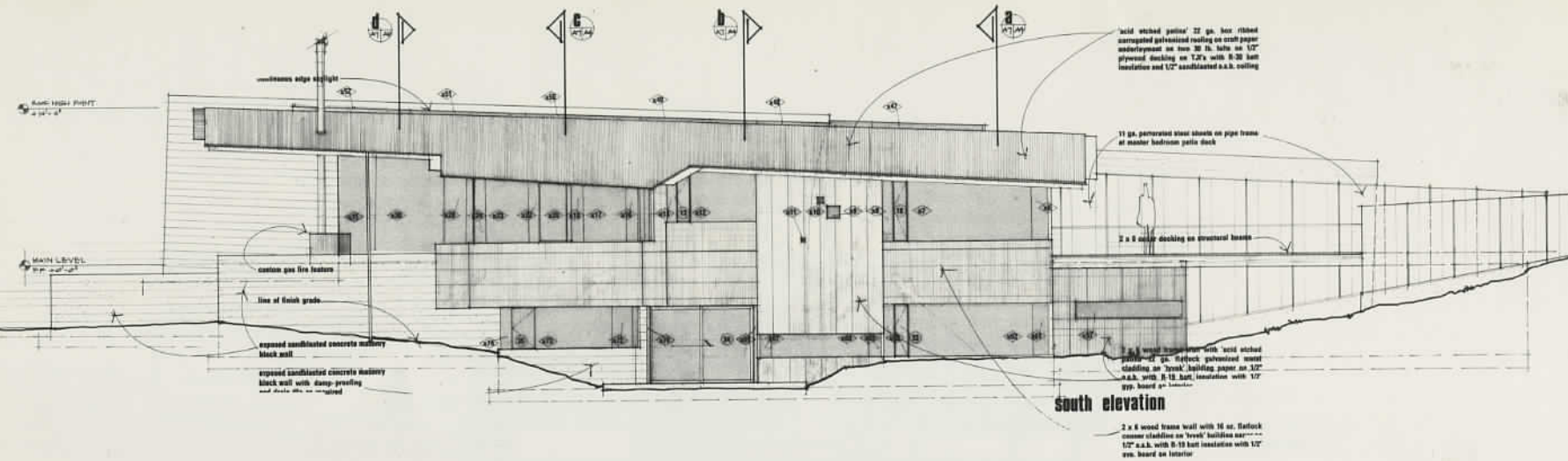
Only simple concrete block walls, treated as a dynamic sculptural element, could capture the potential of this architectural concept. Laid at a three-degree slope from the horizontal concrete foundations and leaning at varying angles from vertical, the beautifully crafted masonry walls are ever-changing in the desert sun. With the daily and seasonal variations of shadows playing off the subtle coursing offsets, the buff-coloured masonry and the angular alignments of the plan geometry, the architecture possesses a mysterious quietness and power in the landscape. Towards maximising these effects, the main roof is boldly held four inches free of its masonry supporting wall by skylit sculptural steel brackets which allow the sun to energise the interior. Carefully balanced by vertical walls of masonry, metal, and glass, the house exists as a poem of special invention and originality.

To complement and contrast with the dominant concrete masonry wall, the wall and fascia elements are clad in blue/blackened copper and acid-etched galvanised metal. With their purple/bronze and pewter hues, these materials blend well with the natural landscape and the buff concrete block. Completing the exterior palette is glazing of clear and 'solex' green non-reflective glass set in custom configuration and details.

