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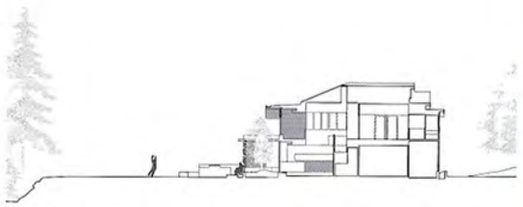
Indooroopilly RESIDENCE *by* Kieron Gait Architects

• BRISBANE, QLD •

This house is a stitching together of old and new – robust and bold new elements have been added to a delicate and tactile original building to create a home that can grow with the clients' teenage boys.

Words by Michelle Bailey
Photography by Christopher Frederick Jones



Section 1:500

0 5 m

01 The new portion of the house includes a living, dining and kitchen space downstairs and a bedroom upstairs.

02

03

Indooroopilly Residence, designed by Kieron Gait Architects, is a stitching together of traditional and modern domestic architecture. The completed scheme retains an original interwar-period Queensland home and connects to it a two-storey addition that extends a new main suite and living space into the back garden.

The suburban Brisbane home's teenage occupants have affectionately dubbed it The TARDIS and indeed, it is larger on the inside than it outwardly appears. From the front yard, the humble timber facade suggests very little of an interior space that unravels into another sort of architecture completely. From the backyard, an elegant composition of concrete, glass and timber frames a suite of contemporary spaces that ground an otherwise lofty Queenslander solidly in the subtropical landscape.

The clients, who have three young sons, approached Kieron as they came to realize their need for a home that could grow with their boys through adolescence. Their brief was to transform their current dwelling into one that considered the balance of teenage and adult spaces and where the two could function respectfully side by side. In addition, they hoped to improve the connection to the backyard, dissolving the boundary between the living room and garden.

Of the original house, only a small rear lean-to was removed. The rest was remodelled to accommodate children's bedrooms and bathrooms upstairs, and a guest and soundproof games room downstairs. The new portion of the house is reserved for an upstairs main bedroom with living, dining and kitchen spaces downstairs, all of which are oriented toward the garden with an uninterrupted view of native bushland beyond.

In spaces of the original home, the charms of the past are revealed and celebrated wherever possible. This is evident in many rooms, including the children's bathroom, which is overtly placed at the former front door so that the toilet can sit proudly beneath the elaborate, decorative plasterboard ceiling of the original entrance hall. In the bedrooms, the original frosted glazing was preserved and it continues to emit the same morning glow that lit the "sleep-out" in the past. In the ensuite, wall tiles are stopped short of the ceiling to expose the original timber linings. The aged timber floorboards

02 The living spaces are orientated toward the garden with an uninterrupted view of native bushland beyond. Artwork: Felix Gallagher.

03 A double-storey volume expands over the open-planned living area, with clerestory louvres on the western edge of the void.

04 Spotted gum flooring and feature walls balance the use of off-form concrete. Artwork: Felix Gallagher.

05 The extensive use of concrete satisfies a brief calling for the use of teenage-proof materials.

06 In the spaces of the original home, the charms of the past are revealed and celebrated wherever possible.

07 In the main ensuite, wall tiles are stopped short of the ceiling to expose the original timber linings.

throughout the original home continue their gentle creak as they have for almost a century.

In the middle of the house, a timber stair connects the home's two levels and marks the junction between the old and the new. At this point, contemporary architecture takes over from traditional and a double-storey volume expands above the open-planned living spaces. The surrounding white walls are like a canvas to the changing shadows that are cast in dramatic lines from the corner skylight. On the western wall, clerestory louvres bring winter sun into the centre of the house, and all year round the southern glazed facade delivers soft, natural light to the interior.

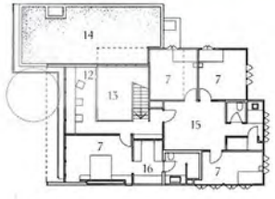
The new main bedroom is deliberately positioned to take an elevated and direct view of the landscape. Its interior is a balance of warm timbers and white walls, with the southern facade exclusively reserved for floor-to-ceiling frameless sash windows. Just outside the main bedroom and continuing along the length of the window is a study area, which has been fashioned to allow parents to passively survey homework. This is a modest space, but it is an essential part of a home that works hard to maintain harmony between teenagers and parents.

