

Steep Radiant

Literally built into an English hillside, this 'dream home' is a glowing example of turning the necessities of a difficult site into virtues of contemporary beauty

TEXT: MADHAVI TUMKUR PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE TOWNSEND



Spending her formative years in Cornwall, and later in Belper, Derbyshire, inevitably affected Jackie Lee's idea of a dream home. The picture that emerged was of a structure nestled in the verdant English countryside, understated in character and yet modern and reassuringly permanent. It would also be a house that could grow with her, providing the space, flexibility and comfort to potentially see her through to old age.

A property overlooking the Amber Valley and the town of Belper became the starting point in transforming Lee's dream into reality. To fulfil the rest of her wish, Lee commissioned Hudson Architects to design an innovative 360 sq-m house that glows like a beacon by night and responds to the changing valley light by day. So integral would natural and artificial illumination be to the structure's character, in fact, that it would end up being called the 'Light House'.

The essence of Lee's brief was quite straightforward. Her desire to occupy only a portion of the residence made a two-storey arrangement an obvious choice. Thus, project architect Dieter Kleiner allocated three guestrooms to the house's lower floor, and the living, kitchen and dining areas, master bedroom, bathroom and utility room to the upper level. Complications arose, however, when the unique requirements of the site itself were taken into consideration: to preserve the view from other houses already standing behind and above, Lee's dream home could not rise more than a metre above the level of the road bordering one side of the site.

To satisfy this local covenant, Kleiner and his team decided to sink the house into the ground, with its north side slotted into the hillside and reinforced by concrete retaining walls. A carefully considered palette of materials that includes a boundary wall made of red stone quarried from the site, timber and extensive glazing, counteract the sense of squat heaviness that could have resulted from the structure's semi-subterranean character. "It was arrived at from the desire to achieve transition from the mass of hillside to the lightness of southern elevation, and expanse of valley," remarks Kleiner. Meanwhile, when viewed from its northern elevation, one can see that the roof of the 'Light House' is indeed level with the road, but decidedly distinct from it thanks to its covering of rich, multi-hued stone tiles. "The roof's careful detailing and the tortoiseshell colouration of the slate was designed to pick up on the patchwork of roofs and fields that are visible across it and the valley," Kleiner continues.

left Slotted against a hill, The Light House is reached by means of a sloped ramp



above Appearing to arise from the hill, the materiality of the house progresses slowly from stone, to timber and finally glass **opposite page from top** The indulgent sun lounge overlooking the valley protrudes five metres without support onto the terraced hills • The interiors of the house complement the materials of stone, steel and slate with light and energetic colour scheme

Entry to the property is via an oak-panelled front door in a sunken forecourt, arrived at by means of a sloped ramp. In the entranceway, Kleiner cut a 3.8m-diameter skylight into the roof, a bold architectural gesture that not only helps to conduct natural light down to the lower floor, but also creates shifting patterns of light and shadow throughout the day. Moving further into the house, one instinctively gravitates toward yet another source of light — the series of glazed panels that frame a magnificent view of the valley below, as well as bordering a sprawling open-plan kitchen, living and dining space. For an even more immediate impression of the home's surroundings, one needs only to step through a set of timber-framed sliding doors onto the veranda. Laid in oak decking and surrounded by rounded timber railings and wire mesh, the balcony is the launching-point for an impressive double-height 'sun lounge' that cantilevers five metres out toward the distant hills. Contrasting with the rest of the house, its exterior is a combination of structural glass and stainless steel shingles that shimmer like fish scales.

Much of the material used on the outside of the structure — such as matte stainless steel,

oxblood stone, slate and timber — was also used for its interiors. The mix was made coherent by the widespread presence of oak, which was used as decking, flooring, handrails, seating and doors. "Oak offered a warm tactile quality against the cool steel and glass and stone, and it also quickly weathers to indicate passing of time," Kleiner points out. The master bathroom, made entirely from red stone, was inspired by a trip Lee made to Indonesia, and evokes a sense of being cut into the rock of the hillside.

