

Case Study
Main Ridge House

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The Brief:

New owners purchased a slightly dated 90's four-bedroom property in Main Ridge in 2018 as a holiday retreat and future "forever home". And while they loved the property, the house itself didn't measure up to their wants and needs. Their immediate inclination was to demolish it and start again.

When we were invited to have a look, we saw a very different opportunity – one that the owners subsequently fully embraced.

From our perspective, the home had 'good bones' but lacked a consistent narrative. The living spaces were too small and disjointed and the outdoor spaces were disconnected and not well used. On a positive note, it had a logical axis, with rooms and spaces feeding off a central spine, and a west-facing orientation that maximised views across paddocks and bushland to the distant ocean.

In studying the existing plan, we saw a way to rearrange and re-structure the plan so as to provide the extra functional areas required whilst imbuing the main circulation spine of the home with a series of landscape vignettes.



Before:

Situated on a well-used road, the home was known to locals as the 'rolly polly' or 'wave' house and the aesthetic was past it's use-by date. The design also lacked clarity, the zones being ill defined and the spaces lacking cohesion.

There were too many "dead zones". Unused al-fresco areas, dead ends to each end of the central hallway, and the main living area was too small and broken up. Overall, more internal living spaces were needed for a family to be able to work, rest and play.





The home was constructed at a time when sustainability was less of a driver than it is today. Our challenge was to boost the home's sustainability rating in the context of its existing fabric.