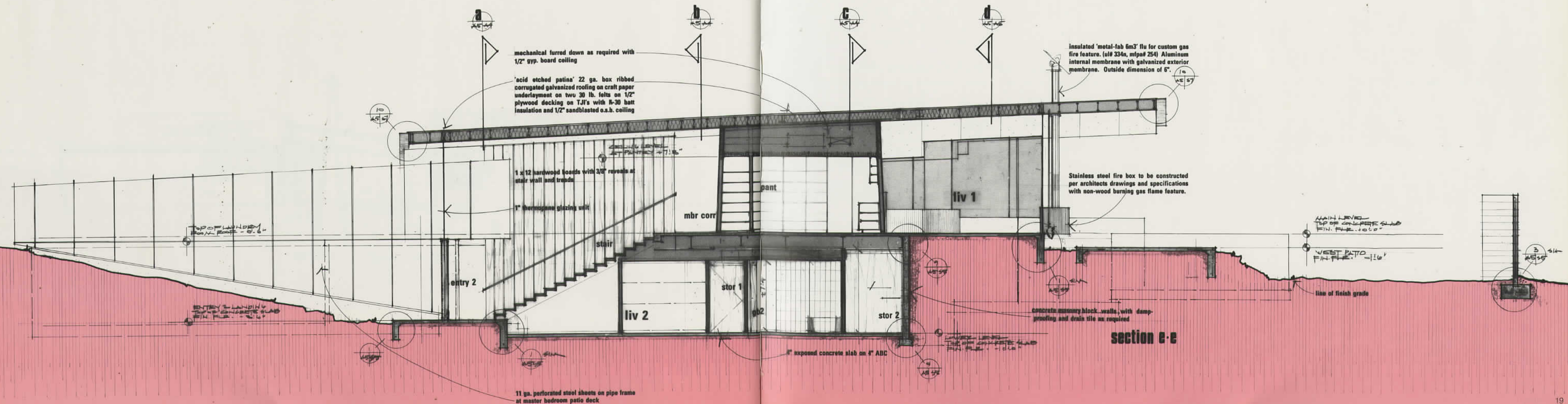
William P. Bruder



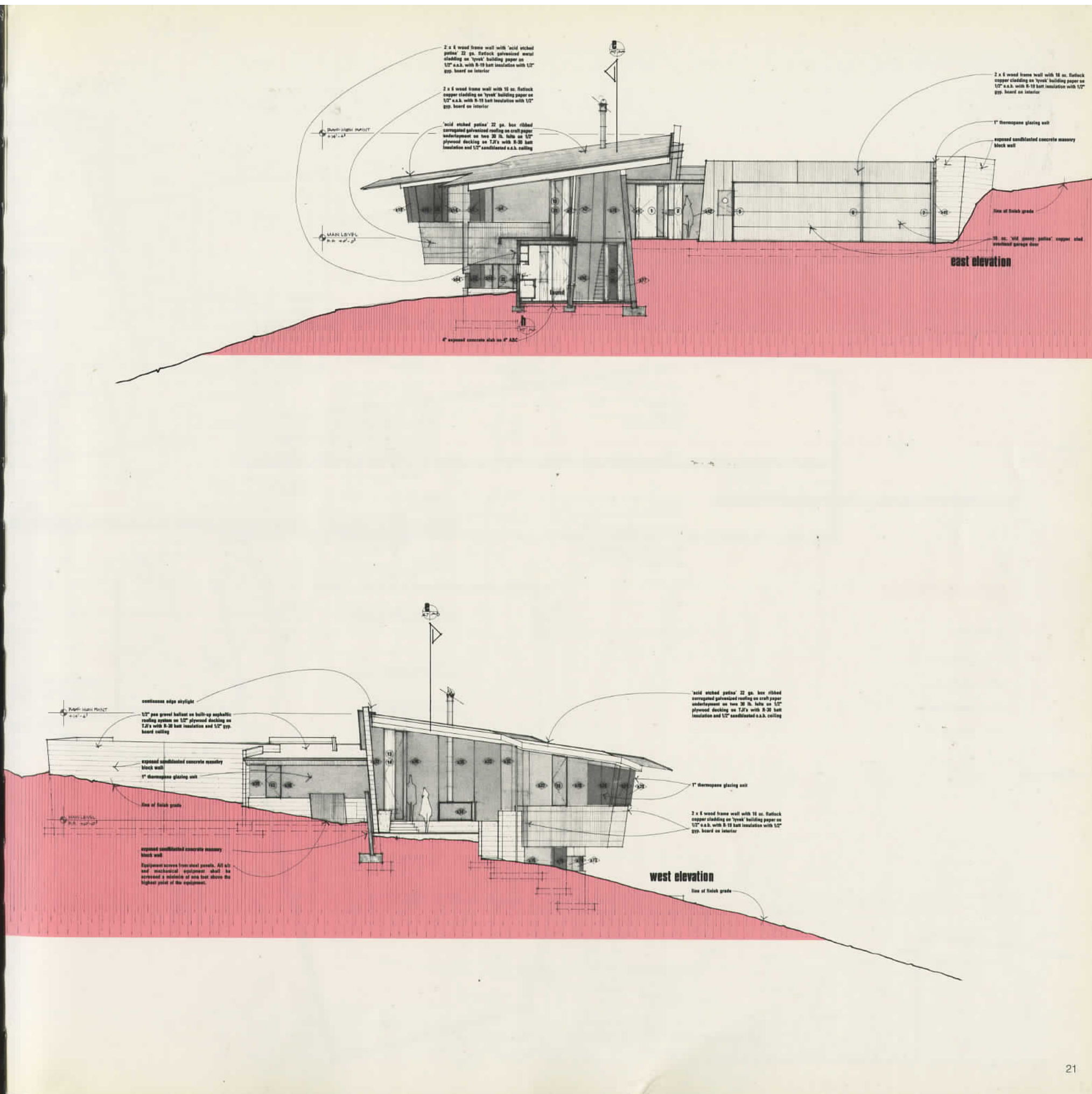


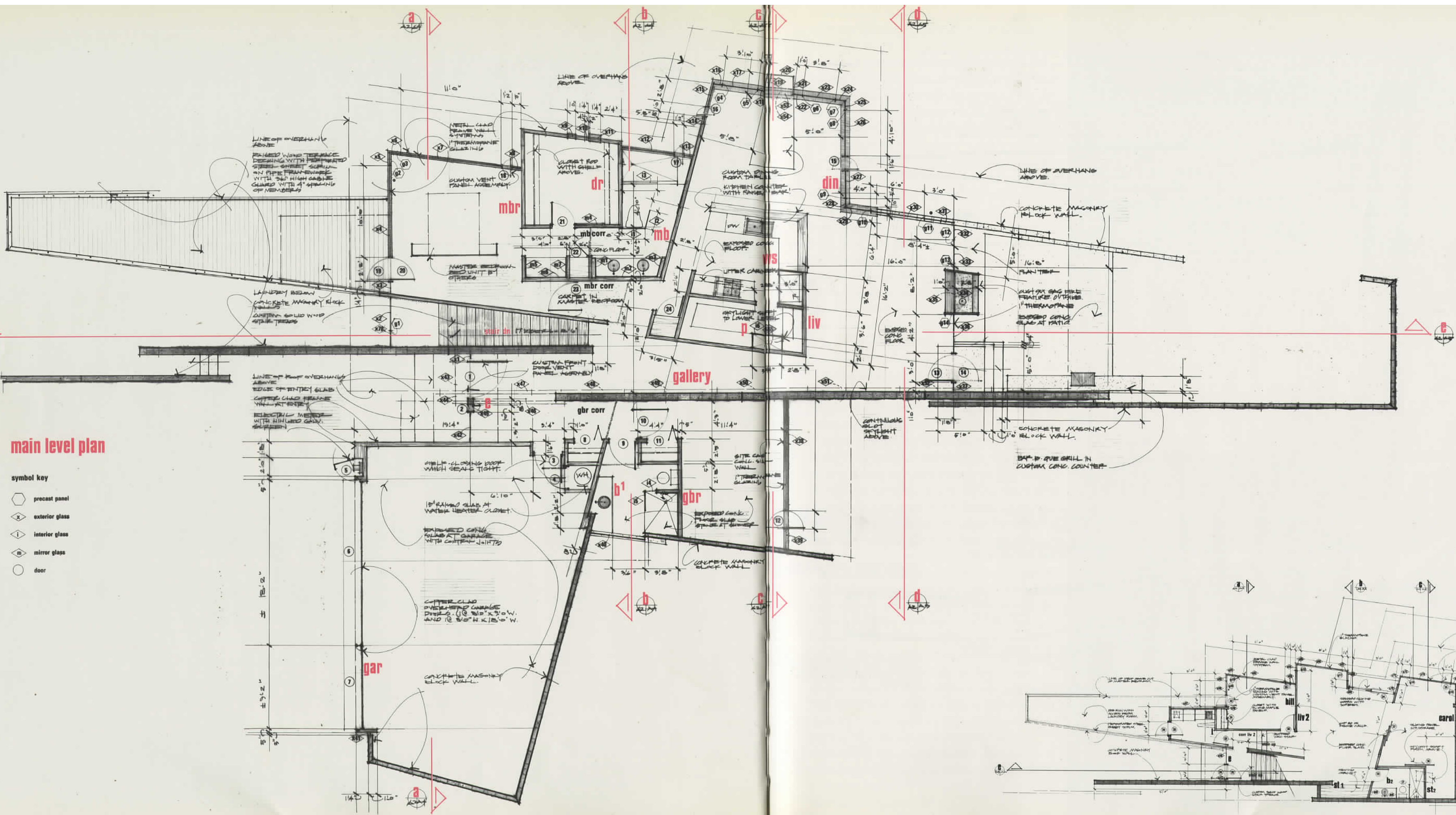


South elevation



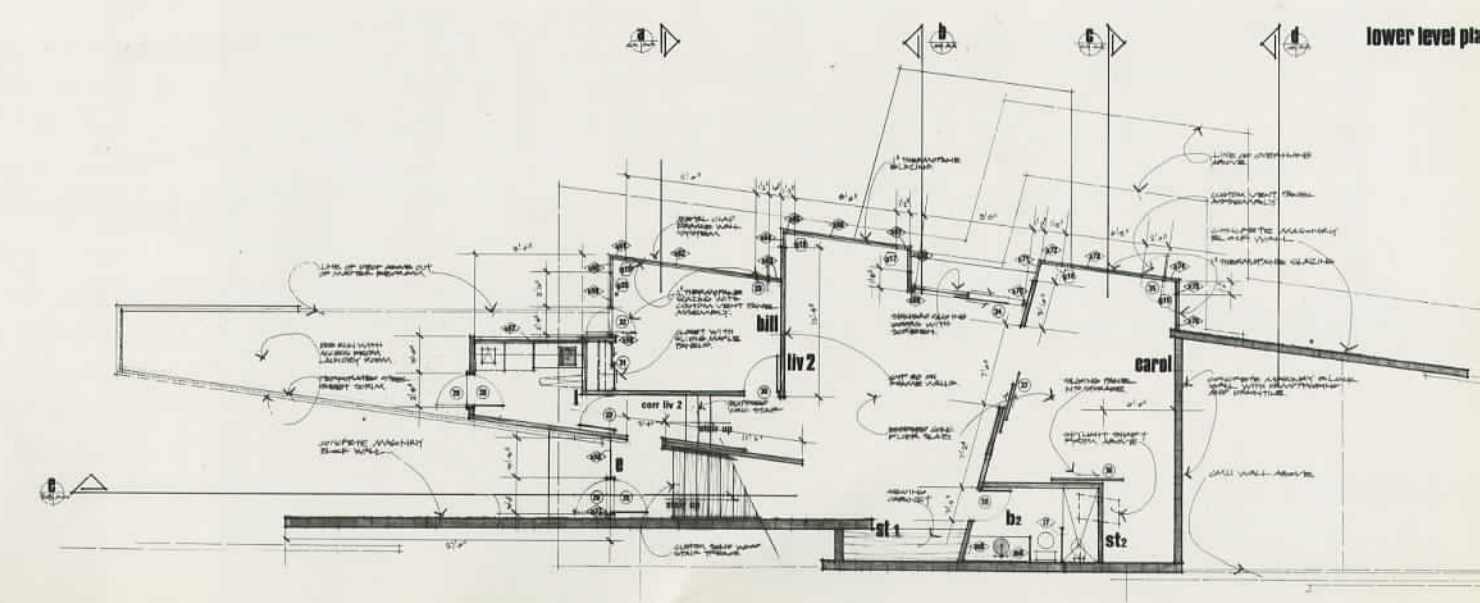
section e-e





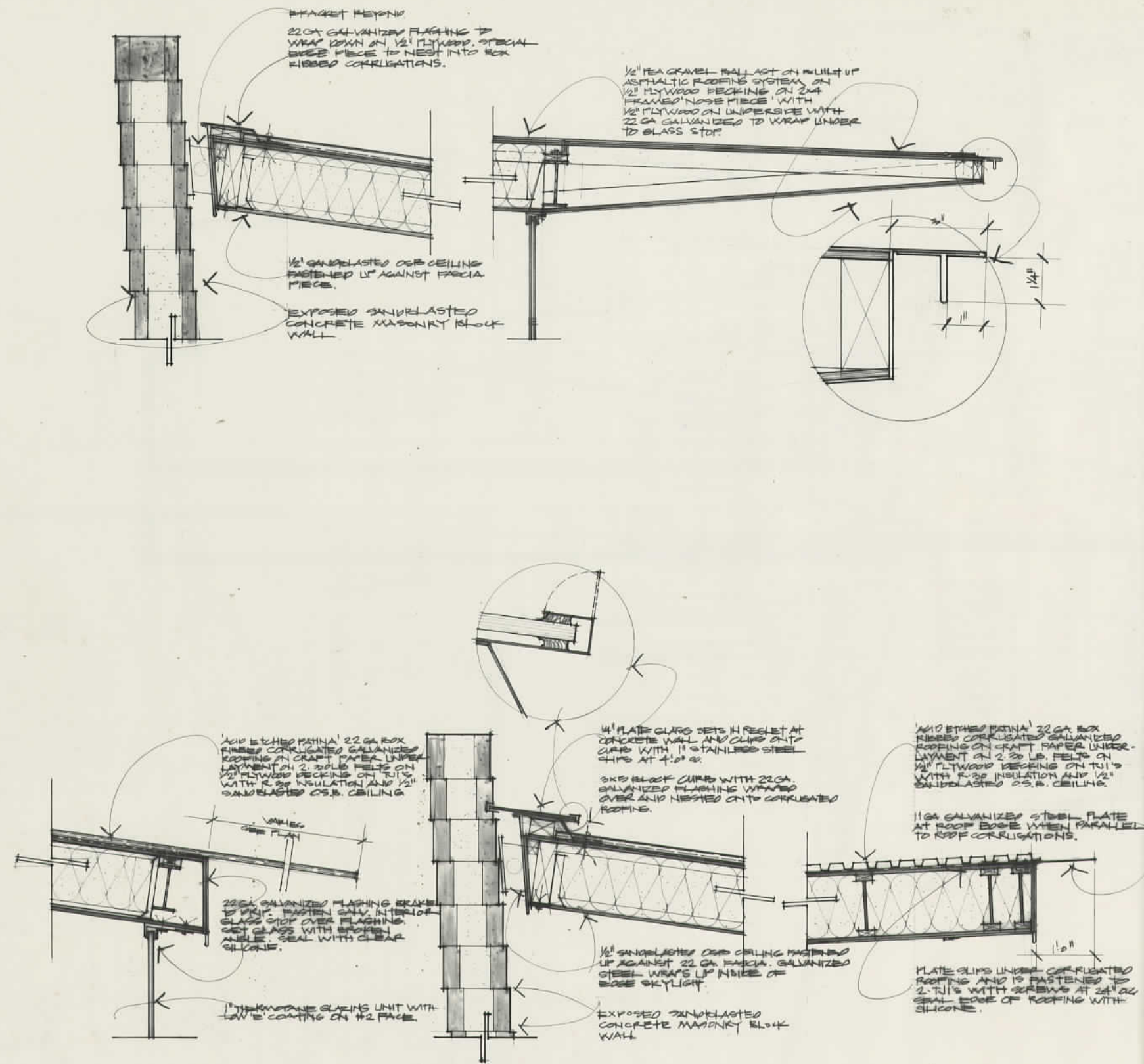
main level plan

- symbol key
- precast panel
 - ◊ exterior glass
 - ◊ interior glass
 - ◊ mirror glass
 - door



lower level plan

Bruder's working drawings are not simply a construction document but also a lifelike rendering of the interior spatial organisation. Even the elevations suggest the texture and tactility of the materials used. The exquisitely rendered drawings contain strikingly few details. The building is a very simple organisation of concrete block walls and encased steel-framed structure. The architect's task lies in the simple planar detailing of the linings and the edges of things. By far the most critical details in the house in terms of its aesthetic are those that relate to the roof: how it makes its junction with the tilted walls and how it feathers down at its extremities.



Architecture and the desert

Will Bruder trained initially as a sculptor before turning to architecture, and this has given him an independence from conventional architectural formal thinking. Sculptors are not generally bounded by the programmatic and structural imperatives that circumscribe the making of architecture: their work does not need to be inhabited and they can produce forms that seem to defy gravity. Bruder brings form making ideas that are close to sculpture to his thinking about architecture.

He also trained with Paolo Soleri, another important grounding. From Soleri comes the idea of giving architectural expression to the desert genius loci, as well as an interest in pueblo dwellings at the base of the canyon wall, the cave, sunlight penetrating. These ideas are obviously instilled in Bruder's own thinking, and it is perfectly appropriate that in this house he should allude to the steep angled canyon wall as an essential idea and expression of the desert.

