

VISION



Labour of Love
Clare Pavilion
Burleigh Heads, QLD

Daylight Saving
Manly Duplex, Sydney, NSW

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Labour of Love

Returning to the project type upon which they built their reputation, Kerry and Lindsay Clare recently completed a granny flat as suburban pavilion. It might seem a long way from their more recent, award-winning, public projects, but this modest structure of plywood, steel and Viridian glass encapsulates an all-too-rare spirit of environmental connection.





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Daylight Saving

A bold glazing strategy is behind the re-invention of this Sydney suburban beach duplex. Viridian glass is part of the jewel-like answer that treats place and climate as friend rather than foe.

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LABOUR OF LOVE

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PROFOUND AND INTIMATE ARCHITECTURE CAN OCCUR AT HOME. IN SUBURBAN BURLEIGH HEADS, NOT FAR FROM THE ROLLING SURF, THE CLARES' REMIND US OF THIS SKILL TO MAKE A LARGE STATEMENT WITH MODEST MEANS. ASPECT, PROSPECT AND PRIVACY ARE ALL ARTFULLY COMPOSED IN A SUBURBAN STREET NOT KNOWN FOR SUCH QUIET INNOVATION.

Granny Flat, Burleigh Heads, Queensland.

Architect: Clare Design – Kerry and Lindsay Clare

Principal glazing resource: Viridian VTough Clear

Images & Text: Peter Hyatt



CORE PRODUCTS



ENERGY



NOISE



CLEAR VISION



DECORATIVE



BUSHFIRE



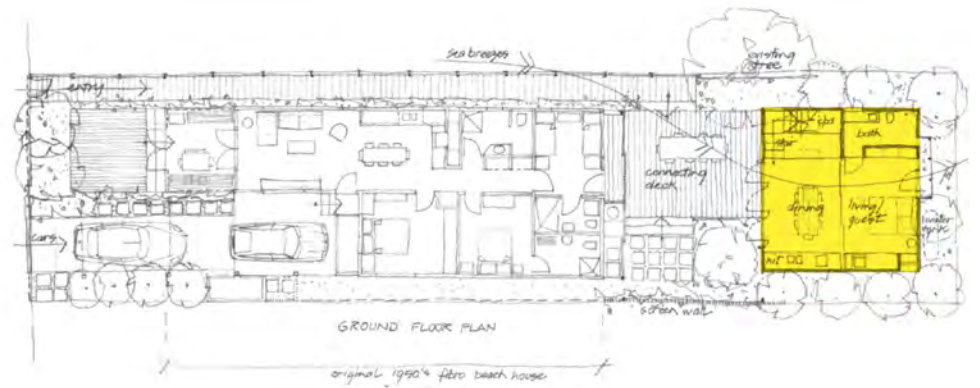
STRUCTURAL



STORM



SECURITY



THE CLARES' FLAT IS ONE OF THEIR SMALLEST PROJECTS IN A LONG TIME, YET LOSES NOTHING IN THE DNA TRANSFER FROM GRAND PUBLIC TO MODEST PRIVATE.



Architecture is all about fingerprints. Not the type often found on windows and walls, but those that shape, pattern and forge their designers' legacy.

These unique characteristics are the giveaway of their creators. This is apparent in the latest work by husband and wife team Lindsay and Kerry Clare with a small suburban granny flat at Burleigh Heads. It all seems a world away from the hustle and bustle of the Gold Coast high-rise just 15 kms. to the north.

Architecture is less an occupation than pre-occupation. It's why the Clares' can be considered in a similar light to the mid-20th century husband and wife team of Charles and Ray Eames whose craft had such far-reaching consequences. While the Clares haven't explored furniture-making like the Eames', their design rigour and enduring partnership have a similar conviction.

Gold medalists of the Australian Institute of Architects in 2010, their Queensland Gallery of Modern Art (2006) stands as a bravura work of elegant understatement. More recently Melbourne's design-challenged Dockland's precinct, benefited from the opening of the Clare designed city library. Despite the usual commercial buffeting, it attains

its gravity not with leaden mass but subtraction and refinement. More reminiscent of early Wright Brothers' flying machines, the library contradicts its more ponderous neighbours as if in levitation.

