

An architectural line drawing of a house, possibly a modernist structure, featuring a prominent red rectangular frame or window opening. The drawing is composed of numerous thin, intersecting lines that create a sense of depth and perspective. The red elements are solid and stand out against the light background of the drawing.

# THE NEW MODERN HOUSE

REDEFINING  
FUNCTIONALISM

*Jonathan Bell & Ellie Stathaki*



RIGHT

THE MAISON INDIVIDUELLE MONTBERT IN CONTEXT. THE GLAZED GARDEN FAÇADE BRINGS DAYLIGHT INTO THE WINTER GARDEN AT THE HEART OF THE HOUSE

*This family house* in the French village of Montbert was completed in 2006 to designs by the Nantes-based architect Xavier Fouquet. Essentially a modern addition to an ad hoc series of buildings dating from various parts of the last few centuries – an old barn, a late 20th-century villa – the Maison Individuelle Montbert is envisaged as a framework around a predetermined space, pushing the client's available site area to the maximum with a low-cost, simple external fabric.

Fouquet describes the project as having an 'internal logic', with the actual form of the structure arising from the building process itself and from the client's demands and ongoing changes made to the plan throughout construction. 'It is the shape that arises from a negotiation,' he writes, adding that the most crucial aspect is not the physical form of the house, but its relationship with the external space. 'We must think about the relationship between nature and building – nature is a partner for humans.'

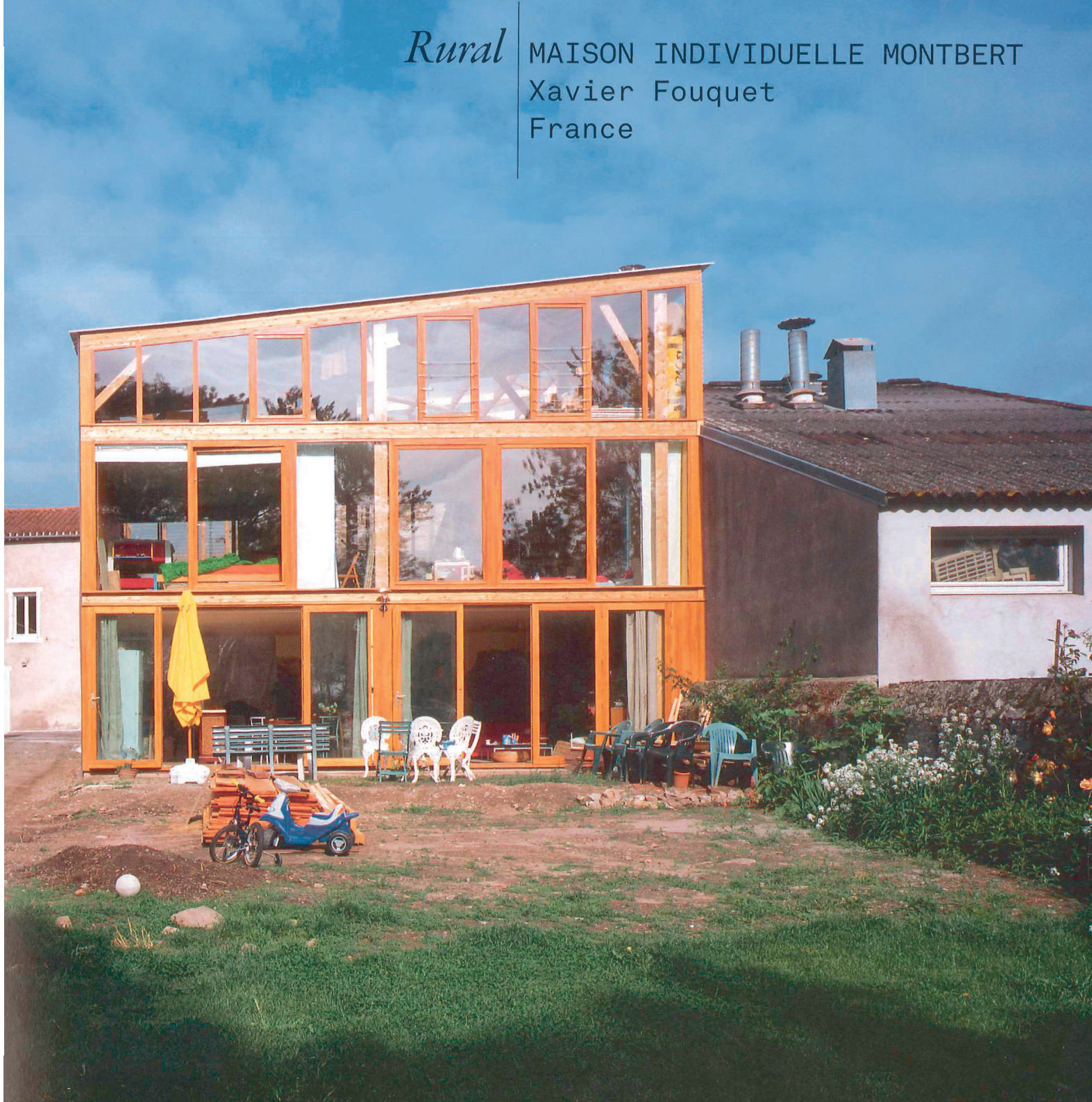
In particular, this interplay between structure and landscape shapes Fouquet's views on environmentally friendly building; the architect believes in a 'dynamic relationship with nature', with modern nature itself accepted as a largely fictional creation. Fouquet's desire to accommodate landscape stresses the importance of such figures as the American writer J.B. Jackson, a landscape theorist who published extensively about the impact humankind has on the landscape, and the close relationship between history and geography.

