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# THREE- DIMENSIONAL LIVING

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Instead of building in beneath this classic 1890s Queenlander, Shaun Lockyer Architects have orchestrated superb interactions with Brisbane's subtropical climate, forging a building that enriches occupation no matter what the season.





Architect's  
Statement

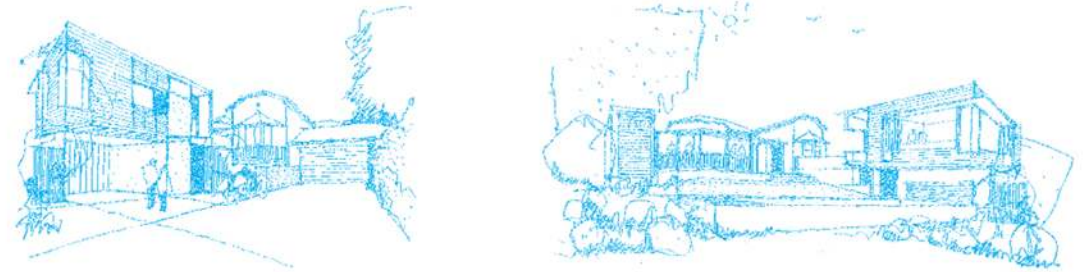
In January 2010, Shaun Lockyer Architects were commissioned to do a 'traditional' build-in-under for a grand 1890s Queenslander house, which had already undergone substantial renovations, as the building, while in great condition, ignored the site attributes and did not adequately address the needs of contemporary subtropical living. Instead of that strategy, however, three distinct 'pods' were added, allowing the house to be re-programmed while leaving the 'history' alone.

The architecture is sympathetic to the interest the client has in continuity rather than distinction, and materials are consistent throughout old and new, allowing the legibility of the juxtaposition to come across in form rather than materials. The distinction between the two is made clear, while also allowing for harmonious dialogue.

Spaces that were dark and under-utilised become warm and engaging, as the pods allow

for appropriate consideration of light, air and transition. Internally, the removal of post-war additions also allows traditional spaces to be reinvigorated so that the centre of gravity remains within the original cottage. A simple but warm palette of weatherboards and new hardwood shiplap cladding creates a historically sensitive approach while responding to contemporary aspirations.

The outcome delivers on many levels, and is a reflection of an enormous leap of faith by the clients, who were clearly uncertain about the initial approach. The final result not only surpassed their expectations, but also offered a degree of freedom about how the house can be used in the future, and, for the architects, a sense of joy and craft within the design.





03



04

**Review:**  
Clayfield House

In a wide, tree-lined street in the Brisbane suburb of Clayfield, this rambling 1890s home sits on a large lot. Searching for it, however, reveals little evidence of its existence, not even a number on the driveway. The home has been jostled to the remnant southeastern quadrant by previous subdivisions, and is now landlocked by an assortment of residential styles, including mock Tudor and 1990s excess. The new owners approached Shaun Lockyer Architects with the preconceived idea of raising the house and building in beneath to make more space – because that’s the default stroke when you want to improve and enlarge the typical ‘Queenslander’ house. Already close to the property boundaries, this course of action would have necessitated a lengthy and costly planning application to seek relaxations on setbacks, resulting in a further disconnection in the relationship between the house and what remains of its surrounding open space.

The architects took an alternative strategy. By concentrating on the existing house’s inherent spatial and material qualities, and fully exploiting the site, the possibility for better performance and comfortable living has been dramatically increased. While earlier additions had made the interior space poorly lit and cramped, the existing building has largely been upgraded and today functions exceptionally well, benefiting from orchestrated interactions with sun, shade, breeze and views, so that the interior now floods with natural light. Instead of being raised, the house has been extended into the lot and into the environment. There is now a bathing pavilion off the bedroom wing on the east; a new living room

and covered outdoor room on the south; and an enclosable, entertaining deck thrusting out to the north, reclaiming the view of the coastal plain down to Moreton Bay.

Set on the brow of the hill, the land comes up to meet the house, sitting within reach of the garden rather than above it. The original garage becomes a workshop and the alternative carport, which would have occupied the site’s best position, is now tucked beneath the entertainment space beside the new swimming pool. The entry sequence takes us under the walkway, which links the original house and the new pavilion, and up half a flight of stairs to a new porch. On the threshold of the house proper, the veranda eaves, in counterpoint to the high-ceilinged interior, come down low over the fully glazed entrance lobby.

Due to the availability and vast range of choice, contemporary houses often use an overly complicated materials palette. Here, the materials that were available in the 1890s when the house was originally constructed – timber weatherboards, vee-jointed timber wall lining and hoop pine flooring – continue to have relevance and integrity, but the new additions are complemented by hardwood shiplap cladding and spotted gum decking, and the new ancillary spaces are arranged around the original core, linking to the house seamlessly, without breaking the integrity of the original hipped-and-ridged roofline. Functionally, aesthetically, spatially and materially, the ease with which the new additions supplement the original house belies the fact that they do not set out to replicate the late 19th century idiom in style or form.

By concentrating on inherent spatial and material qualities, the possibility for better performance and comfortable living has dramatically increased.

01. Openings admit light where and as needed.

02. New ancillary spaces connect seamlessly to the original house.



05

03. Rather than seal and air-condition the new volume, passive and low impact systems capture breezes and cool the interior.

04. Although close to neighbours, the house boasts privacy with an open feel.

05. The alternative carport, which under an earlier proposal would have occupied the site’s best position, is now tucked beneath the entertainment space beside the new swimming pool.



