



FACT FILE

THE BRIEF

Bring light into a 1940s double brick cottage

THE BUILDER

Stuart Wilson Construction

THE ARCHITECT

Melanie Bayl-Smith



FAVOURITE FEATURE

Spacious deck for dining at rear

WINTER WARM...
SUMMER COOL

Skylights to capture the sun's rays and louvre windows to snare the breezes have turned this 60-year-old residence into a modern masterpiece

Some properties are all about the house but in this case, the generously-sized leafy 840sq m block was what first attracted the owners' interest. The building itself was a nondescript, post WWII, double-brick cottage, similar to every other house on the Chatswood street. However, its offering of a quiet and gradual sloping back yard was what sealed the deal. Having established a reputation in the North Shore area, the team of architect Melanie Bayl-Smith and builder Stuart Wilson was approached, making fast work of creating a design that would bring the bushland setting inside. Despite a basic facelift in 1994 when the owners moved in, the cottage received little natural light and as a result was chilly in winter.

Solid investment

"It was an old rabbit warren out the back," says Stuart. "The owners wanted it reconfigured so they could have a dedicated guest bedroom and bathroom downstairs and an open-plan living and kitchen area overlooking the backyard." In addition, the faded green-and-yellow exterior was updated, a 10,000-litre rain water tank was

installed and the expansive garden was landscaped. With older-style houses you never know what's in store, and early in the project this rang true. "We demolished the rear and began excavating to create the downstairs guest area," says Stuart. "Our biggest problem was the footings were made from bricks rather than cement. A fair amount of structural underpinning was required before work could commence." With the underpinning complete, work began on the front of the house. A synthetic texture coat was applied to the existing render at the front and cement render was applied to the existing brickwork. Existing vertical panels to the front of the house were removed and replaced with cedar panelling. To create a centralised walkway through the middle of the house, the entrance and hallway were shifted to the left.

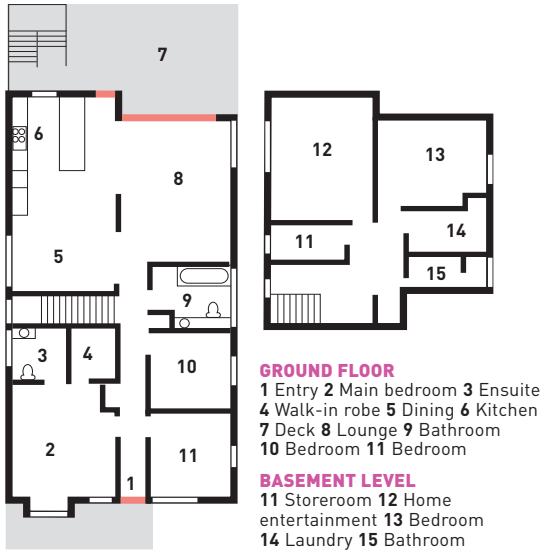
The garage, an agreeable feature with Willoughby Council, was demolished to open up the window in the front second bedroom. "We reconfigured the front of the house," says Stuart. "We changed the old lounge →

SMART IDEA

Positioning the kitchen within easy access to the deck allows the cook to chat with guests while preparing food



A The front of the house has had a synthetic texture applied to the existing render B The streamlined kitchen



MORE INFORMATION Liquid Architecture 9958 7950, liquidarchitecture.com.au
Stuart Wilson Construction 0412 559 777

PHOTOS JOHN FOTIADIS

home checklist

Design

☐ page checked by Kerrie

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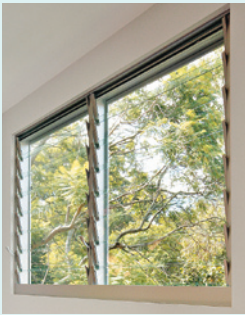
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GET THE LOOK

BUSH SETTING

For cross-flow ventilation and visual access to the greenery outside, louvre windows from Vision 3 were used in the project. Once a security problem, today's louvre windows are both aesthetically pleasing and safe. Vision 3 specialises in glass windows and doors, POA.

MORE INFORMATION Vision 3, 9905 9700, vision3windows.com.au



A Dining, lounge and kitchen area open up on to the generously-sized deck **B** Frieze of mosaic tiles colours the bathroom **C** Skylights were used throughout the house **D** The deck offers greater entertaining potential



MAGIC MOSAICS

In the main bathroom, a frieze of mosaic tiles was used to bring colour into the room. Alternatively, cover an entire wall in mosaic tiles; the change in texture will create an interesting effect. Gregorio Polished Mosaic from Amber comes in sheets so it's easy to lay. Available from \$25 per 15cm x 155cm sheets.

MORE INFORMATION Amber Tiles, ambertiles.com.au

SHINY AND BLUE

Neutral walls and finishes can be brightened up by introducing boldly coloured homewares. In this project a blue glass vase sits near the stairwell, catching the afternoon sunlight. Superfin is a new Ikea range of tinted glass vases. At \$2.95 a vase, why not buy a few and group them together for visual effect.

MORE INFORMATION ikea.com.au



room into the main bedroom and we added an ensuite and walk-in robe.”
The standout feature of the renovation is the rear dining, lounge and kitchen area, which opens out on to a spacious deck.
“Bi-fold doors open up to bring the outdoor living space in,” says Stuart. “The deck is made from Stringybark. It’s designed to be big enough for entertaining. The idea is that you can sit out there and enjoy the view of the garden and still be close to the kitchen and other facilities.”

“The owners love cooking. They wanted to be able to chat to guests while preparing food”

Keen entertainers, the owners dictated that the design include a top-notch kitchen within easy access of the deck, and provision to keep an eye on children playing outside.
“The owners love cooking. They wanted to be able to chat to guests while preparing food,” says Stuart.
“They wanted a very neutral and slimline kitchen, with its central location. They didn’t want anything dominant in the open-plan room.”
So off-white CaesarStone benchtops were teamed with neutral cupboards and the same off-white splashback. A red stove-top kettle adds a splash of colour.

Artistic flair

To the rear of the kitchen is the internal stairway, which provides access to the lower level guest and home entertainment area. Stuart suggested cutting into the wall to create a rectangular feature section.
“It’s a nice modern feature. I thought it would open the area right up,” says Stuart. “The back wall is going to be painted a plum colour, so there will be a nice contrast between the two. It will be like a work of art.”
To create an energy-efficient building, skylights were installed throughout to bring the sunshine inside and louvre windows allow for effective cross-flow ventilation. For the winter months a gas heater was installed in the lounge.
“The owners didn’t want airconditioning or floor heating,” says Stuart. “They’re hoping our design will provide them with enough breeze.”
With just a few finishing touches to go, including installing the light fittings and changing the colour of the lounge room feature wall, the owners have well and truly settled in with much appreciation of the new leafy aspect ■

JENNY RINGLAND

Have you renovated your house?
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