Their latest project is comprised principally of corrugated steel, laminated timber and Viridian glass. It virtually turns back the calendar to the '80s and '90s when they were based on the Sunshine Coast and among the leaders in environmental place-making along with Gabriel Poole and John Mainwaring. Lightweight, filleted and layered, their designs speak of the authentic rather than generic.

The granny flat is one of their smallest projects in a long time, yet loses nothing in the DNA transfer from grand public to modest private. Its planar qualities and broad-bladed pivot doors for instance, borrow from those at GoMA that so effortlessly link to its shaded riverfront.

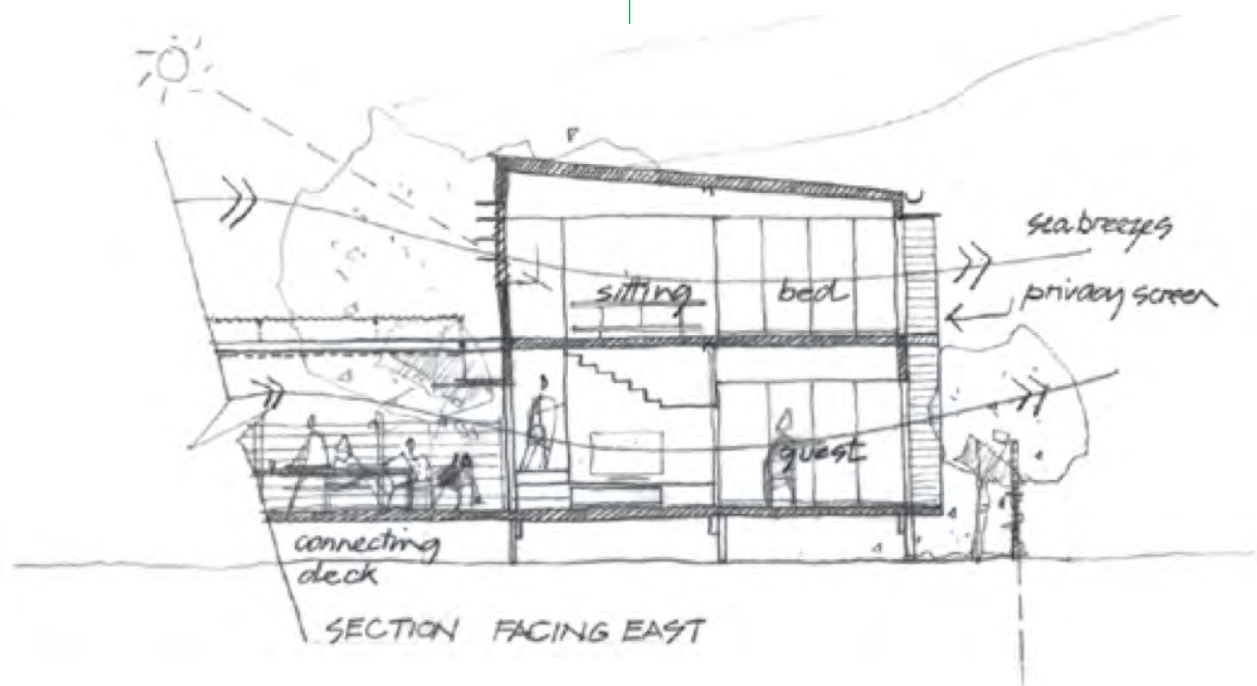
The opportunity for profound and intimate architecture can occur at home. In suburban Burleigh Heads, not far from the rolling surf, the Clares remind us of this skill to make a large statement with modest means. Aspect, prospect and privacy are all artfully composed in a suburban street not known for such quiet innovation.



Labour of Love

GLASS TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING SO RAPIDLY THAT IT CAN TAKE A LOT OF TIME FOR AN ARCHITECT TO STAY ABREAST OF THAT. A GOOD FABRICATOR WHO IS PREPARED TO SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS THE ISSUES AND GLAZING DEMANDS IS INVALUABLE.

Kerry Clare
Architect



THEIR LATEST PROJECT
IS COMPRISED
PRINCIPALLY OF
CORRUGATED STEEL,
LAMINATED TIMBER
AND VIRIDIAN GLASS.





Peter Hyatt, author of two books on the Clares' – *Local Heroes, Architects of Australia's Sunshine Coast* and *Art House – Queensland Gallery of Modern Art*, visited the project to investigate a granny flat with a difference:

How would you summarize the project:

Lindsay Clare: It's essentially a two-storey box placed six metres behind a 1950s fibro-shack on a long, narrow site. The two buildings are connected by a roofed-deck that allow occupants to come together, or retreat, as required.

