

THE COTTAGE BY JUSTIN HUMPHREY ARCHITECTS



Preferring elaboration over eradication, this adaptation of a 1970s house disrupts pervading Gold Coast attitudes toward older housing and revels in its suburban context.

Words by Andrew Leach
Photography by Andy Macpherson

Occupying a corner site in a quiet Burleigh Waters (Gold Coast) street, The Cottage recalibrates its owners' relationship with both their own home and their neighbourhood. Together, Justin Humphrey Architects and their clients, Duncan and Lizzie, have worked with the fabric of an existing late-1970s home to bring out the spaces most vital to day-to-day life – and to strengthen the relationships between spaces across the property.

This recalibration sees the family home entirely transformed through a series of disarmingly simple elaborations, reclassifications and extensions that respond to observation and opportunity. With new kitchen, dining and living areas, the fabric that wraps around this corner block now serves to both enclose a private yard and establish a generous relationship with the street. A large backyard pool was also downsized, reclaiming room for landscaping, dining and recreation.

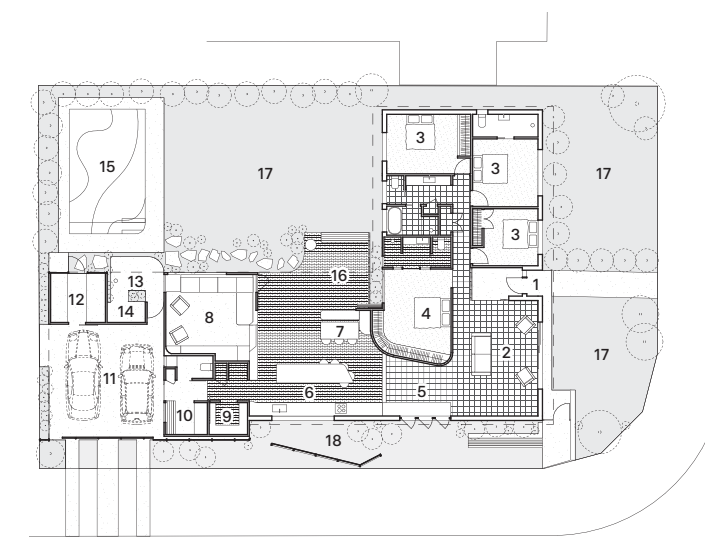
Where the kitchen once stood is now a fourth bedroom, its boundary with the lounge room defined by an elegant, curved wall. The lounge room itself has remained in place but feels significantly larger, thanks to additional sightlines through the new kitchen and the front garden; the now-vintage floor tiles have been retained in one of several decisions stemming from an economical approach to material use and a shared determination to keep the best of the original dwelling. The tiles give way to the new terracotta tiles of the kitchen floor, which in turn yield to the concrete hearth, and these materials help to delineate different zones that together form a new north-south axis in a single spatial gesture connecting the established to the novel.

Moved from the rear interior corner of the old house, the kitchen has become the home's celebrated centre. Its new location allows for long views from the lounge to



01 New living spaces are stitched into the old and adopt the scale of the existing house. Artworks (L-R): Hermia Boyd, Anita West.

02 The roofline was maintained and modified for better solar performance. Artwork: Anita West.



Floor plan 1:400

0 5m

- 1 Entry
- 2 Lounge
- 3 Bedroom
- 4 Main bedroom
- 5 Study
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Dining
- 8 Sunken living
- 9 Pantry
- 10 Laundry
- 11 Carport
- 12 Store/bikes
- 13 Outdoor shower
- 14 Drying court
- 15 Pool
- 16 Terrace
- 17 Lawn
- 18 Garden

The Cottage is built on the land of the Kombumerri and Yugambah people.



Gold Coast, Qld



Alteration + addition



4
Family



4



3
+ 1 powder room



Site 652 m²
House 210 m²
Terrace 68 m²



Design 12 m
Build 10 m

03 A sunken living room looks east toward the downsized pool.
Artwork: Anita West.

04 The plan opens up sightlines between rooms of the house, while flooring finishes signal the shift from one zone to another.



03

the carport (which doubles as an enclosed outdoor playroom) and momentary glimpses from the side street into to the backyard. The plan opens up many such sightlines within the house, and adds even more that cross the modest front yard and offer novel views into the neighbourhood. As Lizzie reflects, “All corners of the house are lived in and enjoyed, often simultaneously – someone might be cooking in the kitchen while another is playing music in the lounge; someone’s reading the paper in a sunny spot and another playing in the garden – yet we’re all connected and in view of one another.”

