



were also pre-cast with a drip-rail cast in, as were the flat concrete balustrade panels, and a system of protruding stirrups and starter bars was used to tie the whole structure together and to the roof deck, the only element cast *in situ*. The roof deck itself is inhabited by the chimney stack – to which is appended a stair to a viewing tower and a hot-water donkey – and the stair enclosure, which supports a wind turbine and solar panels.

The house can be seen as a typical piece of outsider art, being – as Alan Lipman writes elsewhere in this issue – the raw and fantastic creation of a private and non-professional person, in an open, yet hidden space. Yet it is remarkable, even considered as outsider architecture, because of the extent to which the fantastic and romantic impulses, so often unchecked in amateur work, have been sublimated into the design as a sculptural

object. This is due to an absence of superfluous gestures but also to the extreme restraint in the choice of materials used in its fabrication: apart from stone infill found on site, reinforced concrete is the only structural material used, and its monolithic construction entirely eliminates the need for detailing of junctions between elements. Although outsider architecture, it does echo the free-form plans and horizontal fenestration of early Modernism, but what is perhaps more interesting are the similarities with Rudolph Schindler's King's Road House of 1922. Perhaps it is the freedom of building as one's own client and the assuredness that comes with a grounding in structural engineering (which Schindler had studied), but specifically the experimental use of pre-cast concrete tilt-up panels have, as in the Schindler House led to a novel way of making form – the engineer here becomes form-giver.

Its two-fold approach to landscape – besides its sympathetic use of found material – is also significant. The repetition of the monolithic balustrade over various levels is a more modern way of emphasising the horizontal plane to evoke landscape. But it is also close in spirit to the hillside dwellings of Mediterranean villages, for instance, in the way it uses terracing to site the house on a sloping plane, while what it is evidently dwelling is kept to the minimum. Here the bulk of accommodation is subsumed into the 'terrace' of the bedroom level and the distinction between the built and the unbuilt is pleasantly blurred.

Hoogwaterhuis offers a powerful counter-argument to the 'touch lightly' dogma of recent years, but it is also a notable example of the enduring appeal of design as integral to the manual process of construction. ■