

NURRANGI
BY POTTER
AND WILSON



A move into town from a remote farming community inspired the brief for this Armidale site: restore its original nineteenth-century homestead and build a new, complementary living pavilion.



02

Words by Andrew Leach
Photography by Ben Guthrie

A move into town from a remote farming community prompted Potter and Wilson's clients to add a new structure to a half-acre site on the southern edge of Armidale, complementing the farmhouse that had occupied the property since the end of the nineteenth century. Suburbia creeps in from the north-west, but Nurrangi – as the house was first named, and as the entire project is now known – has its prospect over an open landscape protected at its edges by well-established foliage.

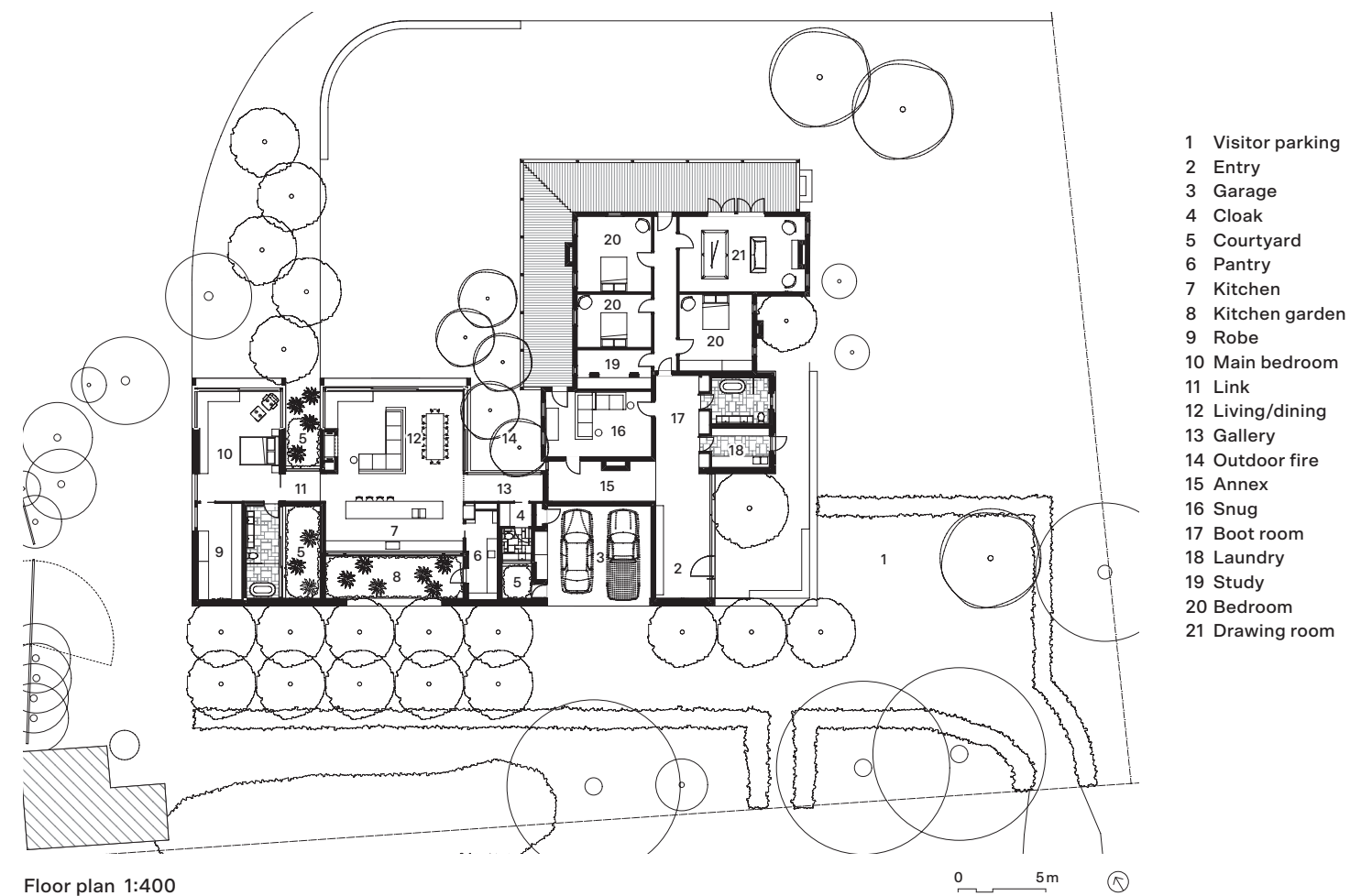
The commission was twofold: to restore and improve the original dwelling, and to build a new living area and main suite – in effect, a second house. The added wing works as a series of interlocking spaces under a single roof plane. An open kitchen and living room are serviced by a discrete pantry. A large bedroom shares the northern outlook of this most public part of the house and captures, too, a clear view to the west. A walk-in closet keeps surfaces clear in the bedroom suite and renders it an easy extension of the living area. Black walls direct the eye around the edge of the original homestead, where the new building wraps around its edge, under the eaves, and provides laundry and service rooms in place of earlier lean-to additions.

