

# THE LOCAL PROJECT



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Architecture and Design of Australia and New Zealand

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THE MADE BY STOREY SERIES

# BERKLEY STREET RESIDENCE

## WORKROOM

Words by Millie Thwaites • Photography by Timothy Kaye • Styling by Bea + Co • Architecture and Interior Design by Workroom  
Landscape by LBA Construction • Timber Flooring by Made by Storey





Embracing the challenge of combining two buildings to create a cohesive and functional family home, Workroom drew on a holistic approach to unite and clarify the existing structures. While some would disregard the originals and start from scratch, Workroom recognised the potential – addressing Berkeley Street Residence with the same rigour and prowess that has come to define the studio’s work.

Counterintuitively for a project of such a grand scale, its inception lay in a decidedly modest brief. The clients initially approached Workroom to simply redesign the laundry. A preliminary site visit made one thing clear – extensive works were required in order to make a meaningful difference in how the family of five lived in this home. “The existing house was confused, and the layout was really bizarre,” John says. “The clients asked me what I’d do, and I told them I thought the house was worthy of something amazing as there was quite a lot of scope there.” With the clients willing to put their faith in Workroom’s hands, the project quickly escalated to a full renovation, unifying and clarifying the original structures to create a cohesive whole.

To fully appreciate the complexities of this project – and the challenges involved in creating the coherence and fluidity it now exemplifies – the history and context of the site must first be understood. This home was initially two separate houses on neighbouring blocks along Berkeley Street in Hawthorn, in Melbourne’s east. A renovation completed in the 1980s saw the two buildings connected by a glass passage, creating one large and confused home. Inside, the ceilings were low, the rooms were poky and disjointed and, as a result, the narrative between the two buildings was irrational. “Even though it had an amazing garden with a pool

and tennis court across two blocks, the house itself was closed in and confusing,” John reflects.

The scope involved partial structural work, addressing the link between the two houses and creating a feeling of connectedness through materiality and clever spatial planning. “It would have been very easy to work on each existing room individually, but that would have retained the very disconnected nature of the home and wouldn’t have served our clients well,” John says. The envelope of the building did not change, but Workroom “addressed the layout, cutting open some of the larger spaces such as the entry to create a real sense of scale – something the previous house was really lacking,” he explains.

The glass passage linking the two houses has proved to be the crux of the project’s success. Redefining the space was key; Workroom enlarged the floor space, adding two bathrooms and transforming the narrow walkway into a generous corridor leading to the master suite. No longer does this space present as a simple linking structure but as an integral part of the home – both in appearance and experience. Through the dissolution of what was an overly definitive junction and designing a logical flow of spaces, much-needed connection is introduced at the centre of the home.







Made by Storey Cloud from the Tonal Collection creates a consistent base throughout.



The light oak tones and wire brushed finish of the Made by Storey flooring complement the interior palette.

With regard to the interiors, the clients wanted to achieve a classic aesthetic. “They didn’t want something ultra contemporary, and they didn’t want concrete, which we generally use a lot of,” John says. Unperturbed, Workroom responded to the clients’ brief with honesty, drawing on a rigorous and innovative approach to design. Some simple detailing throughout nods to period features without saturating the aesthetic, and internal fluted glass doors add a sense of grandeur. The remainder of the interior is characterised by a classic minimalism, realised through clean lines and a largely pared-back palette.

“The materiality of the entire house has been designed to be fairly neutral. You get a sense of the palette that’s forming the overall composition, but it’s not meant to be overwhelming,” John explains. Adding, “the clients have a lot of art, so we didn’t want the house to be competing with that. Instead, we wanted it to be the backdrop.” A sense of continuity expressed through a considered selection of materials and expertly crafted details is typical of the studio’s work. For Berkeley Street Residence, this was easily achieved with the use of Made by Storey timber flooring. The architects selected Cloud – a light natural oak from Made by Storey’s Tonal Collection – to bring warmth to the predominantly white palette throughout the house. The select-grade boards, possessing soft oak grains lightly wire brushed to achieve fine textures, were hand-picked

for Berkeley Street Residence. “The tone and colour of the floor is the link between everything,” says John. “The slightly grey finish to the oak means you get a sense of the flooring and can appreciate its beauty, but it’s not loud – it’s all complementary.”

Workroom has specified Made by Storey’s flooring for multiple projects. This ongoing partnership is testament to the quality of the product and illustrates the merit in an enduring relationship between architect and supplier, explains John. “More often than not, we require a product to be a very particular way. Sometimes it’s difficult to get suppliers to be accountable for what they’re producing. That’s not the case with Made by Storey. Time after time, they’ve given us an unconditional guarantee, and they always deliver,” he says. When it comes to Made by Storey’s team, he describes the service as proactive, consistent and flexible, meaning as the architect “you can always rely on a smooth process from sample selection to installation and finished product.”

Once defined by its lack of connection, this large family home now reads and feels as one, conveying a palpable sense of synergy. Workroom has imbued Berkeley Street Residence with a seamless architectural language that, in John’s words, “carries a narrative from start to end.”



Curated views between spaces and to gardens beyond create a sense of connection.



