

design anthology

INTERIORS / ART / ARCHITECTURE / TRAVEL



AUSTRALIA EDITION / ISSUE 04

HOME / ADELAIDE

A Worthwhile Addition



Emphasised through an articulation of craft and quality, this home by Williams Burton Leopardi is a rare renovation and extension effort that focuses on elevation and sensory heightening over expansion. Through experimental rigour and the exploration of upward massing, the resulting approach frames views and creates meaningful connections across time, the site and its occupants. The firm's founding directors David Burton and Sophia Leopardi speak to an unusual process of thinking and curating small. 'A good addition adds to the quality and the design without interfering with the style,' says Burton. 'It adds warmth and instils an effortless flow from the moment you enter the home through to the backyard. It feels continuous in all respects, and deliberate.'

The quaint and highly detailed heritage-listed cottage is one in a row of significant homes in an inner urban enclave of Adelaide. The understandable restrictions on the extent of new works are what anchor these reminders of the past to their sites and ensure that the built fabric of North Adelaide retains its storied charm. 'Each cottage had its own interesting features, with side entrances, high ceilings and relatively large rooms,' says Burton of the homes' character. 'Each had a large room at the front, with double doors that opened to the street, and contained courtyard garden spaces.' Here, the spacious lean-to behind the home has been replaced with a reimagined contemporary sleeve that now extrudes to the rear, gently navigating the long, linear site. New gestures awaken opportunities for connection, where an engagement with natural light becomes a key focus and muse.

The owners undertook extensive feasibility studies to determine the best use of the site, and their appreciation of the unique relationship between site and spatial qualities led to the preservation of the previous footprint. 'The emphasis was on integration — matching proportion, materiality and a level of quality in a contemporary and sensitive manner,' Leopardi explains. The approach, she says, 'was founded on reinterpreting key cues from the original home: heights, wall thickness and an elevation of materiality, and then carrying that through the whole home.' The use of muted and restrained tones creates a softness that is further emphasised through an interplay with light throughout the day.

Gestures throughout offer a sense of compression and release within the overall whole, hinting subtly at changes in space and function without the traditional vertical barriers. 'It's all about flow, the threading of the heritage into the contemporary addition and maintaining that element of craft,' Leopardi says. 'We wanted to create moments that are beautiful but functional.' As the descending rooms open up and connect with steel and glass doors, visual connections bind the spaces, with the window to the rear framing the view and garden. The kitchen and garden space take a less traditional approach, with the landscape wrapping under a cantilevered bench element and a standing island bench creating another expression of materiality.

The considered and conscious home is founded on a sense of beauty and detail that captures its original spirit, resulting in what Leopardi describes as 'an embedded sense of calm'.

Text
Bronwyn
Marshall

Images
Caroline
Cameron

Previous page
Williams Burton
Leopardi maintained
the character and
style of this heritage-
listed Adelaide
cottage, revealing
and preserving the
original sandstone
and lacework,
while adding to
the rear a new
contemporary sleeve
that emphasises
integration

Facing page
Setting the tone for
the rest of the home,
the front sitting
room is outfitted
with beautiful yet
functional pieces
such as an Arthur
G Capri sofa,
banana fibre Anders
pendant from
PINCH and Michael
Anastassiades-
designed Captain
Flint floor lamp by
Flos





Oak-veneer joinery, custom stained to match the floorboards, is a muted backdrop for pieces like the Knitting lounge chair by Ib Kofod-Larsen for MENU



Swathed in marble, honed limestone and light oak veneer, the serene kitchen with its striking island bench is brought to life by art and ceramics



In the rear living room, light floods in through custom steel and glass doors, accentuating the textures of Hans Wegner's CH25 lounge chair for Carl Hansen & Søn, Pebble side tables by Andrew Carvolth for JamFactory and the chunky felted wool rug from Jordan





This page
The honed limestone and marble palette continues in one of the bathrooms, matched with handmade ceramic subway tiles and sculptural tapware by Brodware, the latter complemented with a custom mirror frame

Facing page
The master bedroom is a fitting expression of the 'embedded sense of calm' that designer Sophia Leopardi says marks the home. Here, the curves of the oak and rattan headboard from Jordan are echoed in the Insert side table by Mario Tsai for ferm LIVING





In place of a lean-to, the designers created a sleeve extending outwards from the long site, its steel and glass windows and doors framing views out to the limestone-tiled garden area