

PROJECT N°

## 06

*City Frame*  
HOUSE  
by Coarchitecture

• BRISBANE, QLD •

A 1929 timber bungalow has been reconfigured to take advantage of its stunning spectacle, while retaining the romance of a Queenslander.

Words by [Margie Fraser](#)  
Photography by [Jon Linkins](#)

01 The new outdoor room features exposed bracing and deep shading, while carefully framing the city views beyond.





Despite its inner-urban location, Brisbane's New Farm is surprisingly suburban and even a little agrarian. Pleasing vestiges of early European settlement are evident in its remnant market gardens and in the charming stock of Victorian and Art Deco buildings. A veritable "Little Italy" still survives, courtesy of the many Sicilian migrants who called it home and set about crafting cheeses, curing meats and cultivating grapes. Backyard sheds and undercroft cellars served as grappa distilleries, chook pens and pig ovens, somewhat countering the area's claims to density and taking advantage of the rich soil of the riverside flood plains. Good coffee was well and truly on the agenda in New Farm decades before ersatz instant powders were abandoned in favour of freshly roasted Arabica beans.

Craig Channon and Dearn Detrick of Coarchitecture secured a patch of New Farm history when they purchased their 1929 timber bungalow. The triple-gabled home sits on top of one of the area's highest hills, enjoying both a north-easterly aspect and a fine surveillance point south-west to the city and Story Bridge. As is often the case with Brisbane's hilltop vantage points, the foreground of plunging gullies and winding streets is largely obliterated by dense foliage, leaving just a bunch of rusty red pyramid roofs spearing through the greenery. The stunning spectacle was somewhat ignored by the layout of the original home, where activities were focused

inwards. "We bought the place from an elderly Italian couple who'd lived here for forty years," explains Craig. "The city view was totally hidden by trellises in the backyard."

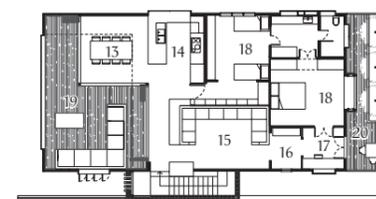
With ceilings entombed in plasterboard, and the kitchen subsumed by yellow laminex, it took Craig three months as owner-builder to strip the layers and reveal some of the building's original qualities. The couple has redeveloped the house and garden as a family home for themselves and their two sons, as well as incorporating a studio for their practice on the ground level.

Re-positioning the house close to the western boundary afforded maximum use of the site. With a lift up, a twist to straighten and a shift sideways, the full ten-metre site width could be used. A 6.5-metre firewall now delineates the eastern boundary and acts as an entry marker. Beginning at the laneway arrival point as a two-metre garden boundary wall, the finely crafted brick structure converts itself into a perforated tower that incorporates the interior entry foyer and stair. "Avoiding the typical Queenslander plan of a central entry point leading into a hallway gave us more living space inside," says Craig.

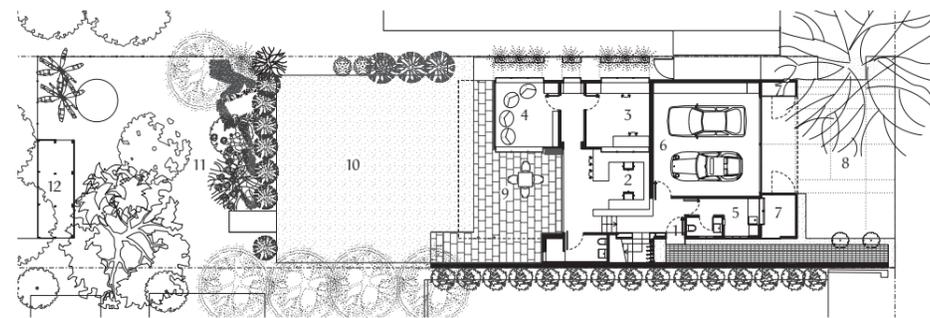
The entry tower is a memorable arrival point. Shafts of light penetrate the screen in an overblown pixelation. Breezes and rain are controlled by a series of pivoting vertical glass panels that sit discreetly inside the perforations. The tower is at once light well, chimney and



- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1 Entry       | 11 Orchard      |
| 2 Studio      | 12 Shed         |
| 3 Art         | 13 Dining       |
| 4 Games       | 14 Kitchen      |
| 5 Laundry     | 15 Lounge       |
| 6 Garage      | 16 Music        |
| 7 Store       | 17 Study        |
| 8 Games court | 18 Bedroom      |
| 9 Terrace     | 19 Outdoor room |
| 10 Lawn       | 20 Deck         |



First floor 1:400



Ground floor 1:400

02 The back wall has been replaced by a wall of operable glazing that opens to a grand outdoor room.

03 High-level glass louvres allow for ample ventilation and light to the living spaces.



**04** The rear elevation opens to a level patch of lawn, which conceals a 12,000-litre water tank.

**05** The pixelation of the entry tower allows shafts of light to penetrate the brick screen, while creating a memorable arrival point.

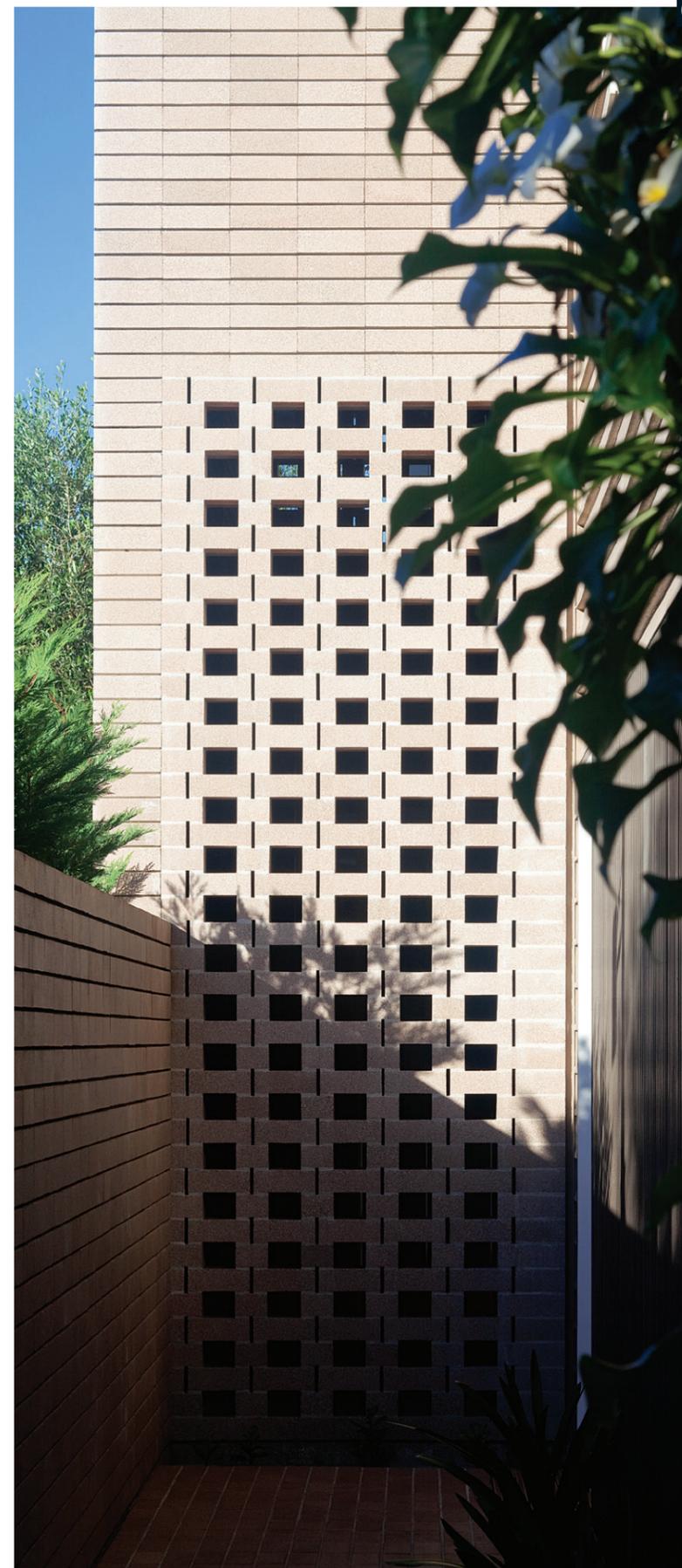
welcome beacon. A generously proportioned blackbutt stair folds its way up. The blackbutt also serves as connection point between the old weatherboards of the original exterior and the new bricks.

