Kennedy Nolan Architects has and even (occasionally) shock. street. Recently, Melbourne

# urban sublime

# JAMES STREET HOUSE, 1999

This project involved alterations and additions in order to recycle and convert an existing Edwardian house into a modern family home. The existing house was internalized and shunned its immediate environment. We aimed to reclaim and make use of the whole site. Reorienting the house to a more logical street frontage was fundamental in providing flexibility to the rigid plan. Public and private functions were separated into discrete zones and new, eccentric forms were created to provide privacy, visual interest and delight. It was important that the interior allow a range of experiences - dark and cosy, airy and bright, soft and hard - and that the client's interest in intense colour be represented in the palette. The reorganized site provides a variety of outdoor rooms that can grow with the client and alter their experience of the house. This project succeeds both as a portrait of the client, and as a highly specific response to its site.



- Sitting 5
- 6 Bedroor
- Study 8 Laundry



Ground floo



### Marcus Baumgart: You started Kennedy Nolan Architects in 1999. What brought you together? Patrick Kennedy: We'd known each other for quite some time. We'd been at university together and we're both from regional Victoria and New South Wales. I'm from Wodonga and Rachel's from Albury, across the border. We also started in the same practice.

### MB: Which practice was that?

**PK:** For Victoria Hamer in Carlton. We worked there together for a few years and we started our own practice because we had a similar way of thinking about work, about architecture.

Rachel Nolan: I also worked for Joe because it is a very handmade, Toscano. Victoria and Ioe were from Graham Gunn's stable. whose work we also liked. I think what happens with small practice is it leads to more small practice.

**PK:** When you're young it's a good time to start your own practice

because in your 20s you're most socially active. We're hermits now, but at the time we met a lot of people and did a lot of things.

**RN:** And we were not financially overly committed, so we could take a risk. We had the space, we had a few jobs and we always felt passionate about the same things.

### MB: What aspects of Graham Gunn's work were of interest to you?

**PK:** The social program of Merchant Builders we found very interesting as well as the aesthetic and programmatic elements of brutalism. Graham probably came closer to it than anyone else in Victoria. We were drawn to it handcrafted form of modernism.

**RN:** And we both grew up in the country with families who enjoyed gardening. In the Merchant Builders projects there was always that relationship with Australian native planting – large-scale

planting and how the house sat within it. That excited us.

**PK:** That whole period [1970s] is an exciting time in Australian architecture, not because the quality of the buildings is necessarily amazing, but because the houses were new and quite modest. The likes of Gunn were also pushing boundaries – they were interested in being socially and aesthetically progressive.

### MB: I'd like to explore this idea of brutalism, because I think people seeing your projects would be quite surprised to hear you talk fondly about a movement known for such brutal buildings.

**PK:** It's true that classic 1970s brutalism is not obviously present in our work. It's not primarily what we're interested in doing, and it's still deeply unpopular in the general community. But it's an approach that we find interesting - the great brutalist buildings have progressive programs.

What they're trying to do is make a better world.

### MB: So it's quite a utopian project?

**PK:** Yes. Also, they're exciting to look at because they engage that architectural idea of the sublime. We try and make houses that are as modest as they can be. This is difficult for clients at times, but that's what we're interested in and the architectural expression of it, in terms of brutalism, is based on this idea of sculptural, hermetic, composed volumes and handcrafted objects.

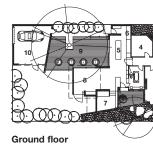
Some of our projects illustrate this more than others. The Duke Street House in Richmond is a good example. We try and make a plastic object out of different materials, the way the brutalists did with concrete.