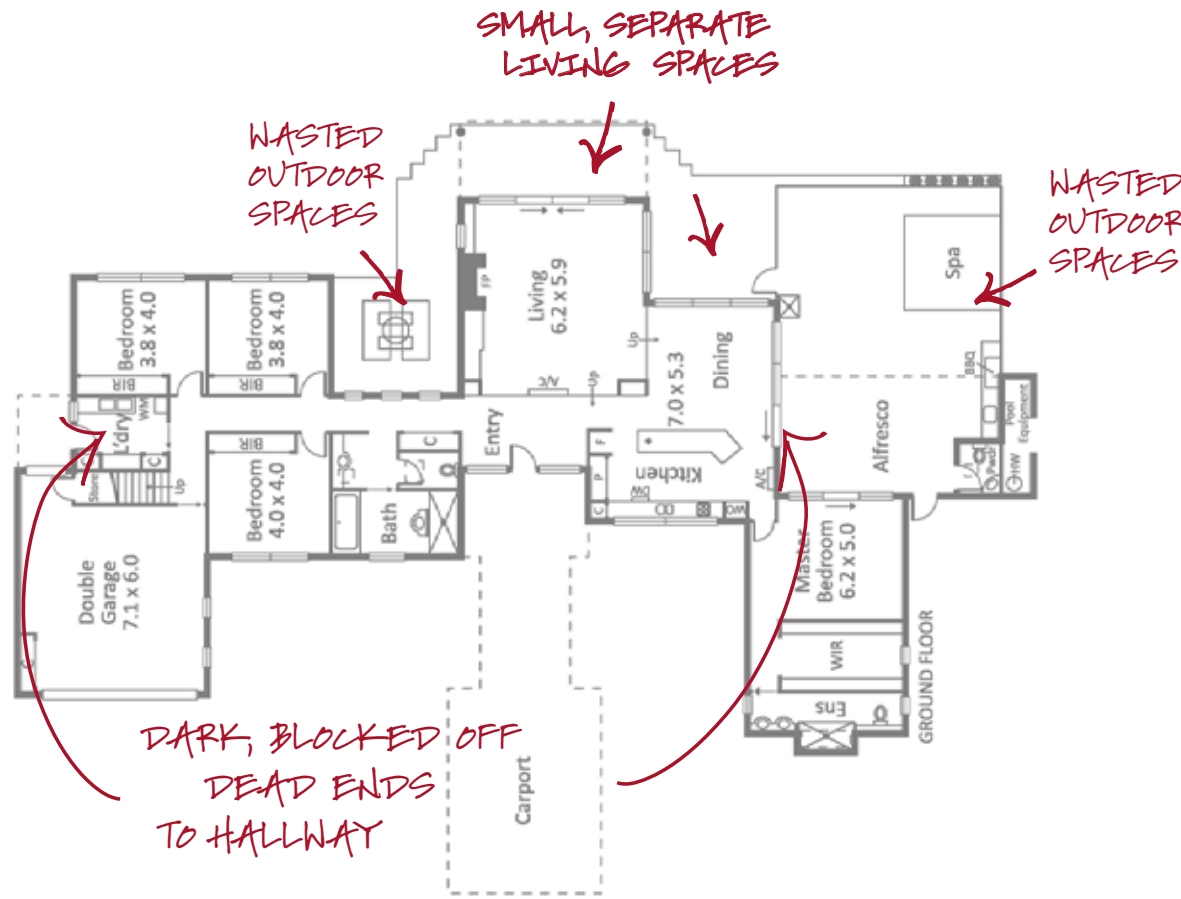


Before:

The overall presentation was a little tired and dated. The house needed to be turned into a timeless forever home that would encourage a sense of ease and relaxation throughout.