It's an unconventional flat. More of a pavilion in many ways isn't it?

Kerry Clare: It's about providing uncomplicated, flexible planning across two levels. Each level has an open studio space that can be sub-divided by sliding screens for living and sleeping and both have attached bathrooms. It also explores the idea of the intergenerational house for an extended family of grandparents, married children and grand-children to co-habitate within the two dwellings on a 400m² suburban lot.

What are the benefits of this type of dual occupancy?

KC: Environmental with the better use of resources, cost effectiveness and better social outcomes from increased density and mutual family support.

How much of this pavilion is prototype rather than stereotype?

KC: Mostly prototype. It's always nice to approach these projects with a willingness for experimentation.

Such as?

KC: The compressed fibre-cement floors and timber strips for instance. We hadn't done that before but tried it on a small project. Even if it wasn't entirely successful (it was harder to build than anticipated).

LC: It's definitely about searching for those prototype qualities. On the other hand the box shape we use is a stereotype. There's nothing wrong with that because it's a shape that provides such great economy.

Is there an element of your workplace that's like a laboratory to really see what you can push and develop next?

KC: That's true. We like to experiment with materials. I think we got that from Gabriel Poole.

But there's an underlying philosophy there too.

LC: While you want innovation, there is also the need to utilize standard elements for economies. This project involved fast construction. We've developed all these details around standard elements and standard sections for speed and economy. You can see evidence of that in the window details. We had to really manipulate those to add effective weather protection hoods that worked with the window type and aesthetic we tried to achieve.





Left and above The ground floor kitchen, bedroom and staircase/bathroom. The overall sense of crafted, lightweight interiors are also beautifully light-filled.

How easy, or rather, difficult is it, to jump between projects of such different scale?

LC: We've nearly always had a housing project underway. Projects of different scale occurring simultaneously tend to complement one another.

KC: The small works can be more experimental, while the larger projects can often benefit from that experimentation.

What about the pivoting doors to the deck?

LC: They're not just about the way you see out. They really represent a tremendous flexibility and way of seeing doors not simply as an in and out. These doors are also windows and provide a whole other dimension to how that deck as the outdoor room is viewed and used.

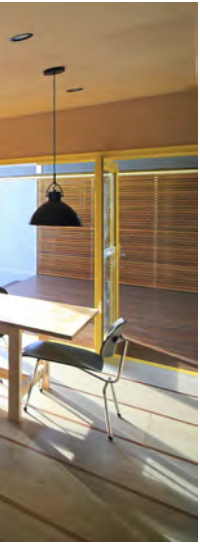
Are they standard?

LC: There are two different window types within the pivoting doors. They have sliding sashes and fly screens within them and also act like casements where you can direct or control the amount of breeze. You can have daylight and ventilation, with security.

How much of a lineage is there to your Gallery of Modern Art in Brisbane?

LC: You could say it's a powerful lineage, because I think we have been very consistent applying certain principles over the years. They're also ideas of habit. The pivot doors are interesting because when they're open, they don't simply steer breezes. They act as a baffle in higher winds. Rather than have just a huge opening, we have a large opening with these blade doors that stop air from just rushing in. This way air-flow is much more modulated and directed.





Left and below Ground floor living space and bedroom with wafer-like room divider and view beyond pivot doors and windows. Bathroom is cleverly incorporated behind wardrobe wall.



Below and Right The staircase and view to the upper level office reflect a sub-tropical flow of light, air and fine detailing.





THE SMALL WORKS CAN
BE MORE EXPERIMENTAL,
WHILE THE LARGER
PROJECTS CAN OFTEN
BENEFIT FROM THAT
EXPERIMENTATION.

Kerry Clare, Architect





Upstairs bedroom. Pivot window captures and directs breeze while translucent screen offers privacy from neighbours.

Your work is renowned for its climatic and environmental fit. Is that your signature?

KC: It's our starting point.

The term 'granny-flat' suggests a rather dowdy, dreary space. This is much more isn't it?

LC: It's a fairly universal design. It could be clothed differently. You might shape it differently, but really, the idea can have a much wider application in this climate and environment.

What motivated your client to occupy this part of the allotment in this way?

