

Residential05



#04

Bent Robe

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Architect Statement

This project defines another stage in the evolution of a family home that has a history of embracing change. Built by Pettit and Sevitt in the late 1960s, the original house was one of a series of mass produced, architecturally designed houses that incorporated natural materials and emphasised functionality, challenging the superfluous in suburbia. After purchasing the house in the mid 1970s, the current owners constructed a high brushwood fence around the perimeter of the corner block and set out to make it a family home. Maggie Edmond designed a double-storey addition to accommodate their expanding family in the mid 1980s. With their children having now left the nest and retirement imminent, the occupants' lifestyle continues to evolve and the home is once again forced to respond...

The Bent Robe comprises a new master bedroom, en suite and walk-in-robe. Conceived as relatively autonomous external containers, the Robe and en suite are defined by the geometry of the site and by circulation patterns/use within. Their relationship to the original house defines the new bedroom, an in-between space enveloped by the existing verandah, which having stretched beyond the limits of the original house has become a dynamic, habitable framework. The bedroom space, outside the confines of the original house and bounded by operable skins of glass to the north and south, offers the occupants an immediate connection to the external landscape while being protected against the western sun and from views of adjoining neighbours. The accommodation of a rapidly expanding wardrobe, strained by extensive overseas travel and compulsive shopping habits, has resulted in a haven for the occupants of this home, who have once again modified their surrounds to embrace a new phase their house responding to the movement of passing time.



3. The graphic extension of building, through pergola structure and paving, colonises the courtyard as an extension of the master bedroom.

IN A QUIET DONCASTER CUL-DE-SAC THIS RESOURCEFUL FAMILY HOME extension lurks, amid a typical assortment of affluent residential dreams.

Although nestled discreetly behind a high brushwood fence, it attracts the eye through its striking visual difference. The clients purchased the original 1960s Ken Woolley, Pettit and Sevitt house in the late 1970s, just as they were about to have their second child. Since then, they have formed a close attachment with their home, tailoring it carefully over the years to suit their changing needs. Initially Maggie Edmond designed an extension to the existing single-storey brick veneer structure. This resulted in a double-storey cedar box to the eastern end of the long, single-gable roof. Porjazoski's addition to the western end has created a foil to Edmond's work, and completes the picture in the now tripartite building.

The client's brief was essentially to provide a glorified wardrobe to house their extensive collection of clothes and shoes. Although empty-nesters, the clients justified spreading out further because they found their existing small, dark bedroom lacking and wanted a new, more enjoyable ground floor space. Their fondness for the house precluded adapting the original and led to the idea of a completely separate, new space. So the extent of this tiny but dramatic addition amounts to a four by four-metre bedroom with adjoining en suite and robe.

The project had been a long time in germination, with initial sketches presented to the clients three years ago. The initial starting point came from the idea of a shipping container, deposited in the garden as a receptacle for the expanding wardrobe. The vivid imagery of this was critical for Porjazoski who was keen to present the clients with not only an exciting conceptual starting point with which they could engage emotionally, but also one with architectural connotations inherent in its form.

Ultimately the volume was split, with a circulation path cut through it, and then cranked to respond to the geometry of the site. This idea remained largely intact, but with two discrete copper-clad boxes (walk-in-robe and en suite) reading very much as separate containers left to weather and decay on the site. The space of the bedroom linked these boxes to the existing house, which reads tectonically as an extrusion of the original gable. The timber rafters are continued, but are exposed and extend out beyond the louvred bedroom walls, to form a kind of pergola structure. On approach, this timber structure gives the impression of a much grander scale, belying what is actually a tiny footprint. Stretching out in alignment with the radiating lines of recycled bricks, taken from the original house, it engages with the surrounding landscape and feels as though it belongs on the site. A linkage that is also evident from within.

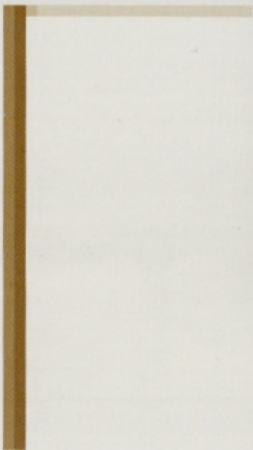
The bedroom assumes the courtyard spaces, being defined by the outlook and making it feel much bigger than it really is. A smaller paved area to the south, along with the larger northern space, articulated by the pergola structure, become extensions of the bedroom. Both form a continuation of the verandah

to the north of the original house, which has been extrapolated to form a continuous paved pathway right round the perimeter of the addition. This simple gesture of stretching the verandah around the extension serves as another successful mode of connection between new and old.

