

architecture

# Lantern House

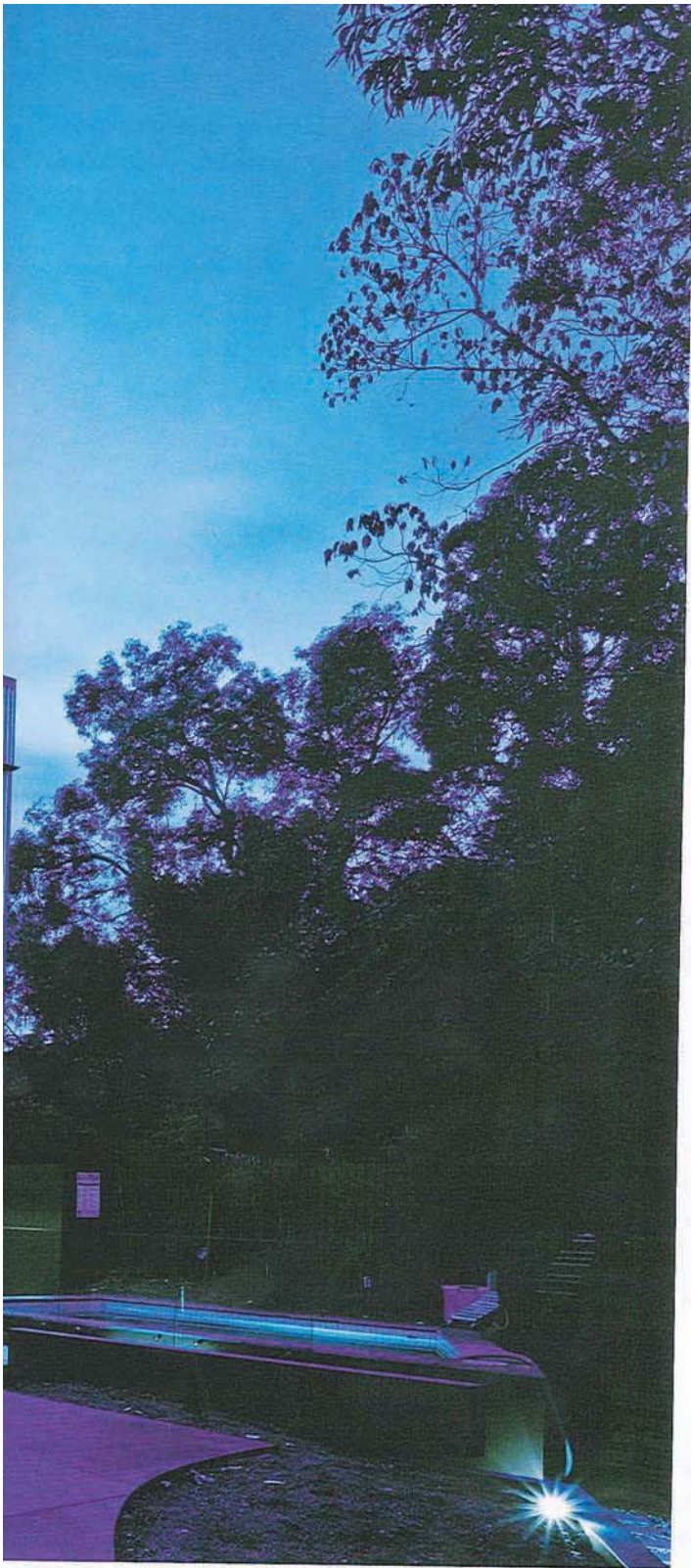
location: Queensland, Australia  
architect: Shaun Lockyer of Arkhefield  
photography: Aperture Photography



THIS NEW HOME WAS BUILT ON A 600M<sup>2</sup> VACANT SITE BORDERING ONTO NATURAL BUSH AND MEASURES 350M<sup>2</sup> OF TOTAL BUILT AREA. FROM THE OUTSET, THE PREREQUISITE WAS TO DESIGN A CONTEMPORARY HOUSE FULL OF LIGHT AND AIR; THAT WOULD BE COMFORTABLE YEAR-ROUND. ►