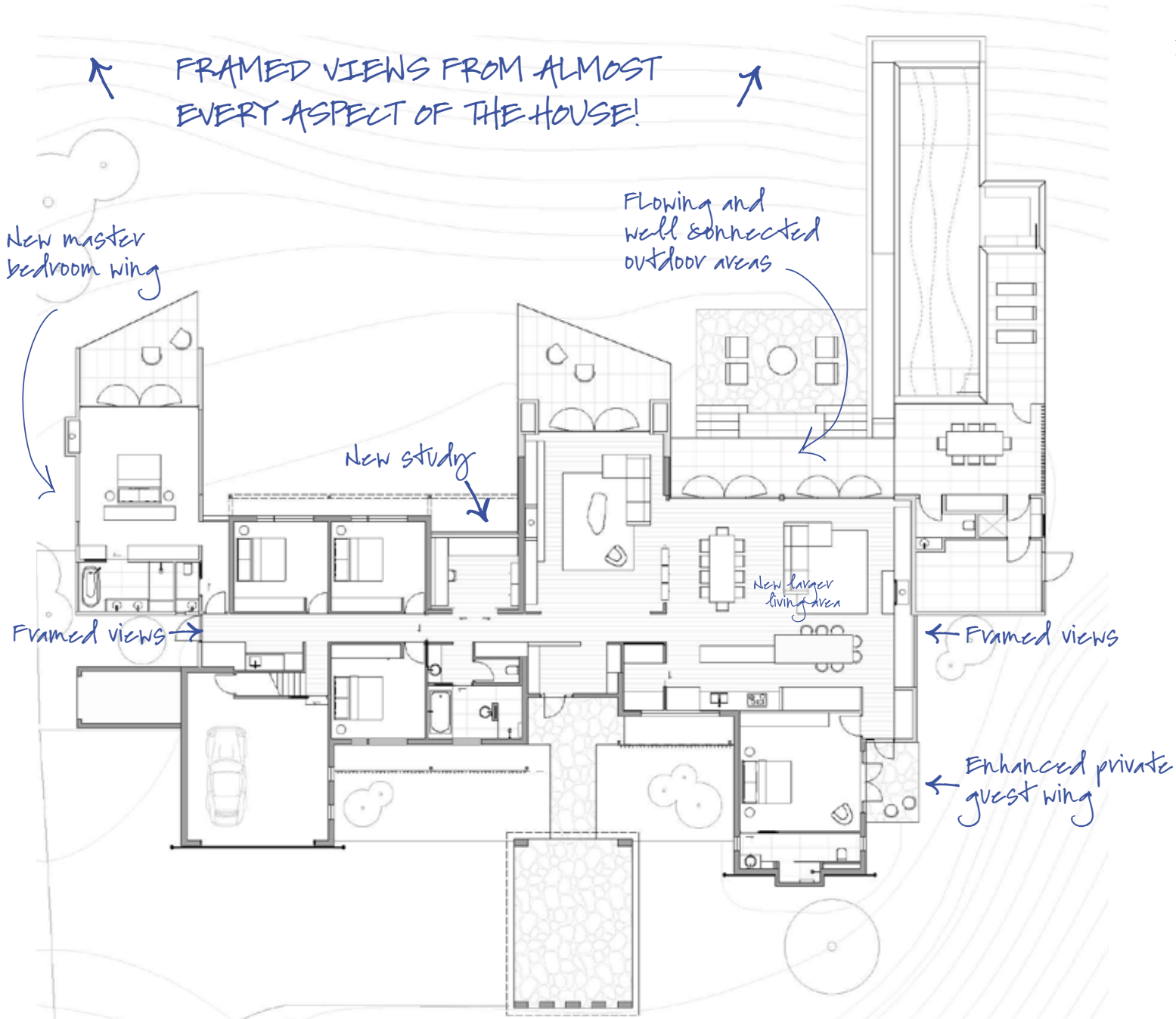


OVERALL, NOT ENOUGH INTERNAL SPACE + NOT ENOUGH CONNECTION TO OUTDOORS AND BEAUTIFUL VIEWS!



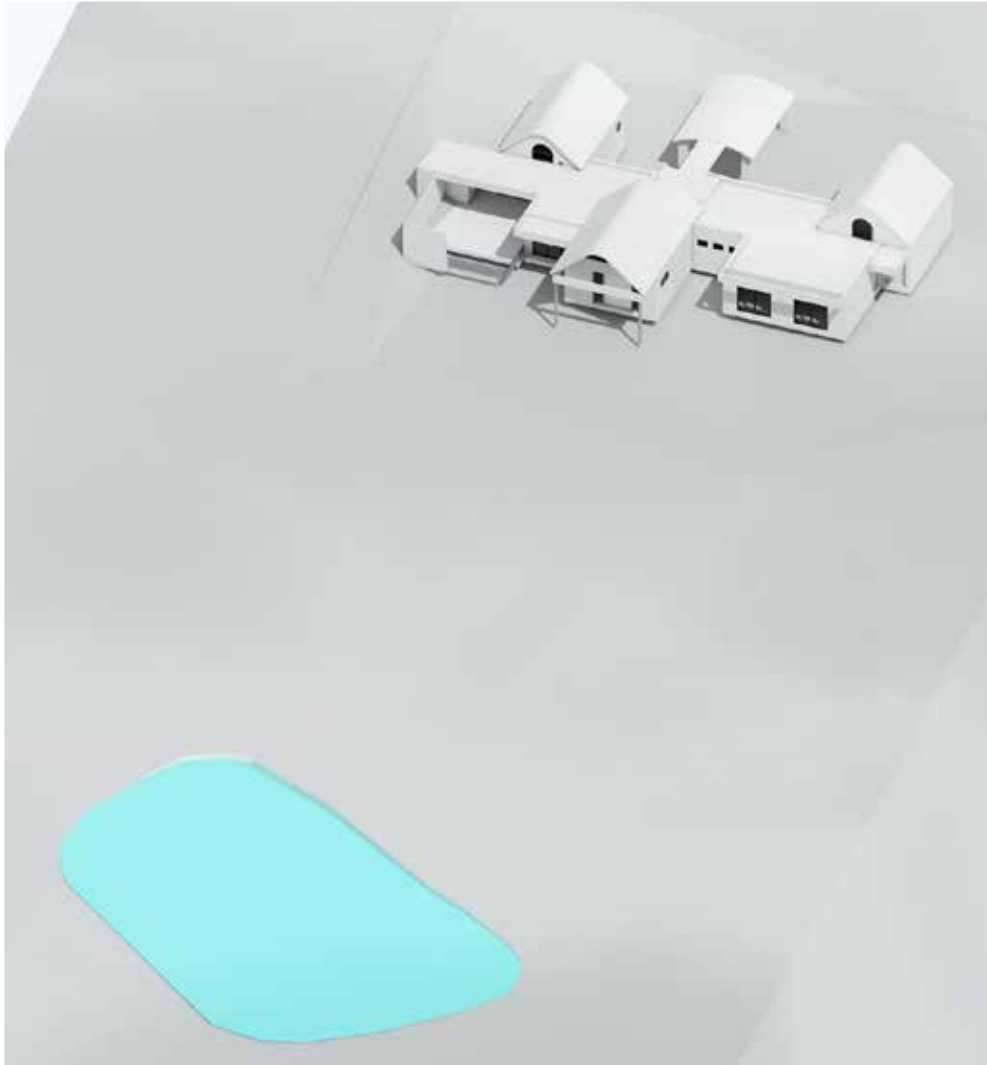
Layout Before:

- lack of clarity in plan.
- ill defined “zones”.
- spaces lacking cohesion.
- not enough internal space.
- wasted outdoor areas.
- “dead” dark spaces at either end of hallway (laundry up one end and dead end up the other).
- small, separate, boxy living spaces.
- not enough connection to the beautiful views and outdoor area at the rear of the house.



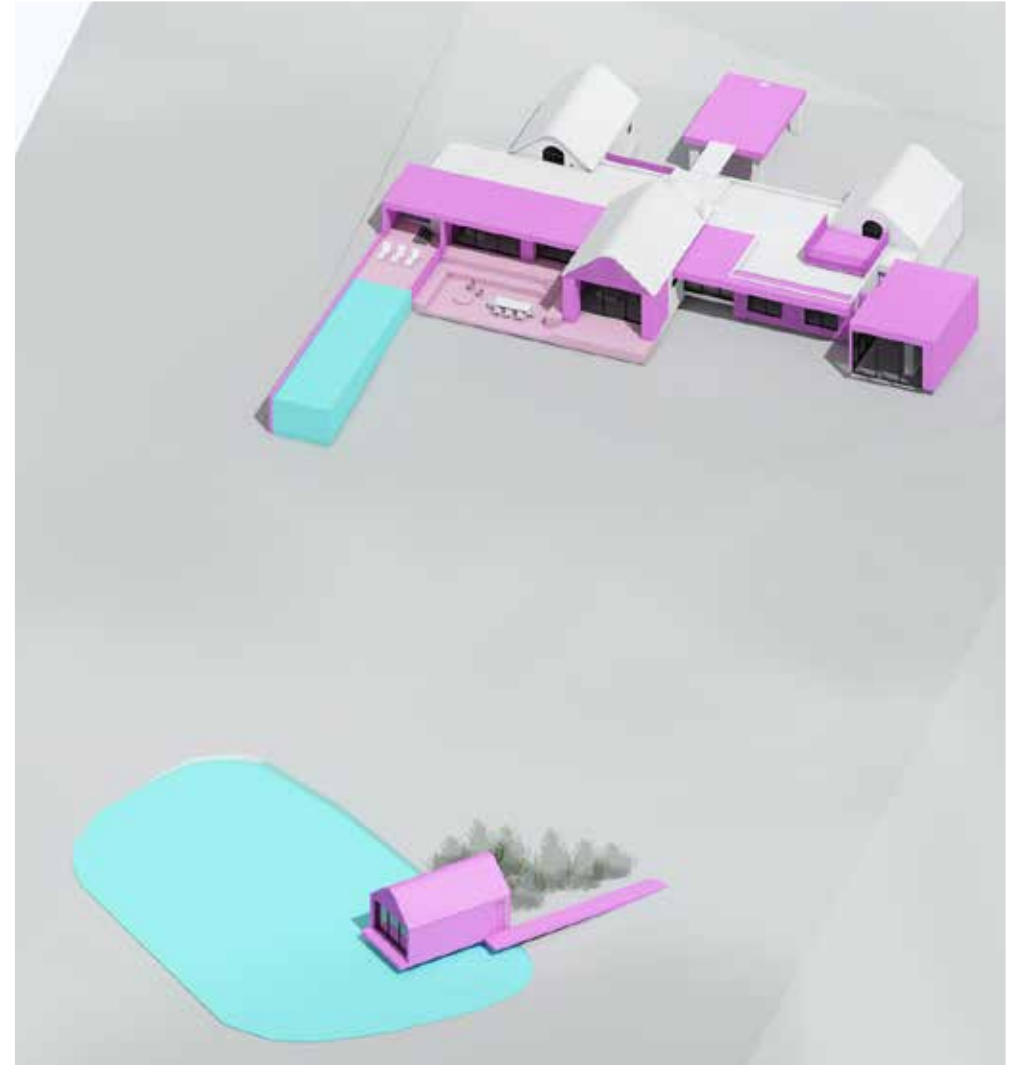
Layout After:

- enclosed alfresco/spa area at one end of the spine to create more internal space.
- large picture window and bespoke daybed replaced what was a dead, dark end.
- a new fireplace and lounge area adjoining the kitchen created additional living space.
- the laundry was relocated and replaced with a glazed entranceway opening onto a generous master bedroom wing.
- an unused courtyard was made into a study.



Existing massing:

- wasted, boxy outdoor space
- disconnected ornamental lake



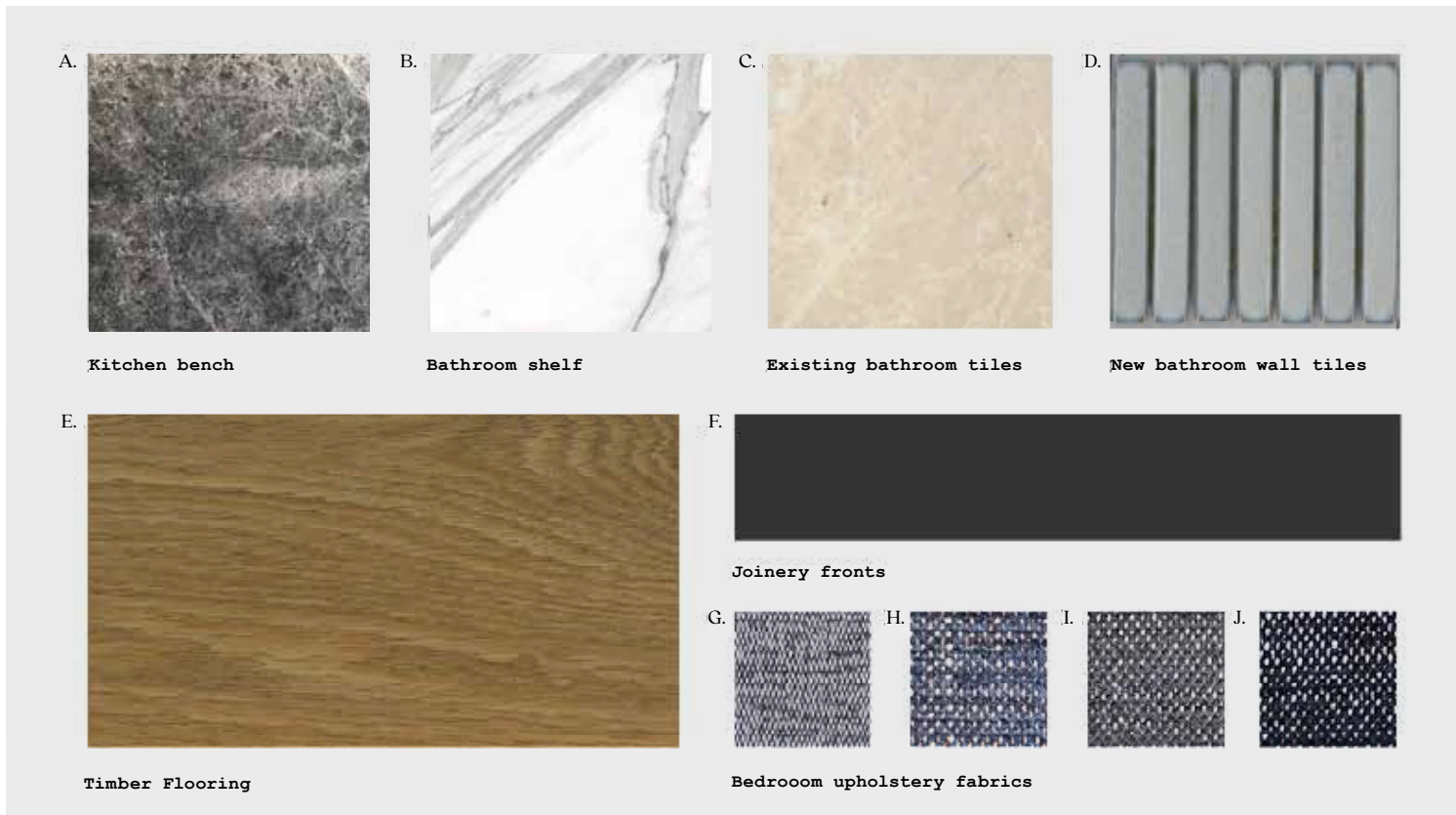
Proposed massing:

