

The Saturday
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home

Raising the roof

Making the most of an
idyllic bushland setting

SITTING
Rock
to suit

SAFE AND
How
would-be

Among the gum trees

A 'pop-up' roof, fixed high windows on all sides and a raised concrete platform all help to give the appearance that this secluded hideaway is floating above its bushland setting, writes **Robyn Willis**. Photos **John Fotiadis**.



RENOVATE

Imagine seeing a wallaby on the front veranda, or watching a sea eagle glide by. While not exactly routine, these are sights Michelle and Phil Carlyle have become accustomed to from the comfort of their living room overlooking Narrabeen Lakes on Sydney's Northern Beaches.

Framed by stunning angophoras that dot their property, there are views from almost every room of either the lakes or the bushland beyond. But it was not always like this.

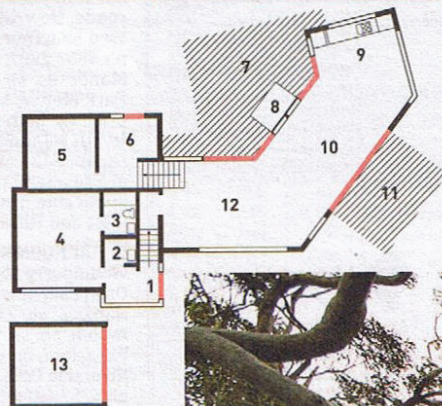
When Michelle and Phil came across the house, it was not making the most of its location. "The lake view was originally at the back of the house and you could not walk out there," says Michelle.

The exceptional views and privacy of the block inspired the Carlyles to put renovation plans out to tender. After knocking on the doors of houses they liked, in order to find out the name of the architect, they invited four architects to present their portfolios and put forward their ideas for their home.

"We connected with Richard the most and his portfolio had a mixture of stuff. There was no particular style," says Michelle.

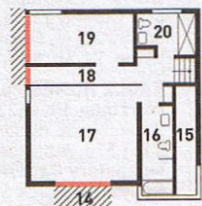
LOWER LEVEL

- 1 Entry
- 2 Laundry
- 3 Bathroom
- 4 Office/bedroom
- 5 Bedroom
- 6 Wine cellar
- 7 Terrace
- 8 Barbecue
- 9 Kitchen
- 10 Living room
- 11 Terrace
- 12 Dining room
- 13 Garage



UPPER LEVEL

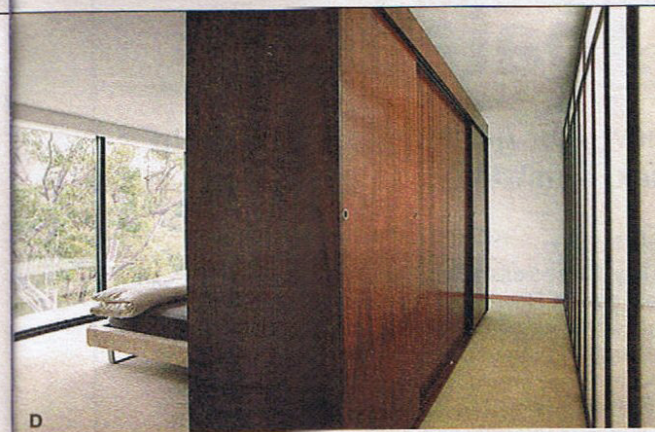
- 14 Balcony
- 15 Void
- 16 Ensuite
- 17 Main bedroom
- 18 Hallway
- 19 Bedroom
- 20 Bathroom



A Fixed high windows let in light without compromising on privacy B The south side of the old house C Now the south side is open and the concrete platform and 'pop-up' roof add to the feeling that the house is floating D Japanese-style hallway with timber panels and opaque glass provides views yet maintains privacy E-F Entry to the house: before and after G-H Extensive water views are now taken advantage of



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Although he describes the original house as "nuts and berries style", thanks to its rough-sawn, exposed timber beams, Richard could see there was plenty of scope for the site.