MB: In your description of the George Street Houses you talk about the transition from daylight to evening. Can you tell me more about that? **RN:** George Street was a >

# STANILAND AVE

This was another brief calling for alterations and additions to an existing Edwardian house. A view of Australian native trees in a park, and the use of Castlemaine slate as a key building material, provided a sober and calm palette of tertiary colours. In terms of design, the aim was to combine diverse colours and textures in such a way that together they appear consistent and harmonious. The influence is the Australian bush, which adeptly combines green, red and white to create a surprisingly subtle and tranquil whole. The interior melds with the exterior, the lawn rolls into carpet, exterior walls become interior walls, trees are constantly visible (framed by extensive windows) and colour is modified by texture.





curious one in terms of the constraints we had. We wanted to leave the existing building as it was on the ground, because otherwise we were going to have to conform to new setbacks. So in terms of the development we knew what we had to deal with. We wanted the corner to be quite sculptural, and in the grey area between residential and commercial

Lighting is another device we thought we would explore with that project. We were restricted, by money, to using a lightweight material so we massed it together to make it look a bit more abstract. The windows were grouped, we kept walls blank where we could and we really were playing with form. Employing yellow light was a fun exploration, and how it changed the mass of the building at night.

PK: The main architectural conceit was that in order to achieve the mass we wanted and to get the

windows that we needed, we used a lantern device – timber battens that during the day appear like walls, but at night become diaphanous. The building turns quite transparent when the light differential changes to the inside.

**RN:** With a building, you need to identify the main problems to overcome. What's the architectural solution that's required? This is a major theme in our work. We'll ask, what's the real problem with this site, how do we solve that? Our projects have always sought to provide an architectural solution. They're not just a building that works for the client, and it's not just about an aesthetic. They've got to solve something.

MB: Can you give me examples? **RN**: George Street is a good example. The result was a solution for how people can get privacy and live in that density, and how you can also get

## KENNEDY NOLAN IN PROFILE



**RIGHT: Diverse colours** and textures, inspired by native garden surrounds, blend harmoniously in Kennedy Nolan's Staniland Avenue house

interesting vertical space, but still have a terrace as well.

**PK:** As a completely different example, the Lovely Banks House solves a problem – one of those being the brief. The clients wanted a period-style homestead, which we weren't going to do. They are very open-minded people so we were able to work out a new aesthetic with them, but in a sense that initial brief requirement pushed us into new territory. We looked at historic homesteads and what made them successful and unsuccessful. Through this process we realized that the main thing about a with a large area around it, is that it is an object "in the round". This homestead form actually gave us some interesting cues – we found some of those rural forms really different and beguiling and we wanted to have a go at them ourselves.

**RN:** Also the big problem at Lovely Banks is that it's all cleared, nasty old farmland with big skies, and all the houses they showed us were massive, but from a distance were just shapeless. Distance reduced their appearance to a big long block. What we were trying to do is give the house scale from a distance. The Lovely Banks House was kind of unpopular, at the time. But we've always really loved this building, and the clients loved it. At the beginning we thought maybe we're not going to be able to deliver something that these guys are going to be really happy with, but they loved it, because house in the middle of a paddock, they built it with their bare hands too, there was a joy in that as well.

> MB: It's difficult, when you're used to working in a modern idiom, to come up against a desire for the historical. **PK:** I think that was our second year of practice, or something, so we weren't really in a position to be too choosy about our >

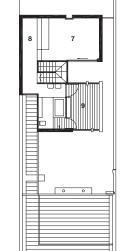


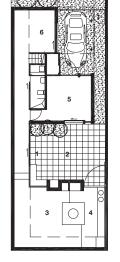


# DUKE STREET HOUSE, 1999

This is a two-bedroom (plus study) house on a very small block of land in Richmond (8 m x 20 m). Essentially, it's a courtyard house with a suite of rooms that are flexible enough to provide for a variety of dwelling options. The project is distinctive for the rigour of its planning and for the thematic development of an aesthetic. This house is not about space defined by planes, rather it is a collection of volumes. The materials and absence of colour reinforce the architectural concept. Interior walls are the same as exterior walls and are perceived, defining a volume. Interior space is devolved into exterior space through large openings, a wall opens as a door, a window acts as a wall, a room becomes a balcony. The building's interior and exterior volumes are commensurate in proportion, the entire site is the house. This house integrates programmatic requirements with the development of an aesthetic and the accommodation of various amenities, such that these factors are inseparable, and this is the success of the architectural concept.







