

# HOUSES<sup>®</sup>

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**city, beach or 'burbs?**  
COOL HOUSES FOR EVERY LOCALE

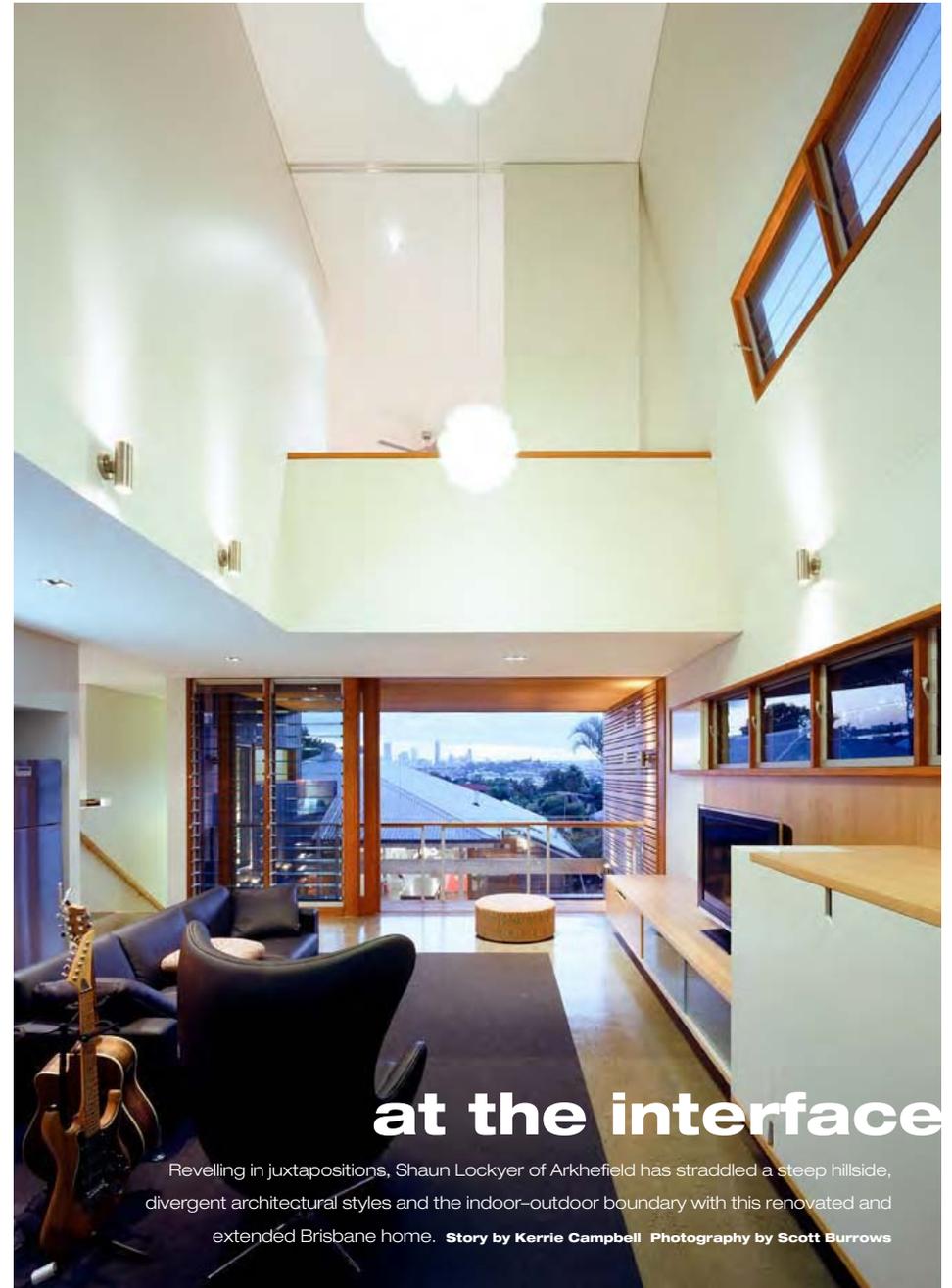
**NORTHERN EXPOSURE**  
Queensland Architects In Focus

