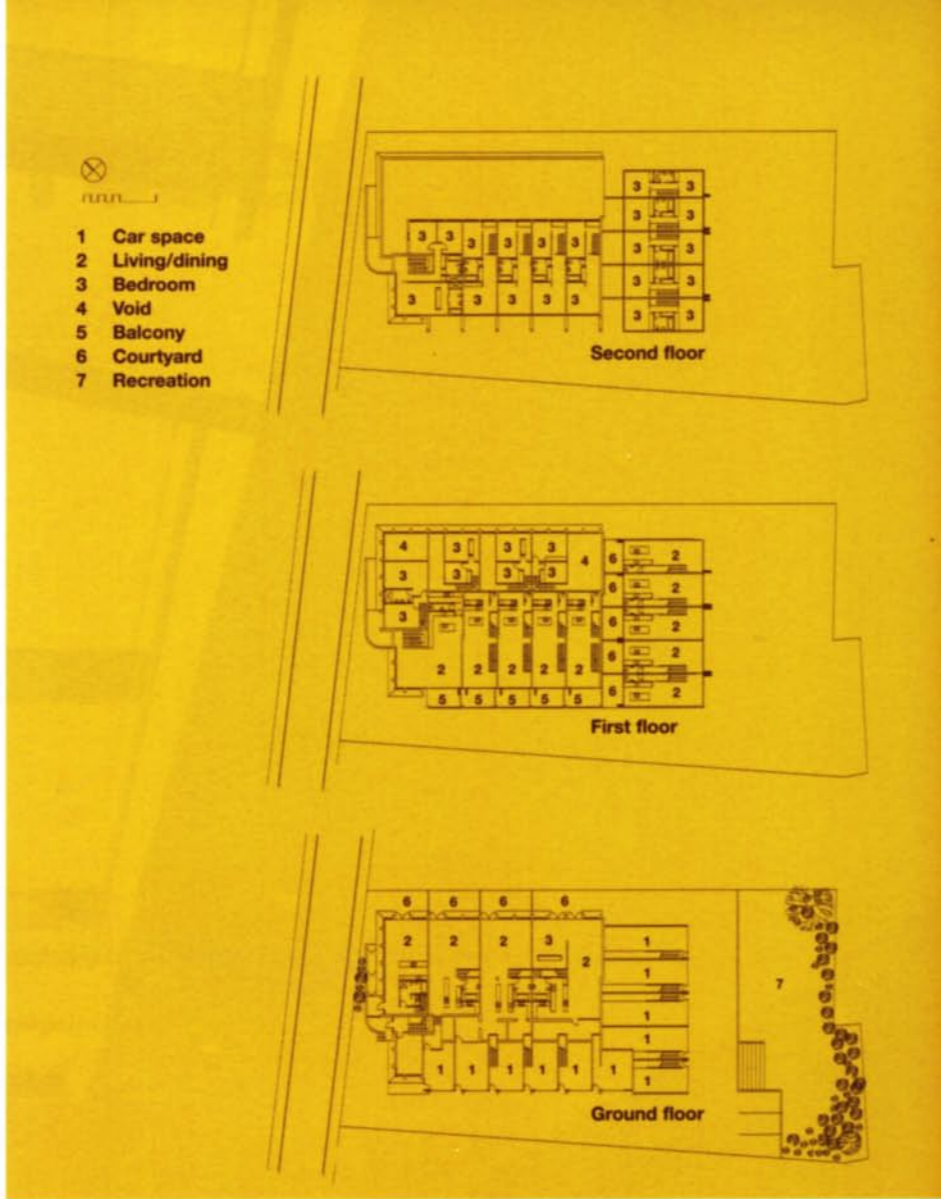


BUILDING SOCIETY

A 1970s credit union office building in the heart of Hobart, deemed well worth saving, has been reconfigured as 18 apartments by local architecture firm Terroir.





each apartment is furnished with correspondingly darker colours and materials and is, as Richard Blythe puts it, "a protected niche from which the space opens out to the larger landscape." Warm lighting of these spaces completes the cocoon-like ambience. The remaining apartments in the original building face onto Patrick Street, and provided a successful contribution to the streetscape, so changes are small-scale on this side.

