

Positioning the past

PHILIP STEJSKAL ARCHITECTURE



This striking renovation of a South Fremantle house boldly expresses the site's architectural imprints, giving structure to the transformation from the ground up.

Photography by Bo Wong

In the beginning, Perth architect Philip Stejskal was unaware of the multi-layered history lying dormant on this residential site in South Fremantle. A modest masonry cottage constructed in 1924 and rear additions completed during the 1950s had partially concealed the remains of a stable constructed with limestone rubble walls dating back to 1896. Once we realized those relics were there, we started thinking about the project as an archeological dig, Philip says. Rather than the stable having a token presence, we wanted it to spatially influence new rooms and inform how they would work.

Contemporary additions were designed to straddle the stable walls, therefore enclosing and protecting them. An expressed timber post-and-beam structure was introduced to support contemporary space, extending from the back of the original cottage and weaving around and over the limestone rubble walls. Inside the semi-enclosure made by the old stable, the kitchen is carefully positioned. We wanted the kitchen to have a front-of-house presence, Philip says. Putting the kitchen here allowed us to co-locate it with views to the old stove in the courtyard.

Gathered at the centre of the kitchen are all the functional elements, wrapped in one neat Tasmanian oak joinery unit. Cooktop and sink sit on top of the reconstituted stone bench, while fridge, drawers and cupboards pull out to fulfil the requirements of refrigeration, cooking and cleaning. Two existing doorways in the limestone walls are used to give access to a scullery tucked in behind and to create a shallow pantry in the void left by the old door. Overhead storage and extraction are suspended above, ensuring that the stable walls remain untouched. This compact and clever kitchen reserves visual primacy for the historic limestone rubble, bathed in sunlight pouring down from above.

A new staircase positioned on the outside of the stable walls but inside the contemporary envelope connects the ground to the upper floors. Upstairs, the sleeping chamber and ensuite create a grown-ups' retreat elevated above the garden. Wrapped in timber battens, the shower room of the ensuite provides sanctuary and privacy while offering views out across the suburb. Downstairs, the children's bathroom also fosters a meditative mood while borrowing from contemporary rooms its material palette of dark colour tones and dramatic lighting effects. The circular bath is intended as a place of restoration and introspection, Philip says. The freestanding faucet and ceiling-mounted rain showerhead were selected to support the idea of relaxation.

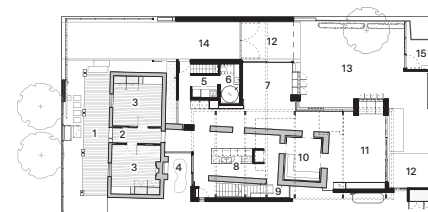
01 From within the old stable nook, the kitchen offers views of the old stove in the courtyard.

02 Limestone rubble walls, remnants of an old stable, define the layout of the house.

03 Tasmanian oak joinery inserted into an existing doorway in one limestone wall accommodates a compact pantry.



03



- 1 Verandah
- 2 Entry
- 3 Bedroom
- 4 Courtyard
- 5 Laundry
- 6 Bathroom
- 7 Dining
- 8 Kitchen
- 9 Scullery
- 10 Sitting
- 11 Living
- 12 Covered outdoor living
- 13 Garden
- 14 Carport
- 15 Utilities

Ground floor plan 1:400

0 5m



04 A freestanding faucet and bathtub create a meditative mood in the downstairs bathroom.

05 The circular bathtub stands out against the dark tones of the walls.

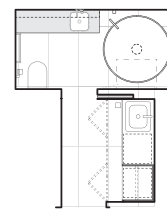
04

Bathroom products

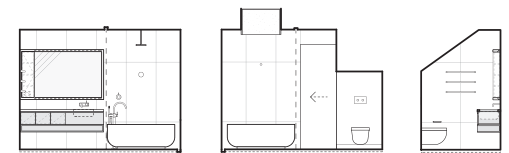
Internal walls and flooring: Speranza Endless Nero tiles from Myaree Ceramics
Joinery: World Wide Timber
 Traders Tasmanian oak veneer; Caesarstone Airy Concrete reconstituted stone benchtop
Lighting: Unios Eclipse strip LED lighting; Unios Zen Wall Light in textured black
Tapware and fittings: Astra Walker Icon freestanding faucet, ceiling-mounted rain shower head and tapware in [Charcoal Bronze]
Sanitaryware: Fienza Shinto freestanding matt white stone bath; Astra Walker wall-mounted toilet; Duravit basin



05



Bathroom/laundry plan 1:100



Bathroom elevations 1:100

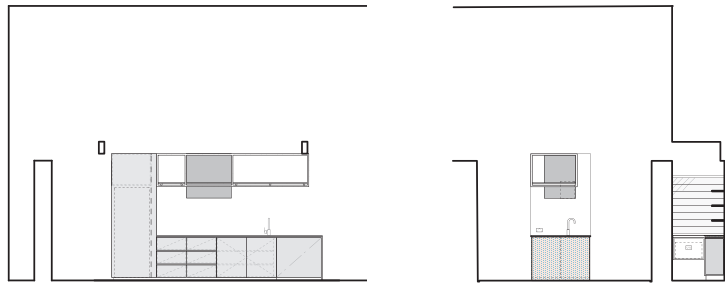


06

Kitchen products
Internal walls: Original limestone rubble walls, pointed in lime-based mortar
Flooring: Speranza Endless Nero tiles from Myaree Ceramics
Joinery: Caesarstone Airy Concrete reconstituted stone benchtop; World Wide Timber Traders Tasmanian oak veneer
Lighting: Unios Anthena Surface Series downlight in textured black; Unios Eclipse strip LED lighting incorporated into overhead framework
Sinks and tapware: Franke sink; Astra Walker Icon kitchen mixer
Appliances: Fisher and Paykel french door fridge; Bosch built-in oven; Asko hotplate; Miele rangehood; Neff integrated dishwasher
Other: Custom suspended storage framework



07

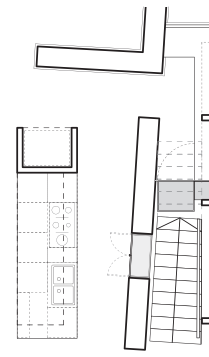


Kitchen elevations 1:100

0 2m

06 The architects approached the updates to this house as if it were an archaeological dig.

07 The addition is built around the home's rich history, with the kitchen at its new centre.



Kitchen plan 1:100

0 2m

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