



WINNER

Australian House of the Year

Bisley Place HOUSE

by James Russell Architect

• BRISBANE, QLD •

Few architects would possess the courage even to accept this brief. Fewer still would have applied fresh thinking to produce such an arresting outcome.

The bland, even gloomy context of a commonplace Australian suburban estate, surrounded by project houses, is unpropitious for an innovative gem. This design succeeds in creating opportunity where none seemingly existed. It does not repudiate the “Australian ugliness” context, but relies on the quintessential ordinariness of the streetscape to enrich the experience. It rethinks the possibilities that architecture offers Australian suburbia.

A nostalgic homage to early postwar Queensland, the house recalls a time when new models for subtropical living embraced the essence and immediacy of the elements; utilized natural ventilation, sliding doors and curtains, imbuing a sense of living outdoors; and made climatic consciousness a pleasure rather than a necessary duty.

This house’s entire front elevation generously opens to the street. Of four garage doors, two serve their usual purpose, while the other two provide staggeringly vast access to the kitchen and eating areas with deep views across the grassed court and shaded playroom beyond. Only a discreet single door provides conventional entry when privacy is necessitated.

This strategy deliberately invites community interaction, recalling a gentler era when children moved freely between neighbouring houses, parents untroubled by safety concerns.

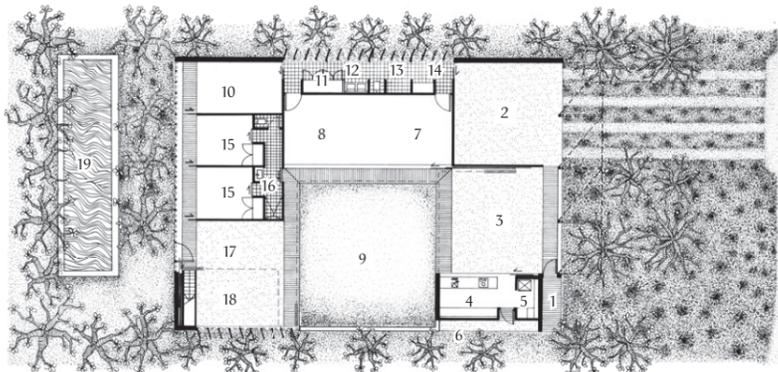
Standard materials requiring minimal applied finishes, used almost exclusively, and little decoration beyond varying brickwork bonds, are as refreshingly economical as the materials are hard-wearing. The absence of bespoke elements, and the pervasive sense of honesty which this instils, belies the highly disciplined structural approach of the design.

Occasionally you come across a project that stops you in your tracks. This is such a house. Robust, yet firmly grounded in the pleasures of living, it challenges the orthodoxies of brick-on-slab construction, rejecting the conventional agenda of isolating each allotment from its neighbourhood.

From the Houses Awards jury.

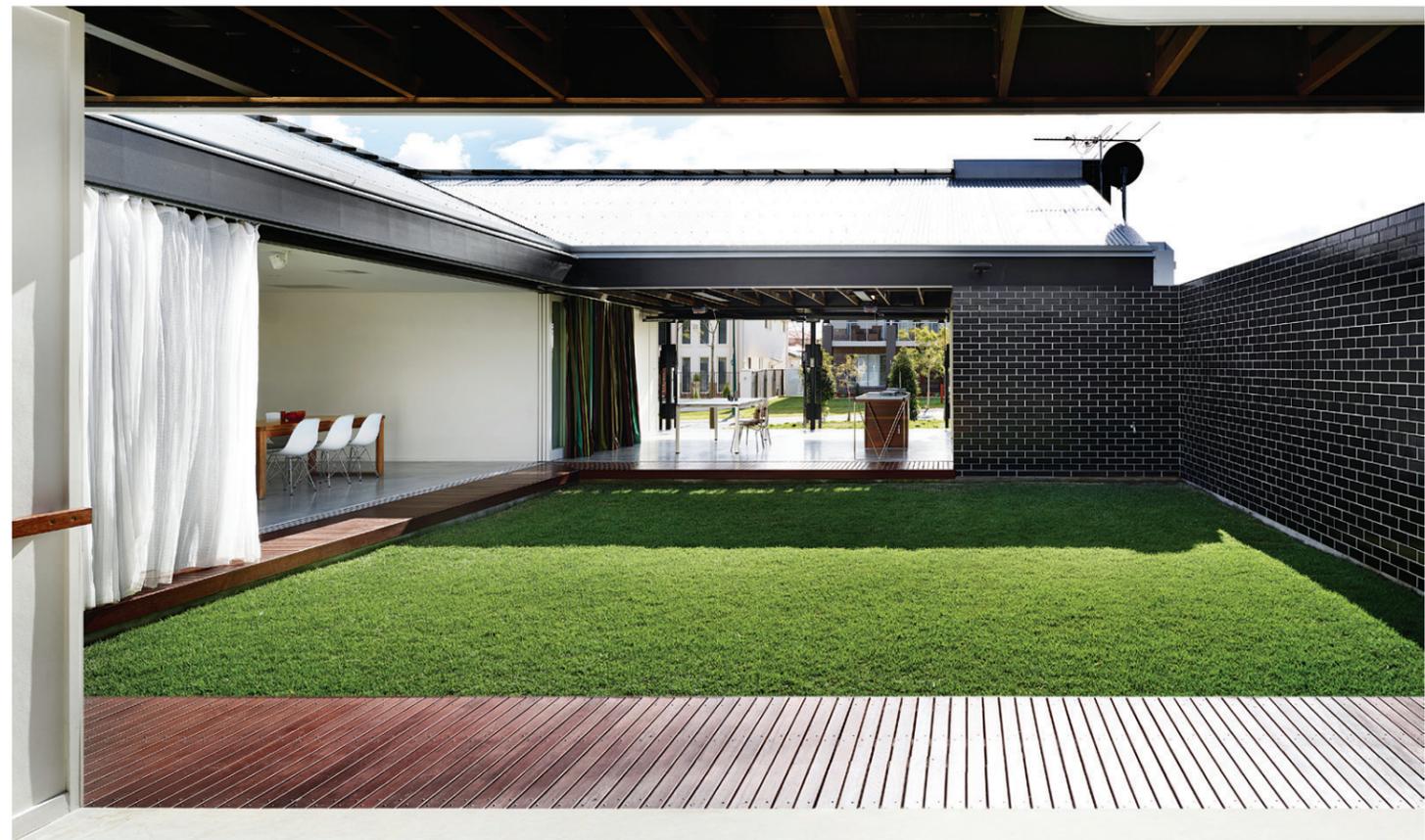
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|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Entry | 10 Main bedroom |
| 2 Car | 11 Robe |
| 3 Meals | 12 Ensuite |
| 4 Kitchen | 13 Shower |
| 5 Laundry and pantry | 14 Study |
| 6 Drying | 15 Sleeping |
| 7 Dining | 16 Bathroom |
| 8 Lounge | 17 Playroom |
| 9 Courtyard | 18 Sleepout |
| | 19 Pool |

Floor plan 1:400





Architect

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Practice profile

A design-based practice that uses traditional pen on paper and models to develop ideas. James Russell Architect is made up of design professionals that build, using this as a tool for developing knowledge of materials and the way they are put together.

Project team

James Russell,
Andrew Schindler

Builder

Build Restore

Consultants

Engineer: Adrian Dine,
Ad.Structure

Photographer

Toby Scott