

PROJECT N°

10

Hampton
HOUSE
 by Kennedy
Nolan Architects

• MELBOURNE, VIC •

Fundamental ideas from the Arts and Crafts movement have been reimagined to suit the twenty-first century for the renovation of an Edwardian home.

Words by Mark Scruby
 Photography by Derek Swalwell

Renovations of period houses often draw on idealized notions of times past to create glorious futures. In reality, however, an adjective like Art Deco or Victorian, blessing for a real estate agent though it may be, does not guarantee great, or even good, architecture. Every era has had its fair share of plain and just plain ugly houses. And so Melbourne architects Kennedy Nolan were engaged to enhance and expand a homey – but rather homely – weatherboard Edwardian in the bayside suburb of Hampton.

“The house was pretty ordinary to begin with, and a lot of the original detail had been stripped out when it was renovated in the fifties,” says architect Patrick Kennedy. “But then it was re-Edwardianized in the nineties with a faux period addition at the back.”

The site slopes down at the rear, and no attempt had been made to reconcile the floor level with the ground. A wraparound verandah, too narrow to offer any real utility, acted as little more than a lookout to the backyard, if not a physical barrier between indoors and out.

01 The crenellated forms of the extension to the original Edwardian.





“We felt that the addition was too far off the ground, so our first intention was to make the house work harder on the site, to engage with the surrounds, to build a stronger connection between the interior spaces and the garden,” says Patrick. A key strategy for achieving this was modulating the floor level inside the house. Rather than looking down from the verandah to the backyard, the occupants now walk down four steps from the kitchen to an expansive living space that, in turn, leads outside to the garden at ground level. The kitchen itself is also much more open to the outdoors than it was previously – bifold doors peel back to provide access to a protected north-facing terrace.

Programmatically, the house has been conceived as a response to two imperatives: meeting the day-to-day needs of a family with three children and accommodating a steady stream of house guests from interstate and overseas. To these ends, bedrooms have been retained at the front of the house, a luxurious master bedroom with ensuite and roof terrace has been added in a new upper level, and private guest quarters have been appended to the rear of the ground floor. The main entrance was also relocated, so that visitors can enter the house through the living area rather than having to tiptoe past rooms full of sleeping kids. The “public” and “private” interior spaces are now clearly demarcated; approached from within the house, the front bedrooms are concealed by a mirrored door that blocks off the central hallway and would make Maxwell Smart proud.

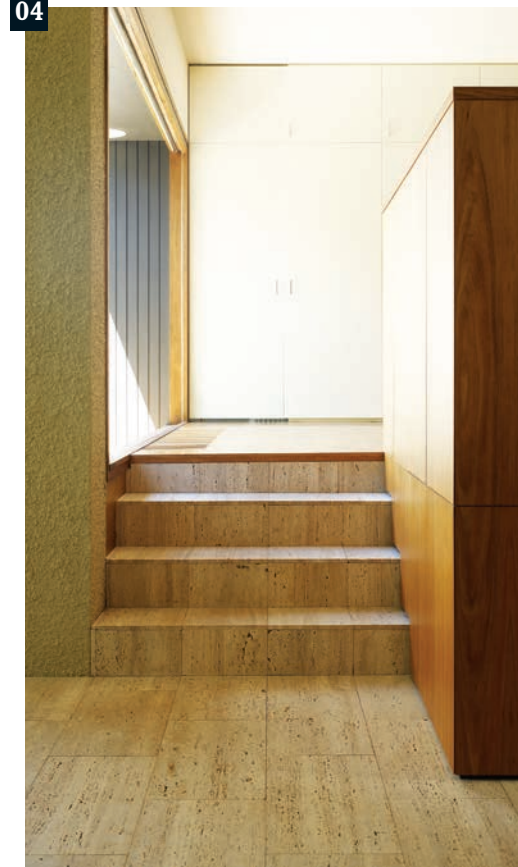
In terms of utility, then, the renovation represents a nuanced response to the challenges and opportunities inherent to the site, the existing structure and the needs of the client. There is, however, a much greater force at play here that elevates this project beyond the everyday functional accomplishments of contemporary architecture. Kennedy Nolan’s vision for the original house was to take an

“ordinary” example of Edwardian architecture and imbue it with the spirit of the “extraordinary” design of the era – specifically, the work and philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement.

That’s not to say that the house has again become a faux period memorial. Rather, the architects have taken the fundamental ideas of Arts and Crafts designers – English architect and furniture and textile designer C. F. A. Voysey, in particular – and reimagined them for the early twenty-first century. Externally, this plays out most obviously in the imposing crenellated form of the rear elevation and its roughcast walls, but also in details such as the delightful abstract fretwork of the front facade and an oversized cruciform column at the back of the house.

Inside, the colour palette is subtle but the materials palette – porous, unpolished travertine floors, natural timber and more roughcast walls – is intensely textural. In accordance with the Arts and Crafts philosophy, the house has been designed with “truth to material” in mind or, as Patrick calls it, “handmade modernism.” Taken in the context of suburban Australian renovations, and with reference to the previous alterations to this house, it represents an emphatic (and welcome) revocation of acres of perfect, featureless plasterboard, twinkling constellations of recessed downlights and blemish-free, identical floating floorboards.

