

Perfect *suburban block*

A shared passion for Victorian architecture is brought to fruition in this beautiful **CARLTON** warehouse by **KENNEDY NOLAN**, which also explores the making of place and peace at the very heart of inner-city suburbia.

TEXT ALICE BLACKWOOD | PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL





When Kate embarked on the purchase of what would be her ultimate home, it was with three key criteria in mind: size, location and orientation. She'd come to appreciate the advantages of size and location during years spent living with her growing family of four boys, in a lovely double-fronted Victorian out in Hawthorn, Melbourne. Here dwelled some of Melbourne's most quintessential Victorian architecture, not to mention beautiful examples of skilled labour. "That Hawthorn house was one of the first houses built on the Yarra, when George Coppin subdivided the estate in 1871," Kate recalls.

Her passion for architecture began here, among a close community of skilled gardeners, architects and appreciators of real Victoriana. With her sons fully grown and flying the coop, Kate embarked on what she describes as "a more independent life", moving to the inner city and making home in Richmond. However the tight suburban quarters proved a roadblock for her enthusiastic green thumb and she yearned for more space.

When an old warehouse ("really a shell of a building," as Kate describes it), came up for sale in Carlton, she looked beyond its rough exterior to see the potential hidden within. Structurally it was "a long distance from a house", says Kate, but it was "the perfect

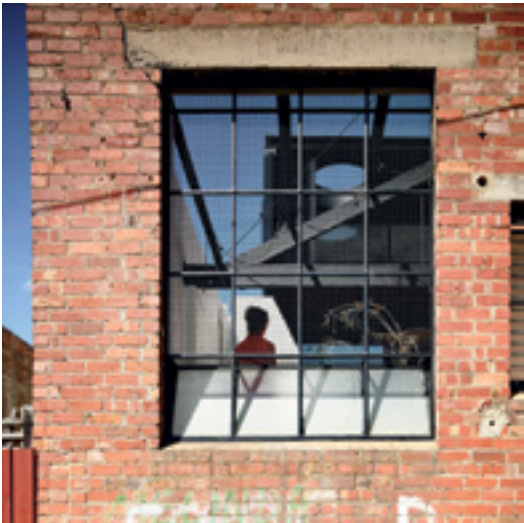


suburban block”. At 10x22 metres it ticked all the boxes for size, location and, importantly, orientation. “I wanted sky and the orientation so I could get a garden and, as soon as I saw it, I knew. The visual freedom was so attractive, the orientation perfect, and the size of the block – also perfect.”

A long-standing connection with Rachel Nolan of Kennedy Nolan brought the two parties together, and the pairing between client and architect seemed a neat dovetail of architectural values and domestic ideals. Kate’s maturity of vision, her quiet certainty for what she wanted from a house and her home life, resonated with Kennedy Nolan’s own residential design philosophy and their passion for narrative.

From the street at least, the building still speaks to its past; the colourful illustrations covering the external, street-facing wall reminiscent of a community centre now 40 years gone. You’d be forgiven for thinking the entire building is simply refurbished; the likeness of the materiality and brickwork is so close. But it is only the four outer



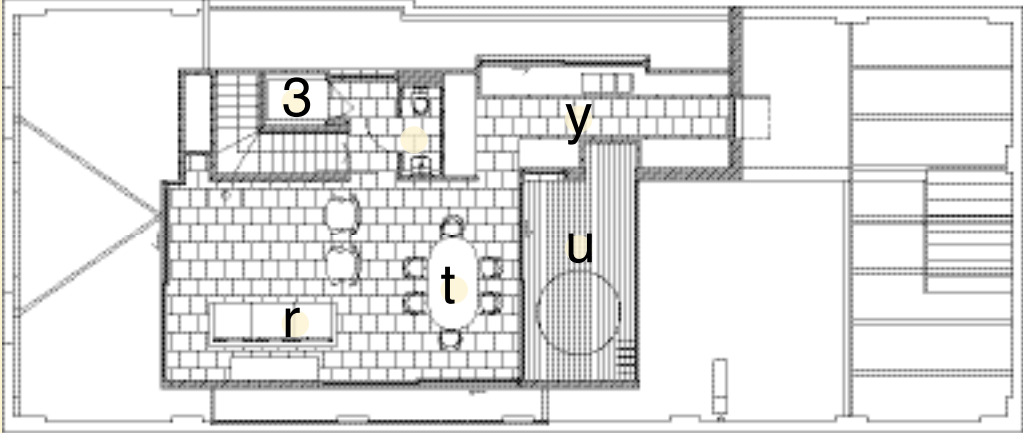


walls and a single truss that remain from the original structure, Kennedy Nolan’s strong architectural language setting the boundaries for what Rachel describes as referencing the ‘1970s Carlton’ response – “a robust, honest approach that speaks of a handmade modernism”.

