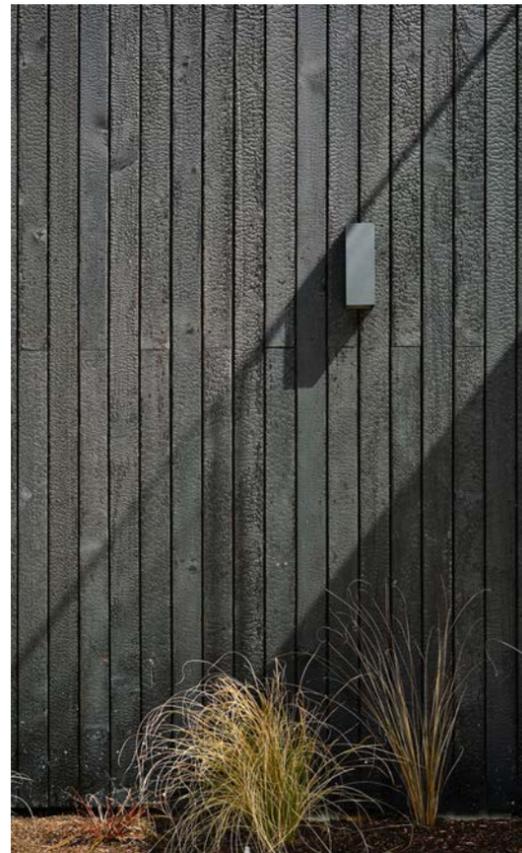
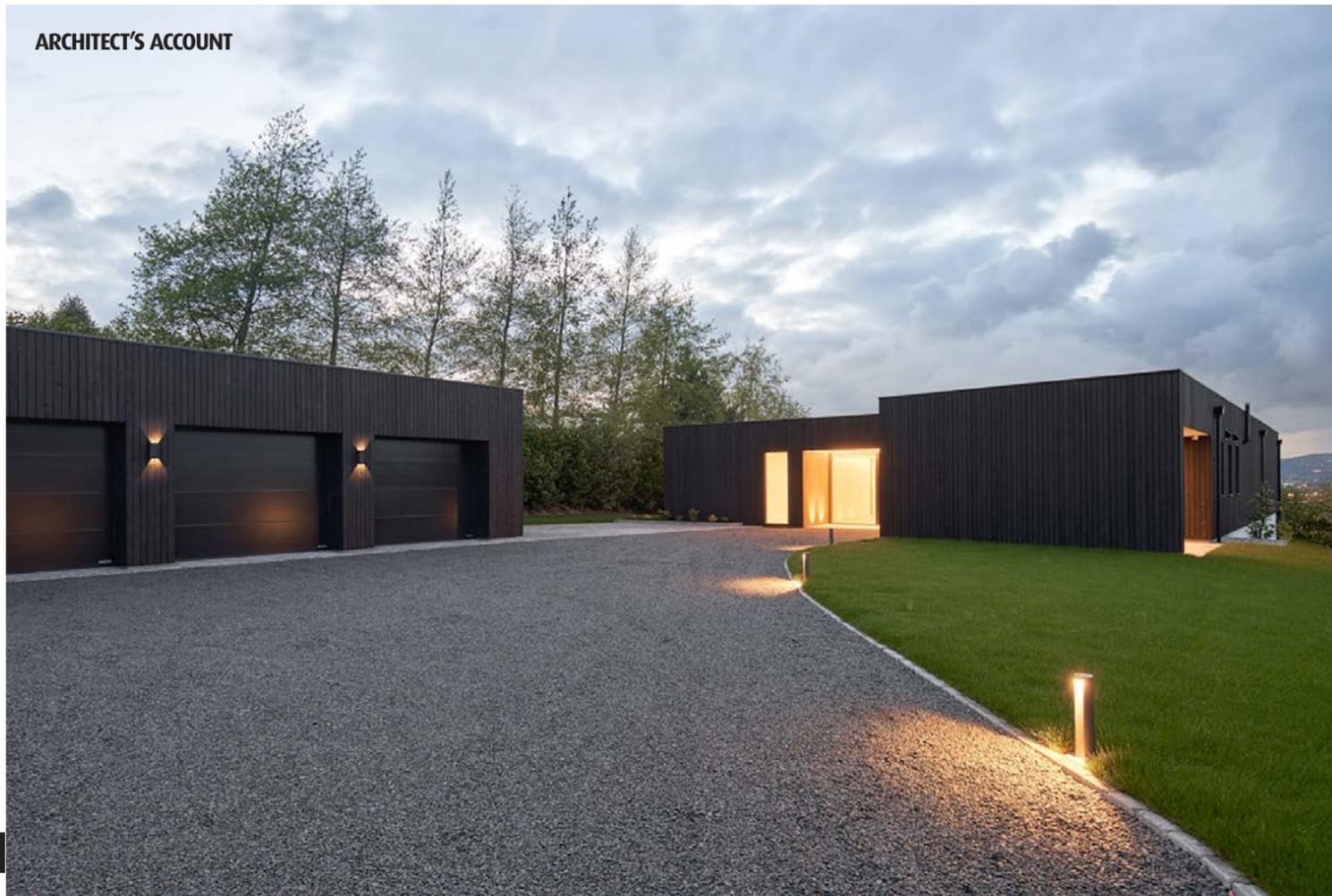


