

DOW JONES ARCHITECTS THE SETT

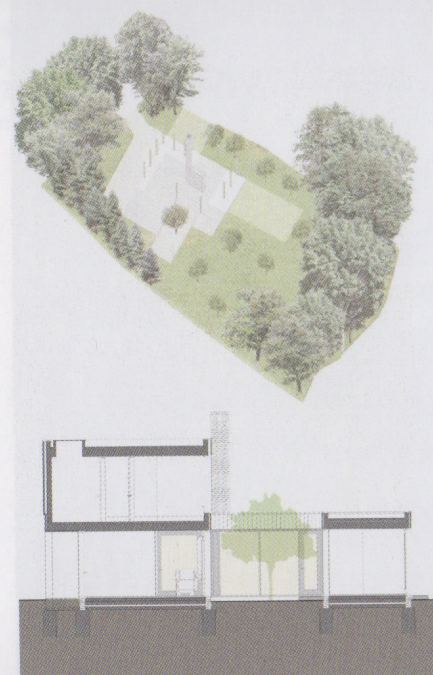
The village of Totland on the Isle of Wight was developed in the late-nineteenth century as a residential and seaside resort. Until then, the area had been predominantly rural and remote, and this pattern of development is characteristic of much of the island. A new house completed by Dow Jones Architects on a hill to the east of the village sits within the former orchard of a large house built in 1924, and is enclosed by mature trees, with apple, pear, plum, greengage and medlar trees growing across the site.

The placement of rooms and spaces on the site arose from the desire to retain the sense of enclosure while bringing a view of the sea from the upper floor and responding to the locations of the remaining fruit trees. The house is placed towards the eastern edge of the site along a small lane, making an entrance courtyard between the tall, mature trees around the site perimeter and the two-storey part of the house. Further into the site, the house extends as a series of single-storey rooms arranged around an apple tree, which open up to different parts of the garden. Roof canopies create verandas around the house, making sheltered places to sit at different times of day: one, at the entrance courtyard, wraps around the kitchen to make a sheltered space on the south side for eating; another adjoins the living room, overlooking the garden, for evening light.

The house was built for a family of four, with studies for both parents. 'One of our concerns was to make spaces which respond to all the different parts of family life, both in terms of connecting and holding together as well as providing places to withdraw,' says the architect. 'Making generous thresholds between spaces both inside and out extends the building beyond the limits of a modest budget, and makes a spatial generosity for daily life.'

The house sits on a concrete floor which extends out into the garden spaces and verandas to form steps and thresholds.





The polished concrete floor is hand trowelled in bays responding to the interplay of spaces, both defining separate rooms and connecting them together. Similarly, says the architect, 'the extension of views through the apple tree courtyard and the study beyond into the garden create deep spaces which both define and connect, and it is through the awareness of boundaries that the depth and interconnection of the different spaces are apparent'.

At the centre of the house, a chimney forms the axis around which different living spaces are arranged. The brickwork is bagged with a concrete slurry so that the courses are discernable but there is also an implied unity with the concrete of the ground. The rooms are structured around views and the changing light throughout the day; the east-facing kitchen receives morning light, the living room faces south, and the west-facing dining room gets the evening sun.

The house is constructed using a cost-efficient prefabricated timber frame clad in larch. The boards are butt-jointed, with lengths corresponding to storey heights, and with the ends of upper boards lapping over lower boards to emphasise their thickness as well as the different heights and layers of the building form.

Externally, all the timber is painted with a thick bituminous paint used to protect boats, providing a unifying coating which does not mask the grain of the timber and is slightly reflective when it catches the light. Windows sit flush with the face of the boarding, becoming highly reflective and bringing a 'tautness' to the skin of the building, which is textured by the lapping of boards, the recesses of the ventilation shutters and the depths of the verandas.

◀ The Siberian larch boarding is capped with a patinated zinc flashing.
 ▲ Sapele windows and doors are waxed internally, providing a contrast to the external bitumen.
 ▶ Douglas fir triboard is used to make the internal joinery elements, including large pivoting doors, the stair, flooring and cupboards. Upstairs, where bedrooms open onto a large, south-facing landing overlooking the garden, intended as a play space for children, the Douglas fir flooring is cut into large panels which mirror the concrete bays of the ground floor. The client has designed and made Douglas fir tables and benches to furnish the house.

○ Architect Dow Jones Architects structural engineer Momentum contractor David Norville Associates electrical contractor Berry Electrical mechanical contractor Datawarm joinery The joinery shop timber frame, insulation, breathable membranes Sydenhams Timber Frames single-ply roof membrane Sika Sarnafil exterior paint Sadolin concrete floors and bagged wall sealant Lithofin Stain Stop interior floor and joinery Tilly Triboard (Douglas fir) interior joinery finish Danish oil interior floor finish Osmo oil interior paint Farrow & Ball handles D-line hinges, latches and locks Häfele sanitaryware Duravit brassware Hans Grohe skylight Vitral Skyvision kitchen light Licht und Raum photographs David Grandorge.