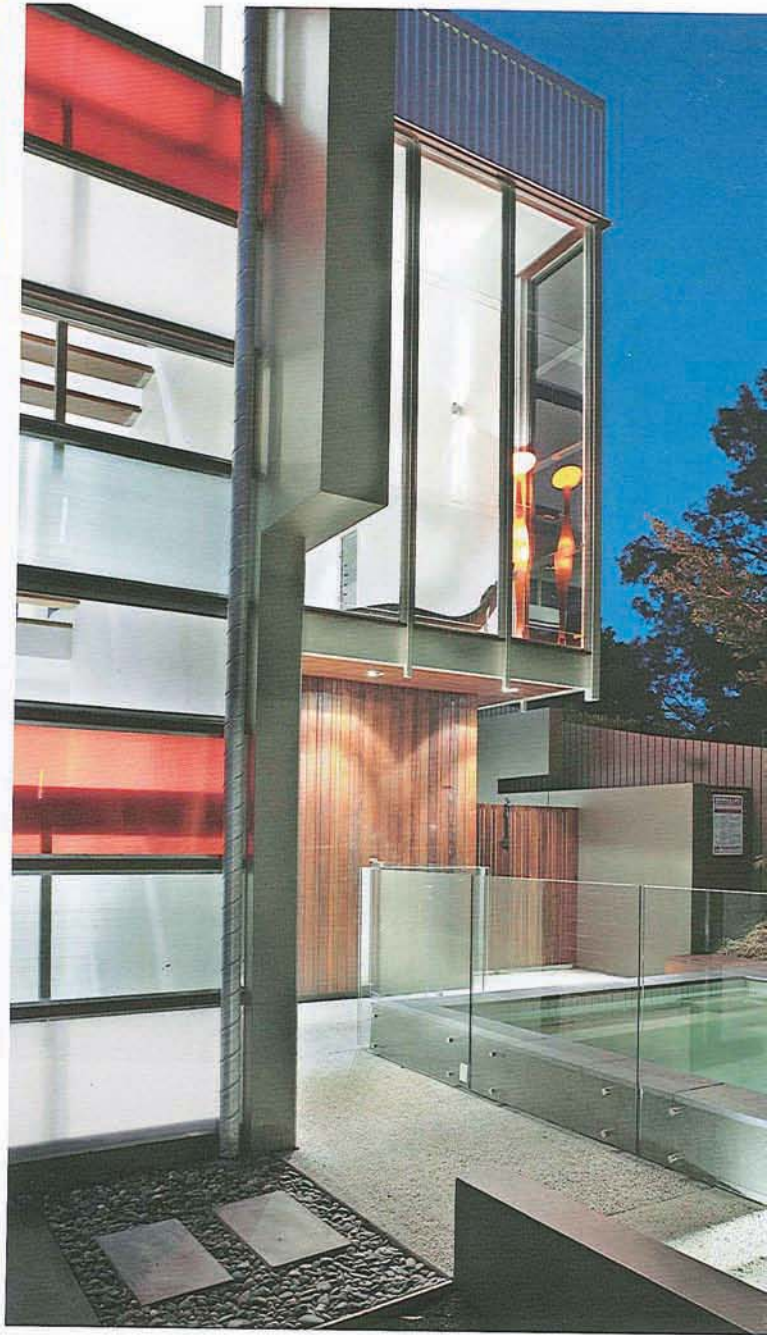


These clients were unspecific on theme or style and instead wanted the architects to use their best judgment and understanding in this regard. They expressed a love of gardening and the southerly view of the bush, both of which were to be incorporated into the design. The programme itself was modest: this was to be a three-bedroom house with small ancillary spaces for office and media. A swimming pool was later added to the brief and this allowed for a cool, tropical setting in the bush where the owners could escape the high summer heat.



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*The basis of the concept was to build an animated pavilion that would hang out of the landscape. The experience of the space by day and night varies materially, which heightens the living experience.*



An early sketch outlined the 'lantern concept', a design that would maximise southerly views while taking advantage of a northerly aspect. The design was borne out of the section which anchors itself into the land and then elevates itself to soak up northern sun through a series of devices. This manifests in a perched metal pavilion to the street and a grounded element to the rear.

The transparency of the house accommodates a seemingly ambiguous planning strategy, where winter and summer spaces can migrate to follow the more comfortable areas within the house, through the changing seasons. ►