While neutral hues were used for the exterior to integrate the house with the landscape, a bolder scheme was selected by Lee for the interior. "The suggestion of vibrant pastel shades for the furniture elements complements the house by contrasting it with the stonework," says Kleiner. That the furnishings are kept to functional minimum prevents their vivid colours from overwhelming the eye, and even the home's storage cupboards and cabinets were fully integrated into the building's overall design. "The AV cupboard, seating bench, kitchen cabinets, utility, laundry units and wardrobes were specified and installed during the build. I planned exactly what would need storing and where it

would go," Lee reveals.

For a project beset by some very testing material and zoning requirements, the Light House is delightfully simple in its appeal. As Kleiner puts it, "It is very grand, but also very domestic and homely, and we feel it will improve the more it is lived in."

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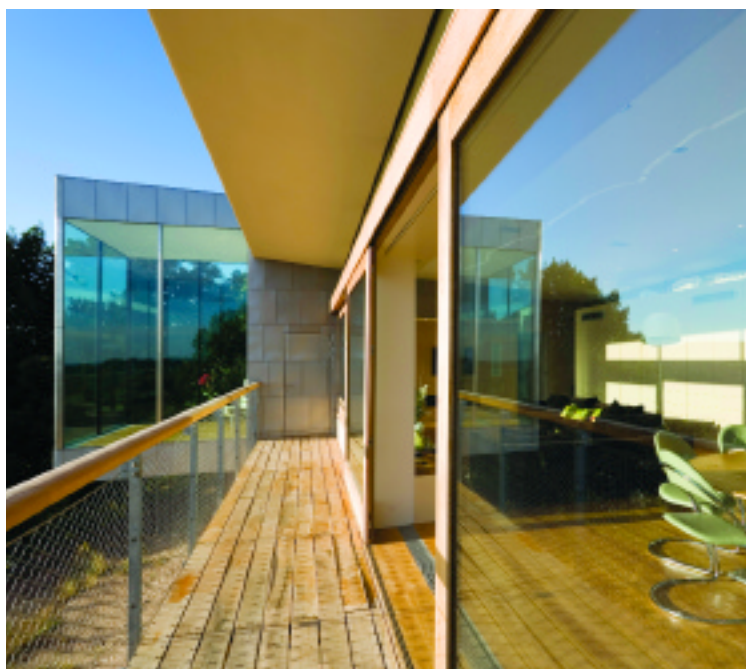
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山居歲月

所有人都夢想擁有這麼一間英國山邊小屋。它利用先天有限的地理條件衍生出無限的創意，定下當代優雅新詮釋

撰文 NADHAVI TUNKUR
攝影 STEVE TOWNSEND



above from top The living space opens out onto the balcony and sun lounge separated by glass sliding panels • The bath and utilities in the master bathroom are embedded in red stone, evoking a sense of being cut from hillside • Most of the storage, cabinets, worktops and cupboards were built-in and specific space was chosen during the time of build

Jackie的童年及少年時期分別在英國的康瓦耳及德比郡的貝爾珀渡過，因此她心目中的夢想家居當然十分英式。畫面背景必須是青蔥一片的英國田園，房屋是那種外型含蓄又不失現代感，經得起時間考驗的設計，空間最好能夠靈活調度，讓她舒適愜意地生活並陪伴她一起跨越人生各個階段，一直到老。

Jackie很快就找到了一間俯瞰安伯山谷及貝爾珀小鎮的山邊小屋，踏出夢想成真的第一步。至於設計方面，她就交給了Eudson Architects去全面落实。建築師決定將500平方米的屋子變成一個黑夜中放光明的燈塔，即使白天時它也會隨著山谷的日光變化而展現不同的姿態。總而言之，它將會是結合天然及人工照明的傑作，命名為Light House實在再貼切不過。

