

*Glenn Murcutt*  
**OFFICES,  
WOOLLOOMOOLOO,  
SYDNEY**

**This office conversion, for the interior design firm Marsh Freedman, shows Glenn Murcutt responding to a dense urban context. It is an exquisitely simple but bold solution to the problem of transforming a very English, nineteenth-century end-of-terrace house, with backyard offshoot, into a modern office.**

A new entrance has been created at the side of the building, into a tiny forecourt, formed out of the original backyard. The typical narrow and always unsatisfactory piece of yard between offshoot and party wall has been filled in with a new steel and glass staircase hall. The original external walls between the house and new hall have been removed and the old floors and roof supported on the new steel structure, drawing more light into the interior and unifying the whole office, both visually and in other ways—one can for example call out to someone on the other floor.

Consistent with Murcutt's concern for climatic design, the office was intended to be naturally ventilated, but air-conditioning has now been installed due to dust and street noise. Removal of the existing staircase allowed the creation of five large, well-proportioned office spaces, all daylight from two sides. Wide openings were made between the two front offices on each floor, with bull-nosed sliding doors so that privacy can be obtained when necessary.

The new staircase hall, the principal feature of the design, is a beautiful serene space, appropriately painted a restful grey-green, bringing sunlight and a sense of airiness to offices in a congested urban location. Walking from one part of the office to another through the double-height space, one is made aware of the sky and clouds, and climatic changes, unlike in the usual city office. Thus, in a sense, nature is brought into the city.  
R.S.



**HOUSE, GLENORIE,  
NEAR SYDNEY**

*12, west (bedroom) elevation.  
13, 'enclosed in the artefact yet  
confronted by the awesome  
stillness of the bush.'*

*Photographs by  
Richard Bryant*





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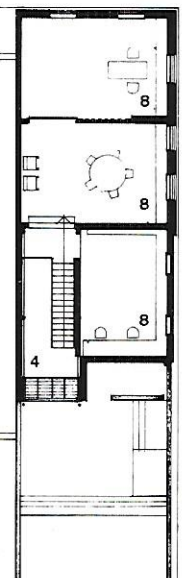
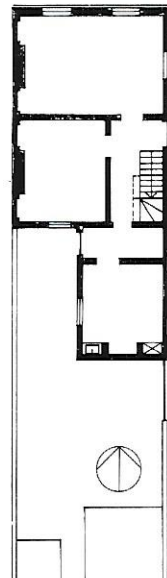
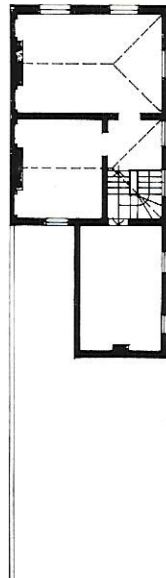


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1, Murcutt's exquisitely simple detailing in upper part of stair hall as seen from entrance court.  
 2, stair hall from first floor.  
 3, street scene: new entrance leads to court and stair hall.  
 Colour scheme by clients Marsh Freedman intensifies from upper to lower parts of wall.  
 4, entrance to office from court.  
 5, 'stair, as seen from entrance—a serene space bringing sunlight and a sense of airiness to a congested urban location.'  
 6, upper level plan before.  
 7, lower level plan before.  
 8, upper level plan after.  
 9, lower level plan after.

key

- 1, courtyard
- 2, store
- 3, entrance to offices
- 4, staircase hall
- 5, kitchen
- 6, print room
- 7, shower/wc
- 8, office



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