

RICHMOND HOUSE

Krause Emperor bricks add a positive sense of calmness and serenity in Richmond

There's something uniquely different, and surprising, about Richmond House.



From the street front, it has all the hallmarks of a heritage home. A two-storey façade of red Victorian bricks on what was originally a tin smith's workshop, completely retained.

But walk inside and it's a wonderful surprise.

With new owners, and in the experienced and creative hands of Alex Lake, architect and director, Therefore, it has been thoughtfully and magnificently transformed into a three bedroom family home. The front section restored by respectfully referencing (rather than recreating) heritage details, with a serene and thoroughly modern addition at the rear.

While the heritage section contains two bedrooms, a bathroom, sitting room and study, the extension has a master bedroom on the top floor—with rooftop

terrace—as well as a powder room, living and kitchen spaces downstairs, along with a single car garage and laundry at the rear.

Designed in response to its fairly tight site, Richmond House is built to the back of the block, which inspired a courtyard planning typology, resulting in one long façade courtyard, and a few minor internal courtyards to encourage an abundance of light, views and ventilation throughout.

"The courtyards are quite significant in their, at times, double storey façade that surrounds them. They're not imposing, small or feel overly sheltered – they feel quite remarkable in the presence of the two-storey buildings around them and the gardens within them," Alex says.

And it's these beautifully positioned courtyards—combined with the vine-covered heritage facade—that makes Richmond House so surprising: Despite its inner city location, the whole space is resoundingly quiet and calm.

It's a beautiful sanctuary, fending off any noise from the street.

"It's really enjoyable and unique in this urban context to have something with a quiet, serene space," Alex reflects.

Of course, material selection also helped: Krause Smoke Grey bricks, concrete and American Oak timber. "The purity of the materials allows for the flexibility in the form—they have a clarity and robustness about them, without making the design too complicated," Alex explains.



Bricks were a firm choice from the beginning. For their longevity and honesty, but also to, "create a dialogue with the heritage building using masonry, which was a comfortable way for us to engage with it without necessarily overruling or being subservient to it," Alex adds.

The traditional red Victorian brickwork in the heritage section was constructed with an English bond, offering a reasonable degree of texture. Krause Smoke Grey Emperor Bricks on the extension deliver a different, but equally fine-grained, texture to complement the old bricks.

"We chose the Krause Emperor bricks for their dimensions, for the qualities of the clay, and for the aesthetics and colouring. And, of course, because they're locally made—we're always supportive of using local products," Alex explains.

Thanks to David Craigie and his team at WeBrickVic, the Krause bricks were skilfully hand cut and sorted into random lengths and laid slightly imperfectly at times to create a greater sense of monolithic variation.

The result is breathtaking.



"It was quite an involved process with David and his team, we did some small test patches to get it right and we're so happy with their approach and the outcome we achieved."

Alex Lake and the whole team are to be congratulated for delivering such a tranquil home right in the heart of Richmond. What sets it apart are the generous spatial qualities and proportions of the spaces Alex designed, taking their lead from the existing heritage rooms and creating a strong sense of space and quite throughout.

Particularly rewarding for Alex is the owners love for their new home, "It's been so joyful to hear that it's working very well for them." From the images we see, we couldn't imagine any other response.

Architect:	Therefore Studio
Product:	Krause Emperor bricks in Ghost
Builder:	Loc Build
Bricklayer:	David Craigie, WeBrickVic
Landscape Design:	Acre Studio
Photographer:	Rory Gardiner