Raising the Bar



// Attention to detail throughout the house is key to its success: concealed hinges, shadow gap detail, blind recesses – everything hidden or reduced. //



This luxury speculative development house has been designed to be inconspicuous and understated from the public viewpoint; creating a sense of intrigue, heightened by the dark cladding.

A single storey, simple entrance externally, unfolds into a large, double-height entertaining space. The views of Belfast are spread before you in a beautifully finished entrance hall and dining space. What looks like a small, unassuming house unfolds into a generous 4500 sq foot house.

The unusual briefing point for this development house was that there was a live planning approval for a large two-storey, split-level dwelling – in a style that conflicted with the client's ethos. Marshall McCann's brief was to design a contemporary house on the same foundation footprint as before; but to create intrigue, drama and style in an elegant and refined manner.

A long, narrow site on which the previous owner had already started moving soil, meant that the site worked well with a split-level house – which also created thought-provoking buildability issues, requiring careful planning.

Arriving at the house, the pristine lines of the gate, the garage and the house become apparent. The crisp horizontal lines, offset by beautiful, crackly, alligator shou sugi ban charred timber, bringing scale, texture and an amazing deep black to the restrained front elevation.

On arrival, the large, glazed arrival space – and the views from the front door right through the entrance hall, of the trees, city and mountains – invites you in. The generous hall with glass balustrade encourages the viewer to rest for a moment in the tranquil space, looking over the views, and the double-height space below. ➤

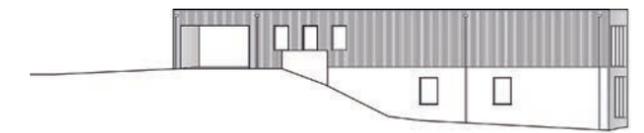
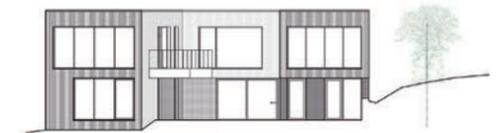
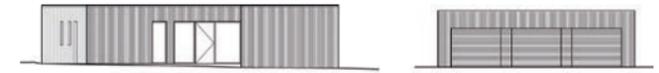
“What looks like a small, unassuming house unfolds into a generous 4500 sq foot house.”



Upper Level



Lower Level



Elevations

➤ From here, the sizable, cantilevered balcony beckons, accessed from the open-plan living, kitchen, dining area. The front of the house receives the southern light; the views are to the north; and with the living spaces mainly on the entrance floor, a large balcony was required to provide a usable, private, accessible outdoor living space, to enjoy the westerly evening sun.

bold. The hints are there: you just need to know where to look.

Internally, the palette of materials is restrained, forcing the eye out to the green canopy of trees, and purple hues of the mountains. Walls are soft white, floors are tiled in a muted

warm grey, with walnut bringing warmth and depth to the doors and stair treads. The beautiful, oversized rusty tiles at the entrance vestibule bring some understated colour, complementing the orangey-red in the walnut. The kitchen echoes the colour and textures of the charred timber. ➤

From the rear, only visible after a trek down the stairs and through the garden, the house is majestic. From the front, the black cladding creates mystery, almost hiding the house in the shadows. From the rear viewpoint the charred timber takes on another life: it is strong and confident, reaches out, creating angles against the sky. It stands proud and seen. One wing of the house is grounded into the grass, whilst the other wing is almost afloat, atop lighter, white rendered walls. If this house was a person, it would be an introvert: quiet and restrained on the outside, to others; but once through the guarded gates, and heavy threshold, it is confident and



➤ Attention to detail throughout the house is key to its success: concealed hinges, shadow gap detail, blind recesses – everything hidden or reduced.

Newcomers to speculative housing, the developers are exploring construction methods in order to get the best solution for each house, in each scenario. Curtailed between two houses, and on a split-level site, Insulated Concrete Framework (ICF) was

decided. With a small area at entrance level, the garage was built first in order to store materials, so that there was room to get machinery and cranes on site.

With a B+ rating, this house has MVHR, ASHP, and provision for electric vehicle charging, battery storage and PV panels (which would bring it to an A rated house). ■

Marshall McCann Architects

THE PROJECT

Client:
???????

Architect:
Marshall McCann Architects

Quantity Surveyor:
Developers own QS

Structural Engineer:
JSC Consulting

Main Contractor:
Design & Build

Photography:
Keri-Leigh Kearney