



# CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

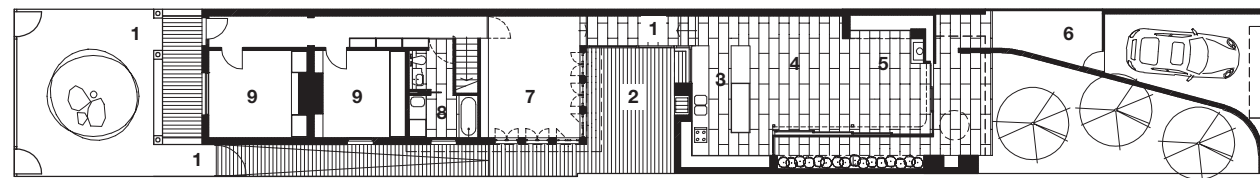
Suburban Melbourne is a long way from Palm Springs but that didn't stop Kennedy Nolan's clients

from dreaming of a California-inspired extension to their Victorian-era home.

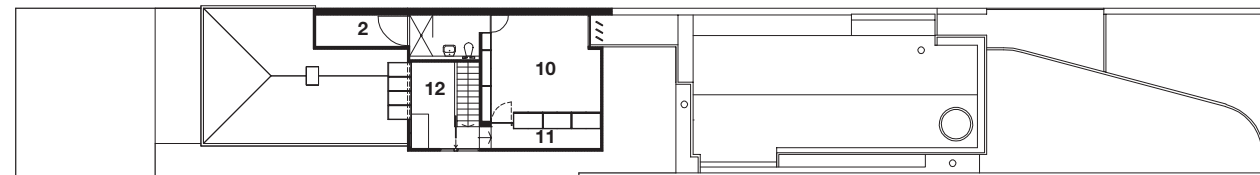


**PREVIOUS PAGES:**  
Travertine floors,  
shantung curtains and  
an outdoor fireplace  
evoke effortless  
sophistication in the  
living space.  
**THESE PAGES, LEFT:**  
Retractable glass doors  
open the living and  
dining space to the  
terrace and rear  
garden. A robust  
concrete wall is planted  
with bamboo. **BELOW:**  
Generous storage in  
the formal and informal  
areas reduces clutter  
and maintains a clean,  
minimalist aesthetic.





Ground floor



Upper floor



- 1 Entry
- 2 Deck
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Dining
- 5 Living
- 6 Service court
- 7 Sitting
- 8 Laundry
- 9 Bedroom
- 10 Main bedroom
- 11 Robe
- 12 Study



**ORIGINALLY BUILT IN THE** late nineteenth century, this brick home in Middle Park, Melbourne, conceals a restrained contemporary addition. Designed by architecture firm Kennedy Nolan, the new glazed pavilion is more akin to a house one would find in California. With its flat roof, large picture windows and travertine floor, the renovation exudes the sophisticated elegance associated with these postwar homes. “Our dream home was a Modernist house like the ones you see in Palm Springs. I wanted something minimal. But we also wanted something practical for a family,” says the client Angela, who lives here with husband David and four-year-old daughter Abby.

While the architects also appreciate the Californian aesthetic, they were given a site considerably smaller than many of those heroic Californian blocks – and encumbered by neighbouring terrace houses. Fortunately, the narrowness of the site (approximately six metres in width) is ameliorated by its length (50 metres). As the house is located in a heritage precinct, the architects retained the original two front rooms. These rooms only required modest changes, with one room occupied by Abby, and the other earmarked for a second child who is on the way. “We wanted the bedrooms to be relatively private. David and I didn’t want people to ring the front door bell and walk up and down the corridor waking up children,” says Angela. Her brief to the architects was to create a completely new entrance to the rear wing.

A side gate now serves as the front door, with visitors following a gently graded timber ramp to a courtyard and new entrance. Located between the formal and informal parts of the house, the courtyard acts as a light well – its timber deck is elevated between the formal lounge and the informal kitchen and living areas, creating a transition space. “The courtyard was an important element in deconstructing the period home. It also provides an additional area for entertaining,” says Rachel Nolan, pointing out the built-in barbecue.

The kitchen and informal living areas are contained in a pavilion that is separate from the bedrooms and boasts a casual ambience. Framed by floor-to-ceiling fully-retractable sliding glass doors, the informal area features travertine flooring that extends to the rear terrace. And to allow the doors to be retracted on cooler days, two fireplaces were included in the design, one indoors, the other outdoors. “We wanted to create quite a flexible environment, which meant controlling the temperature,” says Rachel. In the spirit of the project’s retro cool Californian ambitions, shantung curtains envelop the space.

