

Architect Sam Crawford has devised a rigorously modern extension to an existing inter-war house in Sydney,

HIDDEN TREASURE

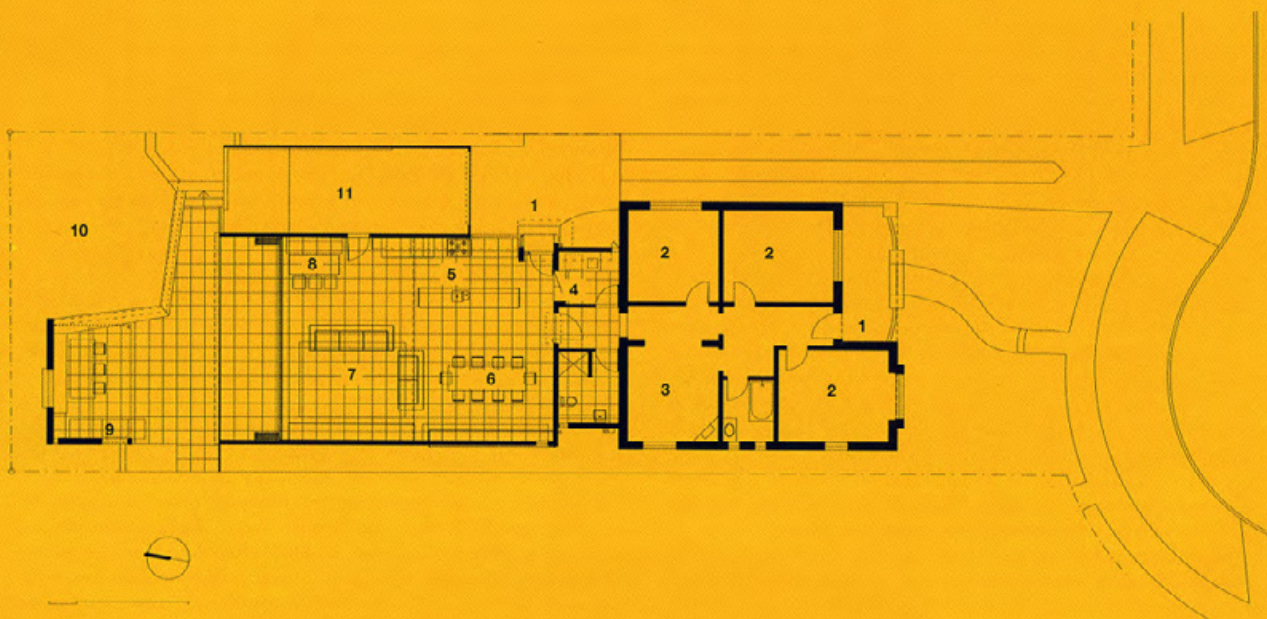
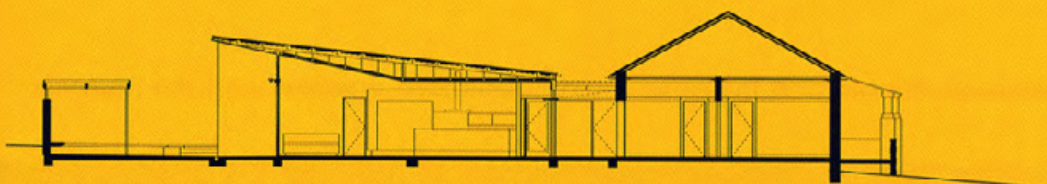


taking care to preserve the integrity of the old bungalow while fusing the new onto the rear of the building.





PREVIOUS PAGES: The crisp whiteness of the living space is relieved by carefully edited blocks of colour such as the vivid red splashback in the kitchen.
THIS PAGE, OPPOSITE: At the rear of the site, the barbeque and outdoor seating area is sheltered by a canopy made from varied timber battens.



- 1 Entry
- 2 Existing bedroom
- 3 Media room
- 4 Laundry
- 5 Kitchen
- 6 Dining
- 7 Living
- 8 Breakfast
- 9 Barbeque
- 10 Garden
- 11 Garage

“the contrast between the old and the new couldn’t be more marked, and the journey

A QUIET CUL-DE-SAC LINED with inter-war bungalows in an equally quiet inner-western suburb of Sydney: could this possibly be the right address, I wonder? Hidden somewhere behind these dark-brick facades and manicured front gardens apparently lurks a starkly modern renovation by one of Sydney’s brightest young architects, Sam Crawford. But there’s no sign of it from the street – something the local council would no doubt have insisted upon. After all, these bungalows are strictly heritage-listed.

But wait – a glimpse of sculptural cacti and succulents in a bed at the end of one driveway looks interestingly out of place, and so beckons. And on reaching the end of the driveway the horticultural hint proves its worth and the hidden treasure is revealed: a sleek new fibro-clad extension and matching garage, both painted white, joined to the old house by a soft lime green fibro-clad link. There’s something about the juxtaposition of materials, styles and colours that’s exciting but, at the same time, not entirely out of place. Perhaps it’s because in choosing fibro Sam took his cue from the existing structure.

“There was an old fibro skillion verandah on the back of the house, with a kitchen off one end of it,” he explains. “Essentially we’ve replaced it with a larger skillion addition, also in fibro – the idea being to make a much bigger verandah space. Obviously there’s a lot more to it than that, but the new addition does reflect what was there.”

The form of the extension – comprising a large open-plan kitchen, living and dining area – is indeed like a giant verandah, opening to a north-facing back garden. “It’s a relatively big space but, on the other hand, not when you have to fit a kitchen, dining room, living area and breakfast area into it, so we wanted it to be all white so that it felt spacious. The addition is about the same size as the original front half of the house but, by today’s standards, it’s still not a huge house.”