Ground floor

LEFT: Conceived as a collection of volumes.

the Duke Street house

enables flexible use of space. RIGHT: Materials

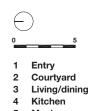
architectural concept. FAR RIGHT Bigorous

of the compact site.

planning makes best use

and the absence of colour reinforce the

Upper floor



Music Office

Bedroom Walk-in robe

Deck

projects at that time. We've been fortunate, we've never had a project we couldn't proceed with. We couldn't have proceeded if they had insisted on a Victorian homestead, but actually this particular brief constraint was incredibly fruitful for us.

MB: It certainly stands out in your folio as being a house that plays much more with the figurative forms of the archetypal house. Whereas a lot of what you've done is explicitly abstract. **PK:** To a certain extent. At the time we were very interested in [the late Melbourne architect] Guilford Bell, who did beautifully refined, reduced domestic forms. There's an element of that interest in that house.

### MB: You can see it in the fenestration and the depth of shadow under the eaves.

**RN:** And he understood how a house sits on a lawn, too.

**PK:** His houses were basically

Australian manifestations of the English stately home. He understood about the program, hierarchy and function of a house, and how these are expressed in archetypal forms. We were interested in that because this is quite an old part of Victoria – it has been settled for a long time. We were very interested in other  $\operatorname{rural}\,buildings$  in the area and the  $\quad$  if you had the budget you would do way they sit in a bare landscape.

**RN:** We were also coming out of an architecture school that was about new bush housing "touching the earth lightly", whereas the Lovely Banks House was not about that at all.

**PK:** In Victoria it's very hard to identify with Glenn Murcutt and while I admire his work enormously I don't know that it's climatically appropriate for here. It wasn't appropriate for the Lovely Banks site, which goes from freezing cold to scorching hot. We needed a different approach.

MB: I think the other difference between your work and Murcutt's is that he pursues a very different sense of making. There's a manufactured precision and refinement to his details that is very different from the way you resolve and refine detail. **RN:** Different budgets.

MB: Certainly, but I suspect that even something that feels much more handmade – and this comes back to your brutalist argument, doesn't it? **PK:** Yes, it's true that we're not particularly interested in highly manufactured environments in domestic architecture. There's something reassuring about being able to understand the way a building's made, which is why we do a lot of timber buildings carpentry is a really good way of expressing that.

**RN:** That being said, we also do quite highly decorated interiors.

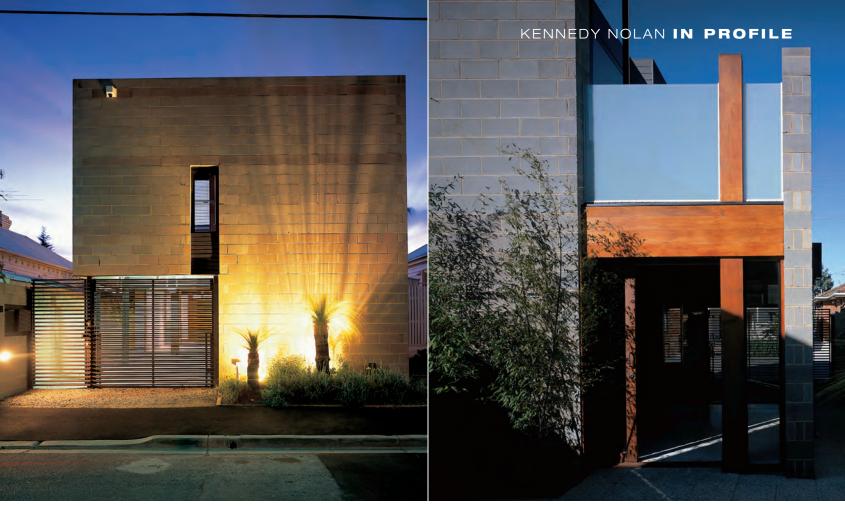
**PK:** Yes, but that's all part of it,

isn't it? It's part of the crafting of our buildings.