A further act in the transformation of the building was to provide a new "plug-on" section on the eastern facade where the building faces the city and the water. This portion houses three-storey units with internal courtyards to provide a sheltered outdoor space on this wind-prone side of the building. Although constructed with contemporary techniques and materials, the new section of the building is not in conflict with the original part. Precast concrete here ties in with the expressed concrete in the older section. "We've tried to pick up the line of the expressed concrete frame of the original building and also to pick up the colour of the brickwork," says Richard. It is on this facade that the building shows its most contemporary side, with paintwork that forms giant bar code patterns, and room-height roman numerals painted across the apartments' garages. "We looked at the patterns that the windows and the concrete columns created," the architect explains, "and translated that into something far more contemporary." The super-graphic becomes an integral part of the architecture here, the asymmetrical design in particular lending the composition dynamism. As Terroir's inspiration for this, Richard cites the work of Dutch architect Steven Holl, whose recent domestic and museum commissions make frequent use of giant graphic elements.

As dictated by the existing conditions of the building, the interiors of the different apartments vary as well. One set is resplendent in earthy tones of chocolate latte, burnt orange and aubergine; the next in blue-grey tones that match the colours of their wide water views. Some apartments have polished concrete floors, others luxurious wool carpeting in the deepest chocolate brown. Kitchens and bathrooms are dramatic, using a combination of materials that includes Tasmanian timbers, black granite and stainless steel. All apartments have parking for up to two cars, and all also have access to private and shared outdoor spaces, where, despite the proximity to Hobart's city centre, the environment is remarkably tranquil.

The Patrick Street project is not the first building transformation undertaken by Terroir. The firm has been involved in similar projects previously, as well as several high profile constructions including the Peppermint Bay complex south of Hobart, and the new Hazards Resort at Coles Bay on Tasmania's east coast. "Just like Patrick Street all these projects meant for us a process of interpreting and fitting in with the existing environment, whether that was already a man-made one, or natural. In the case of Patrick Street, this meant unravelling the onion layers of the site's inherent character, and then adding something new, as a proposition about the future or at least the present."

With such intelligent treatment, a 1970s brick and concrete building, built especially for the bank it once housed, now accommodates its inhabitants amongst architecture eminently suitable for living. Above all, the building has kept its soul – its "terroir" – and, once neglected, has become a building with a valued past, a revitalised present and an assured future. **GABI MOCATTA**



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 Fairbrother

CONSULTANTS
Engineer Gandy and Roberts
Landscaping Terroir
Interiors, lighting Terroir,
 Advanced Electrical

PRODUCTS
Roofing Lysaght Trimdek,
 Zincalume **External walls**
 Existing red face brickwork;
 precast concrete panels painted
 Dulux 'Weathershield'; Harditex
 cement sheet cladding system
Internal walls Plasterboard,
 painted; glazed ceramic tiles
Windows Powdercoated
 aluminium awning sashes;
 Vantage aluminium bi-folds **Doors**
 Vantage powdercoated aluminium
 duo-sliders; Designer Doorware
 door furniture **Flooring** Concrete,
 clear epoxy finish; Marmoleum;
 ply sheets with Marmoleum and
 carpet over **Lighting** Dimmers to
 living areas; recessed and
 surface-mounted luminaires;
 dichroic, N, incandescent;
 fluorescent fittings **Kitchen**
 Bosch ss dishwasher, oven,
 glass electric cooktop; Smeg
 rangehood; Abey ss sink;
 Laminex joinery; surfaces – ss,
 granite, Tasmanian oak
Bathroom Fuori Box basin;
 Fowler 'Newport' wc; Caroma
 'Marina' vitreous enamel bath;
 Hansa Polo taps

TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation
 10 months
Construction 10 months

PROJECT COST
 \$2,810,000 (inc. whitegoods
 and landscaping)

PHOTOGRAPHY
 Brett Boardman

THIS PAGE, LEFT: The apartments differ from one another in terms of finishes, but all are flooded with light via generous glazing and skylights. OPENING PAGES, LEFT: Blade walls provide privacy between balconies. RIGHT: The eastern facade sports a rhythmic bar code pattern, created by paintwork (see also image on page 102).