

FACING CONSTRAINTS

JAN MANTON DESIGN
ARCHITECTURE

Photography: Tony Miller



■ When Jan Manton Design Architecture was asked to redesign this small inner-city Victorian terrace, it took into account the neighbour's concern with overlooking. 'There were a number of issues: overlooking, possible shadows and setbacks', says architect Chris Manton. 'The design really evolved as a result of the planning controls', he adds.

The house, which was closely aligned to the neighbouring backyards, also suffered from having been originally built on a sloping site (a fall of approximately 1.5 metres). 'It was almost carved into the site. The only elevation was from the home's bluestone blocks', says Manton. With a brief to design a new contemporary addition to the period home, attracting light was a large problem. 'We had to ensure privacy', he says. Light was drawn into the house via a continual skylight along the kitchen and living areas. 'It's like a shaft of light that moves between the two floors'.

As the space in the kitchen and living area was relatively small, the kitchen was treated with one large brush stroke. The white overhead cupboards in the kitchen provide the only clue as to room's function. The line of the kitchen cupboards below extends to form the joinery for the dining area. 'The one bench between the two areas is multifunctional. It was designed like a piece of furniture rather than a traditional kitchen', Manton says.

As a way of creating privacy, the new rear façade was designed with timber screens, folding out when required. The small concrete plinth, which cantilevers out from the building, defines the floor above. 'It's like a contemporary version of a Juliet balcony. It also offers some protection from the sunlight', Manton explains. The site, which only measures 6 metres wide by 16 metres in depth, had to include a new living room, a new kitchen, a laundry and powder room, together with a new main bedroom, bathroom and robe. When the list of constraints and the size of the block are put into the equation, many would not have been able to answer the brief. However, to the client's delight, the renovation went beyond their expectations, providing a light and open living environment.

