

House Howley by Mark Szczerbicki Design Studio

• SYDNEY, NSW •

Strategic vistas and subtle shifts in plan enhance informality and openness in this addition to a Californian bungalow.

Words by Rebecca Gross

Photography by Tom Ferguson

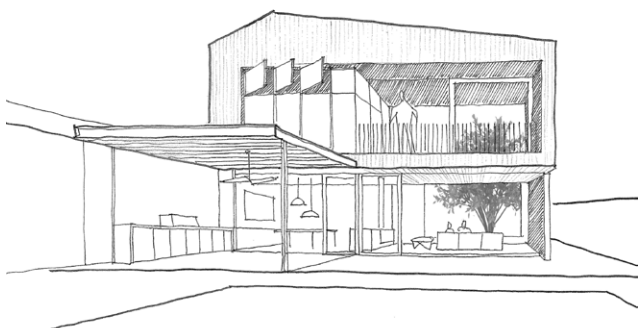
5 (family home)

4 +1 guest

3 +1 powder room

m² Site: 596 m²
Floor: 320 m²

Design: 6 mths
Build: 1 yr, 4 mths



Designed by Mark Szczerbicki Design Studio, House Howley has strategic vistas and subtle shifts in plan that enhance informality and openness and forge a stronger connection to the outdoors.

Influenced by west coast American architecture, the California bungalow represented a modern lifestyle in the inter-war period in Australia. It was designed for a more casual way of living with a straightforward, informal and open layout and a strong connection to the outdoors. Mark Szczerbicki Design Studio restored this California bungalow in Rodd Point, Sydney, and enlarged it with a contemporary two-storey extension that emphasizes openness, spatial relationships and garden views.

The previous owners, who lived in the house for fifty years, did very little to the bungalow, but added what Mark describes as “a series of awkward extensions at the back.” The new owners also intend to be long-term residents of the house and tasked Mark with creating a family home for their three young children to grow up in.

Their brief was simple: they prescribed the required spaces and how they wished to use them, and requested hardwearing materials. Beyond that, the design team had the freedom to develop the form, volume and plan of the house to meet the requirements of complying development. “We created a series of spatial transitions informed by the existing gabled roof to morph the building from traditional [design] at the front to contemporary [design] at the back,” Mark explains. These new and existing forms are configured around a central courtyard that allows northern sun into the rear of the house. Inside, Mark says, the team “kept micro-tweaking the spaces and relationships between rooms for how the clients wanted to live in the house.”

Barely visible from the street, the two-storey addition sits atop and extends behind the original house. The pitched terracotta-tiled roof mimics the existing roof profile at the front, before stepping up and terracing down through the middle of the house, with terracotta and corrugated steel sections. The roof at the rear has an off-centre ridge and more obtuse angle, presenting as a contemporary interpretation of the traditional domestic gable form.

The existing bungalow has been respectfully restored to retain the streetscape, original mouldings and materials and the traditional character of cozy, separate rooms. It accommodates the family room, guest room and study, as well as the bathroom and laundry, which have modern styling and vintage details. The addition is organized with the kitchen, dining and living area pivoting around the courtyard and opening to a covered outdoor space, garden and pool.

Bedrooms and bathrooms are upstairs.


Acute attention has been given to angles where the house transitions from old to new, enhancing openness and spatial connections. The glazed wall facing the staircase and courtyard is subtly splayed, as is the stairwell; the kitchen wall concealing the mudroom is slightly chamfered. The effect breaks formality, integrates garden views and allows sightlines into and through adjoining spaces.

The kitchen has a commanding position at the centre, with a full scope of interior and exterior views – to the courtyard in front, garden to the side and to the carport through the glass splashback behind. A double-sided fireplace defines the dining and living areas, and stacking glass doors open to the courtyard on one side and garden on the other.

The neutral and minimal interior scheme highlights the colour and vitality of the garden, which is integral to every view throughout the house. Designed by Melissa Wilson Landscape Architects, the garden, like the interior, transitions through a series of spaces, with flowers to complement the heritage of the front bungalow and pared-back planting to suit the contemporary architecture at the rear.

The material palette also balances the old and new; the low-fuss, low-maintenance selection complements the texture and detail of the original house with polished concrete floors, black cedar joinery, brown timber veneer and white aluminium window and door frames. Shiplap cedar cladding wraps in from the exterior to line the living room ceiling, and reclaimed brickwork from the former additions has been used for the ground floor of the extension, with one wall painted white, and a section in the dining area exposed as a feature – an artwork, in effect.

The stairs, with spotted gum timber treads to complement the original mixed hardwood floors, are designed to offer a spatial experience, providing views throughout the house. The hallway leads to the children’s bathroom and three equal-sized bedrooms. The main bedroom has an ensuite and walk-in robe, and a balcony overlooks the garden and pool. Finishes have been kept practical, with the focus on the generosity and relationship of spaces.

Throughout House Howley, the subtle shifts in plan and the strategic vistas through the windows enhance the informality and openness of the house and forge a stronger connection to the outdoors, much like the intention of the original California bungalow. “It’s about how the space makes you feel, how it relates to the garden and how comfortable it is thermally,” Mark explains. 

