

Villiers Street House

Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
Arkhefeld Architects with Shaun Lockyer
Photography: Scott Burrows

The Villiers Street House is an overtly contemporary pavilion/extension to a Queenslander cottage on a typical small lot site in inner-city Brisbane. The choice to build a 'pavilion' to the rear of the existing cottage appeared an obvious one. The challenge was the dilapidated and unspectacular nature of the existing cottage. How to maintain the idea of the cottage and the integrity of its proportion were critical issues.

The design looks to preserve the existing architectural vernacular while offering a challenging juxtaposition with the new built form. This contrast is clearly evident not only in the application of colour, material and form—the entry sequence through to the front door/stair connection is the junction between old and new.

The language of the house is all about the celebration/interrogation of the Queenslander theme. An 'undercroft' aesthetic, manifest in detail, is explored in both the new and the old, as well as the concept of arrival and definition of edges.

The retention of the old cottage preserves cultural and architectural identity and, more basically, public expectation. The contemporary extension is largely invisible from the street and therefore looks to preserve the character and qualities of this inner-city suburb.

While the house has unquestionably had to address broader needs, the design has allowed the owner to live in a way that maximises the benefits of the benign climate.



