

# Brick HOUSE by Andrew Burges Architects

• SYDNEY, NSW •

A layered arrangement of volumes and materials gives this new home a spatial richness and complexity that makes each day "interesting" for its owners.

Words by Genevieve Lilley  
Photography by Peter Bennetts

01 A layering of indoor and outdoor spaces defines the spatial arrangement of this coastal Sydney home.





02 From the street, the new house presents as stacked cubic forms.



03 A series of double-height voids are side lit by huge window panels showing only the sky.



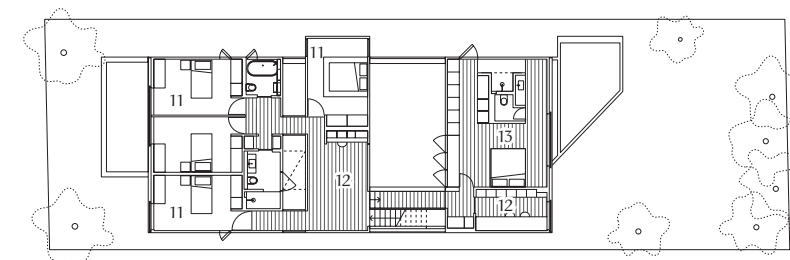
04 For a house on a flat site, the ground floor has a surprisingly rich and subtle topography.

The streets behind Sydney's North Bondi Beach have a strange quality about them – they are not as relaxed as one would hope. There are few beach views, sporadic breezes and a constant air of street parking angst. The houses here are, for the most part, built to maximum width, with a maximum block footprint. Some houses are oversized adaptations of beach bungalows, while others are new. Brick House by Andrew Burges Architects falls into the latter category. The site was once home to a badly altered bungalow and original houses remain on either side. The clients came to Andrew with some experience of the process, having worked with other architects. Their brief was concise – they wanted “something interesting,” and they wanted to use the pale bricks developed for Peter Zumthor’s Kolumba museum in Cologne, Germany.

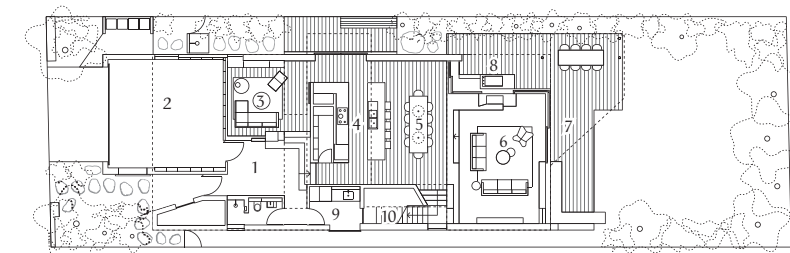
This benchmark brick became the basis of a robust palette of materials that Andrew developed. Andrew’s other beachside residential projects have shown a delicious preoccupation with indoor and outdoor layering, and he has continued to explore and

enrich this theme in this project. The soft grey external brickwork, with wide mortar joints, turns and wraps into the house to form major structural walls and the fireplace surround. Blackened timber wall panelling clads upper walls inside and corresponding first floor walls outside. Blackened timber shutters appear on the front and back elevations, but are echoed with different shutters inside. The timber beams and ply soffit of the main living spaces seamlessly extend to covered outdoor areas. The clients have three boys and the house has a robustness that suits its occupants well.

From the street, the house presents as a cubic form, but once inside, the mass of the house breaks down immediately. A series of double-height voids divide the upper rooms into smaller forms and towers. Several bridges are visible above, traversing the soaring slivers of space. The voids are lit from the side by huge window panels showing only sky. This strategy is an extremely clever tactic, where occupants forget their close proximity to neighbours, and is further strengthened by smaller side windows (in bedrooms and bathrooms) that are mirrored inside to reflect the garden, rather



First floor 1:400



Ground floor 1:400



- 1 Entry
- 2 Garage
- 3 Lounge
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Dining
- 6 Living
- 7 Verandah
- 8 Barbecue
- 9 Laundry
- 10 Store
- 11 Bedroom
- 12 Study
- 13 Main bedroom



**05** The pale bricks developed for Peter Zumthor's Kolumba project in Cologne became the basis for a robust material palette.



**06** The use of footbridges on the upper level cleverly provides privacy between the adult, child and guest zones.

than the abutting neighbours' side walls and roofs.


For a house on a flat site, the ground floor has a surprisingly rich and subtle topography. One steps from the entry's concrete floor up to the core of the house, the kitchen and dining areas, which are marked by a timber floor. This has void areas above it, so feels like the heart of the house. After crossing this space, one then steps down to the living room at the rear that addresses the wide garden. Here, Andrew has reverted to a concrete floor, and therefore the space feels much more like a covered garden room. The repeated pattern of three to four concrete steps marks most thresholds, as well as the entry point to the stairwell. The area surrounding the stairwell is a masterful combination of brick, natural timber panels and blackened wood cladding, drawing together the four constant house materials.

