

THE LOCAL PROJECT



N°9

Architecture and Design of Australia and New Zealand

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ROSE PARK HOUSE

STUDIO GRAM

Words by Millie Thwaites • Photography by Timothy Kaye • Architecture and Interior Design by studio gram
Build by BUILDinc. • Landscape by Jo Connolly Design • Engineering by Triaxial Consulting • Joinery by Gap Joinery



Many contemporary extensions to heritage homes are guided by similar parameters, following comparable ideologies and leaning on a dependable set of architectural principles. In most cases, this works well, and yet stepping outside of these boundaries can lead to architecture that is surprising and thought-provoking. To pursue such an approach takes a heady mix of resolve, pragmatism and nerve from both the architect and client. Rose Park House in Adelaide sees studio gram bend the rules ever so slightly to create a home that feels refreshing and offbeat while remaining true to its heritage bones.

From the street, the handsome Queen Anne villa appears in sync with the surrounding vernacular. Upon crossing the threshold though, a sequential series of spaces unfolds, leading to an unexpected form at the rear. “We described this as a project of discovery in its truest sense from commencement to completion,” says studio gram Director Dave Bickmore. “We’ve used that analogy in the way we’ve designed it, but it also applies to the experience of moving through the house from front to back – it underpins the design approach to the whole project.”

This informs the way colour and materiality are applied according to each room’s individual function: the master suite is airy and inviting; a guest bedroom is awash with hues of pastel green; and the wine room is coated in shades of rich burgundy. It equally influenced the decision to use curves throughout, inspired by the arched shape at either end of

the pool, providing little moments of discovery and recognition. There is a curved shower alcove in the ensuite with a circular skylight overhead, and the architects have carved the pool’s arched motif into a timber pelmet in the front room. “Having these little quirks or stories ties back into how we like to approach our architecture and interior design,” Dave says, adding, “hopefully, it provides a little more richness and personality to the project.”

studio gram has also employed several accessible design principles throughout the home. One of the family members uses a wheelchair, and “we wanted to create an architecture that integrated accessible design – whether that’s for this client or for future occupants,” Dave says. This is integrated into the architecture, with ramps around the house and flush thresholds with wide openings. “We think it’s seamless and shows that form and function don’t always need to be competing interests.”







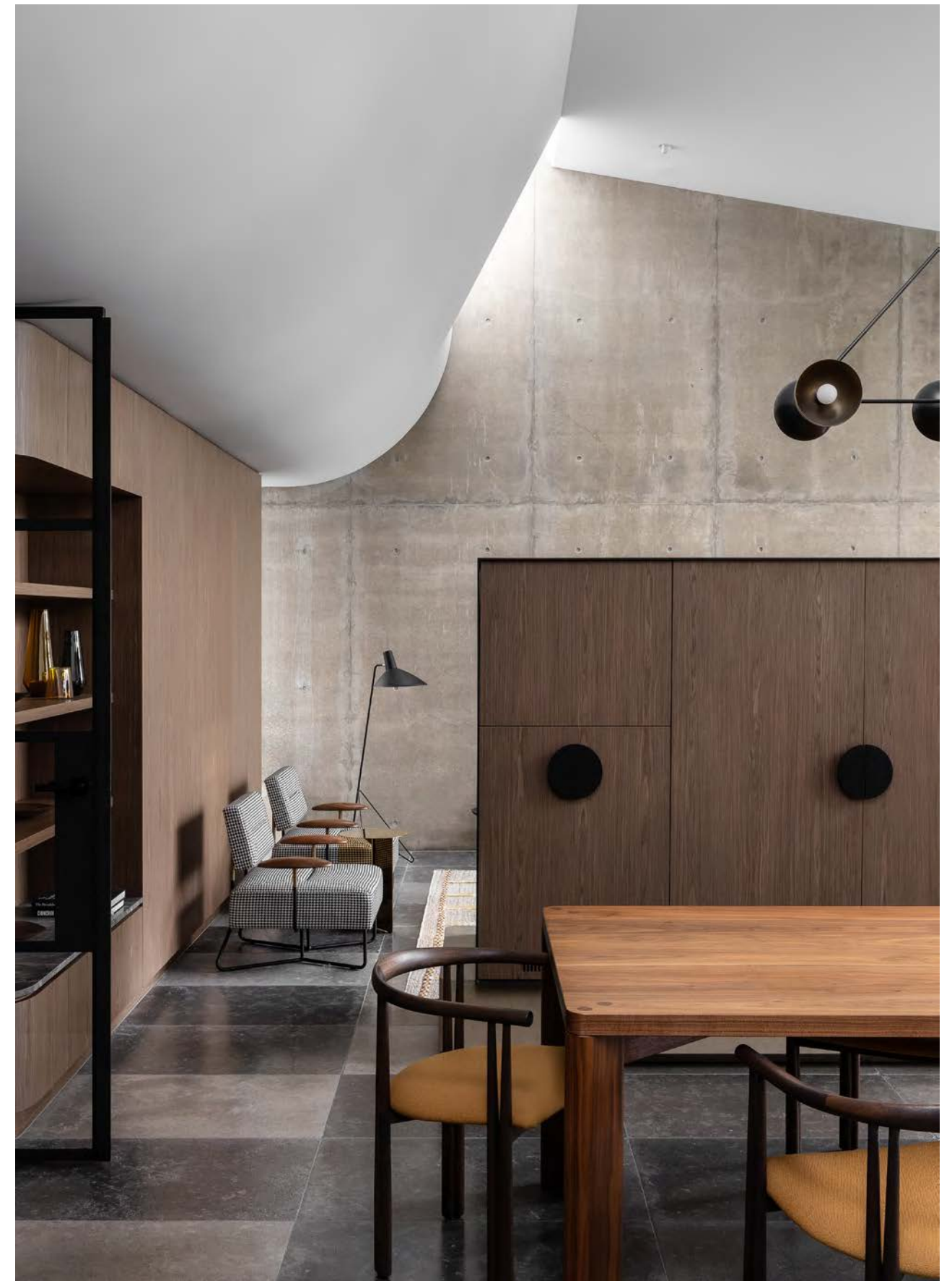
A large kitchen, dining and living space is created for the clients' needs, with key refining elements providing essential functionality.

