

# Higher GROUND

The decision to raise an existing 1940s cottage gave this Brisbane family home a real lift.

STORY *Judy Pascoe* | STYLING *Leigh Boswell* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Scott Burrows*



**EXTERIOR** Calabor dry-stacked stone and Dover antique limestone floor tiles, all Eco Outdoor. For similar Adirondack chairs and matching table, try French Knot. Cushions, Highgate House.



**KITCHEN/LIVING** Bifold windows create a servery between the kitchen and outdoor entertaining area, which includes a complete outdoor kitchen. Carrara marble benchtop. Joinery painted Dulux Juvenile (island) and Resene Alabaster. Axor 'Montreux' mixer tap, Elite Bathware & Tiles. Pendant lights, Visual Comfort. Custom stools and sofa by Highgate House. For similar ceiling fan, try Beacon Lighting. Penza timber flooring, Tongue N Groove Flooring.

It's rare that a client asks an architect to "surprise us". But that was the brief Scott and Kylie gave Harry Poulos Architects for the renovation of a pre-1946 cottage they had just bought in Brisbane's south. The house was in original condition and perched on a hill with three street frontages and uninterrupted city views.

Scott and Kylie had already engaged Leigh Boswell of Highgate House, the interior designer who worked on their previous home. Leigh had also collaborated on several projects with Harry Poulos, and she was excited to transform the property from rundown and dilapidated into an expansive and luxurious home.

As the couple has twin teenage sons, it was essential that the house be spacious and robust as well as good-looking. "We were after a family home with room to grow," says Kylie. "Private spaces for sanctuary as well as spots to relax and recharge. Scale and texture were important, so we wanted to keep the original high ceilings but add vast expanses of glass."

The project was certainly a challenge. The cottage had rotting floors and roof, termite infestation and, surprisingly, a bath installed in a cupboard.

Harry and his team opted to raise the existing house and create two lower levels, a neat solution on a block that slopes about 9 metres from front to back. The council required the facade and original features be retained, so Harry carried the proportions and architectural details through to the new areas for consistency. The existing external weatherboards, fretwork, french doors and windows were also retained and restored. "The design has two anchor points, the traditional character and the city view," says Harry. "By maximising these two elements, the layout and flow became really simple."

The family was keen for the twins to have independent space so a teenage retreat was created on the new lower-ground floor. It includes identical bedrooms for the boys as well as a gym, family room and terrace with a ping-pong table. A key feature of this level is the concealed store room, accessed via a 'secret' door in the TV/bookcase unit. "Our sons really enjoy having a whole level of the house to themselves - it gives them a place to retreat from the adults. There are spaces to sleep, study, work out and play," says Kylie.

The main living zones are located together on the ground floor. To the right of the entrance are a guestroom and bathroom with study and laundry/mud room beyond. To the left is a sitting area and dining zone, separated by a double-sided fireplace. The layout then opens up to a generous open-plan space that includes a butler's ▶

**SITTING ROOM** Furniture, roman blinds, cushions and inlay tray, all Highgate House. Lampshade fabric, Tigger Hall Design. Rug, Dash & Albert Rug Company. **KITCHEN** *Opposite top* Carrara marble benchtops. Joinery painted Dulux Juvenile (island) and Resene Alabaster. Axor 'Montreux' mixer tap, Elite Bathware & Tiles. Oven and cooktop, Siemens. Refrigerator, Electrolux. Pendant lights, Visual Comfort. Custom bar stools, Highgate House. For similar lantern tiles (splashback), try Schots Home Emporium. **BUTLER'S PANTRY** *Opposite bottom* Aged mirror tiles, Telescope. Wine fridges, Vintec. Joinery painted Dulux Juvenile.



pantry, kitchen and living area. At the rear is an entertaining pavilion with outdoor kitchen and additional sitting zone next to the pool. Thanks to the slope of the site, these areas enjoy spectacular views and feel wonderfully private. The original cottage, now the first floor, is a true sanctuary for Scott and Kylie. It includes a generous main bedroom with dressing room, ensuite and sitting area, all with city views.

