

# MODERN HERITAGE

Celebrating history and welcoming contemporary styling is all in a day's work for Brighton's beautiful Ballara

Words Louise Smithers Photography Hilary Bradford





**“Painted rough-hewn bricks make the new extension unexpectedly textural, tactile and approachable”**

— Rosemary Ross

The sparkling coastline and bright beach boxes of Brighton in Victoria are legendary. So too is this family home by Rosstang Architects. Federation homes are like a good bottle of wine. When treated right, they ripen and mature and become better with age. Treated incorrectly, they spoil and become a shadow of their former selves, characteristics weakened or destroyed and the fundamentals warped with time.

If Ballara were a bottle of wine there’s no doubt it would be a rare, expensive Penfolds. Unfortunately, it had not been kept in optimal condition and was crying out for a dose of TLC. Occupying a generous 2960sqm corner site, the double-storey 1910 Federation brick and timber home was sorely run down.

It had been a long time between drinks, so to speak, with the neglected beauty sporting overgrown gardens and dilapidated interiors. Weeds sprang from the gutters unimpeded and abundant ivy engulfed much of the external walls. Central heating was a pipe dream and indoor/outdoor flow was MIA, leaving the north-facing backyard forgotten and ignored.

“The brief was to bring life back to the house and to celebrate what was wonderful: the large, well-proportioned formal rooms, the bay windows, the rambling first floor in the existing roof space, and all of its colliding ceilings and hidden cupboards,” says Rosemary Ross from Rosstang Architects, who worked with the builders at Kleev Homes to complete the Ballara project. “In addition, the house needed to support a 21st-century family lifestyle.”

The resurrection of the property involved the rearrangement of access, pathways and driveways, the creation of a new family entrance and double garage, and a new structure housing the kitchen, dining and service areas. New north-facing terraces reconnect the fully refurbished house to the garden, now updated to include a reimagined pool house, new pool and landscaping.





**ed's fave**  
 THE BLACK ALUMINIUM-FRAMED SLIDING DOORS THAT OPEN THE HOUSE TO THE OUTDOOR LIVING AREAS

The completed home comprises five bathrooms and two powder rooms, a master bedroom, guest bedroom and four children's bedrooms, study, formal dining, billiard room, plus kitchen, meals and living areas. The extension links to the existing structure via a new opening in one of its walls. Where old

meets new, junctions are carefully considered to respect the Federation fabric. Grand hallways, entries and reception rooms make you feel important, while fun-filled nooks and roof crannies add a sense of frivolity and personality. Despite the large scale of the house, it feels far from intimidating thanks



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## we love

### THE TASTEFUL Juxtaposition BETWEEN OLD AND NEW

to an appropriately scaled design that offers the exterior a humble, family-friendly vibe. “Painted rough-hewn bricks make the new extension feel unexpectedly textural, tactile and approachable,” Rosemary adds.

Materials and colours were chosen for their ability to assimilate with the period home and complement its style in a fresh and functional way. Custom polished concrete floors from Mentone Premix cope well with the steady stream of visitors the four children of the household regularly bring through the home after school and on weekends. Elsewhere, a combination of original timber floorboards were re-laid after being treated with Porter’s Palm Beach Black to achieve a consistent dark finish.

Like the timber, most of the original bricks went back into the new construction. Second-hand bricks filled in the gaps when additional material was required.

“Ballara contributes significantly to the streetscape and the broader environment, so bringing it back to life has a much wider impact than just on its inhabitants,” Rosemary concludes. “It’s fantastic to be able to intervene, but not interfere, with old buildings so that they can continue to be relevant.” **HD** [rosstang.com.au](http://rosstang.com.au)

WHERE OLD MEETS NEW,  
JUNCTIONS ARE CAREFULLY  
CONSIDERED TO RESPECT  
THE FEDERATION FABRIC