Subtly renovated alongside the new build, the older farmhouse has seen surfaces and fittings renewed, and a rear sitting room (a snug) functions as the moment in which the new transitions back into the old. The element of the original dwelling most in tune with the extension is the verandah: expansive, north and west facing, a platform for viewing (like the new living room, though it is sensitively and cleverly reinstated rather than restored, as such).

The material language of the old house is drawn into the brick finish of the new wing. Armidale bricks carry forward into the new build, their distinctive blue hues joining

01 Generous windows frame views to the north and west from the new living wing.

02 Evident in this side-by-side view of the two volumes, the addition's chimney replies to those of the farmhouse (left).



Floor plan 1:400

0 5m

Nurrangi is built on the land of the Anaiwan and Kamilaroi peoples.



Armidale, NSW



Alteration + addition



2
Couple



4



2
+ 1 powder room



Site 8,700 m²
Internal 448 m²
External 150 m²



Design 6 m
Build 22 m

the original reds, browns and greys. The basalt that picks up where the brick leaves off dominates the exterior of the extension and invokes a private connection to the landscapes of Walcha, from which they were selected. A new chimney replies to the two chimneys of the original structure.

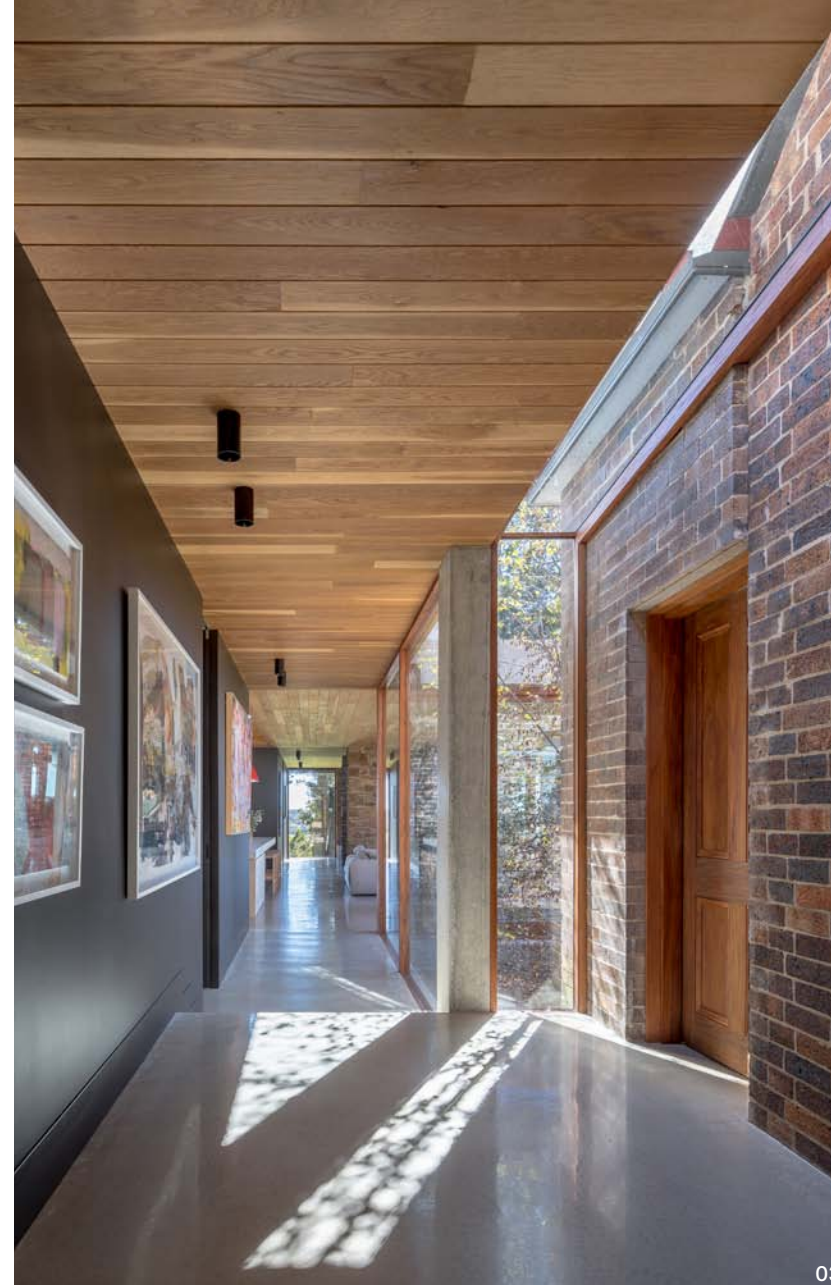
Throughout the extension, a palette of oak and rosewood timber, clean concrete surfaces and neutral tones plays off against the view and the landscaping. The clean modernist lines of the new wing are wonderfully complicated by the clients' own eclectic taste. A polished-concrete kitchen island is illuminated at night by bright red, Soviet-era industrial light fixtures. Muted surfaces along the long corridor that binds the two houses are enlivened by a rich collection of paintings.