- re-configured al fresco space (sunken to allow for views)
- additional enclosed spaces including parents retreat
- new swimming pool to extend into landscape
- whisky hut addition to incorporate ornamental lake

Design development:

Materials and finishes are presented and carefully reviewed.

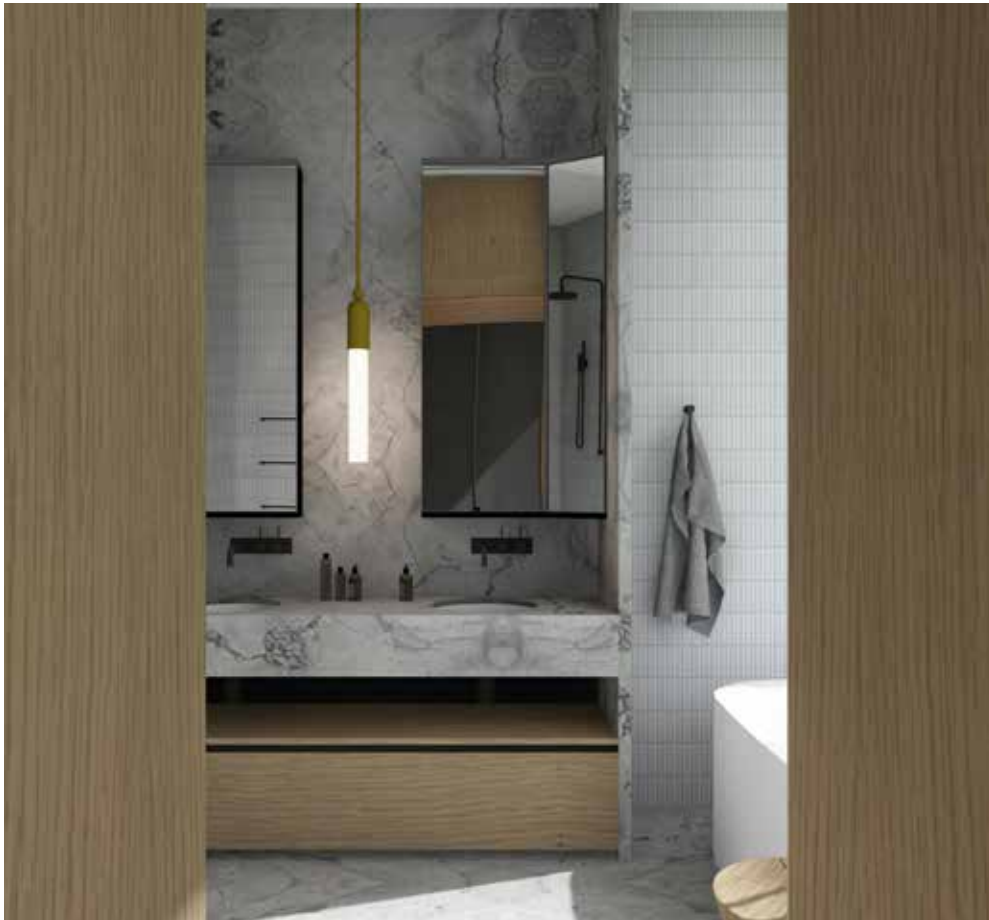
For this project, a palette of natural materials, textures and colours were selected, inspired by the changing natural landscape that is captured through the many framed views in the house.