KC: It was an exposed backyard overlooked by neighbours and as soon as the pavilion was built, it just became the centre of gravity for the whole house.

There is a distinctly crafted, honed quality – not exactly something the neighborhood, or Gold Coast, has really discovered.

KC: There are well-known gems around, but the Gold Coast has been more of a brash tourist town and the housing stock takes more of the mansion approach. There is a growing appreciation for design and gradually we'll see a lot of the old housing stock regenerated. It's at a turning point now.

Have tight budgets made you better architects, or simply forced you to better disguise where cuts have been made?

KC: You have to understand where to direct the budget. You might perform to a very low cost, but it's important how to assemble those parts to realize the whole.

There are testing issues of privacy and daylight. You've obviously considered those issues thoroughly. Have you been successful?

LC: Privacy is difficult when you have this density. One reason the pavilion is there is because to the south a neighbor had views into the backyard. The pavilion increased their privacy and our client's.

Given your work is so collaborative, how do you assign roles? Do you design half each and meet up in the middle, or does one handle interiors and the other the exterior?

LC: We work over each others' drawings and quite often forget who initiated the first one, so it's all quite seamless.

KC: Having run a small practice for so long, we work as general practitioners and our skills are interchangeable. There's not much we disagree on, really.

What was the main attraction of Viridian glass?

KC: An architect needs to understand their materials whatever those happen to be. In this instance we were lucky to have such an informed and helpful window manufacturer. Wayne Burt from Window Makers visited the site a number of times. We discussed glazing details and he provided window and door section samples. That was a very positive experience and so we look forward to working with him on other projects because of his enthusiasm and knowledge.

LC: He was also very knowledgeable about Viridian glass. Wayne was really on the case. The other thing to say is that his people were craftsmen and were interested to find solutions for this small project.



Are you surprised at how many architects and building designers appear to be quite so unaware about the glass that winds up in their projects?

KC: Glass technology is changing so rapidly that it can take a lot of time for an architect to stay abreast of up-to-date information. A good fabricator who is prepared to sit down and discuss the issues and glazing demands is invaluable.

How important are the pivoting bedroom windows to the overall design?

KC: They're fundamental. Certainly in summer the slightest air-flow is important. Rather than rely on mechanical cooling this design optimizes breezes and comfort levels. The big pivot doors offer a whole other freedom channeling air into the house. A big issue in Queensland is insect protection. You can't just have vast, unprotected open spaces up here and expect to use them without being carried away by mosquitoes.

LC: Of an evening those windows lock for security, but provide ventilation. That's quite a critical detail to ensure you have both.

The best advice for architects working on a modest residential scale and budget where clients expect blockbuster results?

KC: Work with the potential of the site and climate. Window design is fundamental to this approach.

Credits

Project

Granny Flat, Burleigh Heads, Queensland.

Architect
Clare Design – Kerry and Lindsay Clare

Project Team

Lindsay Clare, Kerry Clare, David Currie, Britta Wingender

Contractor

ClareBuild

Engineer

Mark Traucnieks

Glazier

Wayne Burt, Window Makers

Principal Glass Provider

Viridian

Principal Glazing

Viridian VTough Clear throughout

Carefully scaled windows provide balanced views and light.

DAY



LIGHT SAVING

A BOLD GLAZING STRATEGY IS BEHIND THE RE-INVENTION OF THIS SYDNEY SUBURBAN BEACH DUPLEX. VIRIDIAN GLASS IS PART OF THE JEWEL-LIKE ANSWER THAT TREATS PLACE AND CLIMATE AS FRIEND RATHER THAN FOE.

Manly Residence, Sydney

Architect: Archer Breakspear/Tomahawk Studios

Principal Glazing Resource: Viridian ComfortPlus™

Text: Peter Hyatt

Photography: Peter Bennetts



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NOISE



CLEAR VISION



DECORATIVE



BUSHFIRE



STRUCTURAL



STORM



SECURITY

A weary duplex in Sydney's sought after Manly had a pair of fine, if severely compromised, structures until their recent rescue. Fusing these early 20th century terraces, architects Toby Breakspear and Tomek Archer performed the complex, highly convincing, renovation.

Rather than repeat the makeover as fashionable fit-out, the designers opted for a new structural order to produce a sequence of flowing, interlinked spaces. No mean feat given the difficulty of merging two houses.