The bricks match the proportions and colour of the weatherboards, reducing the exterior to simple forms. The crisp effect is heightened by the mitred corners and non-visible mortar. Craig's collaboration with bricklayers Elvis and Rose also led to some delightful patterning and much painstaking sorting of bricks on site. It was, he says, "a bit like dental work."

A shell of VJs remains as interior walls and ceiling. Large joinery modules are inserted into the spaces as room dividers, storage units and walls, avoiding a big open plan. The back wall of the original home has been replaced by a wall of operable glazing that opens to a grand outdoor room. The room has all the romance of the Queensland, with its exposed bracing and deep shading. But the

main event is in what it frames so perfectly through a deep reveal: a view to the redeveloped garden and the spider web peaks of the Story Bridge.

The garden was crucial to the planning. It is both an adventure land for the couple's sons and a plot for a fledgling orchard and herb garden. A level patch of lawn was established at ground level, with easy access from children's play areas and the practice studio. It conceals a 12,000-litre water tank and is framed along the sides by trenches of tall plantings as privacy screens from neighbours. Across the lawn is a timber footbridge that fords a swale and provides easy access to the paths winding under and around the fruit trees and to a trampoline. The shed, which had once been the roosting place for chickens inherited from the previous owners, is now home to tools and lawnmowers. In time-honoured New Farm tradition, the scene is about as bucolic as a suburban landscape can be. 



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**Practice profile**  
A small, design-intensive practice specializing in residential and interior projects of all scales.

**Project team**  
Dearne Detrick, Craig Channon

**Builder**  
Noble Quality Homes

**Consultants**  
**Engineer:** A.D. Structure  
**Landscaping:** Arbour Essence  
**Bricklayers:** Elvis and Rose

**Products**  
**Roofing:** Existing roof, repainted with Dulux Weathershield; Fielders Snaplock roofing, Zinalume finish  
**External walls:** Weatherboards, painted Dulux Weathershield; Bowral dry-pressed brick, 'Simmental Silver'  
**Internal walls:** Pine VJ, painted Dulux 'Designer Silk'; plasterboard, Level 5 plaster with gloss paint  
**Windows:** Breezway louvres, clear anodized with painted hardwood frames; laminated glazing with translucent interlayer

**Doors:** Architectural Windows and Doors aluminium bifolds  
**Flooring:** Hanson Terracrete with Hiperfloor finish; Gympie blackbutt tongue-and-groove flooring with Feast Watson decking oil; ironbark hardwood decking  
**Lighting:** Custom Yellow Goat dining pendant; Megabay LED downlights and uplights, Erco LED facade lights and WEEF Metal Haide floodlights supplied by Raylinc

**Kitchen:** Corian Glacier White benchtops; 2-pac cupboard fronts; KWC Inox sink mixer  
**Bathroom:** Corian benchtop; Grohe mixers; Classic Ceramics Vogue wall tiles and dense sandstone; Rogerseller basins, toilets and accessories  
**External elements:** Architectural Ceramics Slate and Stone granite terrace tiles; Bowral 'Simmental Silver' dry-pressed brick

**Floor area**  
600 m<sup>2</sup> site  
330 m<sup>2</sup> floor

**Time schedule**  
**Design, documentation:** 9 months  
**Construction:** 14 months