



## Heritage Work

### Forrest house – 4 Sorrell St

The Percy House House, at 4 Sorrell Street, Forrest, is located in the heart of what was once known as Blandfordia. The first permanent residential precinct in Canberra, Blandfordia was inspired by Garden City principles. The house and site are thus a representative component of this form of suburban environment. Our clients, Jack and Heather Percy, clearly appreciated the historic significance of their house, and wanted to retain these qualities as much as possible. But their design brief—to extend this eighty-year-old house, which contained a series of unsympathetic extensions and interventions, into a large, contemporary family home, complete with all the requirements of twenty-first century living—presented a formidable challenge. How could this be done without destroying the existing qualities of the house and its setting—the very qualities that had attracted Jack and Heather to it in the first place?

The final solution to the challenge did not happen over night, but was the end result of a collaborative process between Jack and Heather, Preferred Builders, the architect [Hugh Gordon] and the interior designer [Karin McNamara]. The key to the design solution grew from the way in which Jack viewed the design problem from the beginning. In fact 'problem' is not the correct term here. Because, rather than seeing the heritage aspects as constraints, Jack viewed them as opportunities: a vocabulary of design language through which it was possible to develop and enhance the original house. This way of thinking extended from the 'bigger picture' right down to detailed design: from the preservation of the concept of the house within its park-like, garden setting, to the continuation of the simple but robust form and massing, down to the detailed design of windows, doors, chimneys, fireplaces, ceilings, balustrades and internal hardware.

A single storey, double brick house with timber framed doors and windows and tiled, hipped roofs, the Percy House presents a gracious, formal and serene frontage onto Sorrell Street. To the rear it forms a 'U'-shape around a sunny, private court. The two 'arms' of the 'U', which contained earlier extensions, were rebuilt in a style that matched the original architecture of the house. Existing doors, windows and chimneys were measured and recorded, and these became templates for new units that matched the original versions. The existing eaves soffit detail—consisting of white painted, spaced timber battens—was extended throughout the new work. Other design 'themes' were taken from elements of the existing fabric, and reinterpreted in new ways: for instance, a pattern found on existing leadlight windows become the pattern for new windows, but was also incorporated as the profile for new metal balustrades.



## Forrest house – 4 Sorrell St (cont.)

Inside, unsympathetic elements were removed and the spaces were fitted out in a way that respected the integrity of the original house. Other existing themes and details from the original house—such as the black and white tiling, marble fireplace surrounds, internal door profiles, door and window handles and battened ceilings—were incorporated in the new work. Some of these items, such as the heritage door hardware, took some effort to locate. The battened ceilings, which divide the surface into a series of square shapes, break down the scale of the larger volumes [such as the new family room and kitchen], and spatially unite the interior.

With a view towards sustainability, we recycled building materials as much as possible. These included reusing bricks, roof tiles, windows, doors and door surrounds. The fact that the building footprint is largely unchanged allowed retention of the maximum amount of open space around the house, and retention of significant Oak trees that provide shade to the outdoors. We also managed to retain a large expanse of grass, and a small existing orchard of fruit trees. Stormwater is recycled for watering the gardens, and the swimming pool is heated from solar tubes located on the carport roof. We believe that the completed house is an elegant and sensitive solution to the problem of providing contemporary living spaces within a historically significant, older Canberra home. We further believe that the success of the project is due to the input from all of those involved in this challenging, but ultimately rewarding, design and building process.

Forrest House won Master Builders Association 2012 Residential Heritage Restoration and also won Master Builders Association 2012 Remodelling Open category. Master builders Association 2012 House of the Year Finalist.



## Forrest house – 4 Sorrell St (cont.)

I was absolutely thrilled when Jack Percy, the owner of the Sorrell Street house invited me to work on the interiors of this gracious elegant heritage home. Canberra is such a new city, that rarely, as designers do we get to work on such older projects. Fortunately Jack and Heather shared my very strong belief that we should absolutely retain the integrity of the house, rather than retain the external facade and modernise the interiors as so many clients tend to do.

The front of the house follows a traditional formula, and hence the new extensions I believe, have been well designed by Hugh Gordon in maintaining that feel, but creating a light, open and functional open plan space, which is also sustainable and efficient. By focusing on restoring the period finishes of the home, I recommended using natural materials, most notably the Grigio Carnico marble used in the kitchen and bathrooms. This elegant natural stone compliments the cabinetry and the black and cream tiles used throughout the wet areas and new fireplace surround. The high quality but surprising well priced range of tiles we selected further restate the intent of maintaining the integrity of the finishes and style of such older homes when originally built. I would like to congratulate Hugh Gordon for his thoughtful and innovative design, I know his passion is sustainability and therefore working on such an old home, makes this task even harder.

Furthermore, in the 25 years I have worked as a designer, I have never been so delighted as to have the opportunity to work with Paul Kerr, and his supervisor Richard of Preferred Builders. Paul's attention to detail, his appreciation of what the designer intends for the project without question or negativity was so refreshing! Together we would discuss and resolve design issues as they arose and he respected my opinions and ideas. And, when I made additional design suggestions, such as the pop-out on the dressing room to enlarge the space, his attitude was positive and he just made it happen!

