

HOUSES®

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THE LATEST LIGHTS
COOL INNER-CITY PADS



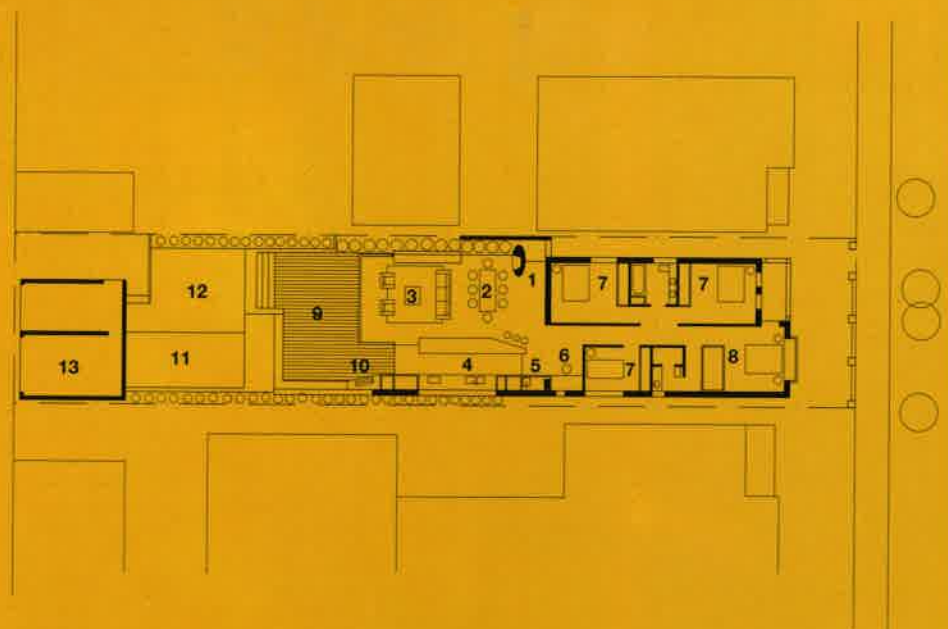
BKK ARCHITECTS IN PROFILE

ON THE FARM **Heffernan Button Voss** CLASSICS REVIVED **Buro, Hicks**
REMOTE RETREAT **SODAA** EXTENSIONS **Tribe Studio, WHACC, Toscano, Ivanov**
TIGHT SITES **Chaney, Anderson** BOLD NEW HOUSES **Kerr, Arkhefield**



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02



0 5 10 m

- 1 Entry
- 2 Dining
- 3 Living
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Laundry
- 6 Study
- 7 Bedroom
- 8 Main bedroom
- 9 Deck
- 10 Barbecue
- 11 Pool
- 12 Lawn
- 13 Garage

defying gravity

A gracefully cantilevered concrete ceiling plane dominates the addition and alteration by architect Vladimir Ivanov of this Sydney bungalow.



ARCHITECT VLADIMIR IVANOV has extensively reworked a small Federation bungalow in a conservation area in Randwick in Sydney's east. This pocket of the suburb is slowly but surely undergoing a metamorphosis – the demand for more space by families wishing to live close to the city and the beach has led to a significant change to the scale and character of the area. Where the streets were once dominated by single-storey red brick houses, there is a growing number of “contextual” attic conversions and second-storey additions.

This approach has resulted in new works with pitched roofs and tiles and the occasional reference to detail. In general, these “contextual” copies lack the material qualities and refinement of detail of their predecessors and often play games with materials – paint and render in streets of face brick. While not trying to promote a literal historicist approach, it would seem that if the key characteristics of a place are scale and materiality, these would be the most important things to conserve in terms of urban context. A considered approach to new work would be to maintain them, and this is precisely the approach taken by the architect for this project.

Vlad says that his contribution was “hardly rocket science”. His strategy was simply to maintain a single level throughout, to refurbish the material and detail of the original bungalow at the front of the property, including reconstructing a bay window in the master bedroom, and to build a new, contemporary pavilion at the rear. The pavilion opens to the north, connecting a large living/dining/kitchen space to the garden and pool. All very simple and, perhaps, if that was all there was to the project, it would not be worthy of further note.

The new work is barely visible from the street. A tall, curved, white wall denotes the entry from a landscaped side passage. Entering through a three-metre-high pivot door, you are immediately aware of the continuous concrete plane that forms the ceiling of the pavilion space. There is an exciting discomfort in the relationship between the perceived mass of the concrete form and the apparent lack of structure beneath it. To the east, a long, low window hovers between a joinery unit and a suspended wall plane. The abstract composition of solid and glazed elements makes it difficult to locate the structure – that is, of course, if you care about these things; perhaps it's more exiting to let yourself think this edge is supported by magic.