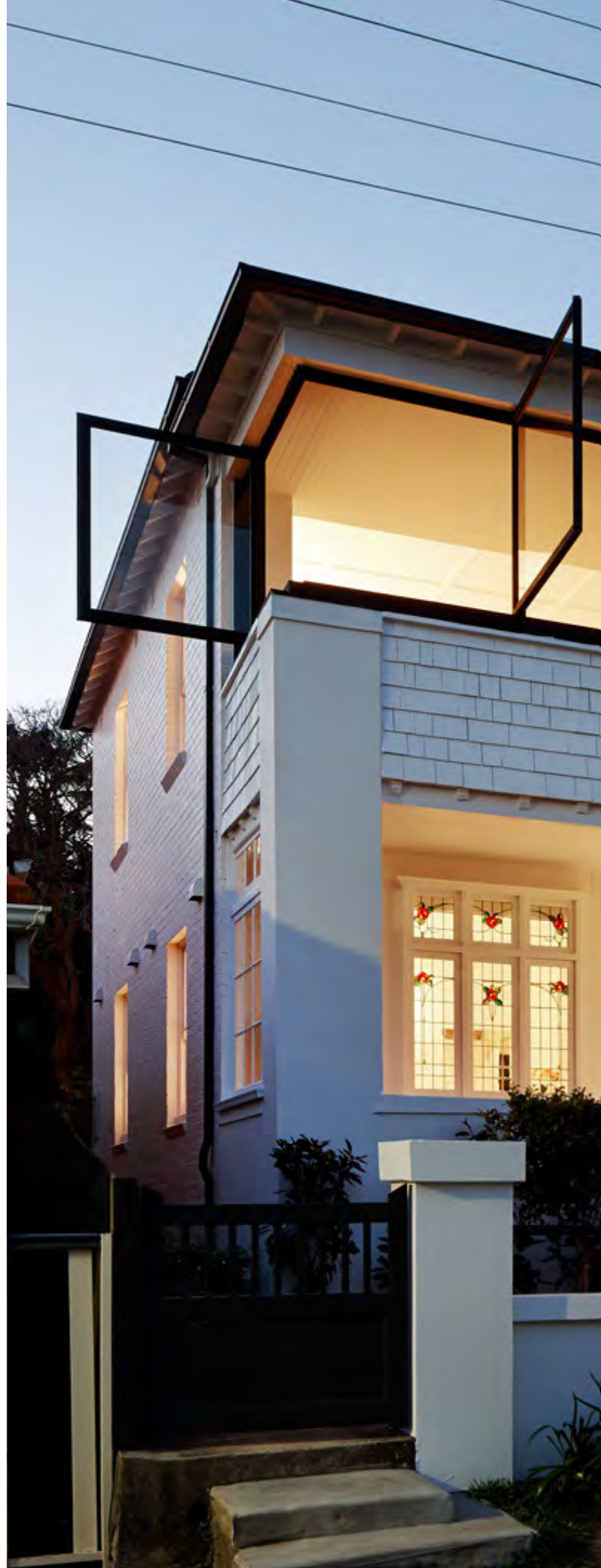
There is a certain bravado and skill required to transcend the populist 'Fs' of fixtures, fittings and furnishings. This superficial idea of luxury shouldn't be confused with the supple muscularity of high-end architecture. Directing funds towards major incisions and cut-outs was the equivalent of heart surgery and facelift rather than cosmetics alone.

Connected by a common wall, and functioning as two separate houses, Breakspear and Archer have created a strong, unified identity. While the old provides a backbone of pleasing solidity and decoration, the new contrasts slenderness to facilitate the circulation of sunlight, air and most significantly, people.

Precisely punched holes penetrate the envelope. These aren't the random variety, but carefully targeted from the north-facing skylight to the L-shaped upper window band that steers views right across Manly to the Pacific Ocean.

The feel of the new is one of special precision, from the folded steel staircase to the black-steel-framed glazing rebated into the brickwork. Fully function driven, windows and doors contribute to a far more dynamic operability. These slide, pivot and angle like yacht sails for finely tuned performance of sunlight and breeze.

Engineered, motorised windows using Viridian ComfortPlus™ create a seamless modernity with the old.