Interrupting the tall central volume of the extension is a concrete portal that forms the roof of the kitchen and extends out to cover the barbecue terrace. Off-form concrete walls complete the western side of this space and, like the underside of the roof, remain "unfinished" so as to best represent their natural state. The ground-level floor is also concrete and its polished black surface looks like the dappled reflection on the surface of a pond.

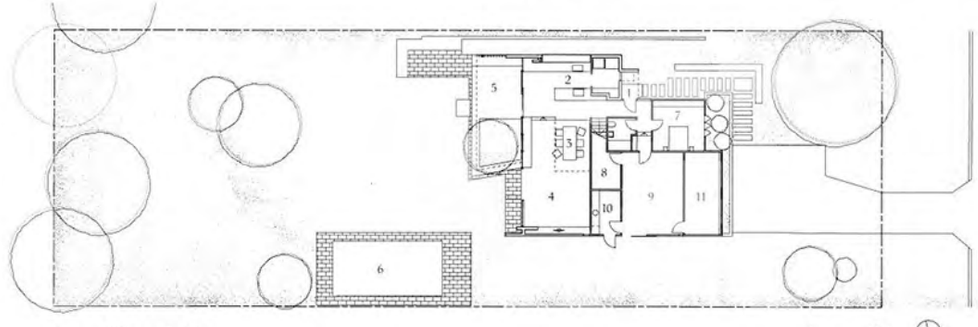
The extensive use of concrete in the design of the house satisfies both an inquisitive architect and a brief calling for the use of teenage-proof materials. Overseeing the construction of this aspect of the project was a learning curve for Kieron. Nevertheless, the result has brought a complexity to the finished product and has ensured that these hard-wearing surfaces will age well with time.

The real pleasure in the experience of this home comes with the curious collision of old and new and the delightful contrast of familial and designed elements. Where the original home remains delicate and tactile, the extension is robust and bold. The successful marriage of two such opposing elements is as much a consequence of a conscientious design process as it is a trademark and commendable persuasion of the architect.

1 Entry
2 Kitchen
3 Dining
4 Living
5 Terrace
6 Pool
7 Bedroom
8 Wine cellar
9 Games
10 Laundry
11 Store
12 Study
13 Void
14 Roof garden
15 Playroom
16 Walk-in robe



First floor 1:400



Ground floor 1:400

08 A barbecue terrace sits adjacent to the kitchen, covered by a roof in unfinished concrete.

Architect
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Practice profile
A small practice specializing in bespoke residential and interiors projects.

Project team
Kieron Gait, Leah Gallagher

Builder
Natural Lifestyle Homes

Consultants
Engineer: NJA Consulting
Landscaping: Arbour Essence

Products
Roofing: Lysaght Custom Orb and Spandek in Zincalume
External walls: Timber weatherboards painted Dulux 'Whisper White'; spotted gum cladding with oil finish; Hanson off-form concrete in 'Raven'
Internal walls: Tongue-and-groove spotted gum with oil finish; plasterboard painted Dulux 'Whisper White'
Windows: Aneeta sashless windows and Breezeway Altair Powerlouvres windows, both powdercoated in Dulux 'Black Satin'
Doors: Lidco 735 System doors powdercoated in Dulux 'Black Satin'
Flooring: Hanson Terracrete polished concrete in 'Raven'; tongue-and-groove spotted gum flooring with Bona Traffic finish; Classic Ceramics Basaltina Nera tiles

Lighting: Light and Design Group Raat track-mounted spot lights; Lightyears Caravaggio pendant in black
Kitchen: Spotted gum joinery; Caesarstone benchtops; Miele dishwasher; Ilve oven and induction cooktop; KWC Ono sink mixer with hose; Oliveri Titan undermount sink; Elica Platinum carbon-filter recirculating rangehood
Bathroom: Villeroy and Bosch Memento countertop and wall basins, and Architectura toilet suite; Bette rectangular bath; Grohe Feel basin and wall mixers, and Rainshower shower on rail; Classic Ceramics Santosa and Basaltina Nera tiles
Heating and cooling: Hunter Pacific Concept 2 fan
External elements: Custom metal screens in Resene 'Catch 22'; Hanson concrete terrace; National Masonry hollow concrete blocks in 'Charcoal'

Floor area
1214 m² site
266 m² floor
16 m² terrace

Time schedule
Design, documentation: 9 months
Construction: 10 months

Joe & Bronwyn's FAMILY HOME

• BRISBANE, QLD •

Kieron Gait Architects has transformed a 1930s Queenslander into a dream home for Joe, Bronwyn and their three growing boys (see page 94). Here we chat to Bronwyn about her family's experiences of working with an architect.

