



A Slither of a Site

This Victorian worker's cottage originally only consisted of two main rooms, with a kitchen and bathroom tacked on. Inadequate for contemporary living, the owner was keen to update the house.

Located on a small site, 4 metres wide by 27 metres deep, the new design was also restricted by heritage controls in this inner-city location. In a row of eight identical houses that share one continuous roof, the architects were required to retain the first two rooms of this single-storey cottage. 'We also had to set the new work back 10 metres from the street. The new design wasn't permitted to be seen by those passing by,' says architect Jennifer Hocking of the practice Burne Hocking Weimar Architects, who renovated and extended the cottage.

A double-storey extension was added to the rear of the cottage, and includes a new kitchen, bathroom and living room. A new bedroom and roof deck were designed on the first floor. While the architects could

have maximised the entire width of the site for the extension, they chose to set the building back 1 metre, creating a building width of only 3 metres. 'Our client valued light over the physical space. The additional light increases the feeling of space,' says Hocking. The angled glazed wall that runs along the bathroom, kitchen and living space helps to reduce the towering sensation of the two-storey extension over such a small site.

The wall of the extension is made of stained plywood cladding. The material creates a tactile and warm ambience from the pocket-sized garden. 'It's only a small garden, but it acts as another room. We didn't want the owner to feel as though she was pressed against a wall every time she used the garden,' says Hocking.

While the size of the site may have discouraged other architects, Burne Hocking Weimar embraced the many constraints. As Hocking says, 'You need to look at the positive qualities of the site and work with what you have.'

Burne Hocking Weimar Architects

Photography by Naomi Kumar