Jackie的要求相當簡單直接，她希望佔用住宅的其中一部份。建築師Deter Zentgraf於是為她安排了一個雙層家居，下層是三間客房，上層是客廳、廚房、飯廳、主人房、浴室及貯物室。這原本是很合理的安排，可惜房子

先天的地理條件奇特，在它後面更高的山坡上還有其他房屋，為了避免影響那些住戶的景觀，Jackie的夢之家不可能建得太高。位於該塊地皮邊沿的房子，後面恰好有一條路，而Jackie的家最多只能夠高過路面一米，處理起來有點難度。

既然要遵守遊戲規則，建築師Zentgraf及他的設計團隊索性將整間房屋沉入地底，向北的一端嵌入狹長的山邊，加一道水泥擋土牆。所有建材都經過一番挑選配搭，例如圍牆用了附近石礦開採的紅石材，還有木材和太大的鑲嵌玻璃，因為房子的姿態猶如牢牢地墊伏著而且半嵌入地面，感覺較沉重，這些物料能夠帶來輕巧的觀感。建築師Zentgraf解釋道：「這構思是一種視覺上的過渡，從沉穩的山坡到房子向南一面的輕盈，然後是遼闊的山谷。」從北面看，Light House的屋頂跟旁邊道路成同一水平，屋頂鋪上的石磚豐富多彩，遠遠就望得見。建築師續道：「細心裝飾的屋頂用了玢瑯色系的石材，排列風格參考附近一帶的其他屋頂及山谷中青翠的田野。」

走過橡木前門，再經過斜坡道連接的凹陷前院，就會來到玄關。這時抬頭一望，會看見天花板打開了一個直徑3.8米的天窗，手法相當大刀闊斧，不單將較多天然光帶到室內低層，日間不同時段更出現微妙的光暗變化。繼續往前走，將會被令一光源吸引，一系列巨型鑲嵌玻璃外是山谷的好風光，一個長長的開放式廚房、客廳及飯廳依次排列，緊緊貼著玻璃一直伸展。打開鑲木框的滑門走到戶外的陽臺，四周的環境更加一目了然。陽臺地面是橡木甲板，並圍上圓木欄杆及鐵絲網，是個壯觀非常的雙層日曬場，五米長的懸臂式架構彷彿撲向遠處的群山。房子的外牆以結構玻璃和一塊塊不□鋼片，像魚鱗般閃閃發亮，跟室內比較起來又是另一種氣氛。

大部份外牆所用的物料都在室內重複使用，包括啞光不□鋼、牛血石、石板和木材，這些材料同時配搭大量的橡木元素如甲板、地板、欄杆、椅子甚至門，整體的呼應感覺更強烈。建築師指出：「橡木有獨特的溫和觸感，為冷冰冰的鋼、玻璃及石材添上暖意。橡木的

質感色澤會隨時間過去而改變，是一種歲月的痕跡。主人浴室全以紅石製成，靈感來自Jackie的一趟印尼之旅。浴室猶如從山坡開鑿出來，氣氛相當奇異有趣。

房子表面儘是柔和的中性色調，跟周遭的風景融為一體，可室內卻是Jackie心愛的鮮明色彩。建築師道：「傢具都是明朗活潑的粉彩色，跟石材形成奪目的對比。」傢具的數量不多，只是恰好夠用，否則太多鮮艷顏色會令人眼花撩亂。Jackie更一早安排好所需的組合櫃及廚櫃，一次過將所有設備裝修妥當。她說道：「我指定要什麼類型的影音櫃、長凳、廚櫃、用品、洗衣乾衣設備及衣櫃。裝嵌與裝修同步進行，尺寸款式甚至擺位都事先一一決定。」

縱使從物料運用到所在地的地勢，都是一連串接踵而來的挑戰，這個夢想家居最後還是建成了，以最精密的構想換來最純粹的喜悅。正如建築師Zentgraf所說：「這間屋很宏偉，可同時也是十分舒適的安樂窩。住得愈久，愈會發掘到它更多的優點。」