A quote from the owners:

“We love the layers and textures that are in keeping with the natural surrounding environment.”





Design development:

Using Archicad, we developed high quality 3D in-house renders to help better visualise the design.

This fully integrated 3D methodology helps clients review the design in 3D at all stages, allowing refinements and design decisions to be made with confidence. Documentation is also derived from the 3D model, ensuring consistency and coordination are maintained throughout the project.



Image left, before: In house renders, **image right, after:** Actual photograph



Before: In house renders

After: Actual photographs



On site - the process:

This renovation took approximately 15 months to design and document and took around 12 months to build. We were not engaged for full contract administration but attended monthly site meetings with the client and builder to resolve any issues that arose during the course of construction. We did this because our client wanted to be hands-on during construction. The alternative method is for us to administer a construction contract between the client and the builder.





Working off the original axis, we enclosed the alfresco area at one end of the spine to create more internal space. The kitchen was extended into this new space, morphing into a bar. A large picture window and daybed replaced what was a dead end, while a new fireplace and lounge area adjoining the kitchen created additional living space

The result - overall concept:

Employing a palette of natural materials, textures and colours, we have brought clarity to the original form and function of the house by removing extraneous detail, redefining zones, and introducing a more cohesive dialogue between the spaces, both internal and external.

Most importantly, the redesign maximises the home's connection to the landscape, with ocean and natural bushland views from almost every room.





In studying the existing plan, we saw a way to rearrange and re-structure the plan so as to provide the extra functional areas required whilst imbuing the main circulation spine of the home with a series of landscape vignettes.



The plasterboard ceiling at this end of the house accentuated what is a low ceiling height. To counter this, we replaced it with slatted timber making the compression of the space feel more deliberate, whilst creating intimacy and warmth, and better defining the area by providing a material and spatial contrast to the adjoining main living room.

The vaulted ceiling in the central living area was retained and extended. The awkward sunken living room floor was raised to the same level as the adjoining spaces.





At the opposite end of the central circulation spine, the laundry was relocated from the end of the axis and replaced with a glazed entranceway opening onto a master bedroom addition.



External treatment:

Externally, the façade fronting the road was clad in silver-top ash slats. This had the effect of unifying the building forms and reducing the visual impact of the awkward detailing and irregular shaped windows.

At the rear, charred slats were used to clad the façade of the central living space, while floor-to-ceiling glazing was added to maximise natural lighting and views.





The infinity edge pool projects outwards from the main structure, creating an almost seamless visual connection to the distant treetops. The sunken outdoor living space adjoining the pool protects the sightlines from inside and reinforces the connection to the landscape.



The whisky hut:

There was an unused ornamental lake on the property, so we came up with the idea of a “whisky hut” with a style reminiscent of the main house. To the credit of our clients, they loved the idea and the hut, originally conceived as a folly, actually served to visually connect this small but beautiful body of water to the main house and made the property feel more cohesive.

A quote from the owners:

“We love that three bodies of water: the ocean, the lake and an infinity pool, are visualised from the main living areas, yet don’t compete. The ocean and natural bushland views from almost every room connect you to the ever changing landscape, which makes working from the office or just relaxing by the fire a unique experience.”

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Thankyou:

Thankyou for taking the time to download and read this case study.

We understand that working on a renovation or new build with an architect can be both exciting but sometimes a little daunting. We love working closely with our clients and are happy to explain our process to minimise the unknowns and build a sense of security in the process.

If you have a renovation or new build in mind, we would love to get to know you and understand more about your project.

Call us or email us and lets start the conversation.

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