

**henry paine + barry gould**

28 Main Road • Melville • Johannesburg  
011 726 1162 • 082 336 5999  
[hjcpaine@iafrica.com](mailto:hjcpaine@iafrica.com) • [www.henry-paine.com](http://www.henry-paine.com)

## DEVELOPMENT AT MONAGHAN FARM

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**Most important in my concept of good architecture is that it does not follow a fashion and is not constrained by style.** Buildings should be designed to be responsive to the different personalities that they are built for; they should be able to take full advantage of new technology and design that allows for a meaningful response to the environment. However, we must learn from the lessons of the past; new buildings can do this without being imitative or pastiche. Buildings need to reflect the period that they are created in and are, in subtle ways, a reflection of society at that time as well as their owner's attitude to the world.

A beautiful building is ordered and disciplined; there is a relationship between its parts. For example, a flat roof is knitted together with a pitched roof by careful and consistent detailing. A timber column is tapered at one end and joined to a beam and to the ground with custom designed steel plate connectors.



**A south facing window wall to an entrance hall**



**Folding doors that allow internal spaces to connect with the outside**



**Wooden or steel column junctions**



**The comfort of the users is of primary importance in the design;** design features for their own sake should be avoided, rather quality of life should be the purpose of design and should be achieved through rational use of materials and construction. Shading of glass, provision of natural light and allowing for proper ventilation are examples.

Materials should be local wherever possible and in sympathy with the environment. They should be chosen to minimise maintenance and the construction should be within the available skills of the building industry. However, that is not to say one cannot innovate and explore other carefully considered possibilities. Appropriateness of design, materials and construction should be considered so that each design is unique and specific for its setting and use and for its owner's personality. Materials should be chosen for their honesty of expression – no concrete made to look like stone.



West facing verandah with sliding shutters for sun protection



Filigree sun shading retrofitted to an uninhabitable building

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**Moynahan Farm is an inspiring property on which to design a home.** It has been idealistically conceived and is attempting to achieve something that other developments have failed to do or, in most instances, not even attempted. The land slopes towards the north and the east to make the best use of sunlight and the beautiful views. Summers are hot and winter nights are cold and its microclimate is typically highveld with low humidity and large diurnal changes in temperature.

The highveld climate presents useful possibilities: low humidity makes it possible to use evaporative cooling systems as opposed to conventional electrically powered air-conditioning which is strongly discouraged; the difference in temperature from day to night makes the storage of thermal energy a real possibility and the high proportion of sunny days lends itself to the use of solar energy (both thermal and electrical). The capital costs of these alternatives need to be carefully considered against the cost of energy, which is already a limited resource and one that will only increase in cost, not to mention scarcity. Energy saving needs to be designed as part of, and integrated with, the structure of the building and not, if at all possible, added on afterwards.

As much water as possible needs to be collected and stored on site. The water can be used for the purposes of gardening but could, with the use of appropriate filters, be used for domestic purposes. Quantities of water collection are tabulated in the Monaghan Architectural Guidelines.



Renosterveld house



Water storage with landscaping used to absorb rainfall and a pathway profiled to take surface runoff to a reed bed



A home office in Parktown



A cottage in Mountain View



View of Keurbooms over the top of Plettenberg Bay house

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**It is of great importance to me that buildings respect the rights of others;** that views are not blocked and that egotistical, 'look at me' architecture is avoided. Buildings must blend into

their landscape whether this is a high-density suburban context or that of a predominantly natural or agricultural environment.

**My ideal house for Moynahan touches the earth as lightly as possible so that the impact of the house on the land is minimised.** A combination of heavy and light weight construction is used to store and control thermal energy. The house is light and airy, but balances direct sun with shade or filtered sun. It has a strong connection between inside and out. One would want to invite the outside in and connect the inside to the outside by blurring the boundaries. Fling open doors and windows; imagine birds flying through. Courtyards enhance light and space and create the opportunity for cooling breezes to blow through. Views are a surprise and are enhanced through careful framing.

Rooms are linked by spaces that are multi-purpose rather than long passages; a living area linked to a bedroom through a walk-through study, for example.

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**Grabouw farm house**



**Sunlight and shade in a Saxonwold house**

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**Finishes are natural and wherever possible not shiny.** Soft black or grey slate, sandstone, quartzite, wood, glass, glass mosaics, cement, tarnished copper and galvanised iron. There are as few different finishes as possible and they flow from room to room seamlessly.

The resulting feeling is of comfort and simplicity.

The house is as energy efficient as possible. Floors soak up sunlight and store solar heat for winter evenings. Glazing is shaded to prevent over exposure to summer sun. Solar panels for heating water and possibly for heating the house are used and integrated into the structure. Rain water from the roofs is collected and stored in tanks. Wastewater is stored for use in the garden.



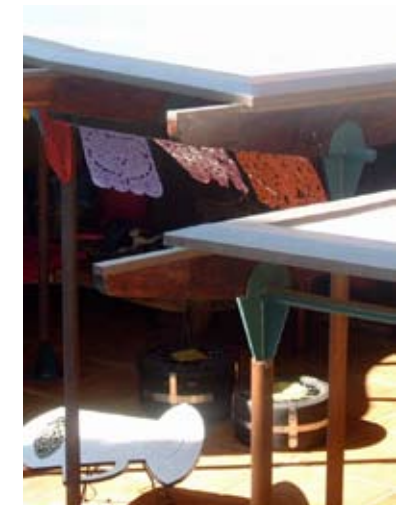
Copper gutters and natural timber posts



Rosewood stair treads on light steel supports



Grabouw farm house



House in Saxonwold



House in Saxonwold



House in Plettenberg Bay



Townhouses in Parkview