"I had taken into account the views and also being able to walk out onto this fantastic [stone] outcrop," says Richard. "The big pluses the house had going for it was that it was narrow and we could open that out to both sides and still have very usable rooms without the feeling of being in a corridor."

Opening up the house

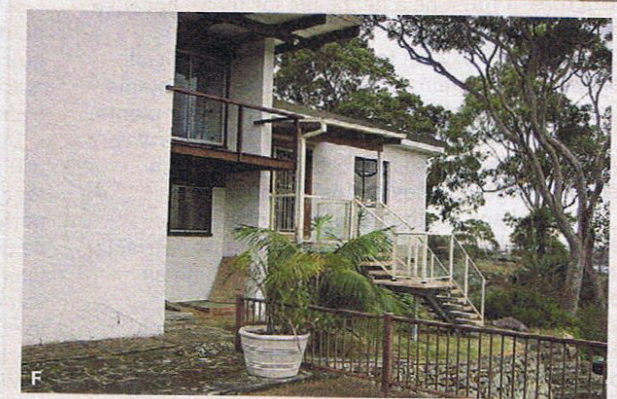
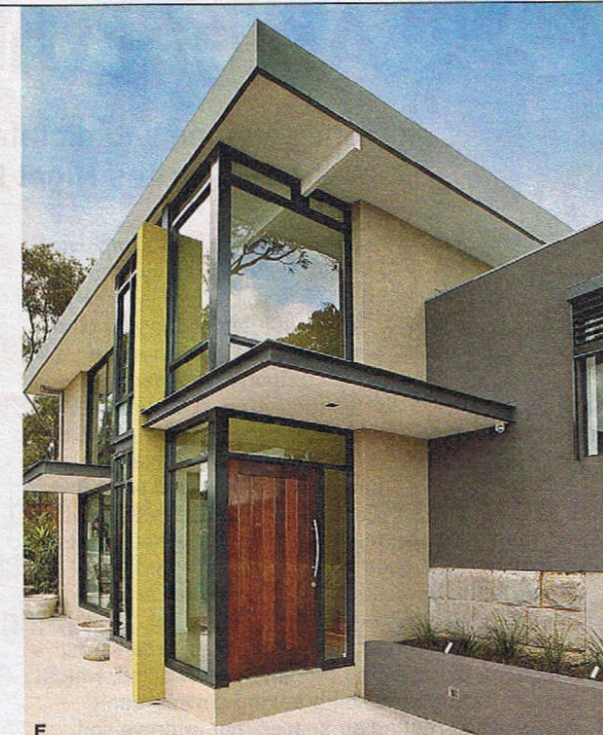
Richard's design completely opened the south side of the house that faced the lake to create a concrete platform that appears to float out on to the natural stone outcrop.

With the kitchen on one side and the dining room on the other, the open plan was given focus thanks to a "pop-up" roof over the living area with high fixed windows on all sides. This adds to the feeling that the house is almost floating. "By changing the roofline, you can take full advantage of the site," says Richard.

Even the sleeping quarters that follow the arc of the house have been exposed to the view without compromising privacy. This has been achieved by creating a Japanese-style hallway with timber support beams and opaque glass. Together with a full-length window with views of the bush at the end of the corridor, Michelle says the panelling allows natural light to penetrate the space during the day.

Although they did not change the overall footprint of the house, development approval and building work was a lengthy process. "The house is in a flame zone and this held us up a bit," says Richard.

After gaining approval from Pittwater Council, the plans had to be submitted to the NSW Rural Fire Service. After a few stressful weeks, the RFS was satisfied with the installation of a new product at the time, Frontline bushfire-resistant glass from Pilkington. Although the house is made



largely of concrete and steel, timber cladding on the northern side had to come from a fire-resistant species. The result was the Carlyles spent almost a year living in a nearby flat and dropping over almost daily to see how work was progressing.

With the work completed, the house is equally satisfying for the owners and the architect.

"The house works really well and there is not anything that we would change," says Michelle. ■

MORE INFORMATION

■ **Richard Cole Architecture** 9918 3843, richardcolearchitecture.com.au