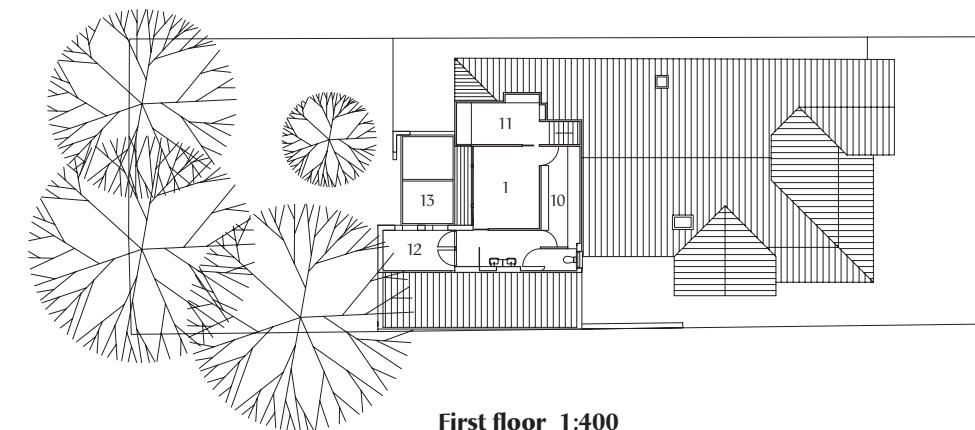
Kennedy Nolan’s work here shows a method for the rejuvenation of established suburbs that respects previous eras and remembers the personal histories embedded in individual houses, but does not seek to memorialize what has gone before. This Edwardian has been reinterpreted, not reiterated. Retailers of replica door knockers and the myriad other mass-market accoutrements of “heritage renovation” may well be disgruntled, but the rest of us should rejoice. After all, who would want to be ordinary when they can be extraordinary? ☑



02 The existing main entrance at the front of the Edwardian has been relocated to the side of the house, so that visitors enter directly into the living spaces.

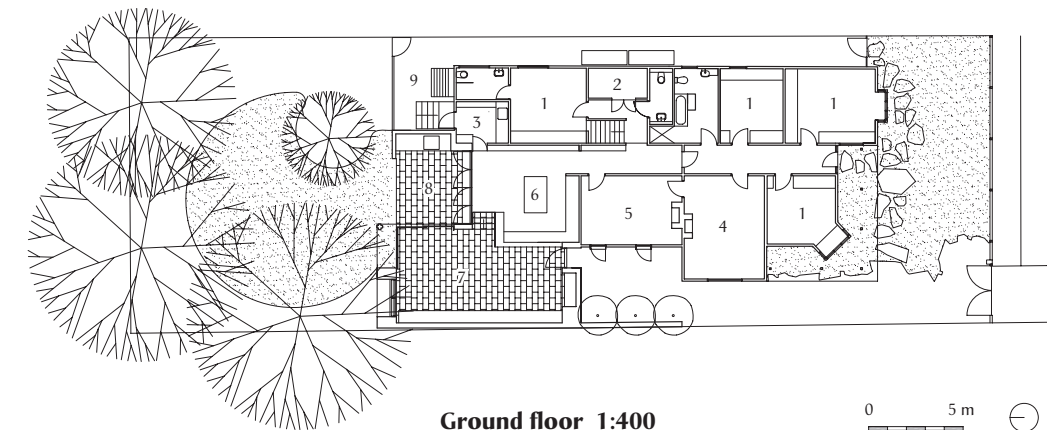
03 The interior colour palette is subtle, but the material choice is highly textural – including travertine flooring, natural timber and roughcast walls.

04 The steps leading up to the raised kitchen.



First floor 1:400

- 1 Bedroom
- 2 Store
- 3 Laundry
- 4 Sitting
- 5 Dining
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Living
- 8 Terrace
- 9 Service
- 10 Walk-in robe
- 11 Study
- 12 Balcony
- 13 Retractable canopy



Ground floor 1:400





05 Bifold doors from the kitchen open out to a protected north-facing terrace.

06 The new roof terrace is part of the luxurious master bedroom on the upper level.

07 The new entrance from a courtyard into the living room.

Architect

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Practice profile

An eight-person practice undertaking residential and institutional projects.

Project team

Patrick Kennedy, Rachel Nolan, Matilda Blazey

Builder

Nick Kelly Constructions (now Korely Builders)

Consultants

Engineer: JSC Consulting
Landscaping: Hocoka
Interiors and lighting: Kennedy Nolan Architects

Products

Roofing: Zinalume Trimdek roofing

External walls: Roughcast render to concrete block construction; vertical treated pine shiplap cladding to lightweight framing

Internal walls: Roughcast render; plasterboard, painted; George Fethers & Co timber veneer panelling; blackwood veneer panelling by joiner

Windows: Stained solid KDHW and bronze anodized aluminium frames; comfort-plus glass; Lockwood black powdercoated hardware

Doors: Stained solid KDHW and bronze anodized aluminium frames; timber veneer and factory paint finish flush panel pivot doors integrated with joinery; comfort-plus glass; Lockwood black powdercoated and polished chrome hardware

Flooring: Rough-sawn travertine flooring on concrete slab; Supertuft carpet; Fibonacci terrazzo

Lighting: Artemide; George Nelson from Studio Italia; Tom Dixon from Dedec; Lumascape external lights

Bathroom: Fibonacci terrazzo tiles; George Fethers & Co timber veneer panels; white rectified porcelain tiles; bronze anodized aluminium panelling; Scala tapware

Heating/cooling: Evaporative cooling system; in-slab hydronic heating; hydronic panels

External elements: Travertine paving; Mintaro Random (Crazy) slate paving
Other: Jardan dining table; Thonet Hoffman dining chairs

Floor area
320 m²

Time schedule
Design, documentation: 6 months
Construction: 11 months