Yours sincerely

Karin McNamara



karin mcnamara design



## Royal Military College, Duntroon

From 2008 to 2010 Preferred Builders carried out extensions and restoration works to 'Shappere Lodge' and 'Waller Lodge' under instructions from Hoa Luu of Defence Housing Australia, and Heritage Advisor David Hobbes of Philip Leeson Architects. These two stone lodges, originally built circa 1860 as gatehouses for Robert Campbell's Duntroon estate, were later taken over as part of the Royal Military College, Australia's first Military college and Canberra's first major institution. To work on such significant and historic properties was a privilege. Preferred Builders employed a combination of traditional and contemporary construction methods. These included cutting and shaping bonded stone and corbels, inserting raised stone pointing with slaked lime mortar, and rendering with slumped lime mortar to lathed walls. Special moulds were fabricated for casting plaster cornices by hand, and timber finishes were reinstated in the original style. New construction techniques, including acrylic resin injection and 'helifix' crack stitching, were introduced in order to stabilise the existing structures.

Preferred Builders have also carried out similar restoration works at Duntroon to 'Hiscocks House' (1912), 'Gilchrist House' (1912), 'Haydon House' (1913), 'McCartney Cottage' (1913), 'Lalor Cottage' (1913), 'McKenzie Cottage' (1913), 'Bernard House' (1911), and 'Hosking House' (1913)

Preferred Builders held the maintenance contract from 2008 to 2012 for these properties and other Heritage listed properties within the Australian Royal Military College, Duntroon for Defence Housing Australia.

3 Plant Rd was the Winner of the Master Builders Heritage Project of the Year 2008 Award.



# preferredbuilders

## Manuka Smiles Dental Surgery, 36 Bougainville Street, Manuka

In 2009 Preferred Builders completed extensive restoration and reconstruction works to this historic property, which is one of the renowned Manuka Grouped Houses designed in 1930 for the Federal Capital Commission by Thomas Robert Casboulte and W. Hayward Morris.

The work carried out by Preferred Builders included underpinning the entire house to stabilise the building and prevent structural movement while the extensions and refurbishments were undertaken. New construction techniques were used to prevent further cracking, and to stabilise the existing wall structures. These included 'Helifix' crack stitching and injection of acrylic resin. Existing roof tiles were removed and 'Thermoshield' was installed before they were re-laid. All existing hardwood timbers were retained and re-milled for use on new timber staircases and other works.

Due to the significance of the original building, and the sensitivity to correct heritage conservation procedure that was required, only tradesmen with specific heritage experience were allowed to work on this project.

The owner and client of Manuka Smiles, Dr. Spiro Pazios, wanted to ensure that the adaptation would make the building as environmentally friendly as possible. For this reason in-slab hydronic heating, a solar grid system, a 22,000 litre underground water tank and a grey water system were installed.

Manuka Smiles was the Winner of the Master Builders Commercial Heritage Project of the Year 2009 Award



# preferredbuilders

## Griffith House

33 Arthur Circle, Griffith. Adam Hobill Design.

The list of works to this property was 'endless'.

Works included internal brick wall removal and installation of new structural roof & floor members, new floors, new bathrooms / kitchen/ laundry, new bedroom wing, new family room wing, outdoor entertaining area with 'plunge pool'.

Much of the original fabric was removed – restored & reused including bricks, picture rail , window sills & headboards, skirtings & architraves.

33 Arthur Circle the Winner of the Housing Industry Association, Residential Heritage Project of the Year 2008 Award



## Other Heritage Houses

### Mollison House

One of Canberra's most gracious and well-known early houses, the Mollison House on the corner of Furneaux Street and Murray Crescent in the heart of Manuka was originally designed in 1928 by Rudd and Limburg for Dr. Mollison as his house and surgery. In 2007 Preferred Builders completed extensive restoration and new works to the design of Hugh Gordon Architect.

Ninety Percent of the internal fabric was carefully removed and replaced with new to compliment the era. The structure was also upgraded including new chimney stacks, new structural steel roof & floor members, replacement of rotten floor joists and re installing (sourcing) the original flooring species i.e. 'QLD Kauri' tongue & groove.

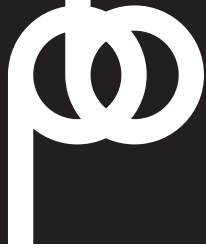
Insulation was installed wherever possible to external walls & floor / ceilings along with new heating & cooling.

Rope & Pulley double hung windows were taken apart, restored, cleaned & re installed, carefully protecting the original hand made glass inserts.

Roofing fabric was replaced - rusted flat galvanized sheets were replaced with colorbond in .48mm BMT kliplok 700 high strength – heritage

Trim profiles including original hand made cornices were re made using local suppliers and tradesmen with appropriate credentials / experience.

An outdoor entertaining area and 25m lap pool were installed for 'the kids'.



