

Dream Home

On the light track

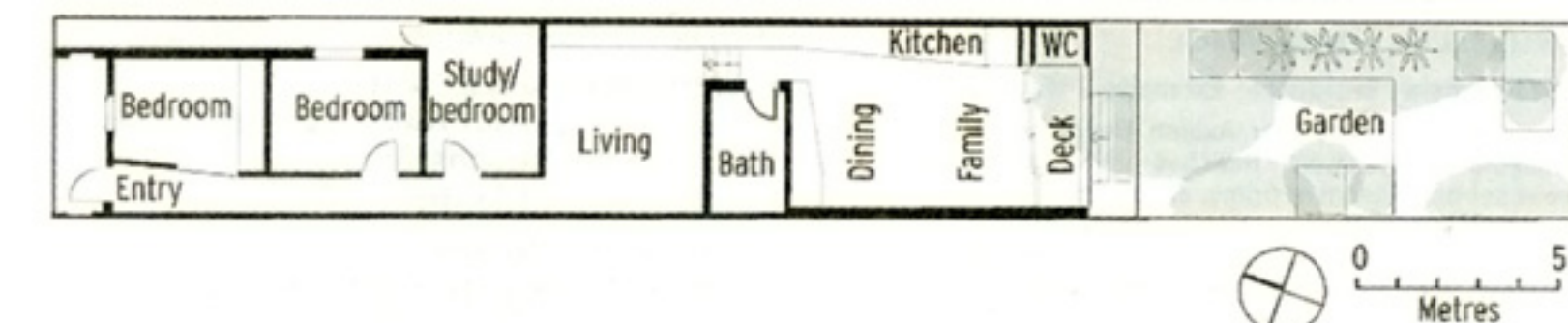
This narrow, compact property needed brightening up, writes **Stephen Crafti**.



Deep space ... (from left) elevated ceilings open up the living areas; you can see right through the house to the garden. Photos: Brett Boardman



Perfect fit ... (clockwise from above) the Haines family love their new spaces; the garden is now more functional; louvres in the living areas allow the breeze in. Photos: Domino Postiglione, Brett Boardman



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m 0408 371 838 p 9550 2276 f 9550 3118
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Meg, Newtown

This semi-detached house in Newtown appears relatively unremarkable from the street. Some of the original Victorian features have been removed and it's painted a salmon-pink colour, popular in the 1980s. "My mother chose that colour more than 20 years ago," says Georgia Haines, who lives in the house with her husband, Simon, and their two young daughters. "There seemed to be more pressing things in the renovation."

While there were already a sufficient number of bedrooms to accommodate a family, the house suffered from lack of natural light and ventilation, as well as being poorly connected to the back garden. Oriented to the south, the only room that benefited from northern light was the front bedroom.

"The house really needed to capture the eastern light to make it comfortable for contemporary living," says the architect, Chris Polly, who was engaged to renovate and extend the home.

Polly retained the original three bedrooms at the front (one now being used as a study or playroom). He also transformed the original kitchen into a formal living area. Georgia and Simon were keen to retain the bathroom separating the lounge from the new wing, as it had been renovated only a couple of years before.

"There didn't seem any point in extending

the budget [about \$500,000] to replace an almost-new bathroom," Polly says.

The new wing, a couple of steps below the lounge, comprises one large open-plan space. Framed by a skillion roof and floor-to-ceiling stackable sliding doors, there's unimpeded sight lines to the back fence.

"Simon and Georgia wanted the house to feel expansive," Polly says. "Part of their brief included provision of one clear volume rather than a series of spaces."

SUPER STORAGE

In contrast to the original part of the house, which features polished timber floors, the new wing includes concrete floors and graphic joinery. The kitchen, for example, features white laminate cupboards and black laminate benchtops. Tiered overhead cupboards and a mirrored splashback increase the sense of space.

"We wanted generous storage areas to allow us to enjoy this space," Georgia says, opening up one of the many cupboards filled with the children's toys.

As well as a continuous bank of cupboards that extends from the lounge area, there's also secondary storage in shiplap timber cupboards adjacent to the dining area. In addition to concealing a washing machine and dryer, the interior is lined with black laminate shelves to accommodate glassware.

One of the large challenges for Polly was to

THE AIM

To provide a customised design that would allow an expansive and private home for a family with two young children.

TIME FRAME

Sixteen months to design, council approval, documentation and tendering; six months to build.

FAVOURITE FEATURES

The large single volume of the open plan kitchen and living areas and the connection to the garden.

GREEN POINTS

- Retention of a substantial portion of the existing dwelling.
- Low-e glazing to reduce heat loads.
- Increased natural light and ventilation.

- Increased wall and roof insulation.
- Passive solar design – the concrete flooring in the new wing acts as a heat sink.
- Recycled-blackbutt flooring.
- Energy-efficient lighting and appliances.

INSIDERS' TIP

Stay focused on the brief. Maintain the quality of the design and use skilled professionals for all aspects of the renovation.

ARCHITECT

Christopher Polly, 9516 5994.

ENGINEER

Simpson Design Associates, 9810 6911.

BUILDER

Paul King, 0412 446 355.

increase the amount of light and ventilation into the house. As well as inserting glass doors to the deck, he "floated" the skillion roof, allowing eastern light to enter the new wing. Coupled with louvred glass windows in part, there's a constant flow of air through the new dining and living areas. "I've also borrowed views from a neighbour's garden," Polly says. "It's more appealing to look at treetops than a blank wall."

HIGH LIGHTS

Polly also included several ingenious additions, such as a bathroom/powder room adjacent to the external deck. When the door is closed, this extrusion appears as a storage unit. And to increase northern light at the front of the house, Polly inserted highlight celestial glass windows in the front bedroom to allow light to spill over into the main passage.

"I love coming home, opening the front door and seeing through the entire house," Georgia says. "You can now see the trees and the sky from most vantage points."

She also especially appreciates the back garden (the depth of the block is 40 metres). "We haven't sacrificed the back garden in the extension," she says. "It's just that the children can now use it. And we can enjoy it while sitting around the dining table."

COST

	\$
► Preliminaries	53,800
► Demolition	16,500
► Concrete and formwork	17,500
► Brickwork and blockwork	11,200
► Structural steel	18,300
► Roofing	14,000
► Carpenter	48,000
► Timber and hardware	20,300
► Joiner	34,500
► Plasterboard and insulation	24,500
► Windows and fixed glazing	33,000
► Floor finishes	12,600
► Painting	21,800
► Electrical and lighting	26,500
► Hydraulics and plumbing	47,100
► Builder's margin	32,300
► Appliances and fittings	10,100
► Landscaping	3000
► Subtotal (including GST)	445,000
► Architect	66,000
► Consultants	17,000
► Total (including GST)	528,000