### MB: Colour and texture are very important to your work. Can you give me some examples of projects where that has emerged?

PK: Colour and texture usually strongly reflect the client. The Charnwood Road House is an intensely and vividly coloured interior and we've had a lot of involvement in selecting and designing furniture, and specially dyed carpets. It provides a fairly specific portrait of that client. In that sense, it's pure decoration, but it was very interesting for us because we had to make that work in with how we did the house. We asked, how do we inject this sense of excitement and vigour and colour and texture into the house without the awful "feature wall syndrome"? We needed to make it integral to the whole building.

The complete opposite of that, aesthetically, is the Duke >



Street House, which is all face concrete blocks and white terrazzo and black carpet and black painted timber. For us the texture of concrete block is enormously appealing, really velvety and soft. It was a different kind of approach to colour and texture. It looks like a building which probably doesn't have any colour in it, but actually white, black and grey are used carefully as colours through the building.

MB: With a number of your projects you've had to do that process of unpicking an existing structure. The Easey Street House, for example. **RN:** Easey Street was probably the one that required the least unpicking, because it was basically two rooms left of the worker's cottage. It was tiny and we had a big bloke as the client. Usually people come to you with too much brief, too much stuff to fit in the building. This client wanted to live in it by himself. so he wasn't worried about

number of ways. It's delightful going back to that house, because it's lovely and hard and robust and massive on the ground floor. But from this neutral palette of natural materials, you go upstairs and it is a full-on green at the top. We tend to avoid floorboards, often at all costs.

### MB: Why is that?

PK: I don't mind the aesthetic of timber floors, I love the colour. It's just the noise. Acoustics are enormously important to us. It's hard to control noise with floorboards.

**RN:** So we often use natural stone. Or, the bedroom suite at Easey

immediate resale value and so on. What's lovely about Easey Street is that it's quite a modernist plan on the ground floor. We try and use all the boundaries as edges to the inside rooms, we tried to make every bit of that site useful to him, so he can use it in a

Street has a brilliant green carpet and walls that match. We treated the upstairs like a single, big, abstract gesture. It was a great brief and it was very realistic, and maybe not necessarily one I could defend in terms of resale, but it was a really terrific conversion.

### MB: It's refreshing to hear of a client being interested in living in the house, rather than being constricted by concerns about its resale value. **RN:** That's often something which we discuss with our clients, and sometimes they are scared of getting less. We try and convince them that the modest solution can be a better house. We'll have solved something in a way which we thought was almost unachievable and they'll say, "but it needs to be bigger, it needs to be this many squares". They don't know what they want to do with the other squares. It's something

**PK:** It's alarming that houses are

we really enjoy challenging.

getting bigger and bigger. Look at the trajectory of housing in terms of visual appearance and size quality is going down, the only thing that's going up is size. This is disturbing and really negative.

### MB: Something you mentioned earlier was the idea of the house being a portrait of the inhabitants.

**RN:** Yes, that was in reference to the James Street House. It was our first house, and got us our first award. It was a small budget - \$180,000 - but this was a house on a corner block and we proposed an architectural solution to that ongoing problem. how houses sit on a corner block. The clients have a beautiful sense of aesthetics, they both love colour and texture and are very creative. The female half of the couple used to live in a Merchant Builders house growing up, so there was a great understanding between us – we didn't have to do a lot of research into doing the portrait of that client. >

# GEORGE STREET RESIDENCES, 2000

This project called for three new three-storey residences in an existing single-storey factory building. The existing factory building remains as a memory of the light industrial history of this corner site in Fitzroy. The new building clearly expresses a change of use for its site and represents the evolution of an inner city suburb. The new form that grows from this ground-floor masonry plinth is lightweight yet muscular in its form, blank in daylight, becoming delicate and transparent in the night. This project is the clients' first speculative development, and as such the building was required to demonstrate clearly their commitment to innovative, high quality architecture. The brief resulted in a building that is bold and enigmatic. It challenges the viewer to look up and decipher the meaning and inner workings behind the silent, sober forms, and transforms at night into a series of lanterns – equally mysterious but also public-spirited in their welcoming illumination. The project is part of a series of buildings from this practice which attempt to reinterpret brutalism in architecture, seeking to capture the strength and drama of brutalist form and emphasize the texture and luxury of blank surfaces and the trajectory of a building from day into night.



