

N O R T H B O N D I H O U S E

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Project name: **North Bondi House**
Architect: **James Garvan Architecture**
Location: **North Bondi, NSW, Australia**
Photographer: **Katherine Lu**
Client and Builder: **Tom Cull of TC Build**
Interiors in collaboration with **Lisa Tackenberg**

PROJECT SUMMARY

The optimistic intent of this project is to advance the traditional semi-detached housing type to better reflect the contemporary social and cultural context of Bondi. This ambitious and crafted home responds to its traditional context by prioritising rigorous geometric composition, dynamic use of space and light, and a strong engagement with the streetscape.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The unadvanced, ornate and traditional context inspired an optimistic, ambitious and contemporary response.

Paired with its ornate neighbour and set amongst the backdrop of vernacular semi-detached houses, the project relies on the simplicity, clarity and strength of the geometric reference to traditional gable-ended semi-detached houses.

The geometry of the new façade is a mirror of its neighbour, but is stripped of ornamentation. The unadorned frontage gives primacy to the purity and clarity of the three staggered gabled forms whilst still maintaining a formal connection with its neighbour.

A strong connection to the outdoors, privacy from the street and the ability to adapt the building to various thermal conditions was achieved via the fully operable and dynamic front and rear facades.

The previously dark core of this semi-detached home is now drenched in sunlight throughout the day and naturally ventilates the entire home, drawing air in from the front and rear and expelling it through the open skylights.

The restrained material palette relies on variety in texture and pattern and their interaction with light and space to provide a level of richness and vigour to the project. This restraint in turn accentuates project's formal composition and improves the design intent's legibility.

RELATIONSHIP OF FORM TO CONTEXT

Given its exposed location, restrained material palette and gabled composition, the house stands as a new landmark in the back-streets of Bondi. The crisply detailed simple forms of the front façade offer an alternative to the traditional Bondi semi and along with it, a sense of advancement.

The dialogue between the new and old is easily read with an unobstructed front boundary and a generous setback which openly engages the streetscape. This openness is balanced by the privacy offered by the dynamic timber batten screening that slides across the facades providing access, sun protection or a veil from onlookers.

PROGRAM RESOLUTION

Whilst the new building envelope addressed the presentation to the streetscape and interface with the broader context, the reconfiguration of the internal arrangement was successful in creating a more dynamic engagement with natural light, space and the landscape within the home.

A large void was dropped into the middle of the home and topped with a series of strategically placed operable skylights between the rafters. This satisfied the brief requirements of separation between public and private spaces and the injection of natural light and air into the core of the home whilst maintaining privacy from the neighbours to the north.

PREVIOUS INCARNATION



The existing frontage was dominated by a garage structure that addressed the street very bluntly. The gable roof form that sat beyond the garage was shared with its semi-detached neighbour. The problem that we looked to solve, was to re-engage the site with the street by opening up the frontage and giving primacy to the gabled roof forms.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO LAYOUT

As often happens on alterations and additions projects, you start with great aspirations of keeping a lot of the original building fabric and only end up keeping a couple of walls! Both side boundary walls were crucial in keeping the structural integrity of the house - both somewhat reveal the house's past life. The party wall along the entry was retained, the original brickwork was revealed and simply painted. The north-facing double-hung windows (seen in the kitchen) were also retained in order to reveal some of the houses' original character set within the contemporary double height volume.

OWNERS

The house was designed for Tom (client and builder in his 30s) and his friends to live in. They have a very active social life and the house, with its bright/voluminous interiors and seamless connection to outdoor/pool spaces, provided the perfect context in which to both entertain and relax with friends from the neighbourhood.

Tom didn't give us too much direction on the aesthetics of the home. We had worked together on previous projects, so we already had a great understanding of each other's approach to a project like this. His broad intent for the project's aesthetic was to create a unique and welcoming home, that was finely detailed and celebrated great craftsmanship.