In designing the extension, studio gram sought to create a form with a distinctive architectural identity. “One of the really complex things with this project was resisting the urge to put a flat-roofed pavilion on the back,” Dave says. Inside, a billowing curve extrudes upwards, connecting the existing structure with the apex of the new pitched roof. “This curve acts as the threshold between old and new, celebrating the transition from private to public spaces within the home by using that old architectural tactic of compression and release,” Dave says. Two south-facing skylights punctuate the curved form at either end, balancing the room’s focus and bringing pools of natural light deeper into the plan. They also frame precious views to the sky, capturing the tops of the plane trees bordering the street.

There is a laundry tucked to one side and a large kitchen, dining and living space spanning the remaining width of the property. “If we go back to first principles, the extension is really functional,” Dave says. “We wanted to create a space that ticked all the boxes and worked well for the clients, but we didn’t want it to feel like one big open pavilion, so there’s some separation – or some redefining elements – within that

space.” A floating dry bar with an extended fireplace sits between the dining and living spaces, creating important delineation. This concept is replicated in the façade, where two concrete blade walls surround a full-height steel-framed door, breaking up the elements and carving out views to the pool and garden.

Externally, the extension reads as a striking architectural expression. The glazing is framed by a concrete shroud that chamfers up towards the north. As Dave notes, this slight angle helps to “invite the sun into the space” resulting in an “incredible play of light across all of the hard surfaces.” It also works to mitigate solar heat gain, providing protection from the harsh summer sun yet allowing for plentiful winter light. The nose cone, blade walls and extended flat roof canopy are all off-form concrete, constructed from a single pour. As Dave notes, “while it was temporary, the complexity and detail in the formwork was almost as impressive as the finished product.” The solidity and weight that this singular expression of concrete brings is significant; however, there is softness here too, as “all the edges have been dealt with as either an arris or a curved radius to soften the brutalist nature of the concrete.”





Natural stone and American walnut are warm, creating a timeless and mature palette.



A concrete shroud sloping upwards invites sunlight into the space, providing incredible light play across surfaces.

Considering the architects' vision to create a "legacy project" that will exist for several generations, concrete proved a rational choice. It also nods to the home's historical context; the original walls of the villa were, quite uniquely, constructed from off-form concrete. Also supporting the idea of longevity is the maturity of the palette. "All the materials were selected for their ability to age well with time," Dave says. Natural stone and American walnut are warm against the textural concrete, while neutral hues and an overall tactility result in an interiority that is rich and enveloping. An overt connection to the outdoors works to complement this experience. As Dave says, "one of the things I love about this house is that when you're in there – whether that's during the harsh South Australian summer or when it's cold and rainy – you read the seasonal change. It's quite beautiful to witness." He adds, "I think it's a modest extension, but it does a lot when you're within its walls."

Just as the architects intended, this home encourages curiosity, contemplation and, most importantly, discovery. Not only does it unfold with a sense of anticipation from front to back, but it cleverly leans on the ever-changing elements of the natural environment to ensure there is always something new to experience.