It is at one end of this corridor – the internal entrance to the old house – that the project's defining moment takes place: the old and new rooflines reconcile around the chimney of the renovated snug, with a slender skylight tracing the ceiling's rise and fall on either side of the flue. While this is a modest gesture, it powerfully isolates the transition from the extension.

This is not a monolithic work of architectural design. Potter and Wilson was brought on by landscape architect Dangar Barin Smith, and the site is something of an essay in their complementarity. Careful planting plays off against architectural surfaces to define a series of private moments – at the kitchen bench, in the bathroom – that work at an entirely different scale to the shared experience of the view allowed by the expansive north-facing facade, which can be as closed or open as the situation requires.

From the bedroom and living space of the new work, and from the restored verandah of the original dwelling, one enjoys generous views north and west. Nurrangi's elevation places suburban Armidale at something of a distance, and even the nearby airport becomes less an intrusion than a curiosity. The entrance from the road presents a more monumental view of the extension than one enjoys from the private confines of the property, showing the original house and the new work side by side. From the bottom of the slope, looking back (south) towards the house, the nineteenth-century homestead dominates, with the Potter and Wilson extension a modest pavilion reaching out to the west. From the road, though, the homestead is almost entirely obscured, save the hint of its endurance offered by red marks indicating the original roofline.

The origins of the word "Nurrangi" are unclear, but habit has it meaning "shelter on a hill." The farmhouse has provided shelter since the 1890s, and the new work by Potter and Wilson embraces this role along with this name. ©



