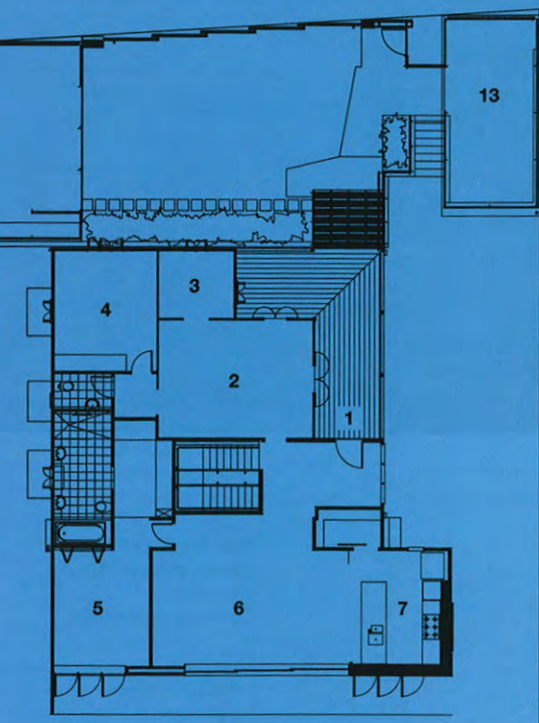
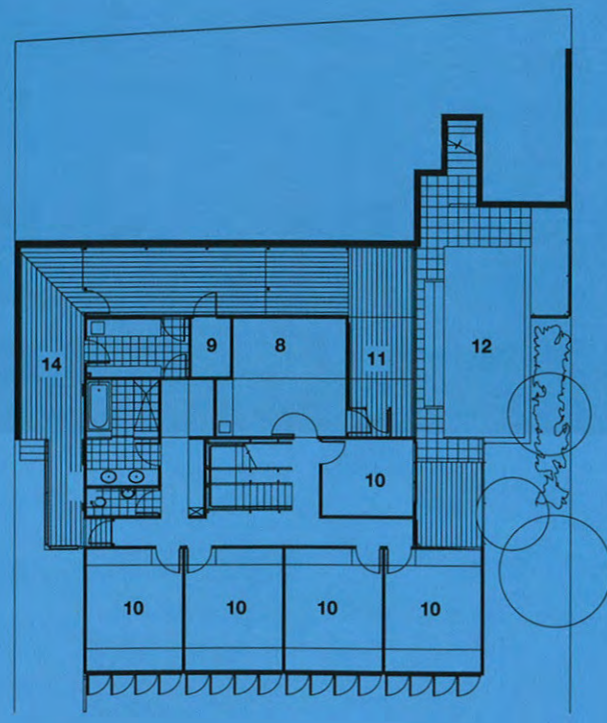


Spatial mutability

Richard Kirk Architects reinterpreted the notion of the deck in this addition to an old Queenslander. The result is a generous and versatile living space that collapses the distinction between interior and exterior.



Upper level



Lower level

- 1 Entry
- 2 Living
- 3 Study
- 4 Guest room
- 5 Main bedroom
- 6 Family
- 7 Kitchen
- 8 Media
- 9 Store
- 10 Bedroom
- 11 Deck
- 12 Pool
- 13 Carport
- 14 Drying deck





ARCHITECT RICHARD KIRK'S INSPIRED RENOVATION of a 1920s timber Queenslander presents a major reinterpretation of the typical rear deck addition. Kirk eschews the making of discrete indoor and outdoor living spaces because, as he explains, "such a strategy ends up duplicating living spaces unnecessarily". Instead, his design presents the rear deck addition as a single grand living volume, generous enough to combine a languid exterior openness with a sensual yet practical interior.

The site for the project is located on a prominent ridge in inner city Brisbane with a stunning outlook from front and back. From the front the views are to the north over the street toward the next city ridge while from the rear, perched high above the steeply sloping site, views are over a verdant gully towards the Brisbane River winding some distance below. The existing timber house on the site had been subjected to various additions over time and an initial decision was made to strip the house back to its original form as a means to restore character back to the street. This sense of character is extended through the orchestration of the front yard spaces with their timber elements and two car accommodation structures. The two car structures play the main role, creating "bookends" to the street frontage and framing the original house and a square of lawn (now used for front yard cricket). This arrangement has the further advantage of creating privacy from the neighbours and minimising visual impact on the street edge. The relative openness and transparency to the street, achieved through a set of timber screens, came largely at the behest of the clients who were keen to participate in the local milieu where previously blocked out by a solid rendered wall.