Architect

Mark Szczerbicki

Design Studio

+61 2 9713 9223

studio@markszczerbicki.com

markszczerbicki.com

Project team

Mark Szczerbicki, Liz

Szczerbicki, Sherrie Huang,

Yassi Deylami

Builder

David Fletcher Construction

Consultants

Engineer: Dynamic Structural Engineering

Landscaping: Melissa

Wilson Landscape Architects

Lighting: The Lighting Guild

Products

Roofing: Lysaght roofing

in Colorbond 'Surfmist';

Monier Marseille terracotta tiles in 'Earth'

External walls: Recycled brickwork; Timbeck

Architectural shiplap cedar

cladding in Taubmans 'Miss

Universe'; James Hardie

Hardieflex sheets in Wattyl

'Cloudy Sky'

Internal walls: Recycled

brickwork; Timbeck

Architectural shiplap cedar

cladding in Taubmans 'Black

Fox'; Gyprock plasterboard in

Taubmans 'Miss Universe'

Windows and doors: Alspec

windows and doors in Dulux

'White Satin'; Decorating

Decor Interiors curtains; Brio

Zero Clearance sliding door

tracks; Centor retractable

flyscreens; Designer

Doorware lever handles

in 'Antique Brass Dark'

(addition); Delf Architectural

Lever Handles in 'Florentine

Bronze' (existing house)

Flooring: Existing hardwood

floors in Synteko Classic;

polished concrete in satin

sealer; Godfrey Hirst

Carramar carpet in 'Coal Ash'

Lighting: Gubi Bestlite desk

and bedside lamps; Gubi

Ronde dining pendant; Flos

IC Lights F floor lamp

Kitchen: Miele ovens,

cooktops, fridges and

dishwasher; Qasair

rangehood; Armando Vicario

Luz kitchen mixer in 'Chrome'

from Abey; Oliveri stainless

steel sink; New Age Veneers

Navurban panels in 'Nutfield';

Caesarstone Calacatta

Nuvo benchtops

Bathroom: Bastow Georgian

tapware in 'Chrome' (ground

floor); Astra Walker Icon

tapware in 'Chrome' (first

floor); Roca Meridian

toilets; Clearwater Formoso

freestanding bath; Skheme

tiles in 'Serene Matt'

(bathroom and ensuite);

Skheme mosaic tiles in 'Pietra

Grey Marble,' honed (laundry

and powderroom)

Heating and cooling:

Haiku ceiling fans by Big

Ass Fans; Daikin ducted

airconditioning; Horiso

external motorized venetians

External elements: Granite

paving by Sam the Paving

Man in 'Sesame Grey'; white

to light-brown sandstone

slabs from Gosford Quarries

Other: Bo Concept leather

lounges; Thonet No. 18

chairs; Muuto bar stools;

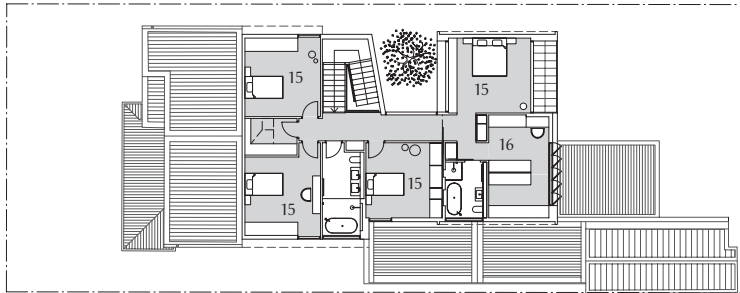
outdoor table from Cosh

Living; Tait Volley chairs and

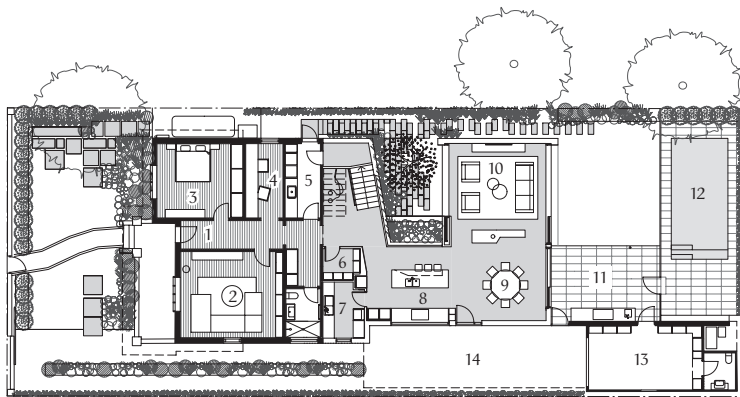
lounger; Globe West coffee

tables; Lopi double-sided

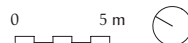
gas fireplace



First floor 1:400



Ground floor 1:400



- 1 Entry
- 2 Lounge
- 3 Guest bedroom
- 4 Study
- 5 Laundry
- 6 Storage
- 7 Walk-in pantry
- 8 Kitchen
- 9 Dining
- 10 Living
- 11 Alfresco
- 12 Pool
- 13 Garage/storage
- 14 Carport
- 15 Bedroom
- 16 Walk-in robe