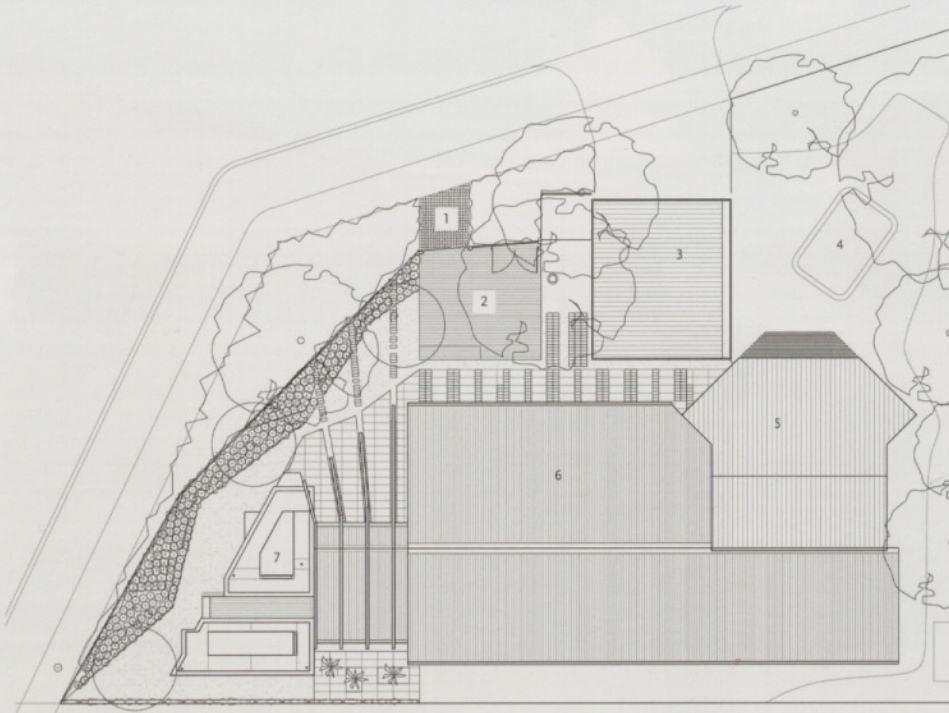
Sympathetic to the original building, the bedroom provides a subtly articulated transition to the dynamic forms of the en suite and robe. Original brickwork to the west has been left exposed, with a converted window forming the door that leads to the new bedroom. In maintaining the external appearance of this brick wall and in extending the external cladding of the copper boxes right round to form the bedroom's opposite wall, the bedroom becomes a residual space between both. Whilst defining the bedroom space, the copper boxes maintain their own identity as separate objects. This is enhanced by the use of a clerestory window to infill the triangular part of wall left over at the junction where the copper boxes meet the higher, gabled roof of the bedroom. This acts to visually separate the forms, whilst also admitting suffused western light into the room through the heavily textured brushwood screening. Sitting between these independent structures to the east and west, and bound to the north and south by translucent louvred walls, the bedroom is a light, open space, which manages to remain surprisingly private through careful siting and landscaping.

Respect for the original is manifested not only in form, but also use of materials. A direct link is made by recycling original bricks in the paving, and continuing the timber rafters into the new structure. There is also a considered selection of new materials, which appear familiar due to their inherent tones and textures. For Porjazoski this project was an opportunity to explore and incorporate materials he had never used before. Copper was chosen, to evoke a natural aging on the site over time, becoming richer in colour as it corrodes, and requiring minimal maintenance. The effective use of black butynol lining solved an otherwise awkward waterproofing detail on the angled pop-out skylights. For consistency, the windows that pop out of the sides of the boxes were similarly treated. Horizontal strips of the black rubber are wrapped around the girth of the containers, sealing the projecting windows and creating a contrast in colour and texture to the warmly glowing sheen of the copper. Within both the en suite and robe, small, carefully placed and angled windows frame vistas of greenery and allow light to stream in and splash across surfaces, whilst maintaining seclusion and privacy.

The strong, quirky character of this addition undoubtedly enriches the existing built fabric of the area and is an impressive first project for Porjazoski. Carefully resolved and crafted, the project displays a meticulous attention to detail, with Porjazoski acting as builder for the project, discussing particular construction methods on-site and re-detailing components to enable ease of fabrication. The luxury of working with supportive clients has allowed Porjazoski to realise his project without compromise, offering a striking contribution to the neighbourhood.

