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The brief was challenging: a temporary and re-useable structure that should stand out from its residential context, whilst embodying Stockland's environmental agenda implicitly. In essence, the building itself was to act as a tool to educate the public in more sustainable ways of living.

Inspired by Utzon's unbuilt Bayview house, and Poulet and Harvey's Concrete house, a systems approach was adopted, whereby the logic of repetitive precast concrete elements stacked together like LEGO is the architecture. Structural components like the roof gutters

that tip water into the concrete awning, then down a rain chain and into tanks for re-use are a small metaphor of the site's hydrology that helps underscore the relationship of the building to the land. As a counterpoint to concrete, timber has been used extensively, introducing a sense of familiarity and warmth; i.e. a notion of 'home' within the cool gallery setting.

The building for us is a kind of suburban critique that embodies our client's commitment to sustainability whilst acting as a prototype for a different approach to the issue of affordable housing.

project: The Macarthur Gardens Sales and Information Centre for Stockland Property Trust  
practice: Supple Design, est 1997  
directors: Eoghan Lewis  
photography: Eoghan Lewis

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