5 Garage Entry Study Bedroom Laundry

6 Garden 7 Living 8 Kitchen 9 Dining 10 Deck

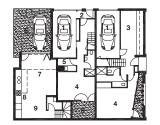
11 Void



Second floor



First floor



Ground floor

**PK**: The house not only says a lot about the client's interests, but is also flexible enough for them to inhabit it in a way that fits them perfectly. They've grown into it.

## MB: Staniland Avenue is another Edwardian. What were its challenges?

valuable collection of antique a museum-like state in the front rooms. But the clients didn't want to live among it. They found it all a bit gloomy. They asked for a glass box in the back – a standard conservatory (not a form that we find remotely interesting) – so we thought, how do we do this thing at the back? We were really interested in the site because it backed onto a park which is full of native trees. The site itself had a generous side boundary and we saw an excellent opportunity to create a dualistic house in such a way that you can never see the two elements together at the same time. We looked at the

Edwardian form of the giant bay window and how we could incorporate a large existing tree into the interior. We also looked at ways of hiding the services and new parts of the house with big garden walls in bookleaf stone.

PK: The biggest challenge was the<br/>valuable collection of antique<br/>furniture that had to be housed in<br/>a museum-like state in the front<br/>rooms. But the clients didn't want<br/>to live among it. They found it all<br/>a bit gloomy. They asked for a<br/>glass box in the back – a standardRN: This was our first "fancy<br/>finish" house, a lot more<br/>expensive than, say, James Street,<br/>with a small amount of additional<br/>floor area. This was more about<br/>an exploration of – what was the<br/>phrase we coined at the time? –<br/>"glamorous ocean liner".

With us, planning is about reduction, every single time. It's about how we can make it look less – which is so nice when you finally crack the plan and it seems there's not much going on.

# MB: Do you use models very much in the design process?

**PK:** About half the time. Sometimes a model can work against you because it's hard for clients to perceive them – if it's alterations and additions, it's all about interior volume often, and junction between inside and outside, so if you're looking at the top of a roof it means nothing.

**RN:** Sometimes the client doesn't know what's going on in the plans, and then a model is useful. It's intriguing how people read plans differently. It's something you've got to work out as an architect pretty quickly – that is, whether clients are getting it or not. Design development is always something our clients can engage with much more easily than sketch design.

### MB: Why is that?

**RN:** I guess because they can relate to kitchens and bathroom materials and "real" things. But we try to avoid what you could call the "lifestyle trap".

**PK:** We try to de-emphasize the role of kitchens and bathrooms in our buildings, too. Some

architecture can tend to "congeal" around these elements and it can suck the life of a project dry. These are very important rooms, but they shouldn't be trophy pieces.

### MB: So you tuck the services away?

**PK:** Yes. We like to use spaces like "butlers' pantries" and other devices like that. It's the idea of having "served and serving" spaces. It injects a level of dignity into the way you can live in a house when you don't have everything out on show.

Another obsession of ours is that we dislike it when the house ends and you look up and all you see are clothes lines, bins, garage doors and paling fences. Our approach is to inject some dignity into how these houses inhabit their sites. This means designing the site, rather than just the actual building.

**RN:** We often work with landscape architects, but we always also

THIS PAGE: By night, the former factory's sober exterior is transformed into a series of mysterious lanterns. OPPOSITE: Texture and luxurious blank surfaces feature in each of the three-storey residences.