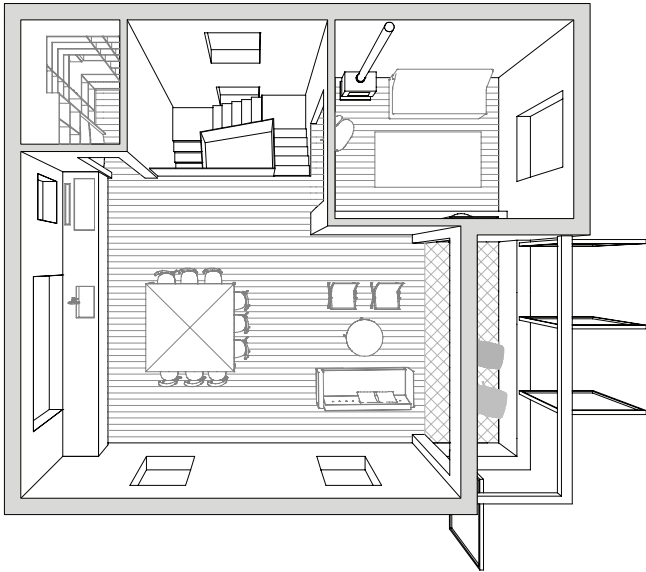


WHAT SURPRISED ME WAS HOW WE COULD TRANSFORM A HOUSE WITH SO FEW INCISIONS.

IT REALLY HAS JUST SEVEN HOLES CUT INTO THAT PAIR OF HOUSES AND IT'S A COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION OF HOW YOU COULD LIVE.

IT INVENTED WHOLE NEW LIGHT QUALITIES, CONNECTIONS WITHIN AND OPENING TO THE GARDEN CONTEXT.

TOBY BREAKSPEAR
PROJECT ARCHITECT



Vision spoke with project architect Toby Breakspear about a renovation that unshackles its owners to experience far more pleasurable spaces and a sustainable future:

You've transformed two houses – introverts really – and created something much more exuberant. Was that your ambition?

That was definitely our intention. It was stacked, top and bottom as separate apartments. Our clients wanted one house. Unifying two houses was a challenge. We had to link those disconnected volumes and spaces in a way that felt as if they were destined to be that way.

Easier said than done with a common wall.

Basically we punched holes in the old and connected the key spaces. That freed up rooms to fit the plan – there were fewer rooms required than we started with. That allowed us to open up



the beautiful views to the beach, to the south of the Sydney harbor, we brought sunlight in and connected to the garden. It became about seven careful cuts into the building. It was our way of editing the duplex into a single house.

Was there a masterstroke moment?

Not exactly that, but the huge central void with the new skylight brought light all the way down to the ground floor through the new staircase. It's also a bigger house now with fewer rooms that flow much better.

The operable windows are a revelation.

Upstairs is now the living area because it offers the best views and we've installed pivot windows onto the old sun-room. It still functions like a sun-room but is now more fully connected. We removed the balcony walls so that it's almost as if you sit on a very large enclosed balcony rather than living-room. Those windows offer a huge opening and views across the valley of Manly and beyond to the ocean.

What are the operating principles behind the windows?

They're motorized and open at the press of a button and pressed again they lock into position. We partly used the motorized windows because of wind loads. The crank-shaft of the mechanism braces the windows firmly in place.

Are they wind-speed rated?

They're engineered to handle a one in a hundred year winds.

Is it a customized system, or off-the-shelf?

They're customized frames and assemblies but the glazing is basically off-the-shelf Viridian ComfortPlus™.

How quickly did the essential design occur to you?

It was a very quick project. Only a few months all up refining the design to suit our clients' needs. Originally the living room was planned for downstairs. There was a bit of a process to work through that with the clients, to make sure the scheme was what they wanted because it wasn't what they asked for.

Were there surprises?

Yes, because our clients hadn't imagined the house we proposed. What surprised me was how we could transform a house with so few incisions. It really has just seven holes cut into that pair of houses and it's a complete transformation of how you could live. It invented whole new light qualities, connections within and opening to the garden context. What's interesting is that it still appears to be the old heritage house it always was.

The quality of light available through a series of openings – rather than a single hero facade, can result in a very beautiful quality of light. That is something often not grasped and probably explains the benefit of those seven incisions and skylight/windows.

I agree. It was much less about one big gesture and more about seven openings that were treated specifically and differently. One is a fixed window that acts like a kitchen splash-back that frames a tree. That window almost foreshortens the effect of the tree foliage. It's as if the foliage is part of the kitchen via that transparent splash-back.