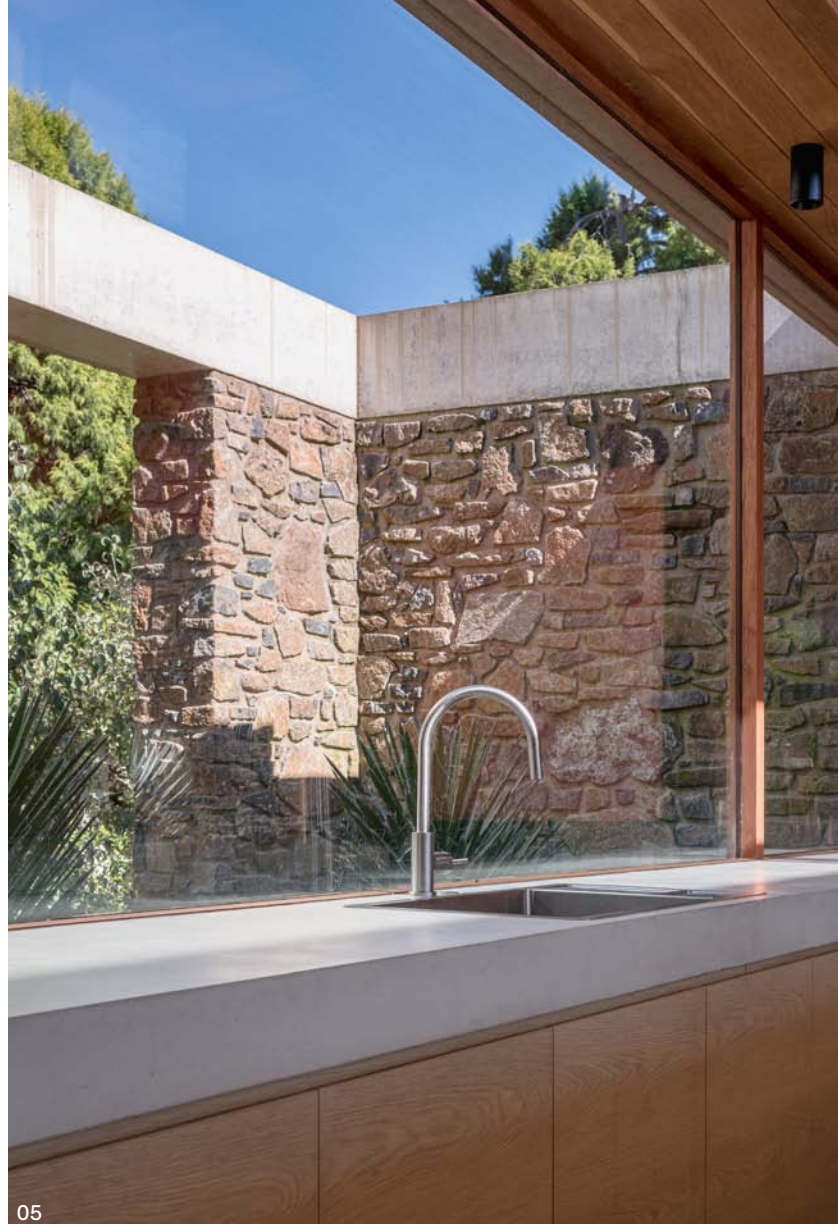
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03 A rich collection of paintings enlivens the long corridor uniting the two houses. Artworks (L-R): Jenny Lavender (top and bottom), Stuart Boggs, Joan Blond.