A striking roofline playfully binds new elements to the original structure, while the first-generation house remains ever-present in the architects’ resolution of this clever renovation and extension. The bold new roof form is more jazz than classical in its rhythms, resisting regularity as it seesaws along the edge of the side street. It uptakes the original roof tiles’ terracotta colour (shared with the kitchen and bathroom floor tiles) throughout the new works, an effective means of drawing on the best of the original 1970s house while resolving it into something entirely new. Most surfaces between the eaves and the floor plane have been rendered in white; the terracotta reads distinctively against it, inviting the different elements of the new build to cohere.

The Cottage redefines the site edges with generosity and care. A low picket fence calls out the profile of the new roof while it opens the house toward the public, and the volume retains the insistence with which the original house pressed against the boundary but trades an uncompromising rendered brick facade for a significantly more transparent treatment. It retains some of the old materiality while opening the interior to the street with a new run of windows; the surface is productively broken up by a horizontal run of shutters. The design consolidates this move with careful and promising planting that binds that same street edge to a landscape program operating across the site, elegantly spanning public, private and boundary conditions. Those windows and doors facing the public – the glazed enclosure of the lounge room, the windows facing the side street at seated eye-level – encourage interactions between the life of the family and that of the neighbourhood.

At its core, The Cottage is an essay in gentle densification. It is modest, adding new amenities to an extant and unassuming dwelling. It stands out in a city that has long favoured more muscular forms of development and repeatedly yielded to the impulse to fell older houses and make way for larger dwellings that maximize the value of each plot of land. Instead, Justin and his team have translated years of careful reflection on the part of their clients into a disarmingly simple project whose moves have been straightforward but rigorously applied. As Lizzie notes, “The house is a very intentional reflection of who we are and how we live, so there’s such an ease and joy in how we occupy the space.” ©

Products

Roofing: Lysaght Custom Orb in Zincalume

External walls: James Hardie fibre cement sheet in Dulux ‘Grey Pebble Quarter’ and ‘Very Terracotta’; new and existing brickwork in Dulux ‘Grey Pebble Quarter’ and wet dash render

Internal walls: Plasterboard, roof structure and brickwork painted in Dulux ‘Natural White’

Windows and doors: Timber window frames and sliding doors by Timberware painted in Dulux ‘Natural White’

Flooring: Matt-finish terracotta tiles from The Tile Mob; polished concrete in matt finish

Lighting: Sava White plaster wall light, Pele adjustable ceiling spot and Bundle 1 pendant by About Space; Slimline linear pendant by Lighting Collective

Kitchen: Bosch appliances; Eden square mixer from ABI Interiors; Laminex cabinetry in ‘Absolute Matt White’; Navurban cabinetry in ‘Box Wood’

Bathroom: Plimepaplika tiles from Academy Tiles in ‘Matt White’; matt-finish terracotta tiles from The Tile Mob; Elysian tapware from ABI Interiors in ‘Brushed Nickel’; rectangular basin from Stonebaths

External elements: Reinstated original crazy-pave stones



04



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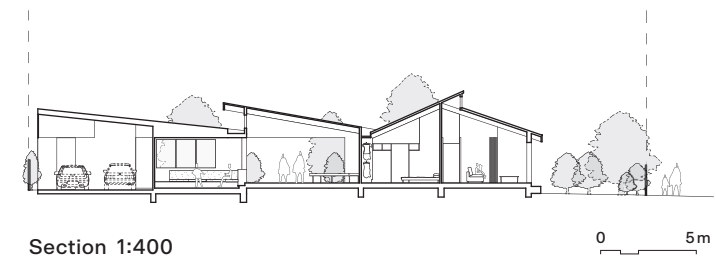
05 Terracotta tones recur throughout the design in tribute to the 1970s brick-and-tile house.

06 A partition wall between the main bedroom and ensuite does not obstruct the pitched roof.

07 Landscape and screens manage privacy on the corner block, while permitting views between house and street.



06



Section 1:400

0 5m

Architect
Justin Humphrey Architects
+61 7 5572 1273
hello@justin Humphrey Architects.com
justin Humphrey Architects.com

Project team Justin
Humphrey, Jacob Hough
Builder Minarco Engineer
Engineered Landscape archi-
tects Second State Design