**GLASS ART BY HOLLY GRACE**

**IN-BETWEEN SPACES**  
Chenchow Little In Profile



PRODUCT: THE LOWDOWN ON FLOORS + WARES FOR THE HOME



## at the interface

Revelling in juxtapositions, Shaun Lockyer of Arkhefield has straddled a steep hillside, divergent architectural styles and the indoor-outdoor boundary with this renovated and extended Brisbane home. **Story by Kerrie Campbell Photography by Scott Burrows**

**PERCHED HIGH** on a steep, sloping site in Balmoral, Brisbane, with spectacular views of both the city skyline and distant ranges is a hidden gem – an extension by Arkhefield design director Shaun Lockyer for Claire and Nigel Lappin and their four daughters. As with all houses in Brisbane’s eastern suburbs, city views bring the harsh western sun. Mitigating these penetrating western rays while capitalizing on the site’s spectacular views were key to unlocking this design.

Claire says, “We contemplated selling and moving house due to the size constrictions of our original house; however, we love the position in relation to other aspects of our life – so extending was mentioned. After seeing Shaun’s work we knew immediately that we had to use him. Shaun’s personality was the final selling point – after our first meeting, we knew we were not going to find anyone better to work with.”

At the commencement of the project, Claire and Nigel had two children with a third on the way. However, this growing family was about to grow a lot faster than anticipated – they discovered that the new arrival would, in fact, be twins. The brief included additional areas for children to play outdoors and a new family room, plus an adult retreat consisting of a new main bedroom and bathroom.

Shaun’s response is simple yet effective. The existing interaction of house and topography offered limited opportunity for recreation. To remedy this, the new extension is structured around a land-based platform at the site’s mid level. This platform separates the old from the new, enabling the existing house to function as a protected space for the children while the extension accommodates private space for the grown-ups.

This junction of old and new forms a meeting point for the house’s occupants. Shaun explains, “The back of the existing house becomes the new core, with the rear-flung kitchen becoming the centre of a new household distribution.” The rear walls of the existing house were replaced with large glass sliding doors, which capture views of the distant city skyline and the ranges while permitting protection from the western sun. Careful crafting of the platform’s edges transforms it into a delightful courtyard. Opening to the north, it allows low winter sun to enter, warming the whole house; in summer, a new double-height roof and the existing eave of the old house partially cover the courtyard, sheltering all internal spaces. Claire says the new extension has changed how they live: “We now spend all year outside: the courtyard is fantastic in summer and winter.”

The courtyard is constantly activated – it acts as the new point of arrival and facilitates circulation, a single node on the site that connects all the other spaces. The pool further compresses the space – positioned at the head of the axis to the street, it creates a pause point that marks entry into the house. On arrival, both distant and immediate landscapes can be viewed from the courtyard. This allows Claire to keep an eye on playing children while enjoying views to the outside world – an

essential consideration for a mother with the full-time job of caring for four children under five.

When discussing the selection of materials, Shaun explains that Claire and Nigel had renovated the existing dwelling a few years prior. The renovation was “tastefully minimalist, which opened up the internal plan, allowing us the luxury of having a very good base from which to work.” This did, however, present a dilemma when selecting materials and finishes for the new extension: “Do we continue the neutral palette of the renovation or do we depart entirely?”

Numerous schemes were presented to the client – some extended the existing palette and others replaced it completely. In the end, the clients were happy to trust in the architect’s recommendation. Claire comments, “We love the way it has all come together – Nigel was always very trusting of their choice of patterned tiles, whereas I was a little scared about the tiled wall in the courtyard. But through the whole project, we knew we had to trust them if we wanted something special and different from the house next door.”