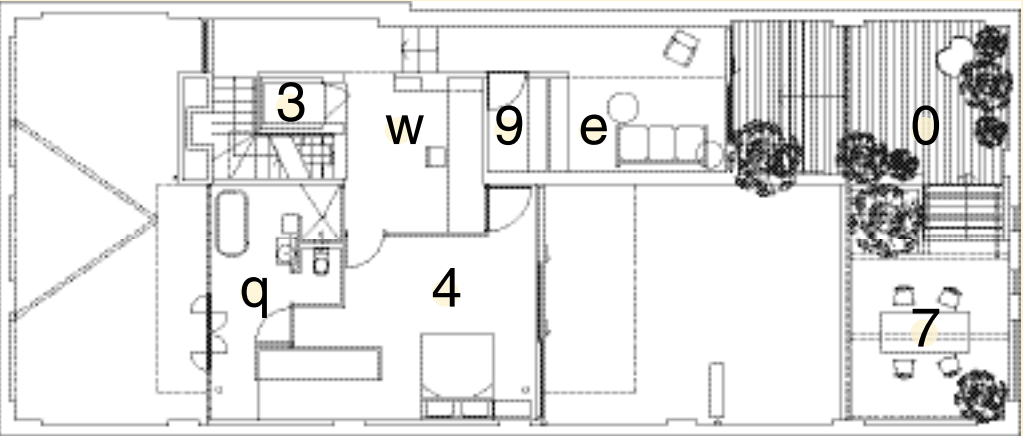
Kate had a firm vision for the site, which included elevated views perched high above the suburb and a ‘grounded’ aspiration for a garden out front and back. This came to fruition in a very “Lady of Shallot” manner, as Patrick Kennedy describes it. The three-level house, rebuilt from the ground up, is both tower and private oasis. A clever layering of levels ensures that the very top – and we’ll come to this soon – remains connected to the ground where the foundations run deep to accommodate a leafy garden.

From the backyard the house’s dramatic three-storey elevation is revealed in all its layers. From the garden, external decking climbs around and upwards in a staged manner, offering multiple platforms for sitting and sunning, before rising to join with a private sitting room on the house’s second level.

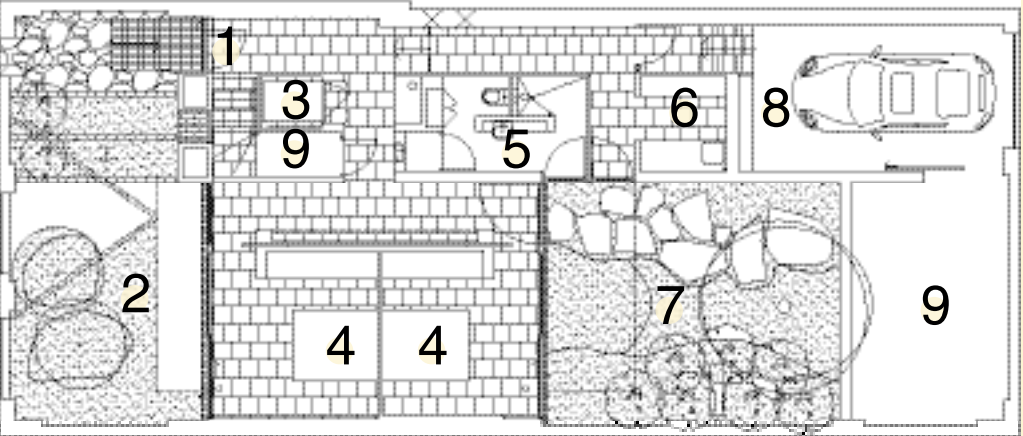
1	ENTRY
2	FRONT COURTYARD
3	LIFT
4	BEDROOM
5	BATHROOM
6	LAUNDRY
7	CENTRAL COURTYARD
8	GARAGE
9	STORAGE
0	LOWERTERRACE
q	ENSUITE
e	SITTING ROOM
w	STUDY
r	LIVING
t	DINING
y	DECK
u	KITCHEN
8	POWDERROOM



SECOND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



Unassuming in size and feature, the sitting room is significant for its quietness and sunlit intimacy. “This is a snug, comforting place,” says Rachel. “In the long cold Melbourne months you seek out a place in the direct sun, to curl up like a cat.”

“We think about how our houses can be inhabited seasonally; about how you may migrate between winter and summer spaces for comfort,” she continues, referencing the adjoining master bedroom and bathroom which sits sandwiched between the upper and lower levels. “It makes sense to us that when you sleep you are protected, that the walls make you feel safe. Conversely when you are awake you can enjoy the views that full glazing allows.”

The glass box to which she refers is perched third level, like an observation deck atop the tower. Combining sitting, dining, deck and kitchen, this level represents both retreat and liberation for Kate. “It’s where peace comes from; it’s having that long view.”

