

LUIGI ROSSELLI ARCHITECTS

KIRRIBILLI HOUSE

architectural+interior review

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ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE

Luigi Rosselli Architects

PROJECT

Kirribilli House

PRACTICE PROFILE

Established in 1985, Luigi Rosselli is committed to providing sustainable, lasting built environments, with a legacy of quality design, both in sensorial experience of space and contribution to the urban environment.

DESIGN ARCHITECT

Luigi Rosselli

PROJECT ARCHITECT

Candace Christensen, Patrick Bless, James Horler, Sean Johnson

BUILDER

Alvaro Brothers Building

STRUCTURAL CONSULTANT

ACOR Consultants

JOINER

VRD Detailed Joinery Pty Ltd

LANDSCAPER

Terragram, Vladimir Sitta

PHOTOGRAPHY

Justin Alexander



More environmentally self-conscious than conscious, ESD principles have made appearances as add-on features in many architectural solutions that fall short of truly integrated sustainable design. In an era obsessed with sustainability, solutions rarely explore the spatial potential of cross-breeding green thinking with architecture. As a practice firmly set on capturing the essence of time, place and space, Luigi Rosselli and his team offer a refreshing middle ground in their recently-completed Kirribilli House.

Situated along Kirribilli's Elamang Avenue, the house enjoys calm backyard views of the ocean and a quiet street frontage that sits amidst rows of free-standing garages typical of the suburb. The brief required the renovation of a post-war two-storey brick duplex to a modern home that would eventually be the clients' home through to retirement. At its core, the renovation was a translation of the existing post-war structure, fragmented and enclosed to a modern architectural language of fluid spaces.

The house occupies most of the original post-war footprint that was used

as a guide for larger spaces, with the garage and a series of gardens articulated into the plan. Space, as a result of material, form and movement, explores the resonant theme of continuity throughout the house – first evident in the house's street frontage, where its rich tapestry of materials and form develop a dialogue with the site. It's a stark contrast to the disconnected and rigid former garage, as the vast rammed earth gate intersects with the soft timber garage exterior that eventually meets with a solid white rendered wall.

The garage's subtle curve nudges



1. The rammed earth walls ground the house to its sloping site, uniting three levels into one and seemingly holding the home's curving white upper volume.
2. Sinuous movement throughout the home extends to the mid-level courtyard where soft shrubbery and vegetation screen the enclosure from neighbours.

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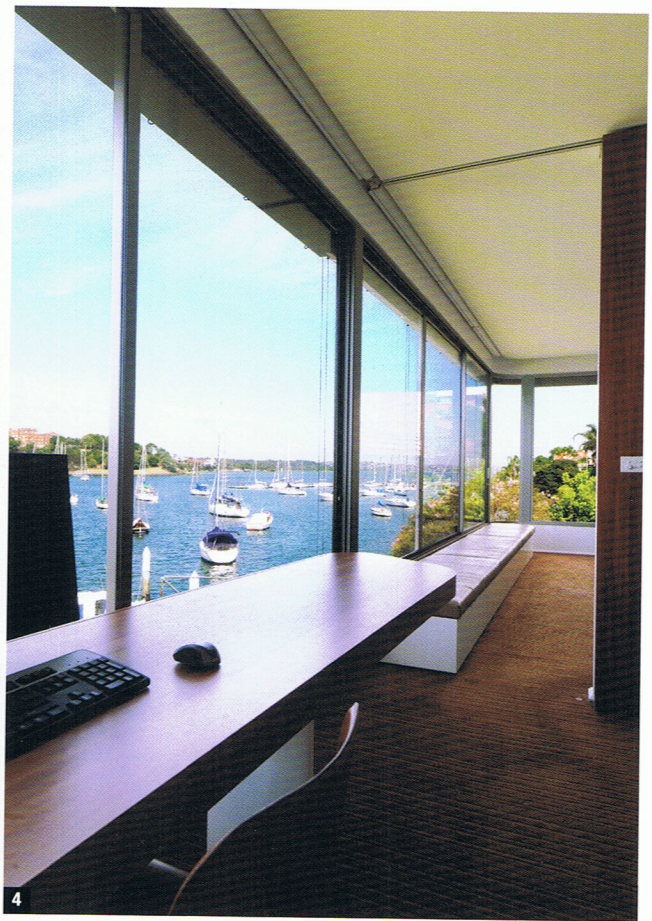


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3. The long flight of stairs extend through the house's three staggering levels which are vertically united by the vast rammed earth wall.
4. Fluid, seemingly continuous spaces reveal expansive views of the harbour from the study room. Joinery and furniture form a complementary

relationship with the spaces, suggesting a ritualistic flow from one activity to the other.

5. Curving balustrades and plunging wooden hand rails artistically convey the downward movement through the sloping site.



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6. The textural warmth of the rammed earth wall is celebrated throughout the home where it ties each individual space together. Even the bathroom appears a part of the home's greater composition.
7. The final step to the ground level is met by a vast dining and entertain-

ment space with utility rooms kept behind and beside the stairs.

8. The theme of continuity is consistent throughout the house. In the kitchen, a long white benchtop stretches to a matching white wall which reaches up to the ceiling as if part of the house's upper volume.

movement towards the entrance of the home where a porch leads to the first of three interconnected gardens. Once inside, movement is directed towards a long flight of timber stairs that steps down the entire length of the three-level house. An adjacent rammed concrete wall is a vertical element of continuity that is rhythmically opened from floor to ceiling to maintain a connection to the outside. Open living rooms meet the stairs as they reach each level so that the spaces, though separate and unique, feel interlocked.

This order follows a circulation pattern that keeps the stream of social spaces separate from intimate spaces, executed clearly and simply through open and corridor configurations. As a result, intimate and utility rooms are comfortably private and hidden, while

social spaces are open and directly accessible. At the same time, these communal spaces explore different degrees of intimacy, between people and the outdoors.

Through the angular entrance door of the upper level, movement is directed down towards the showering light of the mid-level courtyard. The courtyard, sandwiched between the master bedroom and living room is a leafy enclosure, landscaped with trees and shrubbery, connected to the upper and lower gardens. Its intimate quality suggests an evening gathering between close family or friends before the party begins in the ample entertainment space of the lowest level.

By the final level, open communal spaces lead to expansive views of the sea. The kitchen, the home's social hub,

is directly related to the dining and living room spaces that proceed to a large deck where the final garden abuts the sea wall. The climb down from level to level explores different instances of communal and outdoor spaces that enrich the house with individual experiences, harnessing the various qualities of the surroundings into the clients' very own paradise.

Embedded in all the spatial fluidity of Kirribilli House are ESD considerations that contribute to the experiential quality of the spaces. The roof garden of the upper level is a source of insulation and protection that softens the view out from the balcony to the ocean. While the passive solar design of the skylights along the stairs and interlacing gardens are equally effective in experience as they are with the environment. The

rammed earth walls are a beautiful and sustainable form of thermal mass, while the stepping site and interconnected plan encourages natural ventilation. Photovoltaic power generation, solar hot water heating and a water tank are utilities ingrained into the house without being flashy additions.

An example of two birds hit with one stone, Kirribilli House is an all-in-one neat piece of architecture. A practical solution on one hand and a beautiful composition on the other, the house is far from rigid, as movement undulates from indoor to outdoor, intimate to communal. It's an archetype of architecture that responds to the environment as lyrically and effortlessly as its continuity of spaces. Surely, a home to grow old in. +