The Montbert house was undertaken in an extempore fashion. 'We work only on plan, with no sketches, no models, and minimal use of computers,' says Fouquet. The wooden structure grew organically out of the site, originally occupied by a small shed and sandwiched between two party walls that stand at 90 degrees to each other. The house is little more than a glass and polycarbonate shell, built around a muscular wooden framework that forms an inside/outside space to bridge the gap between the accommodation and the garden via an internal winter garden.

The materials are economical and hard-wearing and the construction methods traditional. The pine frame structure supports wooden flooring, clad in chipboard and plywood, plus a mixture of clear and opaque ribbed polycarbonate for the side façade and roof. At around 220 square metres (2370 square feet), accommodation is generous, but it is the expansive relationship between internal and external space that really impresses, enhanced by the warmth of the basic materials and the lack of prescriptive, rigorous design. The Maison Individuelle Montbert forms an organic enclosure, modern in form yet traditional in its warm embrace of the surroundings.

Rural

MAISON INDIVIDUELLE MONTBERT  
Xavier Fouquet  
France





*Rural*

MAISON INDIVIDUELLE MONTBERT  
Xavier Fouquet  
France



01

01  
THE SITE BEFORE  
CONSTRUCTION BEGAN:  
A COLLECTION OF SHEDS  
AND LEAN-TOS AT THE REAR  
OF AN EXISTING HOUSE



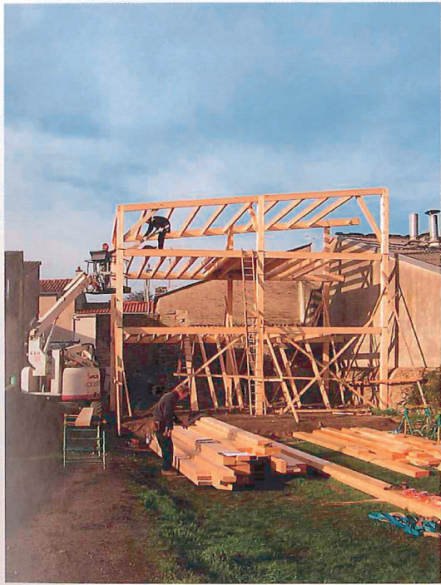
02

02  
THE LIVING ROOM UNDER  
CONSTRUCTION, LOOKING  
BACK DOWN THE GARDEN



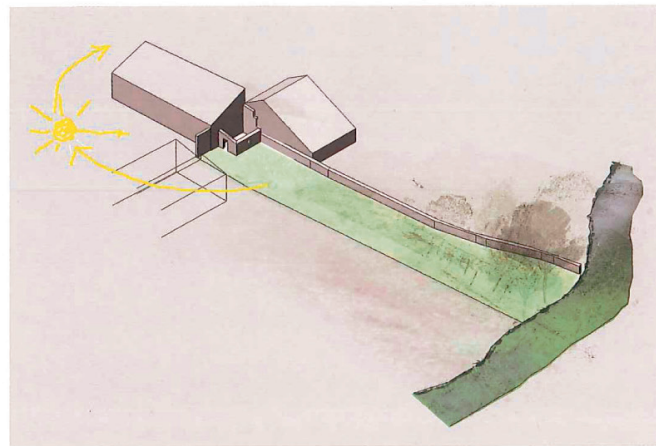
03

03  
THE WOODEN-FRAMED  
GLAZED SECTION UNDER  
CONSTRUCTION

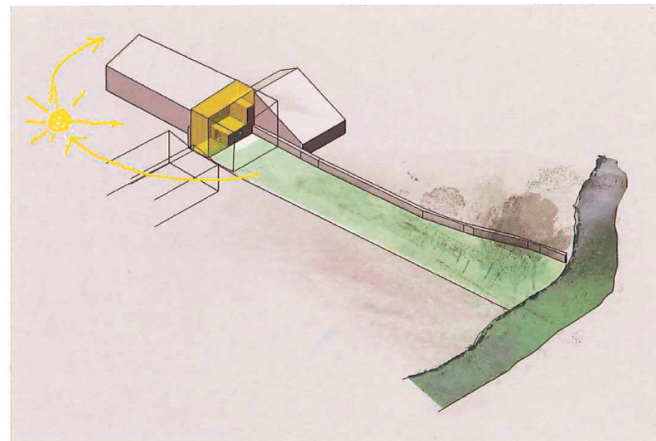


**04**  
THE REAR FAÇADE UNDER  
CONSTRUCTION

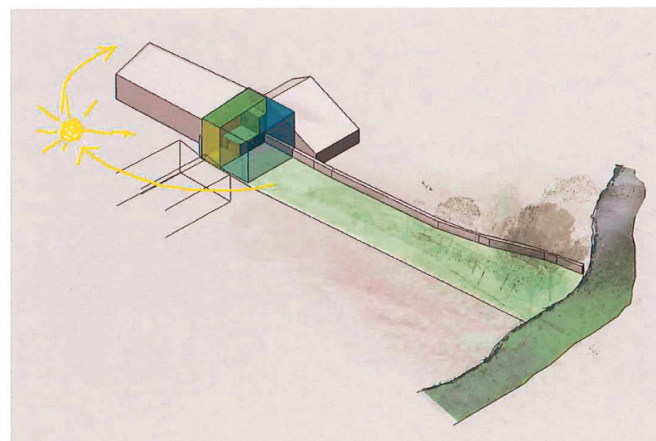
**05-07**  
MASSING DIAGRAM  
ILLUSTRATING THE  
ARRANGEMENT OF HOUSE,  
WINTER GARDEN  
AND GLAZED ELEMENT



**05**



**06**



**07**