04 The porous edge of the new pavilion is a viewing platform, inspired by the original home's shaded verandah.



04

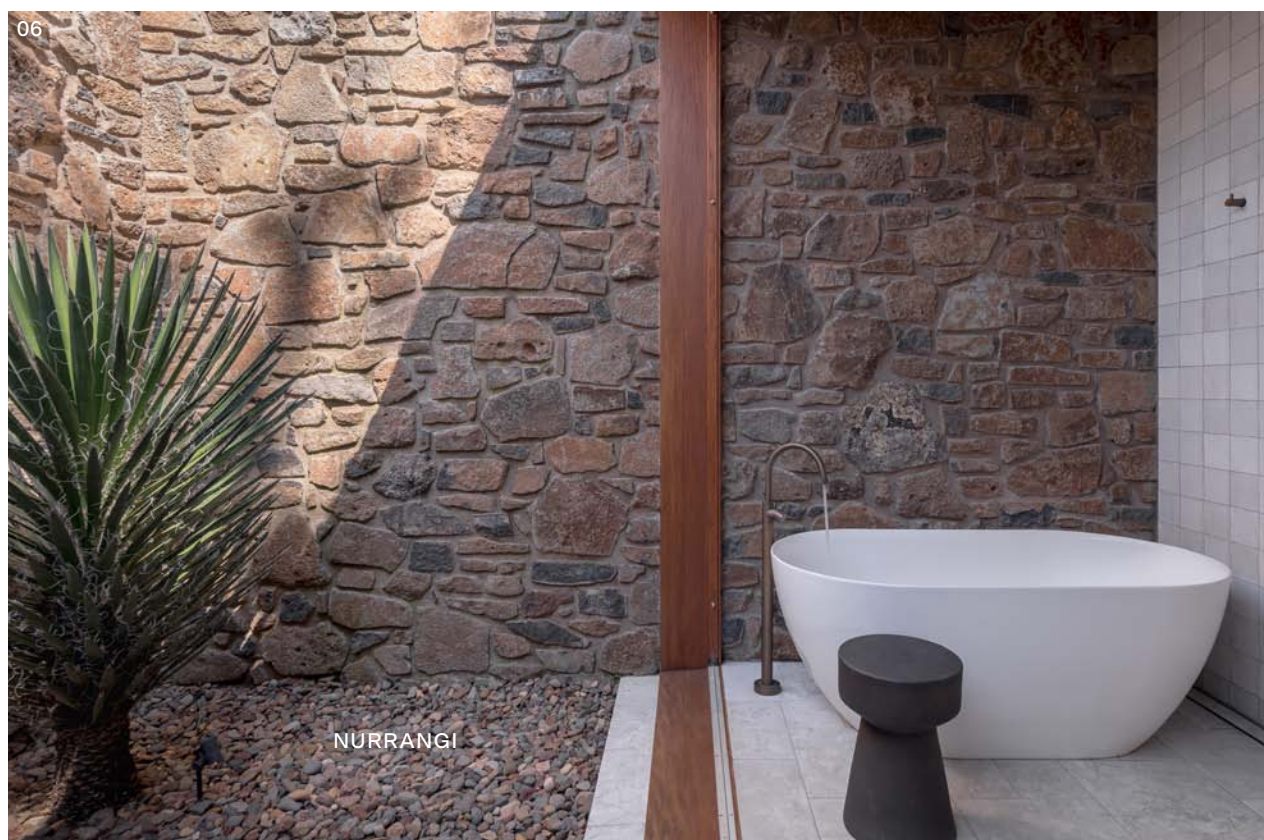


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05 In the new build, concrete and basalt draw on the solid masonry language of the old.

06 Experiences of the landscape vary from the large-scale to the intimate.

07 Rosewood timber doors allow the north elevation to be opened or closed to suit different uses.



06

Products

Roofing: Spacemaker panels from Versiclad

External walls: Basalt by Model Stonemasonry

Ceilings: American white oak from Coach House Timbers

Windows: Rosewood windows by Moar Windows and Doors

Doors: Rosewood lift and slide doors by Moar Windows and Doors; others by Cavity Sliders