# KENNEDY NOLAN IN PROFILE



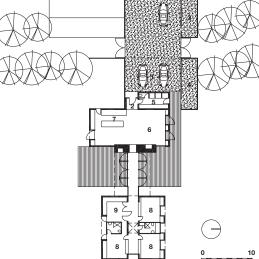


# LOVELY BANKS HOUSE, 2000

The aim was to create a robust family house, responding to its rural setting, that would be the centre of an organic process of growth across the whole site. We wanted to create a powerful relationship between the new house and its landscape. The architectural forms aim to reference rural building types (barns, hops kilns) and to be mythic and inscrutable. The planning of the house draws on pastoral traditions, formalizing and separating space, and focuses on the ambiguous interstitial space that blurs inside and outside - the verandah. Although the house sits massively on the land, it has a low impact on the environment, recycling grey water, using passive solar principles and utilizing a cooling tower. This house is sited so that, in time, it will form the focus for a driveway lined by lemon-scented eucalypts, a kitchen garden, a car court, a hedged room, an autumn forest, a horse paddock, a lawn, an orchard and reforested Australian bush.

The key design aim was to make a relationship between the house and the landscape. The austere context suggested a similarly austere and muscular response. The house is monumental and evokes primitive rural forms. Its appearance is massive and rustic, with deep reveals, abstracted fenestration and expressed natural materials inside and out.





Ground floor

1	Garage
2	Entry
3	Saddlery
4	Drying court
5	Laundry
6	Living
7	Kitchen
8	Bedroom
-	- · ·

•	Dealoo
9	Study

**OPPOSITE, ABOVE: The** house's monumental form references traditional rural building types, enhanced by prominent verandahs. **BELOW:** With time. lemon-scented eucalypts will line the drive leading to the house. THIS PAGE, LEFT: Strong, simple design gestures enhance the feeling of spaciousness in the Easey Street House. RIGHT: The design blurs lines between indoor and outdoor spaces.

(-)

1 Study 2 Kitchen

- 3 Dining
- 4 Living 5 Bedroom

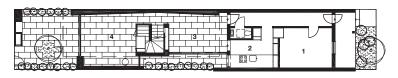
6 Robe

# EASEY STREET HOUSE, 2002

The project involved alterations and additions to a single-storey Victorian worker's cottage in Collingwood. The concept behind this project focused on converting the residence from small to big, from dark to light, from utilitarian to luxurious. Design gestures were kept strong, simple and large, while an aesthetic of abstraction was employed to help blur typical domestic scale. The team used every square metre of the title to maximize the sense of space. In addition, the new house captures views from beyond the site. Spaces within were designed to be discrete without being turned into rooms.



### Upper floor



# CHARNWOOD ROAD HOUSE, 2004

The aim was to improve the amenity of a large but awkwardly arranged house - improving natural light, privacy, acoustics, zoning and the relationship with the garden. These aims were to be integrated with an aesthetic that would enliven the existing dour interwar house and reflect the clients' idiosyncratic interests. A series of architectural interventions were undertaken, including demolition, new built elements, joinery and extensive interior finishing - all with a strong focus on colour, texture and modulation of light quality. The aesthetic approaches were essentially colourdriven and were informed by, and reflect, distinct uses.

LEFT: Work at the **Charnwood Road House** focused on the distinctive use of colour, texture and modulation of light. **BIGHT** The dwelling's enlivened interior reflects the clients' idiosyncratic interests



have our own external concept for each project.

MB: I've heard you say that you like to pursue a multidisciplinary approach to architecture. I understand you've worked with graphic designers? **PK:** We are interested in the graphic possibilities within a building. Perhaps it's a little grandiose to characterize it that way, but what it means is looking at pattern and symbols and forms and shapes of different buildings.

MB: We've talked about houses in inner-urban environments and we've talked about Lovely Banks as a house in a rural environment. Do you have any comments to make about what it means to bring a particular language to a suburban environment? **PK:** The approach to the suburban environment is a fairly significant preoccupation of Melbourne architects, but it is not a preoccupation which either of us is particularly interested in.

**RN:** The suburban is a larger scale of what happens in the inner city. You've still got your two side boundaries and you're sharing your back boundary as well. So it's the same problem.

