

Time
after
time

Inspired by happy
memories, an architect
reimagines his family
home for a
new generation





Legacy to treasure

An architect updates his longstanding family home on the southside for the third and fourth generations

Michelle Bailey

The Watson family and “Nostow” go back a long way.

In fact, a Watson has lived in the Seven Hills house, on Brisbane’s southside, since 1939.

When third-generation and architect Luke Watson bought the property in 2012 he began thinking about alterations and additions which could transform the treasured place into a contemporary home for his wife Lisa and their two daughters.

“It was my grandparent’s house originally, my dad grew up here in the sleep-out when it was a two bedroom house,” Luke says.

“It always had good bones and beautiful details.”

Fond memories of the place helped steer Luke’s vision.

“I knew how my grandparents used the house and the extended family had occasions here so I knew how they occupied the spaces,” Luke says. “Largely we wanted to keep the configuration as it was (in the upper level of the house).”

The original two bedrooms remain, now accommodating the youngest members of the house, with the old



sleep-out now a play space.

New bedrooms extend from a breezeway created at the back of the old house with a new staircase.

“There’s an idea that as you come into the house, you get this instant visual connection through to the backyard,” Luke says.

“You never had that before, it didn’t open up so much.”

The premise of new rooms inserted into the undercroft of the old house was to capture a north-easterly aspect



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and arrange a new kitchen, dining and living rooms in an 'L' shape around a garden courtyard.

"The way we live now is about using outdoor space. That's what our climate allows for and that's what we wanted to embrace," Luke says.

To encourage outdoor play for the children and strengthen a connection to nature, outdoor terraces extend from interior spaces to the lawn.

The most impressive of these is the outdoor room where masonry forms

the floor, seat, fireplace as well as the edges to a pond.

Similar brickwork, which references the sloping terrain of Seven Hills, forms the pool, pool terrace, front staircase and carport.

"The idea of the brick forming the base of the building, embedding it in the landscape, was a key idea," says Luke.

Between the pool and outdoor room, the kitchen is the new "central control hub" of the house. The

double-height space above it connects to rooms in the old part of the house, while the lower-level garden can be supervised from the kitchen.

In a nod to the original kitchen and its beloved Laminex table around which so many meals were shared, the new kitchen occupies the same corner of the house.

A contemporary dining table, with bench by the window, establishes the new heart for meals and conversation.

"The original house was fairly

modest but it's all those memories that made it what it was," Luke says.

"This is recognition of those and about adding to those with a new generation in mind."

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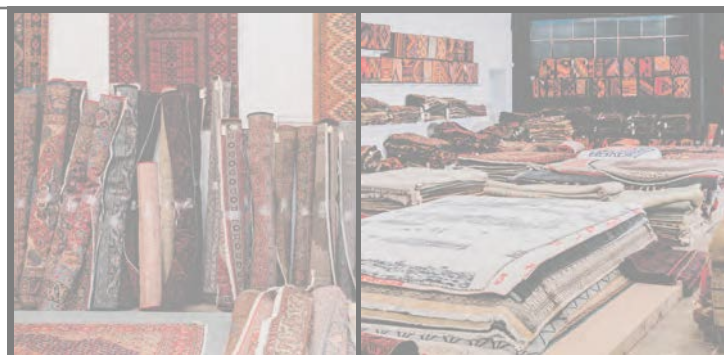
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