When it came to the interiors, Kylie knew exactly what she wanted and had already compiled a comprehensive Pinterest file with inspiration for the overall aesthetic. "We wanted a relaxed home - casual elegance with forgiving fabrics and enduring furniture. Nothing too serious, precious or formal," she says. "A house that was refined yet understated, true to the original dwelling while allowing for contemporary living."

Leigh interpreted Scott and Kylie's wishes with neutral tones, rich textures, wallpapers and beautiful fabrics, fusing traditional and modern elements. "The idea was to create spaces that were user-friendly and facilitated flow through the home. It was all about balance and thoughtful curation," she says. "It was important to create a gentle flow from the calm, elegant interiors to the relaxed, natural tones of the exterior spaces." ▶



### THIS IS THE LIFE

Brisbane's benign climate means the focus is on outdoor living. With the expansive terrace alongside the pool enjoying city views as well as boasting an outdoor kitchen with bar fridge, gas barbecue, pizza oven and slow cooker, this is an entertainer's dream. The owners love to host family and friends and are looking forward to holding Kylie's mother's approaching 80th birthday celebrations here.





*The palette*

- Resene Deep Ocean (exterior)
- Resene Alabaster (interior, main walls)
- Dulux Juvenile (kitchen island, butler's pantry)

**MAIN BEDROOM** Custom bedhead with bronze-stud detailing, bed end stools, throw, curtains and table lamp, all Highgate House. Custom cushions in Manuel Canovas Sona. Tussore carpet in Sumac, Cavalier Bremworth. **BOYS' BATHROOM** *Below left* Caesarstone benchtop in Turbine Grey. Vanity made from Nikpol Tobacco Gladstone Oak. Floor tiles, Elite Bathware & Tiles. Custom wall lights, Highgate House. **STUDY** Desk made from Nikpol Tobacco Gladstone Oak. Lower joinery painted Taubmans Black Flame. Custom office chair and striped wallpaper, Highgate House. Floor tiles, Elite Bathware & Tiles. **POWDER ROOM** *Below right* Carrara marble benchtop. Joinery painted Resene Craigieburn Quarter. Lewis & Wood Coromandel wallpaper. Mirror and custom lampshades, Highgate House. Wall lights, Visual Comfort. Floor tiles, Tilescope. **MAIN ENSUITE** *Opposite* Thibaut Diamond Head wallpaper in Slate. Floor tiles, Tilescope. For similar bath, try Victoria+Albert. For similar bath filler, try Phoenix Tapware. Stool and towel, Highgate House. *Off the Beaten Track* artwork by Jud Keresztesi, Martine Gallery. ▶



Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



Scott and Kylie say the design and building process was “seamless, enjoyable and gratifying”. There was one little hurdle when it came to the gardens, however: the family’s new labrador puppy, Loom. The landscaping firm, Boss Gardenscapes, had to take puppy behaviour into account in creating the design, as well as accommodate the family’s favourite outdoor activities, which include volleyball and badminton.

The home was completed early this year and now perfectly suits the needs of all its occupants. “We have a home that’s very private yet feels vast and sumptuous,” says Kylie. “It has a graciousness that is a reminder of all who contributed to its transformation. It’s a great space for our family in which to begin a new story together, to enrich our adventures and to cocoon.” **H&G Harry Poulos Architects, South Brisbane, Queensland; (07) 3255 2828 or [www.poulos.com.au](http://www.poulos.com.au). Highgate House, Hendra, Queensland; (07) 3256 0860 or [highgatehouse.com.au](http://highgatehouse.com.au).**



**ENTERTAINING PAVILION** *Above* Rattan lounge setting with outdoor cushions, Highgate House. For similar urn, try Orient House. Rug, Dash & Albert Rug Company. **LAUNDRY** Caesarstone benchtop in Osprey. Joinery painted Resene Double Sea Fog. Hand towel, Highgate House. For similar splashback tiles, try The Tile Mob. For similar gooseneck tap, try Winning Appliances. For similar butler sink, try Parisi. **MUD ROOM** Bench made from Nikpol Tobacco Gladstone Oak. Zigzag baskets from eBay. **POOL** Freshwater pool, Naked Pools. For similar plant pots, try Garden Life. *For Where to Buy, see page 176.*

