

PerfPad by Northbourne Architecture + Design

• MELBOURNE, VIC •

Through a series of simple but effective alterations the architects have transformed an existing terrace house into a more functional, light-filled home with a luminous street presence.

Words by Ella Leoncio
Photography by Tatjana Plitt

01 While the house's scale and form tie in with the street, its new powdercoated aluminium facade glows brightly.

01

Northbourne Architecture and Design’s first completed architectural project sits comfortably nestled in a row of terrace houses down one of South Yarra’s narrow streets. While its white facade glows brightly among more subdued houses, its scale and form ground it comfortably within the existing streetscape. The building volume is very much in keeping with the character of the street, with expressed horizontal lines that tie it in with the datum lines of its neighbours. Although the scale and form are contextual, materially the house departs from the sombre and muted streetscape palette. Clad in bright white powdercoated aluminium sheets perforated with regularly spaced round holes, the facade presents as a crisp, minimal, all-white box. Compared to its neighbours, it’s quite abstracted as a form, with little to reference the human scale. The only aberration to the rational, geometric all-white design is the existing tree in the front garden. This organic, snaking green form acts as a counter to the rectilinear, pure white facade and is almost as essential to the facade composition as the architecture itself. Both the tree and the architecture seek to highlight the features of the other through contrast, and together they give one another balance.

One would be forgiven for assuming that the project is a new build, given its contemporary, minimalist facade, but in fact it’s a renovation of an existing dwelling. The aluminium screens clad a pre-existing house. With the exception of increasing the first-floor building envelope by one metre, the building footprint is more or less as it was. The “before” and “after” plans make it obvious that the degree of intervention was fairly minimal and that much of the original structure remains intact.

The ground floor was essentially massaged through the addition of a row of joinery that separates the main living area from the entry, plus a new laundry and powder room. Other than that, little has changed in the plan. The kitchen, which has always been the hub of the house, remains centrally located on the ground floor with open space either side. The first floor, which has been extended with the additional metre toward the front, has had some slightly more extensive internal changes to accommodate an additional bedroom upstairs. However, the two rear bedrooms have changed little.

Although the plans reveal fairly limited intervention, the quality and feel of the internal spaces have been completely transformed. This is partly due to the updated joinery and finishes, which change the look of the house and add more functional storage. However, it’s the simple spatial massaging that fundamentally changes the bones of the dwelling and gives it new life. New full-height glazing has been introduced to both ends of the open living area on the ground floor, providing vastly more light than the former heavy timber-framed French doors. A timber deck has been added to the front of the house, which has been significantly raised above the natural ground level to finish flush with the internal floor. Given the fence height, this courtyard is protected from the street and makes for a



- 02 A row of joinery separates the living space from the entry, a laundry and a powder room.
- 03 Full-height glazing added to both ends of the open-plan living area brings in light and allows for cross-ventilation.



- 4 (family home)
- 3 +1 flexible room
- 2 +1 powder room
- Site: 164 m²
Floor: 210 m²
- Design: 1 yr, 10 mths
Build: 1 yr
- \$ \$2,400 per m²



04



05

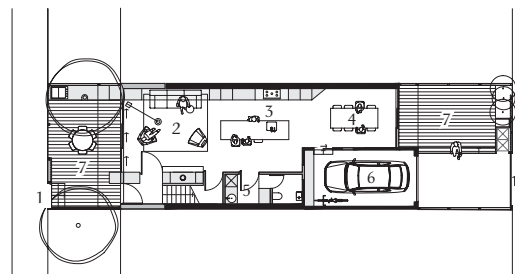
04 A stark, white bathroom reflects the house's crisp palette and minimalist design language.

