



INDOORS

Mezzo forte

BY *Karen McCartney*

THE WORD mezzanine has the power to conjure up a sort of architectural eyrie, but it's not a term that resonates with architect Christopher Polly. "It can sometimes be misused – much like 'galley kitchen' – and imply a space that is given less consideration or importance than it's due," he says.

In the house pictured above, in Sydney's Woolooware, the design of the "upper floor", as Polly prefers it to be known, melds into the interior of a new pavilion at the rear of a yellow-brick 1960s house. The additional space was marked from the outset as a separate area and intended for use as a sitting room, guest bedroom or study.

The composition within the large concrete space is sculptural and significant, with

hoop-pine ply chosen for its easy maintenance and durability as much as the soft honey tone which links it visually to the original house. Using one material for the kitchen benches and cupboards, stairs and balustrade at one end of the pavilion clearly defines that zone, and frees the soaring double-height volume at the opposite end of the space.

Visually it allows the owners to experience a play of scale, since the upper floor was intended as a compressed, intimate space from which they could enjoy views of the surrounding district. "The band of windows wraps across both the north and east faces to deliberately frame a wide horizontal view," says Polly. "It becomes a platform for watching the sunset and the movement of the sky."