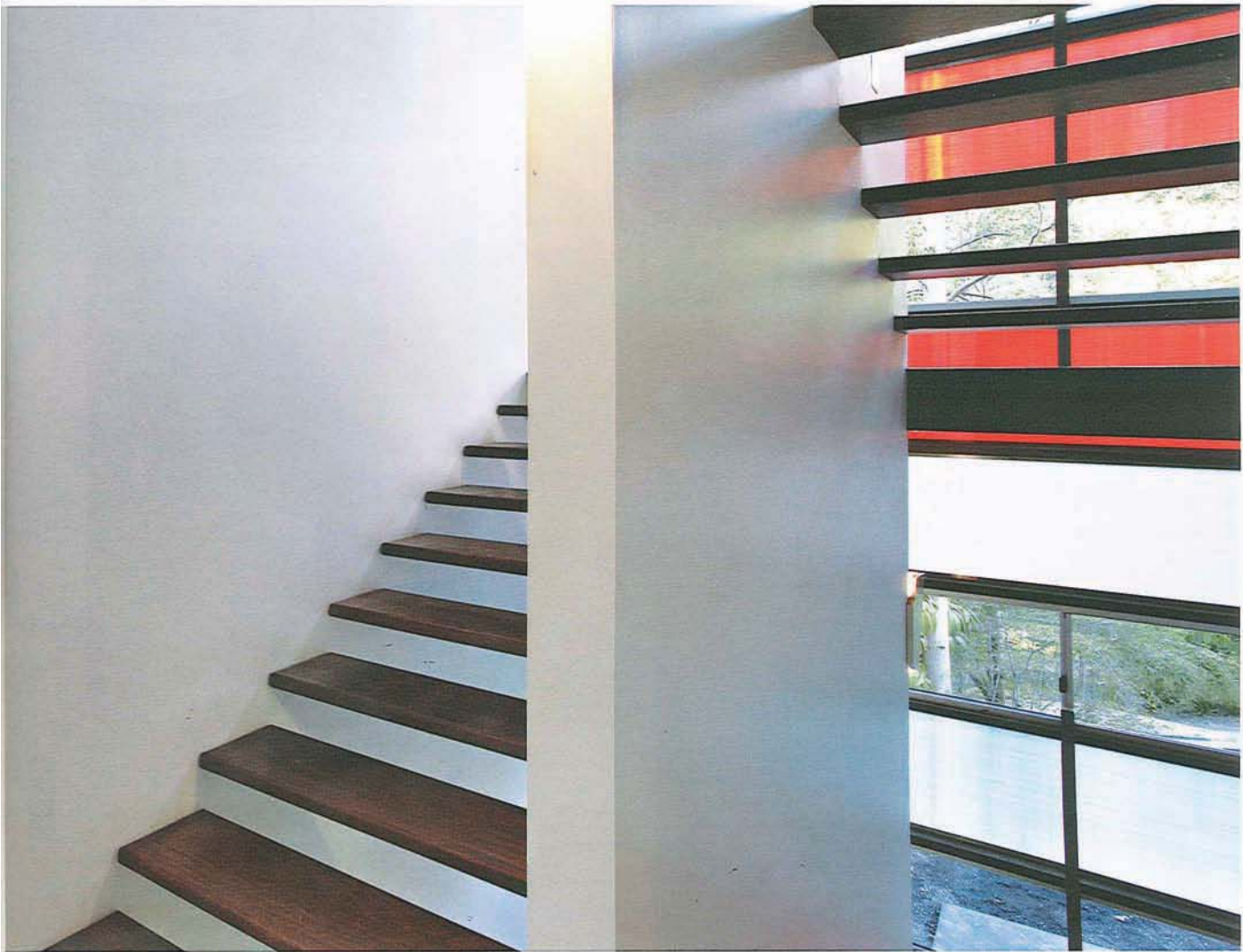
A northerly courtyard bunkers into a landscaped wall and facilitates privacy, intimacy and connection with the ground. The southerly street-facing façade is constantly changing and informs the street about the life within the house.

Says the architect: 'Engaging with the bush views to the south, while enjoying north aspect, was the challenge in this design. The development of the section is manifest in the planning of space and use on the site. This principal informed the idea of the 'perched pavilion', which cantilevers over a heavy masonry base anchored into the site. The primary arrangement of space is vertical and linear, articulated by a service spine that runs east west on the house. This defines the various uses within the structure and is expressed in the selection of material: largely metal sheet.'

As opposed to touching the earth lightly, this house hugs the site in a deliberate strategy to maximise the south garden and aspect to the bush. To the rear, it cuts into the site creating an 'introverted' space, while the street façade presents as an 'extroverted' space. The architecture is deliberately non-domestic

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*The architecture is unpredictable and looks to subvert the suburban paradigm through its expression. This attitude has challenged the clients and allowed them to live in a new lighter, more open way that has proven to be liberating. The use of colour is manifest and reflects the clients' acceptance of 'inbuilt art' as part of the overall design.*



to challenge the postwar / brick veneer vernacular that has long been pervasive in Australian suburbia.

The structure is arranged with ancillary spaces anchored into the ground, living areas punching through the house (north / south) and bedrooms looking south toward the bush, while enjoying the best solar orientation. The main bedroom occupies the 'loft' space and enjoys the north / south relationship.

Colour is typically linked to a material, so that the clarity and purpose of each element is reinforced. The palette is muted and deliberately natural so that the timber, stone and other elements can dominate. The overall limitation of colour allows for the expressive use of red in the stair wall and tiling to delineate the entrance and guide visitors into the house. The neutral palette of the primary spaces helps to allow the light and volume to dominate and the timber detailing to be revealed. Even the kitchen units are restrained in tone and succeed in occupying space in the living area with subtlety.

The anchored / grounded portion of the building is of masonry construction ▶



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*The idea of the house as a lantern is the primary narrative in the design but other details in the house distinguish it from the commonplace such as: entry 'lantern' staircase: built in seats and daybeds and purpose-designed lighting and door handles.*

and is recessed under the building. A series of masonry blades holds the lightweight components above and expresses the junction with the animated polycarbonate screen. A combination of timber, glass and aluminium serves to further articulate and reinforce the respective material relationships throughout the house.

The architect adds: 'The joy of this building is revealed in the crafting of timber, both internally and externally, where concepts are carried through from the bin enclosure to the door handles, through light fittings down to towel rails. This idea intrigues us and works its way into the junctions of materials throughout the house. The 'stitched' junction of the kitchen bench and the 'crow's nest' - outside the main bedroom - are perhaps the best examples in this regard.' ■