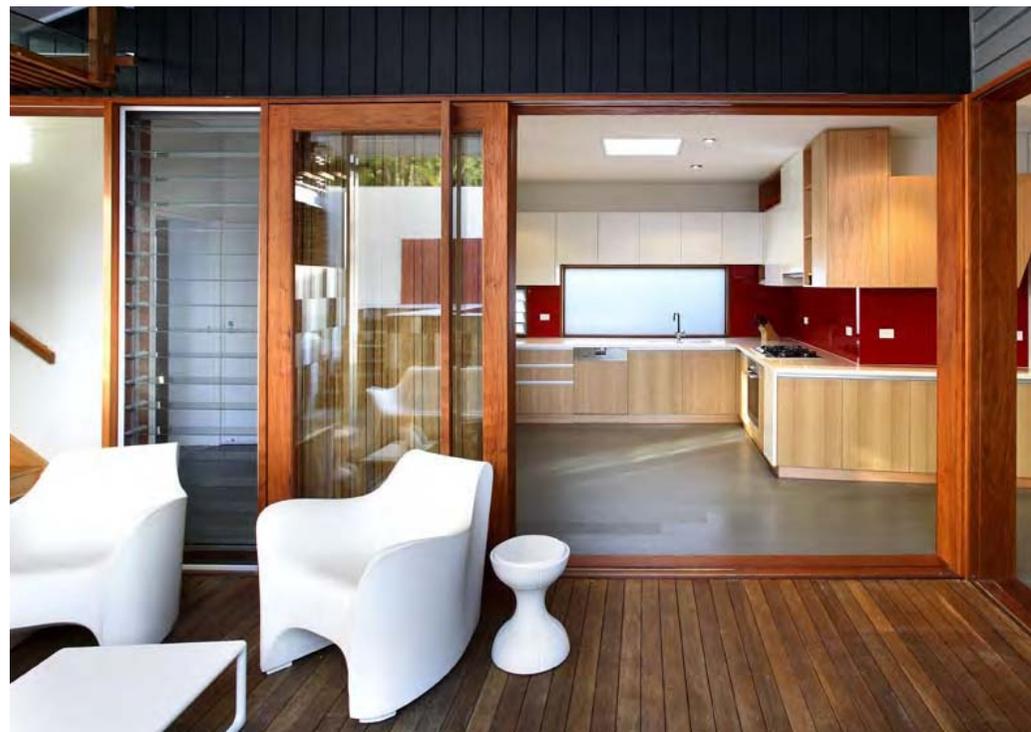
The materials were chosen to complement but juxtapose with the existing elements. Black vertical ply cladding in the extension contrasts with grey horizontal hardwood weatherboards in the existing house, while the new part’s light Tasmanian oak balances the dark timber of the old. In parts, timber floors have been replaced by concrete. As Shaun explains, “What was colourless is now animated. What was introverted and dark is now extroverted and light.”

Long and steep, the site has a rear boundary thirteen metres above street level. Nigel did all the landscaping and selected plants in conjunction with the local nursery – an integral component of the project’s success. The sloping backyard at the rear of the new extension becomes a peaceful space, a meandering path climbing the incline to provide views back to the city. Chairs, platforms and play equipment are dotted along the path, revealing its frequent use.

Boulders that were part of the existing garden have been arranged as a sculptured, natural terrain at the base of the path, which Claire says the girls love climbing – “fun for them but a constant stress for us!”

This landscape relates directly to a new public living room, light filled and sited to take in views to the city over the existing house. With operable blinds along its western edge adjoining the central courtyard, this space can be manipulated according to time of day and use of space. Above the living room is the parents’ bedroom, secluded for privacy but engaged by its overlook of the central outdoor space. The new bathroom, lined with black wall tiles, is striking when viewed at night, animated by a panorama of colourful city lights along a distant horizon.