The kitchen dominates the western wall of the space. It is raised up a single step to delineate it from the remainder of the open-plan volume, making the act of cooking a kind of show. Pink overhead cupboards seem to float between two long slot windows and other white joinery elements in another gravity-defying feat. (In fact, there is a large steel beam and bracing concealed within the unit itself.)

During our visit Vlad points out what he perceives as flaws in the

concrete – a few stains, the odd blowhole – however, these are inherent characteristics of the material. It is the interplay between the robust, almost imperfect qualities of the ceiling plane and the refined nature of the timber floors and polyurethane joinery that gives the space its character. A series of narrow skylights are sliced through the roof plane. At first they appear random, but each has been located to accentuate a particular point within the overall composition of the volume. They allow shafts of light deep into the plan, creating a bold graphic that plots the course of the day. The concrete form helps to maintain a stable thermal environment. The clients moved in on a January day, when it reached well over 45 degrees in Sydney, and they have commented that there was a significant differential in temperature between the interior and the exterior.

A generous eave cantilevers and slopes gently to the north to provide shade in summer, but is proportioned to allow winter sun to penetrate deep into the space. With a 3.2-metre ceiling height, the entire volume of the rear pavilion feels well connected to the garden and pool beyond. The rear of the house takes on the qualities of a giant verandah.

The original structure of the front rooms of the house has been retained. Externally the original house has been meticulously restored. The bay window in the master bedroom had been removed by a previous owner; it has been rebuilt reusing original bricks. Two near-identical children's bedrooms straddle a shared bathroom, and each has been customized by the bold colours of the wardrobes – green for boys, pink for girls. The parents' room is more “mature”, with a freestanding stained timber wardrobe separating the ensuite from the sleeping area. What was originally intended to be a study is now a baby's bedroom – not everything goes to plan. The study is now accommodated in a corner of the main pavilion.

The work has clear Corbusian traits, combining the concrete qualities of Ronchamp and La Tourette with the abstract facade composition of Villa La Roche and Villa Stein. It is somewhat ironic to think that Le Corbusier was beginning his experiments with Modernism around the same time the original dwelling was being designed and built. Taking an abstract view of the project you might argue that it has truly meshed the architectural genres of the era. It could be considered simultaneously modern, Modernist and contemporary.

Context goes beyond urban fabric. It deals with other important issues such as climate and culture. Therefore a successful project is one that deals well with the complex relationship between these issues without resorting to a formulaic approach – each place has its own nuance. In this case, Vlad has successfully combined the authenticity of the streetscape with the clarity of new components in a dwelling that has an excellent relationship to the landscape. **JOHN DE MANINCOR**



PREVIOUS PAGES: The kitchen, raised from the floor plane on a platform, adds a sense of performance to the act of preparing meals. THIS PAGE: A continuous concrete plane cantilevers over extensive glazing at the rear of the house.

INNER-CITY LIVING IN FOCUS



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PRACTICE PROFILE
One-person practice specializing
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PROJECT TEAM
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Paul King

CONSULTANTS
Engineer
Partridge Partners
Landscaping
Peter Fudge Gardens
Interiors, lighting Vladimir Ivanov

PRODUCTS
Roofing Off-form concrete
External walls Recycled bricks
Internal walls Solid brick walls;
hard-set plaster **Windows** Capral
899 series aluminium-framed
windows; Breezaway louvre
windows **Doors** Capral 899
series aluminium sliding and pivot
doors; solid-core doors; Dorma
pivot system **Flooring** Hardwood
1&g floorboards; Telford carpet
Lighting Spotted Tiger pendants;
Euroluce Sunny surface-mounted
light fittings; Modus Quark
downlights **Kitchen** Corian
benchtop and sinks; Miele
appliances; Erware surgeon's
tap; polyurethane lacquer paint to
joinery **Bathroom** Rogerseller
Logic taps; Corian tops and
vanities **Climate control** Daikin
reverse-cycle aircon **External
elements** Eco Concepts siltstone
paving; hardwood timber decking

TIME SCHEDULE
Design, documentation
8 months
Construction 14 months

FLOOR AREA
Existing house 97.5 m²
New addition 75 m²

PHOTOGRAPHY
Giles Westley

THIS PAGE, LEFT: Walls appear to defy gravity. During the day, glazing lets in natural light; at night, it offer glimpses of illuminated foliage. RIGHT: The house is invested with "clear Corbusian traits". OPPOSITE PAGE: Lipstick kitchen joinery hovers in a glazed wall. Narrow skylights slice through the concrete roof plane.