The kitchen is more enclosed than most contemporary kitchens. Concealed by factory-painted joinery containing the fridge and pantry,

the kitchen proper is quite discreet and only the freestanding marble and chrome bench is really on show. “I didn’t want an open-plan kitchen. I actually like the idea of being able to prepare meals without everyone looking on, and it allows me to leave the dishes while I’m entertaining,” says Angela. Storage in the kitchen and living areas was also an important part of the brief. “David and I are not fond of a cluttered house, and Abby has her share of toys,” says Angela. Even the television is neatly concealed in a cupboard.

In contrast to the informal living areas, the formal living space is softer in appearance, both underfoot and in the warm tones of the deep casement timber windows. From the courtyard, the formal living room appears as a sunken lounge. Generous storage also features in this area, with a bank of putty-coloured cupboards extending across the width of the room and joining seamlessly to a door into the original corridor. “When the cupboard door is closed, you feel as though the house ends here, that there’s nothing beyond,” says Angela. This separation of the front rooms gives Abby privacy for her afternoon sleep.

A discreet door accesses a staircase to the second-storey addition, nestled behind the building’s pitched steel roof. The upper level comprises a small study, the main bedroom and dressing area, together with an ensuite bathroom. In contrast to the light-filled living areas, the main bedroom feels moody, with timber panelling and walls in the same putty hue as the cupboards downstairs. One of the clients’ favourite rooms in the house is the ensuite, with its bronze glass tiling, angled roofline and shower leading to the deck. When the door to the deck is left open, there’s a sense of showering outdoors, surrounded by eucalypts. “Many of the colours we’ve used in the house, such as the deep olives and browns, can be seen in the native garden,” says Rachel.

In the rear garden, the curved wall of the garage appears as a garden wall rather than as something structural. Clad in vertically shiplapped timber, the garage looks like another room. The concrete block wall along the other side is planted with bamboo and features the second fireplace, perfect for warming the terrace. The solidity and height of the concrete wall creates the sense of a freestanding home, distanced from the neighbouring houses.

These clever manoeuvres give the house a real sense of space – the flexible entertaining spaces, the separation of formal and informal living and the emphasis on privacy belie the proximity of neighbours and the compact dimensions of the site. The architects have created a luxe inner-city home that balances the demands of a growing family with the effortless elegance of SoCal cool. **STEPHEN CRAFTI**





**PREVIOUS PAGES,**  
**ABOVE:** Casement  
 windows frame the  
 formal sitting room.  
**BELOW:** The courtyard  
 serves as the new  
 entrance and becomes  
 a transition space.  
**THIS PAGE:** Though  
 partially concealed, the  
 kitchen connects to the  
 living space via a  
 stunning marble and  
 chrome bench.

**ARCHITECT**  
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**PRACTICE PROFILE**

Five-person practice working principally on residential projects, but also engaged in a variety of architectural disciplines in which a strong design component is required.

**PROJECT TEAM**

Patrick Kennedy, Rachel Nolan, Mike Macleod, Catherine Blamey

**BUILDER**

Tate Constructions

**CONSULTANTS**

**Engineer** Bonacci Group  
**Landscaping** Mark Kader  
**Interiors, lighting** Kennedy Nolan

**PRODUCTS**

**Roofing** Colorbond 'Jasper'; Zinalume Trimdek; R2.5 insulation **External walls** Boral 'Alabaster' concrete blockwork; fine-gauge treated pine, shiplapped, stained with Aquacoil 'Treacle' **Internal walls** Boral 'Alabaster' concrete blockwork; Gyprock plasterboard; factory paint-finished panels; American walnut panels; linen panels **Windows and doors** Capral bright polished aluminium frames; Centor tracks; stained kdlw frames; Capral bronze anodised aluminium frames; Designer Doorware hardware **Flooring** Unfilled saw-cut longitudinal travertine 'Classico'; Supertuft 'Spell' carpet; Bisazza mosaic tiles **Lighting** New Moon pendants from De De Ce; Studio Italia downlights and Axo Primuca pendants **Kitchen** Miele appliances; Pietro Grigio honed benchtops; travertine and mirror splashbacks; Hansgrohe tapware **Bathroom** Pozzi Ginori 500 series fittings; Jado tapware; Borma tapware **Heating** Hydronic heating from Parsons Hydronic **External elements** Hardwood deck; travertine paving

**TIME SCHEDULE**

**Design, documentation**  
 6 months  
**Construction** 8 months

**SITE SIZE**  
 330 m<sup>2</sup>

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
 Derek Swalwell