The New Queensland House

Thames &Hudson

Cameron Bruhn & Katelin Butler

Morningside Residence

Morningside, Brisbane
Kieron Gait Architects

Completed – 2017
Project type – Alteration and addition
Total site area – 886 m²
Internal area – 180 m²
External area – 39 m²
Number of residents – 5
Number of bedrooms – 4
Number of bathrooms – 2

Morningside Residence is built on the land of the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples

Location plan

1:5000 0 10 50m

The architectural setting

The reimagining and enhancement of the relationship between building and landscape is a defining characteristic of recent Queensland residential architecture. The timber and tin Queenslander houses and the architecturally eclectic brick and timber housing of the suburbs are largely disconnected from the immersive and experiential qualities of their settings. Modernist principals of openness and transparency have scaffolded this aspirational connectivity in both new houses and renovations.

The new builds sit firmly on their sites, with terraces and courtyards that orchestrate the terrain as platforms for lightweight timber pavilions that discreetly feather into the setting and carefully frame views. Exemplary works of this architectural trajectory include the 1996 Grant House at Sunshine Beach by Gerard Murtagh (see page 292); the Alinghi Residence at Rocky Point in the coastal hamlet of 1770 by Grose Bradley BVN (see page 292); and the sophisticated Ogilvie House atop a seaside dune on the Sunshine Coast by Kerry Hill Architects (see page 294).

In the suburbs this strategy has been deployed to connect an existing house with the garden, and noted works include the Newmarket House by Owen Architecture (see page 294), which appends a crisp, white pavilion to the rear of a rare art deco gem. This architectural task underpins the work of Kieron Gait Architects and at the Morningside Residence a new, discreet pavilion creates a year-round living space that has a seamless relationship with the active backyard.

Previous:
The new pavilion of Morningside Residence is a family home characterised by openness and a sense of sociality.

Opposite top:
The existing Queenslander, built by a neighbour's father in the 1920s, has undergone a series of sensitive restorations.

Opposite below:
A new pavilion sits along the southern site boundary, framing the garden, with the existing house to the east.

Above:
The design of the new pavilion is a refined interpretation of the timber construction of the old home.

The lived experience

Owners Andrew and Kate Jensen purchased their high-set, weatherboard bungalow in Morningside from their neighbour who had grown up in the home; her father had built it himself in the 1920s. There was a promise by Andrew and Kate to retain the original Queenslander house, with aspirations to sensitively update it to embrace the way of life in the subtropics, as well as seeking a direct connection to their yard for the couple's three children.

Although the original home has undergone a series of sensitive restorations and contemporary insertions have been added, it is the siting strategy by their architect Kieron Gait that has reformed the way the family lives. Rather than attaching an extension to the rear of the existing house, a detached pavilion containing kitchen, dining and living spaces runs along the southern boundary of the site. The distinction between the various daily activities is amplified by this separated living space, with the outdoor journey of retreat to the bedrooms as a clear expression of the definition between private and public zones of the house – something that could only occur in the steady Queensland climate.

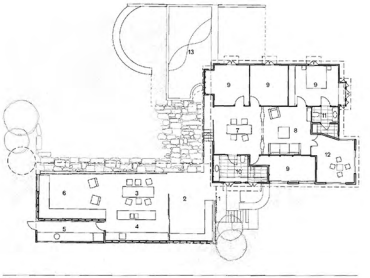
Driven by the care taken to craft and assemble the existing house, the new pavilion design is a refined and elegant interpretation of the timber construction of the old home. Although artfully composed, it is a robust building that can be used by the family and their friends in any number of ways. 'From September onwards, it turns into a pool pavilion for the kids, with water and towels scattered everywhere,' says Andrew. Walls peel away to the east and north, creating a shaded verandah-like space that captures cooling breezes. The addition of this new building has shifted the hierarchy of spaces in the home, redefining the garden as a year-round hub of activity.

Opposite:
Open to the garden, the shaded verandah-like space captures cooling breezes.

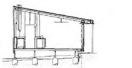
Above:
Exposed studs and bracing are reminders of the home's past in spaces with contemporary insertions.

Following:
At the rear of the house, the ground has been built up into a new landscape to suit children's play.

Above:
The exposed frame in the new pavilion contrasts with the weight and warmth of the kitchen joinery.



Plan



Cross section

1 Entry
2 Outdoor room
3 Dining
4 Kitchen
5 Pantry/laundry
6 Living
7 Craft
8 Family
9 Bedroom
10 Bathroom
11 Ensuite
12 Verandah
13 Pool

1:250
0 5m

Architect — Kieron Gait Architects
Project team — Kieron Gait and Leah Gallagher
Builder — A.H. Done Builders
Engineer — NJA Consulting
Landscaping — Arborescence Tree Services
Certifier — Brisbane Certification Consultants
Photographer — Christopher Frederick Jones