Elevated above the original warehouse, Kate was determined to have this level raised, and pushed for it as a must-have. “She understood how buildings can make you feel,” says Rachel. “She wanted a fire and a view that, while not practical necessities, are elements that make home and place. She was really impressive in her balance of practicality versus things she needed to make her happy.”

ABOVE | TWO BEDROOMS ON THE GROUND FLOOR ARE FINISHED IN BEAUTIFUL, SOFT GREY PALETTE. OPPOSITE | FACING SOUTH, THE MAIN BATHROOM'S GLASS BRICK WALL CAPTURES THE NATURAL LIGHT AND IS ONE OF KATE'S FAVOURITE FEATURES.



A robust, honest approach
that speaks of a
hand-made modernism

RACHEL | ARCHITECT

As you clear the stairway and enter into this third level, the walls and ceilings instantly fall away – the views are that expansive. In a stroke of architectural genius, Kennedy Nolan have painted the walls and ceilings black, re-crafting the space as a frame to Carlton’s picturesque rooftops. Internal balustrades allow you to peel away floor-to-ceiling sliding doors and sit within the landscape itself: a plein-air portrait.

In her role as client, Kate proved to be intelligent and inspired. She took great pride in the process, taking ownership of every stage, from commission through to design – and even build where she bravely scaled the scaffolding (an Escher-esque drawing of ladders and levels, she recalls), as the internal structure of the house came to life.

With a family fully grown and just herself to please, the house represents a later-life coming of age – the proverbial building of the boat. “I always had ideas about what constituted a real house, relative to how you want to live,” says Kate, and, in the case of her Carlton warehouse, she’s been able to test the strength of her ideas in real life.



ABOVE | THE DINING AREA OPENS ONTO THE COVERED DECK WHICH IN TURN LOOKS OUT OVER THE BACK GARDEN BELOW. OPPOSITE | THE PERIMETER WALLS REMAINED WHITE, TO REFLECT LIGHT BACK INTO THE HOUSE AND GARDEN AREA. THE LIGHTS DRAPED ALONG THE TRUSS WERE A MAGICAL TOUCH FROM KENNEDY NOLAN.

*I wanted sky and the orientation
so I could get a garden and, as soon as
I saw it, I knew.*

KATE | RESIDENT





DROP BOX

ARCHITECTS Kennedy Nolan

PROJECT ARCHITECTS Patrick Kennedy, Rachel Nolan, Victoria Reeves, Frank Vedelago

ENGINEER TD & C structural engineers

BUILDING SURVEYOR BSGM

BUILDER Clearview Constructions

KENNEDY NOLAN

(61 3) 9415 8971

kennedynolan.com.au

FURNITURE

In Living room, Cassina LC1 chair, leather couch (unknown), Isamu Noguchi Akari Floor Lamp, sideboard (unknown), Herman Miller Eames coffee table with universal base, Knoll Studio Saarinen side table. In Dining room Herman Miller Eames Moulded Plywood Dining chairs (DCM) and Herman Miller Eames Table with segmented base. In Sitting room, Tacchini Kelly chair from Stylecraft with white paper lantern. In Study, Dedee Knoll Studio Saarinen Tulip chairs. Outdoor courtyard dining by Feelgood designs, Basket chairs and vintage dining table. On lower outdoor terrace, Feelgood designs, CL170 Relax Chair by Yuzuru Yamakawa. On upper deck Feelgood designs C317 Chair by Yuzuru Yamakawa.

FINISHES

Concrete floors throughout. Escape Velour carpet in colour Vamoose from Supertuft on Level 1. Floor tiles are Chinese black from Bellstone and hexagonal tiles in Bathroom from Classic Ceramics. Santosa wall tiles to splashbacks from Classic Ceramics. Desktop furniture linoleum to study benchtops from Forbo. Laminates to laundry and kitchen joinery from Laminex. Paint to brickwork by Dulux. Steel grating to external stair from Webforge. Steel mesh to balustrades from Steel Solutions. La Rochere glass blocks to wall from The Glass Block Shop. Trimdek roof from Lysaght.

LIGHTING

TossB wall lights from Hub. Stealth series strip lights to joinery from Aglo. Wall

light to bedroom from Light Project. Flood lights from Masson.

FIXED & FITTED

From Reece unless otherwise noted. Kitchen sink from Reece. Oven and cooktop by Smeg. Rangehood by Qasair. Dishwasher by Asko. Phoenix Vivid sink mixer. Lincoln Sentry bin system. Posh Solus laundry mixer. Duravit Bathroom Foster basin from Mary Noall. Roca Meridian toilet. Mizu showerhead and Phoenix Mia mixer. Toilet roll holder from Rogerseller. Kado Lure freestanding bath. Icon floor mounted spout and mixer from Astra Walker. Aiphone intercom from Clever Home Store.