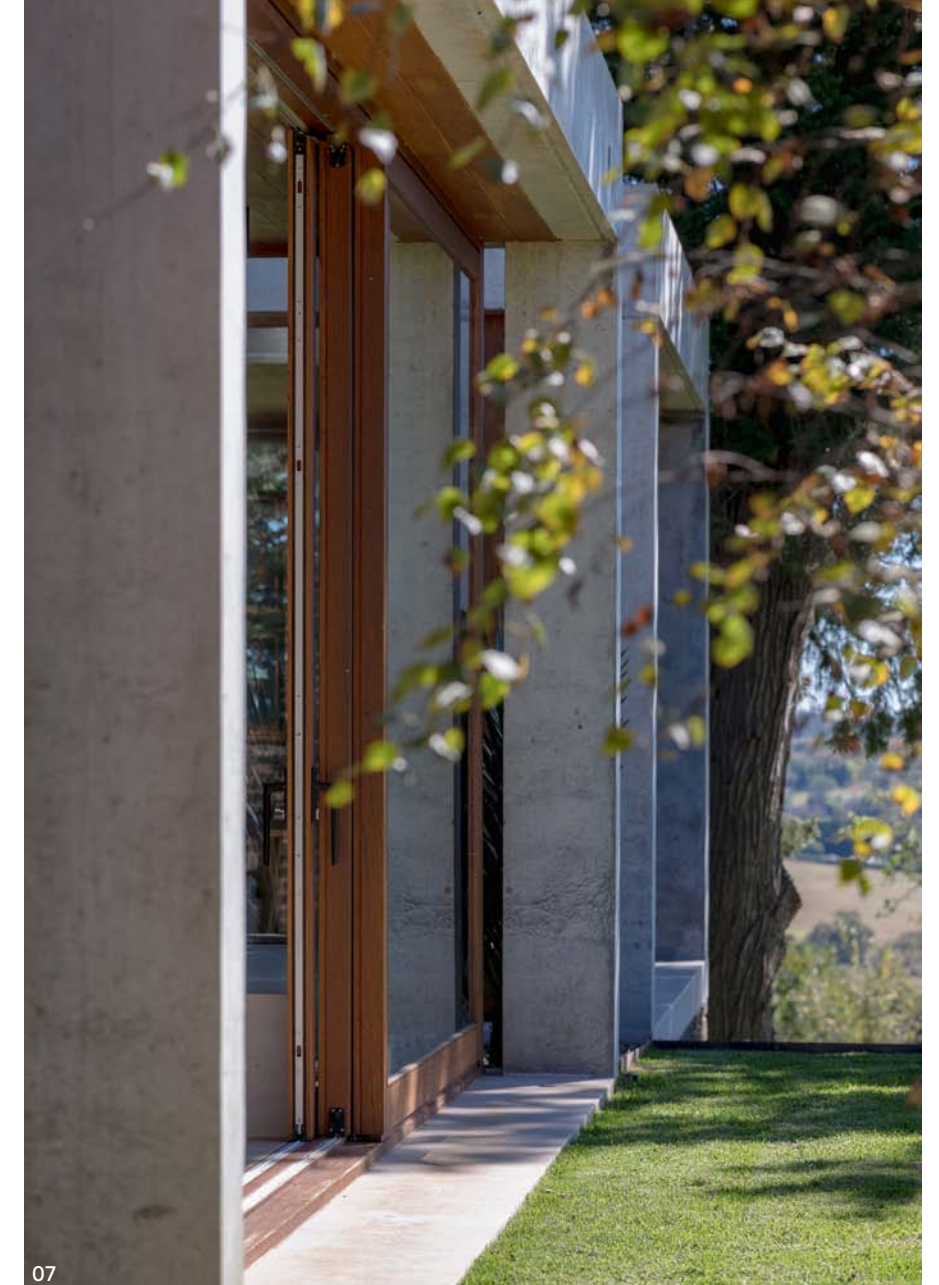
Flooring: Polished concrete by Concreative

Lighting: Matchbox Mini and Snoot in a Can from The Lighting Guild; red pendants from Trainspotters; light switches and power outlets by Zetr

Kitchen: Professional cooktop with downdraft exhaust by Bora; concrete benchtops cast in situ by Concreative; Series 8 double oven by Fisher and Paykel

Bathroom: Yokato mixers by Brodware in 'Antique Bronze'; Silver Travertine tiles and Kasbah tiles in 'White Gloss' and 'Turquoise' from Surface Gallery; precast concrete vanities by Concreative

Heating and cooling: Radiante 1200 by Cheminee Philippe



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Project team Simon Wilson, Imogene Potter
Builder Steve Frost Construction **Engineer** Tierney Consulting Engineers **Landscaping** Dangar Barin Smith **Stonemason** Model Stonemasonry **Concrete contractor** Concreative **Stylist** Melissa Killen