

THE LOCAL PROJECT



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Cape Schanck House STUDIO GOSS • Shell House MADELEINE BLANCHFIELD ARCHITECTS
Big Sur FIELD ARCHITECTURE • Connected House ALBERT MO • Scrubby Bay PATTERSON ASSOCIATES
Border Street WORKROOM • Mansard House STUDIO BRIGHT — AND MORE

MANSARD HOUSE

STUDIO BRIGHT

Words by Sarah Webb • Photography by Rory Gardiner • Architecture and Interior Design by Studio Bright
Build by ProvanBuilt • Landscape by Sam Egan Gardens • Engineering by Meyer Consulting • Joinery by CabinetSmith





Mansard House is an artful combination of 1970s charm and contemporary sophistication that seamlessly blends design and functionality.

Nestled gracefully in an expansive grassy landscape in Kew, Melbourne, Mansard House by Studio Bright is a testament to the crafted fusion of 1970s nostalgia and modern elegance. Named after its mossy-slate mansard roof, the majority of the property's reworking has been internal – with minimal changes made to the external structure – breathing new life into the home.

Responding to the clients' desire for a renovation that would introduce more contemporary elements into their family home, the architect seized the opportunity to maximise views, openness and natural light. "They showed us images of hotels and places from their travels that we wanted to incorporate while also respecting the inherently '70s aesthetic, which our clients also love," says Melissa Bright, principal and design director at Studio Bright. The result is a home that not only respects its roots but also exudes sophistication.

The design narrative unfolds as a dance between preservation and transformation. Much of the original layout has been retained, with

the floor plan only altered to tailor to the clients' needs. Strategic wall removals have created a sense of openness that connects the internal spaces with the breathtaking landscape beyond. "Removing some internal walls in the north-facing spaces allowed for an open-plan kitchen, living and dining space with natural sunlight and views out to the landscape and park," says Melissa. The lemon-scented gum at the front is also made more visible and celebrated, becoming a living sculpture, while terraces on the north and east sides of the house are held within a metal concertina band – a touch that underscores the horizontal nature of the mansard roof while maintaining a unified facade.

Accelerated by the urgency of client needs and pandemic constraints, the process unfolded with incredible ease. Studio Bright engaged a trusted builder early on, allowing for swift decision-making and collaboration. The metal balustrade, a striking feature of the exterior, was one such example of on-site teamwork. "Our clients have particular tastes and were excited to see some glamour and style injected into their existing house, which previously did not match their adventurous tastes."



Mansard House is a striking mix of contemporary vision and retro sensibility.

Studio Bright’s vision for Mansard House was a delicate balance between contemporary flair and retro sensibilities. Open living spaces, while ideal for embracing views, required thoughtful division to avoid a cluttered aesthetic. Studio Bright achieved this by introducing divider elements, preserving distinct qualities within the expansive rooms. “Remnants of an existing brick wall between the kitchen and dining room, as well as a floating joinery piece between the dining room and lounge, make the rooms feel like separate spaces,” says Melissa.

The home’s materiality is a symphony of simplicity and elegance, carefully selected to complement the existing features such as the brickwork. The deep-green marble in the kitchen and metallic paint throughout the house evoke a sense of delight, while walnut veneer accentuates the warmth of the bricks. The flooring is durable bluestone, reminiscent of the home’s existing slate flooring, and the ceilings and

soffits feature a seamless transition of Victorian ash lining boards extending from the interior to the exterior. Steel-framed windows in the north-facing living areas not only enhance panoramic views but also complement the surrounding slate and brickwork. “We wanted the palette to be simple, glamorous and in keeping with the quality of the existing home.” The furnishings – largely sourced from local makers – harmonise with the architectural palette, adding rich colour and texture. A separate guest wing in the west also supports the functional layout of the home, allowing for flexibility in living arrangements.

Mansard House has emerged as a remarkable dwelling respectful of its past. Studio Bright expresses pride in turning a primarily internal renovation into a transformative gem. The newly renovated home aligns seamlessly with the clients’ tastes, yet its unique beauty suggests that this is how it was always meant to be.