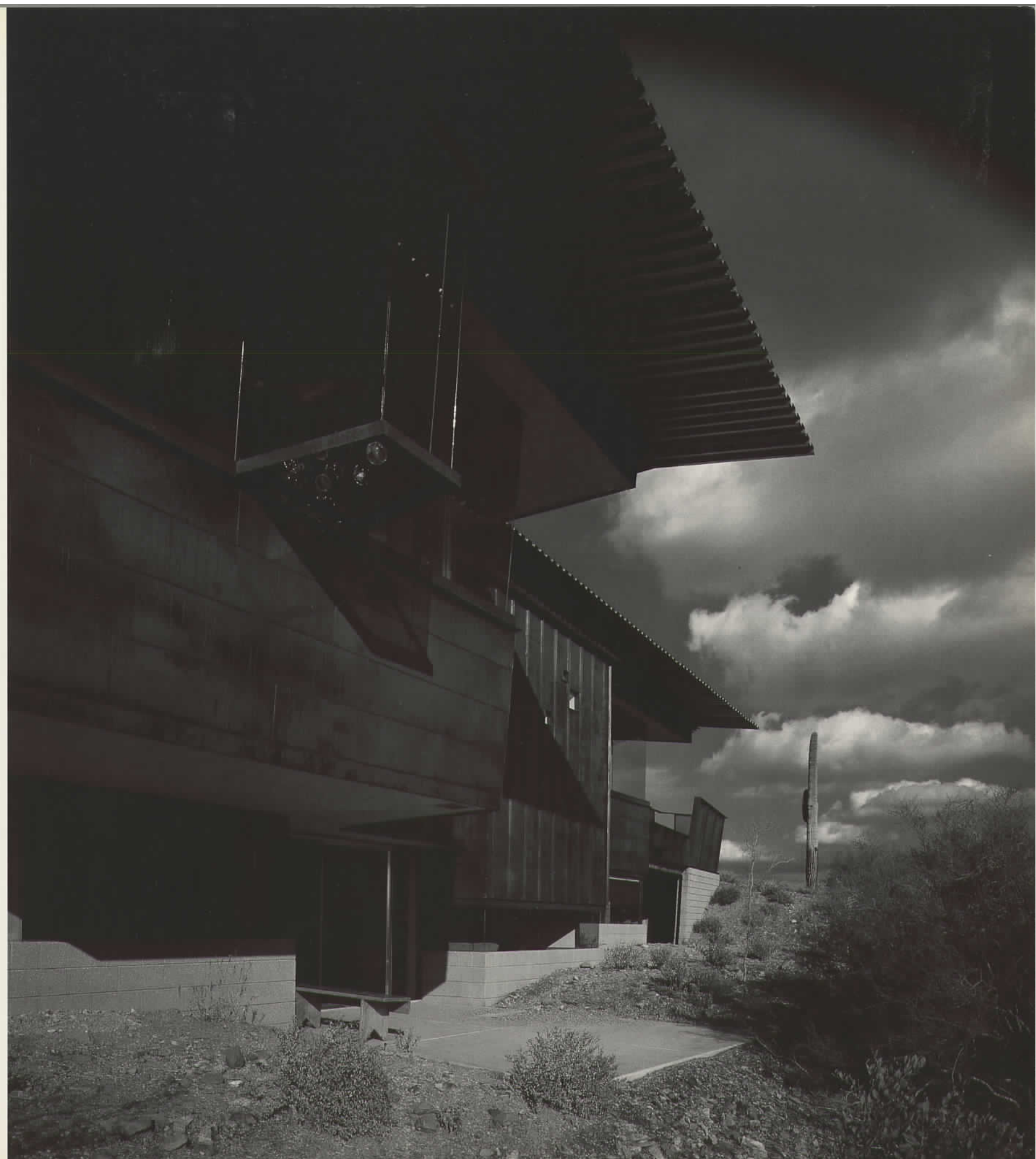
Bruder draws from the desert another poetic – the giant saguaro cactii that populate the hills of this region – and conceives an architectural form that is not the saguaro abstracted, but which remembers its rugged, spiky, jettying forms.

There is also the powerful milieu of Taliesin West in Scottsdale, just up the road from Bruder's studio. Taliesin West exerts an inescapable architectural presence in the district, and there is a great temptation here to draw parallels with Wright. There is possibly some relevance in this, but perhaps it would be a misreading to connect Bruder too closely with Wright. Wright makes an architecture that is about the tectonics of mass rooted in the earth, and about the living rock becoming wall; the floating roof plane is in counterpoint to the mass of the building. But Bruder eschews the idea of the wall rooted in the ground and instead sees it with a sculptural eye. The walls of this house are abstract planes rendered in the poetic of the canyon. They are blades of stone that have been shafted into the ground seemingly from a great height and at great speed: the 3° pitch of the wall and the concrete coursing vibrate with this mighty impact. Bruder's roof is separated from the wall to amplify this drama, and it too is a plane that has floated in, only gently; it hovers, not quite contacting the wall.

It is very different from Wright's reading. This is an architectural formalism that escapes gravity, and the chiaroscuro effects of sunlight and shade are used to underscore this basic tectonic tension. And if one sees parallels between this house and Denton Corker Marshall's farmhouse in Victoria (see pp2-10), it's because these different architects are exploring a new language of architectural form that is no longer constrained by architecture's necessity to express resistance to gravity.

Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper





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Denton Corker Marshall

John Denton, Bill Corker, and Barrie Marshall established their practice together in 1972, having all graduated from the University of Melbourne. Denton Corker Marshall now has offices in Australia, Asia and Europe, and employs over 200 people. Buildings include the Australian Embassies in Beijing and Tokyo; 101 Collins Street, Melbourne; Governor Phillip Tower, Sydney; the Melbourne Exhibition Centre; Melbourne Museum; and Melbourne's kilometre-long International Gateway sculpture on the freeway into the city.

A monograph on Denton Corker Marshall written by Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper, with an introduction by Peter Rowe, Dean, Harvard GSD, is published by Birkhäuser Verlag, Basel in 1999.



Will Bruder

Will Bruder is an artist/architect who has worked from a desert studio in Arizona for twenty-five years. Born in Milwaukee, 1946, he earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and is self-trained as an architect. Was apprenticed under Paolo Soleri and Gunnar Birkerts, and has field experience in carpentry, masonry and metalwork. Registered as an architect and opened his studio in 1974. Awards include the Record Home award, 1977 and 1994; the international Benedictus Award for innovative use of glass, 1996; and a Rome Prize from the American Academy, 1987. Buildings include the Phoenix Central Library, and Mediated Classroom/Social Sciences Building at Arizona State University in Tempe.



Zaha Hadid

Studied at the Architectural Association from 1972; awarded Diploma Prize 1977. Became a partner in the Office for Metropolitan Architecture. Ran an AA studio until 1987. Visiting professorships at Columbia and Harvard; 1994 Kenzo Tange Chair at the GSD, Harvard; 1997 Sullivan Chair at University of Chicago. Commenced own practice 1979. Won The Peak, Hong Kong competition, 1983; won Kurfürstendamm, Berlin competition, 1986; won Cardiff Bay Opera House competition, 1994. Has built Vitra fire station, 1993; IBA housing, Berlin, 1993. Recently selected to design a contemporary arts centre in Cincinnati. Her paintings and drawings are a testing field for her architecture and are in permanent collections in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Deutsches Architektur Museum, Frankfurt, and the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco.

Riccardo Vannucci

Born 1958. Graduated from Rome University 1984. Doctoral thesis in 1995 on complexity and architecture. After several years of travelling, self-education, professional training, competitions, co-founded deStudio in 1996. The firm smuggles architecture in as an optional (extra) benefit to engineering: the strategy is to sell architecture as part of a broader (and apparently more reassuring) technical set of professional services. Riccardo Vannucci (and deStudio) have not built anything but technical stuff. 'Currently I am not reading architectural book. I possibly should.'



Glenn Murcutt

Born 1936. Lived in Papua New Guinea as a young child before moving to Sydney. After graduating, worked for Ancher Mortlock Murray & Woolley 1964-69. Established solo practice in Sydney in 1969. Awards include the Royal Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medal, 1992; the seventh Alvar Aalto medal, 1992; the Richard Neutra award, 1998; the Green Pin architecture and ecology award from the Federation of Danish Architects, 1999. Thomas Jefferson Professor at the University of Virginia, 1998. Teaching at the School of Architecture, Århus, Denmark, 1999. The Boyd Centre won the RAIA NSW Chapter's Sulman Medal, 1999.

A monograph on Glenn Murcutt written by Haig Beck and Jackie Cooper is published by Images Publishing Group in early 2000.



David Langston-Jones

Born 1961. BA Architecture first class honours from Canterbury College of Art, 1983; MA from the Royal College of Art, London, 1986. Worked for Foster Associates, 1986-90. Has practised in Australia since 1991. Reading Paul Shephard, *What is Architecture?*, Neville Shute, *A Town Like Alice*, Pan Books; Slide Rule, Pan Books; Autobiography of renowned British aircraft designer Neville Norway (co-designer of RIOO airship and Wellington bomber with Barnes Wallis) who wrote equally interesting novels as a hobby and then emigrated to Australia after WWII.