

For their imminent retirement the clients required a compact farmhouse, which was both comfortable and secure, to be owner built by their son and farm labour. The game farm site is a narrow, rocky platform amongst enormous wild figs, acacias and paperbarks, constrained to the east by a rock sheet and located along a stretch of corrugated and rocky dirt road deep in the Waterberg bushveld.

The architect took inspiration from the traditional Transvaal farmhouse as a shed building, but then interpreted as a *plan libre*, the facilities designed in the manner of traditional organic mud architecture. What was unusual in the execution of the project was that the only drawings available for construction were the set of sketch drawings and timber engineer's plans. What is achieved is a small building of high merit, with a sense of spaciousness and enclosure, exceptionally well crafted and detailed, that has a fit with the landscape and fitness for its purpose, and allows for a lifestyle of comfort and repose.

where there's a lack of privacy between units, the siting and layout of this design provides for a high degree of privacy, while encouraging good neighbour and street relationships. The form and scale of the house address both the vast scale of the environment and the intimate scale of family life. There's a good resolution of the transition from public to private space. Interior spaces are well defined and aptly respond to their intended functional uses, while being open to redefinition. The exciting form and scale of the central living space acts as formal space for social linkage with society, as well as being the spatial connector to members of the family.

The arrangement of rooms is well considered as a flexible container for evolving family life. The achieved relationship between interior and exterior spaces facilitates the seamless contact with outside covered spaces, taking full advantage of the possibilities of outside living. The house employs passive design principles appropriate to the region in order to

achieve a suitable energy-use profile and to optimise human comfort.

Finishes range from extremely rough to very smooth, and were carefully chosen to enhance the experience and quality of space – the workmanship and detailing is excellent throughout. The landscaping acts as an appropriate mediator between the formal exterior architecture and the natural landscape. ■

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**HOUSE MILLAR, NOORDSIG ESTATE, NELSPRUIT**

**Architects: Matthews & Associates Architects**

**Clients: Mark and Tienka Millar**

House Millar is located in a conservancy and, unfortunately, the chosen format of the low-density development scheme impacts negatively on the site's high scenic and conservation value through allowing houses to be dotted over the whole estate. Within this paradigm, the design of House Millar consciously takes a counter-position by indicating and supporting a more concentrated settlement type, involving active engagement with the internal street network and thus leaving more open space with high visual and conservation quality.

In contrast to most estate developments,