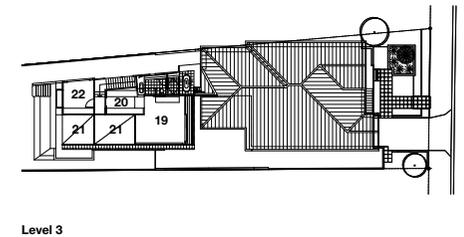
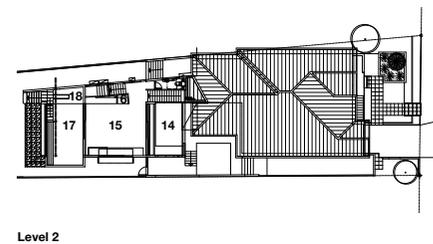
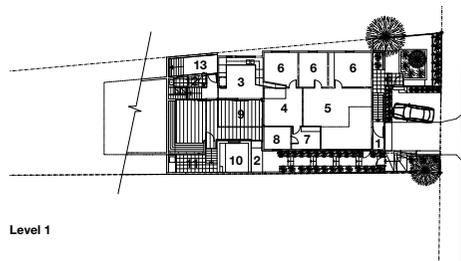
When asked about their favourite spaces, Claire selects the new bathroom, which she likens to a luxury resort, while Nigel loves watching the summer storms roll in over the city from the main bedroom. **H**



PREVIOUS PAGES, LEFT: The tube-like extension climbs its steep Brisbane site to take in city and suburb views. An outdoor terrace nestles into the hillside at the very rear. Rocks from the site have been used to retain the bank. RIGHT: A double-height family room is appended by a balcony that overlooks the new deck behind the existing cottage. THESE PAGES, TOP: Juxtapositions of colour and material animate the kitchen – the fulcrum of the reconfigured house. BOTTOM: Space flows between interior and exterior in this new zone for family interaction. Lively colour contrasts continue outside with a pixelated configuration of tiles.



- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Existing entry    | 12 Laundry         |
| 2 Entry             | 13 Drying court    |
| 3 Kitchen           | 14 Courtyard below |
| 4 Existing dining   | 15 Family room     |
| 5 Existing living   | 16 Kitchenette     |
| 6 Existing bedroom  | 17 Outdoor terrace |
| 7 Existing study    | 18 Sandpit         |
| 8 Existing bathroom | 19 Main bedroom    |
| 9 Deck              | 20 Walk-in robe    |
| 10 Pool             | 21 Void            |
| 11 Pool deck        | 22 Nursery         |



THESE PAGES, LEFT: A deliberate contrast of new and old elements on the street facade hints at the bold new forms that lie behind. Timber strips make a clear juxtaposition with weatherboards. RIGHT: Louvres have been used throughout the house to aid cross-ventilation. A polished concrete floor acts as a heat sink.





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**PRACTICE PROFILE**  
 A forty-five-person practice engaging in residential, commercial and institutional work as well as interiors and industrial design.

**PROJECT TEAM**  
 Shaun Lockyer (design director),  
 Jemima Rosevear (project architect),  
 Lucy Hayes

**BUILDER**  
 Bruce Wales

**CONSULTANTS**  
**Engineer** Bligh Tanner  
**Landscaping** Client  
**Interiors** Arkhefield  
**Lighting** Arkhefield  
**Pool and hard landscape** Arkhefield

**PRODUCTS**  
**Roofing** Lysaght Spandek in black  
**External walls** Shadowclad, painted black; rendered blockwork; ceramic tiles  
**Internal walls** Plasterboard  
**Windows** Breezway louvres; Danpalon coloured acrylic  
**Doors** Rosewood doors; painted solid core doors with Tasmanian oak hardware by Arkhefield  
**Flooring** Tasmanian oak engineered flooring; polished concrete; mosaic tiles; tallwood external decking  
**Lighting** LAD in-ground uplights, design by Arkhefield  
**Kitchen** Miele appliances; joinery designed by Arkhefield: white 2-pack, Tasmanian oak, white Corian, red colourback glass, Hafele hardware  
**Bathroom** Rogerseller basin; Paris toilets; Reeco design for balance  
**Climate control** Airconditioning by LG Fisher; Victory auto blinds; Hales and Lumm awnings  
**External elements** Exposed aggregate concrete  
**Other** Towel rails and outdoor built-in furniture by Arkhefield

**SITE AREA**  
 691 m<sup>2</sup>

**FLOOR AREA**  
 213 m<sup>2</sup> (new work)

**TIME SCHEDULE**  
**Design, documentation** 5 months  
**Construction** 10 months

**LEFT: The new deck area was conceptualized as a "cultured landscape," with material choices common to both the architecture and hardscape elements. The main bedroom above enjoys a prime view toward the city through a large aperture.**