The brief called for a large family home containing a range of diverse spaces with opportunities for independent access and living spaces for teenaged children. Independent access is provided through a deftly handled sequence of entry spaces which contain related but split routes – one to the front door via a new stair and verandah edge, and the other down half a level past a pool terrace to a family room entry. Both routes enable a successful transition to entries that are positioned relatively deep in the site so that, in organisational terms, one arrives at the centre of the house rather than edge. This has the advantage of making the distribution of spaces in the house simpler while also allowing a seamless movement from street-side to the new living volume at the rear.

The living volume is undoubtedly the major set piece of the renovation, dramatically framing the view to the south through a huge triple sash window (which has elements that completely slide away into the depth of the wall). Here interior converts to deck, and back again, as desired. The living area is further animated through a clever sectional strategy whereby light and

PREVIOUS PAGES: View of the rear elevation, showing the row of pivot windows along the bedroom wing. **THESE PAGES, OPPOSITE:** A delicate arrangement of timber elements affords the stair a sense of enclosure. **ABOVE:** Glazing slides away to convert the living area into a deck.

breezes are drawn into the space from the north, over the top of the existing house. This climatic access is achieved above a low bulkhead that frames the living volume on the entry side. The bulkhead is positioned so as to create a deliberate compression of space that then releases out into the main volume and toward the view beyond. At the eastern end of the living volume is a simple open kitchen, positioned to take advantage of the stunning distant views as well the intimate vistas closer to home – over the pool terrace and back to the street and entry gate.

The key connecting space of the house is a centrally positioned stair that acts as a counter-volume to the open living space. The stair has a distinctive room-like quality with its array of timber posts and balustrades evoking a sense of delicate tracery and enclosure as one moves from level to level. The stair connects to the downstairs which functions like a dormitory level or children's realm with its own living space and facilities including a kitchenette. The bedrooms, which are oriented towards the south, complete the spaces of the new addition and are nestled neatly under the living area and main bedroom above.

The new addition melds easily with the rooms of the original house, which include a study, guest bedroom, and a formal living space that connects back to the verandah with views to the street. The original rooms and their trims are painted white, allowing the new and old parts of the house to fuse together in a seamless whole.

In terms of construction, the addition is of conventional steel framing with timber frame infill. The original house was moved back from the street frontage and repositioned with the rectangular box addition placed laterally at the rear. Packing the addition against the original house as economically as possible keeps its built form from straying too far out over the steeply sloping site (a situation that would have created greater problems in construction). Material finishes play an important aesthetic role as well as ensuring ease of maintenance. The exterior is a combination of zinc sheet and untreated white beech cladding. Both materials will develop a patina over time, softening the appearance of the form to shades of pale silver. According to the architect, these tones will eventually settle the built form against the landscape and the house will effectively recede into its surrounds, as a mute backdrop to the enfolding play of foliage and light.

Richard Kirk has created a renovation that is full of clever ideas about siting, organisation, and spatial arrangement and yet the whole is not overly complex as a result. Instead the house is flexible and easy-to-use, coming together in a concise and deceptively simple form – a form that graciously allows the drama of the site and its experience to dominate. **AM**



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PRACTICE PROFILE
The practice undertakes a range of projects from single and multi residential, to institutional and commercial work.

PROJECT TEAM
Richard Kirk, Anne Bach,
Rob Vider, Richard Coulson

BUILDER
Peace Renovations

CONSULTANTS
Engineer TOD Group
Landscaping Richard Kirk
Architects
Interiors, lighting
Richard Kirk Architects

PRODUCTS
Roofing Colorbond Stramit
Hi-Ten External walls Zincalume
Minior 6; Australian white beech
vertical t & g cladding; face block
in 'Charcoal' Internal walls
Plasterboard, painted Dulux
Wash 'n Wear Windows Amora
timber frames Doors Internal –
solid core rotary cut hoop pine
veneer; solid hoop pine jambs;
external – solid Amora frames
and jambs Flooring Blackbutt,
secret nailed, t & g Kitchen
Grohe tapware; ss benchtops
and sinks; Queensland maple
veneer to cabinets Bathroom
Solid amora benchtop;
Queensland maple veneer;
Villeroy and Boch sanitaryware;
Grohe tapware External
elements Surfaces are charcoal
oxide additive concrete

TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation
12 months
Construction 9 months

PHOTOGRAPHY
Jon Linkins

OPPOSITE PAGE, FAR LEFT:
A wide upper level deck
overlooks the pool at the
side of the property. **LEFT:**
A front entrance detail.
THIS PAGE: This detail of the
east elevation shows the
intriguing combination of
cladding materials.