06

06.  
Light and shade makes the most of both natural and aesthetic environments.

07.  
Materials used in the new additions supplement the integrity of the original.

The archetypal timber-and-tin Queenslander house is often criticised for being dark inside, with poor thermal properties – cold in winter, hot in summer. Not this one. Unlike surrounding properties, it does not ignore the advantages of the subtropical climate, and the environmental effect on the architecture is palpable. Despite proximity to neighbours, the house is very private yet has a feeling of openness. Masonry walls extend into the site laterally to shade windows from the angle of the sun, a strategy that also frames foreground views and mediates between the external environment and the spaces within. Openings are deftly handled in scale, location and adaptability to admit light where and as needed.

At the same time, the architecture pays due respect to the sometimes high-intensity rainfall, with deep eaves on the original house and hoods folding and wrapping into the form of the new extensions. Brisbane's natural environment is mostly congenial, a fusion between tropical exuberance and temperate restraint, like the house itself, which enriches the experience of subtropical living. Light fills the home in winter, eliminating the need for artificial lighting during the day. And there is light, indirectly, in summer, although it doesn't bring the heat in with it.

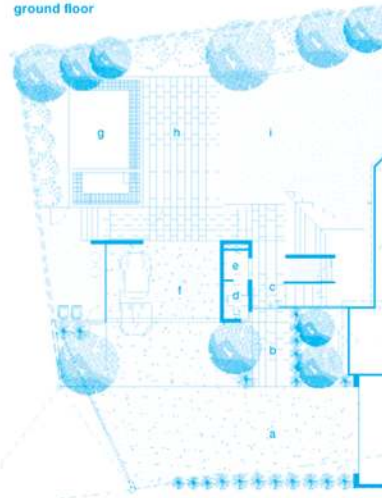
By avoiding the impulse to raise the house, the architects have achieved notable success. They have allowed the owners to enjoy the property on both a functional and an experiential level. At the same time, through deliberate juxtaposition of space and mass, void and solid, they have enacted classic architectural principles: a play of light and shadow on three-dimensional form, not only externally, but internally as well. **ar**

*Rosemary Kennedy is the director of the Centre for Subtropical Design and senior lecturer in architecture in the School of Design at QUT.*

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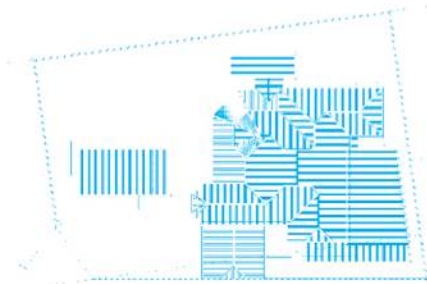


ground floor



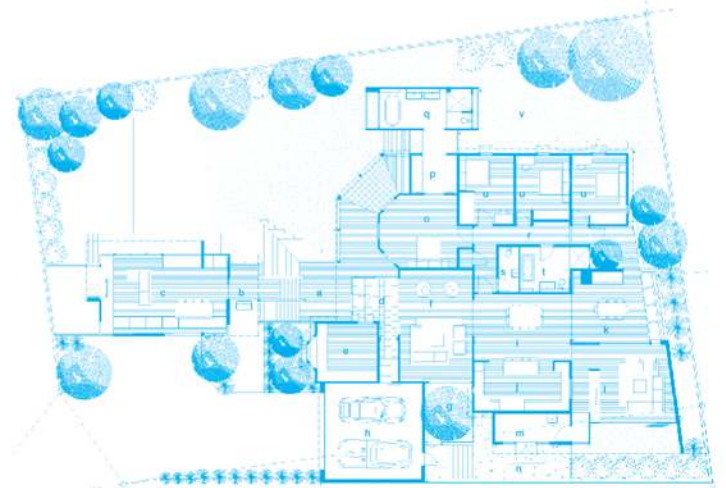
a. driveway / b. entry / c. stairs / d. powder room / e. pool shower / f. double carport / g. pool and spa / h. pool court / i. garden

roof plan



first floor

a. front veranda / b. bbq deck / c. pool pavilion / d. main entry / e. study / f. formal living / g. courtyard / h. double garage / i. dining room / j. kitchen / k. outdoor living / l. living room / m. laundry / n. drying court / o. master bedroom / p. WIR / q. ensuite / r. hallway / s. powder room / t. bathroom / u. bedroom / v. backyard



07

ARCHITECT: Shaun Lockyer Architects — project team Shaun Lockyer, Lucy Hyndman, Jen Lambkin, Richard Pain, Corinne Bolton — project manager Shaun Lockyer Architects — CONSULTANTS: project consultants John Gaskell Town Planning, BCG Certifiers — structural and civil engineer Mordue Engineering — structural engineer Westera Partners — builder BR Wales Pty Ltd — Sub-contractors Allkind Joinery (doors and windows), Blaze Cabinets, Eco Outdoor (tiling) — size Site 1100 m<sup>2</sup>, house 450 m<sup>2</sup> — time to complete Design and documentation – 4 months; construction – 11 months — council Brisbane City Council — design software used AutoCAD — MATERIALS: walls Pine weatherboard, spotted gum shiplap — wall linings Gyprock, pine VJ, spotted gum shiplap — cladding Painted cladding, timber cladding — roof Lysaght Longline 305 metal roof — guttering Zinalume half round gutters, custom flashings and spiral duct downpipes — paint Dulux low sheen paint — paving Eco Outdoor exterior paving — gazing Glass louvers and frameless Shugg windows — hardware Centor — ceiling Plaster, Dulux flat finish pain — internal walls Plaster, existing and new VJs and teak internal cladding, wall and floor tiles — flooring Timber flooring to match existing — surfaces Indian Jet Black Granite, Nero Marquina Marble, Black gloss finger mosaics — joinery Natural white 2pac, fossil laminate, parchment laminate, EvenRaven timber veneer.