At the first floor, three separate "footbridges" head in disparate directions. This gives wonderful privacy between adult, child and

guest zones. The voids at this level of the house allow voices and family life to waft up from the lower level.

The hallways are lit from above, and mirrored shutters at the end of the hallways reflect glimpses of sky, garden and the house. Each hallway is lined with cupboards made from one of the main house materials. Bathrooms are concealed at the end of a circuitous route.

At present, the garden is simple – a lawn for the boys to tumble on with some perimeter planting. Ever self-critical, Andrew hopes the house will seem less like a "box" once more embedded in a fully developed native garden setting.

The project has a great richness of architectural terrain, and a remarkable range of volumes and spaces to it. It must surely surpass the clients' greatest hopes for "something interesting." Most importantly, the house has a calm, robust quality about it – it is a beach house that belies a big build on expensive land in an area of frenetic construction. 

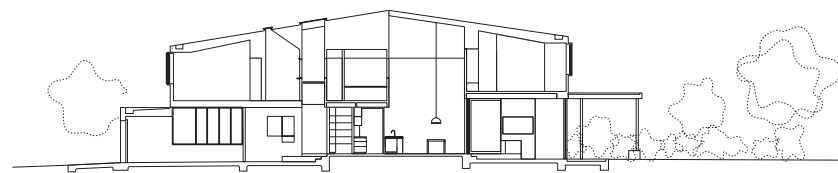


**07** Mirrored shutters at the end of the hallways reflect glimpses of the sky, garden and house.

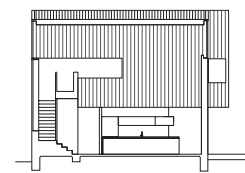


**08** To maintain privacy from neighbours, skylights and high windows are used for access to natural light.

**09** The rear elevation reaches out into the backyard, with a "covered garden room" extending into a deck area.



Sections 1:400



0 5 m

#### Architect

**Andrew Burges Architects**  
32/61 Marlborough Street  
Surry Hills NSW 2010  
+61 2 9331 7433  
andrew@aba-architects.com.au  
aba-architects.com.au

#### Practice profile

A design-focused studio with expertise in single dwellings, multiresidential, masterplanning and public projects.

#### Project team

Andrew Burges, Chris Mullaney, Louise Lovmand, Celia Carroll, Mitchell Bonus, Anna Field, Chris Su

#### Builder

Shane Green Building

#### Consultants

**Engineer:** Northern Beaches Consulting Engineers  
**Landscaper:** William Dangar and Associates (designer), Matthew Napoli (landscaper)  
**Joiner:** Make Bespoke Furniture (kitchen/living), Refalo Joinery (bathrooms/bedrooms)

#### Products

**Roofing:** Lysaght Custom Orb in Colorbond 'Windspray'  
**External walls:** Petersen Tegl Kolumba K11 bricks; Woodform Architectural burnt ash in Murobond Woodwash finish  
**Internal walls:** Petersen Tegl Kolumba K11 bricks; Woodform Architectural American oak in Murobond Woodwash finish; Easycraft Easyvj wall panels in Dulux 'Natural White'; Briggs Veneers American oak veneer  
**Windows:** Stockwells Joinery Accoya windows and screens in Murobond Woodwash finish

**Doors:** Aluminium and Glass Constructions aluminium sliding doors in black anodized finish; Stockwells Joinery Victorian ash doors in Intergrain UltraClear finish  
**Flooring:** Mafi Oak Country boards in brushed natural oil finish; spotted gum decking in Cutek CD50 finish  
**Lighting:** Coco Flip Coco pendants; Anchor Ceramics Potter Light; Kreon Diapason; Actwell Lighting LED drum lights; iGuzzuni View lights  
**Kitchen:** Fisher and Paykel wall oven and DCS outdoor grill; Miele gas cooktop and fully integrated dishwasher; Oliveri sink; Fantini Cafe kitchen sink mixer; Zip Industries HydroTap; polished concrete benchtops by 2Barrows; Briggs Veneers American oak veneer to joinery  
**Bathroom:** Catalano Verso 370 and Domino 100 basins; Rogerseller Strap Towel Rail, Luna floor-mounted bath spout and Logic wall-top assembly and spout; Cibo

Design Chetto freestanding bath; Fantini Mare basin mixer; Academy Tiles Piombo wall tiles; Lea Ceramiche Stoneclay 'Cendre' tiles

**Heating and cooling:** Big Ass Fans Haiku ceiling fan; Devex Systems hydronic underfloor heating

**External elements:** Eco Outdoor bluestone steppers; Robert Plumb Ned Kelly Slimline integrated letterbox

**Other:** Dining table and credenza by Jon Goulder; ceramics from Jordan and Koskela; Muuto Nerd chair; Hay Copenhagen stool; Tait Linear and Nano tables and Volley chairs

#### Area

**Site:** 475 m<sup>2</sup>  
**Floor:** 310 m<sup>2</sup>

#### Time schedule

**Design, documentation:** 18 months

**Construction:** 18 months