Was the bigger challenge technical or creative?

The technical challenge came working so quickly. We were on-site for only a few months and hadn't fully sorted construction details. We figured it out with the builder with demolition underway. We worked closely with the builder and those details come together rapidly.

Sometimes working on the fly isn't altogether bad.

It was a great way to work. And fun. There was an established relationship between the clients and builder, so they really trusted him, and the three of us worked hand-in-hand the whole way through construction. It was always the three of us in discussion about the details we presented on-site.

What was the main design driver?

The spaces will provide for many uses over the life of the building. Even though the cuts in the building are quite specific, we've avoided in-built furniture. We've tried to create robust, flexible spaces for a variety of uses.



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G SOLIDITY AND DECORATION,
CONTRASTS SLENDERNESS TO
THE CIRCULATION OF SUNLIGHT,
MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, PEOPLE.



Left The folded steel staircase and slender balustrade are sculptural elements informed by the wash of daylight from the new skylight.

Above A new doorway connects to the previously neglected garden view.

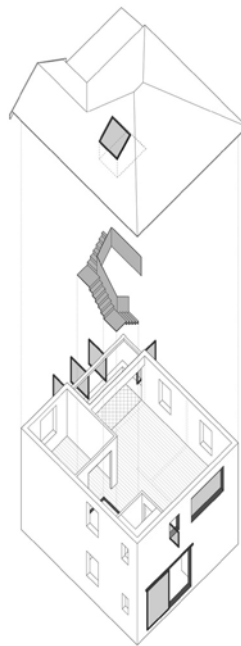


The cool staircase geometry wraps around an ethereal, invented void.



The upper level lounge/living space with windows as light/air scoops and views across Manly to the ocean.





**What about the new prospects for outlook?
Good views rarely date.**

That's true. We put the skylight on the north side of the windows, so the north sun enters but that is largely managed by the ComfortPlus™. The big pivot windows capitalize on the views. The big fixed and sliding windows connect to the garden and are specific, yet done without fuss. There wasn't even a door previously to connect to the garden.

Is the resistance to extensive glazing in more built-up areas due to fears about privacy, or concerns about thermal issues?

Privacy tends to just be a personal preference. Thermal issues though make a big difference and huge amounts of glazing can make it difficult to moderate internal temperatures. In this particular project we don't have huge expanses of glass. We just made sure when we put in a window, it was big.

Isn't that one of the paradoxes of the green-star rating system? Many new houses might tick the boxes, but those boxes are very often gloomy Green.

That's absolutely true. I grew up in houses that weren't hermetically sealed. Quite the opposite actually. Maybe that's why I'm against new work that confuses thermal performance with quality of light, space and life.

Were there many structural issues to link those, to knit those two to become one?

We just cut a big hole in the floor that separated the two. That's where the staircase went. The hole and void was bigger than the staircase, but it's how most of the light arrives there. While the garden is downstairs, you live upstairs. It was important for that staircase to feel generous and to connect the garden to the interior.

Isn't it about striving to make it uncomplicated – to simplify?

There's ingenuity but the approach is not to overtly express any cleverness. We used a cell-form, folded steel, plate structural system for the staircase and worked closely with an engineer to make sure it didn't flex. It barely touches the wall or requires any supporting structure. The balustrade disguises a lot of the structural force. The ambition for that staircase wasn't to express how complex a structural system that stair is; the aim is that it sit serenely in the void, with light washing down. That produces shadows around the sculptural white form. The same goes for the pivot and large windows. We have brought in a ton of light.

WE WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE FABRICATOR SO WE UNDERSTOOD THE GLASS AND ENSURED THE FRAMES WERE AS FINE AS POSSIBLE AND INSTALLED FLUSH WITH THE BRICKWORK. **Toby Breakspear, Architect**



Click image above to play video



That doesn't necessarily mean you're denying the client?

Not at all. It's about including only what is essential, avoiding clutter, installing the right furniture and then enjoying living there. That's what they've done here.

Is there one lesson you take with you from this project?

That every project contributes to your understanding of architecture.

Credits

Project

Manly Residence, Sydney

Architect

Archer Breakspear/Tomahawk Studios

Builder

Cre8ive Building Projects

Engineers

SDA Structures

Glazing Contractor

Steve Jones ARA Windows

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A new sliding glass door to the rear garden.

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