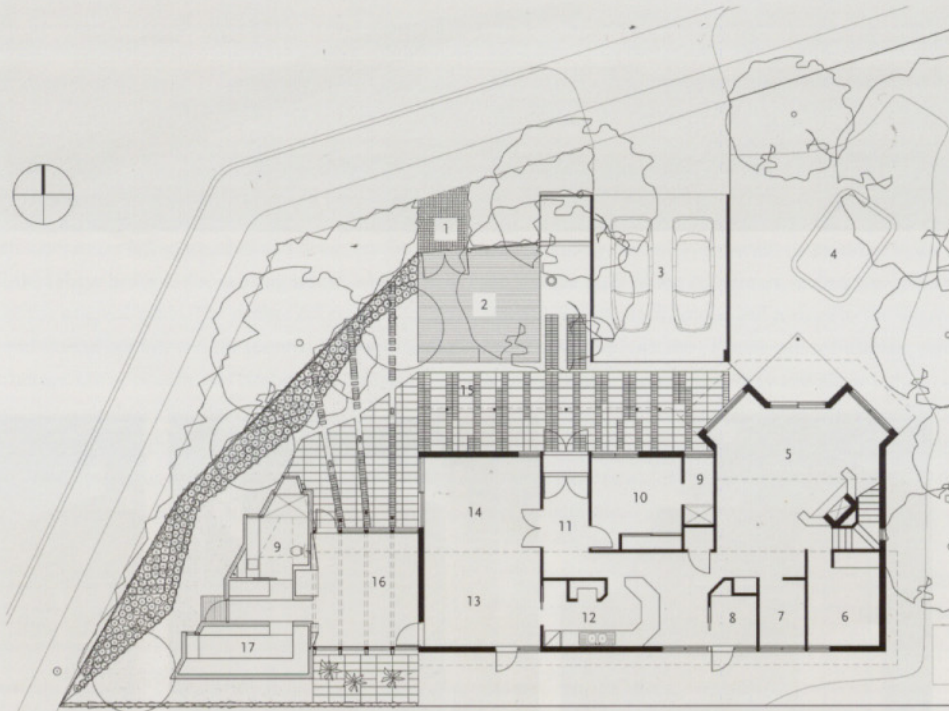


4-7. The expression of robe and en-suite as two discrete objects within a dynamic envelope creates surprising complexity from such a small project.



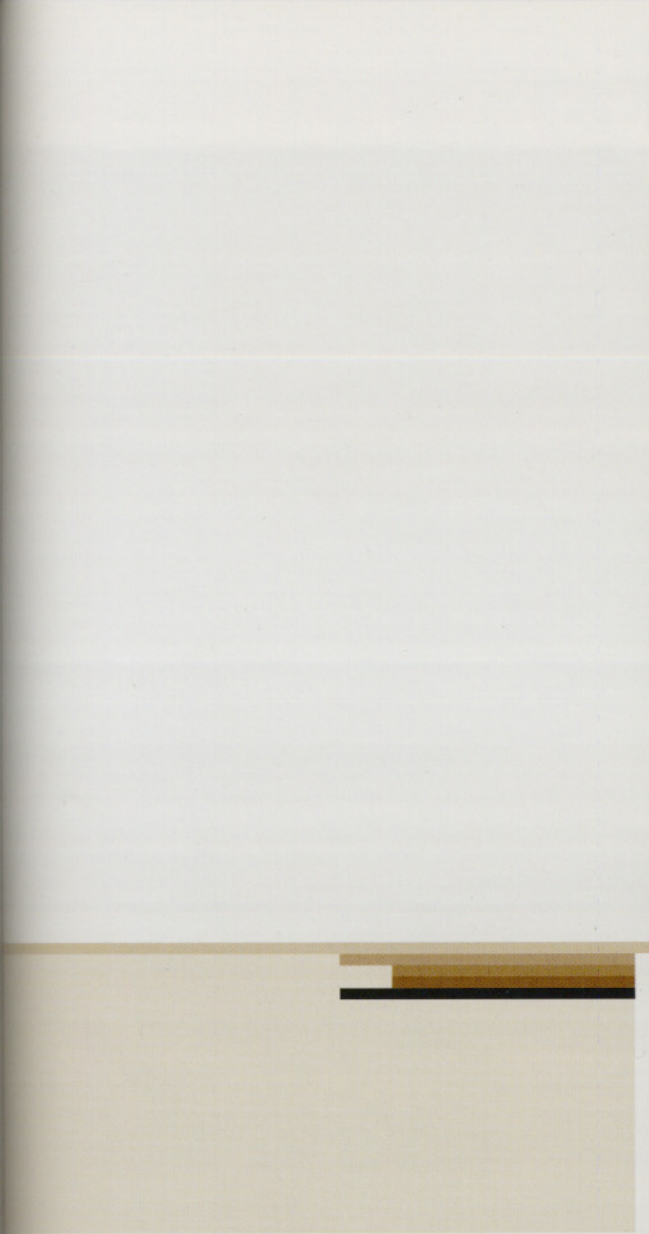
ROOF PLAN

1. Site entry 2. Entry deck 3. Carport 4. Rear garden 5. 1980's double storey addition by Maggin Edmond 6. Existing house 7. Bent robe



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

1. Site entry 2. Entry deck 3. Carport 4. Rear garden 5. Living 6. Study 7. Bath 8. Laundry 9. Ensuite 10. Bedroom 11. Entry 12. Kitchen 13. Dining 14. Lounge 15. Verandah 16. Master bedroom 17. Walk-in-robe



8. Projecting windows frame views and dramatises interior daylight.

9-11. Sandwiched between copper-clad extension and existing home, the bedroom functions as an architectural bridge between periods and forms.