**PK:** We don't think about how we're going to engage with a suburb – we look at the site. We ask, how do we engage the client and how do we engage this site? How do we make an environment which is private, which fulfils their brief, which has good acoustics, which makes the people creativity of the architect that live in it interact in a positive way? Having grown up in the country, too, we're rather obsessed with devolving boundaries. I hate the idea of looking out onto three paling fences. I find it dispiriting and not at all romantic.

### MB: What advice would you give a potential client who is thinking of engaging an architect? **PK:** They should use us [laughs]!

**RN:** They should listen to their architect. I think the best advice is that when they're finding the going difficult, they need to have faith. We've been lucky that way. It's important that people trust the process and the architect.

**PK:** You've got to trust the advice you're paying for – you should enjoy the creativity of the process and understand that what you're paying for is something which is entirely bespoke, that is entirely tailored to you and uses the you've selected.

**RN:** It would be a huge shock for us (and probably disappointing) if, after we present sketch design, a client says that is exactly what they were hoping for. If they're engaging an architect there should be a sense that, "I couldn't have imagined that, but that fits what we're after". That is the joy of the process. Also the other thing is clients really have to be

prepared to hold on tight, because it can be pretty tough.

MB: You two have a great rapport. Does that make it easier for clients? **RN:** Yes, having the two of us always helps. It's like ...

PK: ... I'm vile and Rachel builds bridges [laughs].

**RN:** That is not true! But when there's two of you ... it's just easier for people to pop over when there's two. The client might have a closer connection with one of us. It's always worked well with us that way. And it helps you to line up the jobs, although Pat has had most on his shoulders for the last four years since I've been having children. With residential architecture, you're often dealing with relationships and between the two of us there's usually one who can solve an issue. That's a really nice reason for being in partnership if you can find the right person. H



# KENNEDY NOLAN IN PROFILE

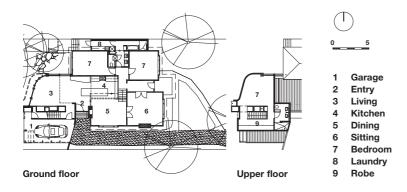




# THE RIGHI, 2003

This was an alterations and additions project to transform and modernize an interwar timber house. The most striking elements of the site are the established European trees and sloping terrain. The programmatic aim was to engage the interior very directly with the ground plane and to retain as much building fabric as possible. The architectural response had to address these aims while also making a house that is exciting and enjoyable to inhabit.

The approach was to lower the floor of the existing house to ground level, creating dramatic ceiling height, a sense of transition through the house, and direct physical and visual interaction with the garden. Colours, textures and materials were chosen for richness and intensity, drawing on the autumn palette of the existing garden. Glazing divisions on the living room are designed to abstract the appearance of tree trunks, and to blur the delineation of garden to interior. The new forms are restrained, dark, glossy and enigmatic, affording privacy and refinement and downplaying the presence of substantial new built form. Programmatic priorities played out in plan place emphasis on privacy, quiet and retreat.



ABOVE: Dark, glossy and enigmatic forms become striking new elements in this transformation of an existing timber house into a modern family home.

### Contact details

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### Featured projects

James Street House, 1999 Staniland Avenue House, 1999 Duke Street House, 1999 Lovely Banks, 2000 George Street Residences, 2000 Easey Street House, 2002 The Righi, 2003 Charnwood Road House, 2004

### Awards (selected)

2000 City of Stonnington Urban Design Award Residential – Alterations and Additions Staniland Avenue House 2000 RAIA (Victoria) Residential Award – Alterations and Additions James Street House 2004 RAIA (Victoria) Residential Award – Multiple Housing George Street Residences

### Publications (selected)

Making More of Small Spaces 2 by Stephen Crafti (Images Publishing, 2003) Out of the Square: Unique Contemporary Residences by Stephen Crafti (Images Publishing, 2006)

Photography: Derek Swalwell (Duke Street, George Street, The Righi, Charnwood); Emma Cross (James Street, Staniland Avenue, Easey Street); Kennedy Nolan Architects (Lovely Banks).

Marcus Baumgart practices architecture at Cox Architects and Planners in Melbourne. He also writes regularly for the design media.