Photography by Christopher Frederick Jones

01
Could you tell us a little about your family and your background?

My husband and I are both Queenslanders who understand and love Brisbane's outdoor lifestyle. We have three boys, who were all born while we were living overseas. Five years ago, after thirteen years living in the UK and New Zealand, we returned to Australia. We wanted to give our kids the opportunity to grow up in Queensland like we did. The boys are now aged fifteen, twelve and six and are as high energy as always. Because of the difference in their ages we need multiple living areas and space for them to run around in and all spaces need to be robust enough to handle clumsy and active teenage boys.

We have lived in a lot of different houses in colder climates and we understand the idea of matching architectural design to the local climate. We bought a house that sits in a wonderfully unique position, enveloped by a beautiful bush reserve with a lot of wildlife, including kookaburras, cockatoos, bush turkeys and lorikeets. It is also close to the city, where my husband works.

02
Why did you engage an architect and how did you discover Kieron Gait Architects?

After returning to Brisbane we bought and moved into a 1930s Queenslander house. Over the years the verandah had been closed in, a little bedroom was hung off the side of the house and a granny flat created underneath it. But apart from that, it was still pretty much in its original condition. We all managed to squeeze in, but we knew it would only be a matter of time before we would burst at the seams. Because so many changes had to be made it seemed silly not to consult a professional – if you are going to commit time and money to your home you may as well get good counsel. We first asked a draftsperson, who came very highly recommended, for a concept, but despite us telling him we were quite adventurous, he pretty much gave us a "renovated Queenslander."

A friend of ours had worked with Kieron at his previous practice. She really liked Kieron as a person and said that his renovation of his own home was the most impressive renovation she had seen. So we arranged to meet him and the rest is history.

03

How did you prepare for your first meeting with the architect? Had you done some research into what you were looking for?

I don't know if we really prepared ourselves. I remember being very excited. We have lived in quite a few homes – tiny little flats in London and then some really interesting homes in Auckland. The last home that we owned had cement floors and the heating ran through the slab to keep the house warm in winter. It was also really robust and perfect for boys. So we were quite keen to use cement in this house, and to put the kitchen and living areas downstairs. We don't understand the common Queenslander concept of living upstairs and away from your garden. We knew we had to keep the original facade, and I wanted to keep as many of the original features of the house as possible while creating big, beautiful spaces. We also wanted it to be anything but precious. I guess we took the approach that "Kieron is the one with the skill and talent, so let's see what he can come up with."

04

Is the result achieved by working with an architect what you expected?

I loved working with Kieron. Unlike a new build, when you renovate you need to do a lot of problem solving and there is a danger that the problem solving will compromise the look. Kieron's problem solving has given the house some wonderful quirks. Hidey-hole nooks in bedrooms, recessed walls with uplit ceilings and a "man cave" shower for the boys. We are very happy with our end result. Kieron listened to our brief and gave us a home that looks like a traditional Queenslander from the street but becomes something very different once you open the front door. The downstairs space functions like a big, beautiful, robust barn, with kids, animals and debris blowing in and out, and at the same time it still manages to look amazing.

05

What advice would you give someone who is thinking of using an architect? And would you engage an architect again?

When it comes to advice about using an architect, on the top of the list would be that you need to be very clear about your budget. Know your own budget! Apart from that, if you have found an architect whom you like and can work with, I'd recommend not only that you get them to do your plans, but also that you keep them on the project until completion. Sometimes it's easy to be persuaded to go the "easier way" when an issue arrives, especially when you are desperate for the build to move on. An architect won't let that happen. We were an unfortunate case, in that our first builder went into receivership, which was quite distressing. Fortunately we had kept Kieron on the project and he helped us navigate our way through an insurance claim. He worked really well with our second builder, Matthew Carroll from Natural Lifestyle Homes, and together they completed a perfect custom-made home for us. People say renovating is the most stressful thing you can do, and we did have a couple of lows, but we managed to get through it all without there ever being a breakdown in relationship or communication with any of our key players. And I think that was due to having an architect as our advocate.

We would absolutely engage an architect again. For those thinking about doing so, I'd recommend you make sure you find an architect who comes well recommended, and whom you get on with and can communicate with. It is important that both you and the architect understand where the other is coming from.