## Campbell House

46 Vasey Crescent, Campbell

This project provided the rewarding opportunity to work on a house designed by Roy Grounds in 1960 and now nominated for heritage listing. The underlying design philosophy, fortunately shared by client, architect and builder, sought to preserve the character of the house by matching forms, detailing and materials. The existing building consists of two pavilions set at right angles to form an 'L', stepping up the hillside and separated by half a level. Most rooms have expansive views to the north towards the city. A simple palette of materials includes unpainted concrete blockwork, timber windows and a flat metal deck roof with broad timber lined eaves supported on slender posts.

The addition takes the form of a third pavilion sited to the rear a further half level above, which seamlessly blends with the existing composition and is largely unseen from the street. Sensitive internal alterations have provided an enlarged living room flowing to a new kitchen and an elegant semi-enclosed dining room. Original limed timber ceilings and wall panelling have been matched and original distinctive primary colours have been reinterpreted on new elements throughout the house.

The one significant departure from the original appearance of the house was to bag and paint the interior block walls to improve their reflectivity, to brighten the spaces whilst retaining the feeling of solidity of the existing walls. In all other respects, the new work faithfully follows the essential elements and feel of the original building.





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## Australian National University – Vice Chancellors Residence

The Australian National University Vice-Chancellor's residence at Acton was designed by Professor Brian Lewis, the University's consultant architect, during 1950 and 1951, for the University's inaugural Vice-Chancellor, Sir Douglas Copland, and his wife Lady Copland. Lewis, who was based in Melbourne, worked closely with Lady Copland on detailed aspects of the design, and in May 1951 asked Canberra-based architect Ken Oliphant to assist with the preparation of specifications and site supervision.

The refurbishment required careful demolition & remodelling work to bring the building interior to the standard required for modern living.

Works included , new bathrooms, new kitchen, roof & wall repairs, stair modifications, heating & cooling upgrade, new furniture, window & floor finishes and various form of asbestos removal – fully air monitored.

The ANU's Heritage Management practices & site protection protocols were strictly adhered to. Specific staff training & identification of proposed works & their heritage values was of high importance.

No internal photo's of this property are available to the public.

The challenge - working in a heritage area maintaining the heritage values and upgrading the house to create light filled living areas whilst optimizing the existing spaces, and providing better thermal efficiency and access to outdoor entertaining areas.

## BARTON HOUSE, ACT

### DESIGN

Architect: Judith Phillips - Phillips & Associates Architects

The project is a small addition and renovation to a heritage house in the suburb of Barton. The house was originally constructed in 1926, and extended in 1938. In the 1970s a rear two storey addition was added and the house was again extended in the 1980's. The heritage requirements for the suburb allowed only a very small addition and the design challenge was to reconfigure and renovate existing spaces.

The clients brief was to provide more light, make better use of the existing spaces and improve the overall functionality. The owners were keen to have space to entertain their family and friends and enjoy their Canberra house after moving from the country into town. The original house allowed for very little storage, and Jill and John wanted good storage to keep their busy lives organized. A staircase was removed from the centre of house to allow living areas on the lower level to be opened up to the rear courtyard garden and pool, and for a guest bathroom and study area to be created from the upper level area. Walls were removed internally and the spatial layout of the living and kitchen areas improved. A new stair to the north side of the house captures the northerly light, and the landing and storage under was the only addition to the house.

NSW spotted gum flooring and Queensland spotted gum joinery add warmth and character. Large bi-fold doors open to the rear garden and the kitchen has been redesigned to maximize space, storage and outlook to the garden. Most windows in the house have been replaced with double glazing to improve thermal efficiency, and external retractable blinds added to the western facade to reduce heat gain.



# preferredbuilders

## BARTON HOUSE, ACT (cont.)

### BUILDER

Builder: Paul Kerr Preferred Builders

It was a pleasure for us to build this project. As far as we are concerned, the success was due to the people involved, and to their positive and realistic attitudes to the challenges involved in working with heritage buildings. We would like to thank the owners, John & Jill Hutton. Not only did they desire a high level of detail and finish, they knew the right way to go about achieving it. The Hutton's provided an adequate budget, and a realistic time frame for completion. Just as important as these considerations was their decision to employ a skilled architect, Judith Phillips, to oversee the design and construction processes. Judith's well documented plans and schedules—plus excellent structural engineering advice from Hugill Consulting ensured that the project build was economical. Constant communication between all parties improved the quality of the completed building.

For Heritage projects we tend to use tradesmen with a sensitive approach & sound understanding of the more traditional techniques and hands on methodologies that are required for successful alterations & additions to heritage buildings converting them from dark small scale spaces to light filled spacious, very livable homes.

## Namadgi Visitors Centre

'Gudgenby in a box'

Architect:

Philip Leeson

Gudgenby timber wall reconstruction:

Myles Gostelow

The site is south west of Namadgi Visitors Centre via Tharwa A.C.T.

Structure:

Rammed earth walls, steel portal, spotted gum purlins

The box shelter was built to cover the old Gudgenby Homstead front timber wall.

The homestead was originally built 1845, dismantled and stored 1964, 'born again' 2013.