05 The main bedroom and ensuite hang in the canopy of a tree, offering privacy and shade.

06 Full-height glazing facing a balcony allows daylight to stream into the main bedroom.



06



Ground floor 1:400



First floor 1:400



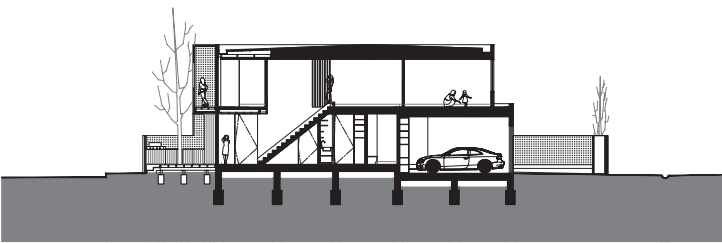
- 1 Entry
- 2 Lounge
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Dining
- 5 Laundry
- 6 Garage
- 7 Deck
- 8 Piano room
- 9 Bedroom
- 10 Flexible room
- 11 Balcony

highly useable private outdoor space. This new outdoor room extends the perceived length of the living space and offers a much more successful indoor-outdoor experience, transforming the daily use of the living area. The continuous line of kitchen joinery extending to an external barbecue unit also helps drive that visual flow and connection. The new joinery unit opposite this houses the television unit and additional storage. More importantly, it acts as a dividing element to create the separated entry, which is now hidden behind a concealed pivot door in the joinery. This new entry made it possible for the owners to use one of the bedrooms upstairs as a consultancy room. With an enclosed entry, the owner's patients can now access the consultancy room without any visual connection to the private family living zone.

Upstairs, other than the additional bedroom, it's the main bedroom that has undergone the most radical transformation. The original bedroom turned its back on the street and suffered from a lack of daylight. In contrast, the new main bedroom reorients the bed toward the windows. Facing onto the only new external wall in the project, full-height glazing opens up to an outdoor terrace, inviting fresh daylight to stream in, filtered and reflected off the perforated screens. The bedroom and ensuite hang in the canopy of the existing tree and this greenery both enriches the outlook and provides privacy screening and shading to the main bedroom.

The alterations to this existing terrace are highly efficient. Maximum impact has been achieved through small but clever and strategic interventions. **CB**

- 07 Updated joinery and finishes have transformed the feel of the house while adding more functional storage. Artwork: Maegan Brown.
- 08 A fireplace and hydronic heating provide warmth in winter, in a house that enjoys minimal temperature fluctuations.



Section 1:400

0 5 m



Architect
Northbourne Architecture
and Design
+61 3 9999 7970
hello@northbourne.co
northbourne.co

Project team
Sally Holbrook,
Lydia Hnatojko

Builder
S & S Builders

Consultants
Engineer: Kersulting

Products
Roofing: Zinalume deck
roofing; Bradford R7 ceiling
insulation batts
External walls: Dulux
AcraTex RenderWall in
Dulux 'White'
Windows: Viridian
double-glazed windows;
Max Industries frames,
powdercoated; Plantation
shutters, roller blackout blind
and translucent roller blind
in 'White' from AP Shutters
and Blinds; Centor retractable
flyscreen
Doors: Custom pivot doors
in 'White' from Tait Timber
and Hardware; Designer
Doorware hardware
Flooring: Havwoods
oak engineered timber
flooring; Kirriwirri rug from
Designer Rugs

Lighting: LAAL Conehome
arch pendant; Masson
adjustable LED downlights;
Moda Piera Arancini floor
and table lamps
Kitchen: Abey Gessi kitchen
mixer; InSinkErator hot water
dispenser; Maximum porcelain
tile benchtop; custom birch
plywood, white washed
and limed; Bosch oven and
steam oven; Miele cooktop
and dishwasher; Whispair
rangehood; Liebherr fridge;
Häfele fully concealed
pull-out bins
Bathroom: Reece tapware;
Omvivo basins and vanity
(ensuite); Ikea basins and
vanity (bathroom); Reece basin
(powder room); De Fazio Tiles
and Stone wall tiles in 'White'
and floor tiles in 'Grey'

Heating and cooling:
Hydrotherm hydronic heating
wall panels; Jetmaster
fireplace
External elements: Tait
Timber and Hardware
tallowwood deck; Perftech
custom perforated aluminium
sheeting, powdercoated;
water-resistant joinery in
automotive paint; Beefeater
barbecue
Other: LAAL Samesame
stools with steel, terrazzo
and marble tops; LAAL tipsy
bowl; Grazia and Co Leeroy
sofa, Featherston Scape
armchair and Featherston
e254 Elastic Suspension chair;
side table from Cult