Spacious it does feel though, due to the dazzling white interior and the amount of light that floods through the bank of folding glass doors in the end north-facing wall and a clerestory window to the west that frames the view of a deciduous tree in a neighbouring yard.

The all-white colour scheme is alleviated by touches of primary colour, which inject a playful sense of fun. As well as the bright red glass splashback in the kitchen there’s the concealed coloured lighting (which can be switched from red to blue or white) under the twin credenzas that were also designed by the architect. When switched on, the coloured glow reflects onto the tiles below, giving the impression that the furniture is floating on a cushion of coloured vapour. Cut-out niches at either end of the reconstituted stone island bench are also treated with colour – at one end canary yellow; at the other, cherry red. Again concealed lights within the niches allow these spaces to glow after dark. “The coloured niche gives relief to what is otherwise a very solid element,” explains Sam.

One final flourish of colour is to be found on the inside legs of the laminated ply table that Sam designed for the breakfast area. It snuggles up to a white leather banquette with additional storage space hidden under its seat cushions.

The contrast between the two parts of the house – the old and the new – couldn’t be more marked, and the journey through the house from the front entry to the new rear addition has been carefully orchestrated to maximise the effect. Inter-war bungalows are characterised by their small windows, overhanging eaves and compact room sizes. In the front part of the house, patterned plaster ceilings and dark-stained timber trims set a quiet, handcrafted tone. On the far side of the original dining room a rebuilt hallway hints at what’s to come, leading the way between a new bathroom on one side and a laundry on the other. Here the ceilings have been deliberately kept on much the same plane as those in the original part of the house, but clerestory windows in the walls that border the hallway allow the service rooms to share their light with the thoroughfare. At the far end, a boxed horizontal shelf above the doorway into the new addition sits at the same height as the plaque rails.

“The shelf creates a really low feeling, so when you come into the back of the house you get a dramatic change, a transition,” says Sam. “We often use low-ceilinged spaces to provide a link.”

The focus of the light-filled rear addition is firmly towards the north-facing garden. Sam capitalised on the ideal aspect by tilting the roof up at an angle of just over 30 degrees to catch the winter sun but exclude the summer rays. A row of glass louvres above the large folding doors allows the room to be ventilated at night, as well as partially screening a very suburban view of 1980s brick units built on the adjacent uphill block. “We considered running the doors up to the ceiling, which would have been quite a beautiful gesture, but having this beam here helps to focus your attention away from the neighbouring properties, and down and out to the garden.”

Dark tiles were chosen for the floor to maximise the room’s solar performance. They extend outside to line up with two boundary walls which project out from the house, expanding the indoor-outdoor idea.

A covered outdoor entertaining area just a few paces away is paved in lighter, speckled tiles. The pavilion reads like a contemporary version of a 1950s picnic shelter, the kind found dotting seaside parks up and down the coast. It’s kitted out with stylish outdoor furniture and fitted with a slick stainless steel bench that supports a matching barbeque. A square cut-out in its rear wall frames a view of the plants in the bed behind, providing a sense of depth, while the concrete retaining wall that borders the space has been continued around the edge of the lawn, its broad top providing additional seating.

“I wanted the house and the outdoor eating area to feel like one,” Sam explains. “The house’s roof does two things – it lifts up to the sun and the side walls frame and almost enclose the outdoor space. The roof has a really strong presence – when you’re outside it’s almost as though you are under it as well, even though you’re not. And the fact that the outdoor area is furnished means it feels like part of the living space.”

Every Boxing Day the owner of the house plays host to his large, extended, Italian family and now, thanks to the renovations, everyone gets a seat. **JENNA REED BURNS**

THESE PAGES: At night the new living space, the lawn and the outdoor entertaining pavilion unite to become a great facility for large-scale casual entertaining. From the street the house gives nothing away, in keeping with council guidelines in this heritage-controlled suburb.

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ARCHITECT

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PRACTICE PROFILE

The practice specialises in
houses and boutique apartment
buildings.

PROJECT TEAM

Sam Crawford, Jolyon Sykes

BUILDER

owner

CONSULTANTS

Engineer Dennis Cornell
Landscaping 360°
Interiors, lighting, joinery
Sam Crawford Architects

PRODUCTS

Roofing Lysaght Spandek
Hi-Ten, CSR Bradford Thermofoil
sarking; CSR Bradford Anticon
R2.0 bulk insulation; Villaboard to
soffits **External walls** 6 mm fc
sheet, Dulux Weathershield; steel
frame and 150 mm cold-formed
steel stud and nogging **Internal
walls** Plasterboard, painted
Dulux Wash 'n' Wear 'Vivid White';
CSR Bradford Rockwool sound
insulation; timber frame **Windows
and doors** Capral natural
anodised aluminium frames; Breezway
Altair louvers **Flooring** Concrete
slab; Bisazza 500 x 50 vitrified
tile **Lighting** Louis Poulsen dining
room pendant; Megalit
downlights; Studio Italia exterior
uplights; Hunza spotlights
Kitchen Smeg oven, cooktop;
Pinnal barbecue; Qasair
rangehood; Miele dishwasher
Bathroom Vola taps; Caroma
Leda sanitaryware; Caroma Liano
basin; Cosmic Logic and
Madinoz accessories;
Smartstone 'Gelsomino' bench;
Aussie Glass splashback
External elements Urbanstone
'Type 100' shotblast finish **Other**
Breakfast bench and table
designed by Sam Crawford
and made by Clairemont Joinery

TIME SCHEDULE

Design, documentation

12 months

Construction 12 months

SITE SIZE

464 m²

PROJECT COST

\$300,000 (inc. landscaping)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Brett Boardman

RIGHT: The bathroom is in
the transitional zone between
the original dining room and
the new extension.

