



NEW SUB- URBAN

*REINVENTING THE FAMILY HOME
AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND*

Thames & Hudson

STUART HARRISON

BRICK

CLARE COUSINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHANNON MCGRATH

HOUSE

ADULTS: 2
KIDS: 2
SITE AREA: 511SQM
FOOTPRINT: 234SQM
FLOOR AREA: 280SQM
SITE COVERAGE: 46%
DISTANCE TO CITY: 8KM
LOCATION: PRAHRAN, VIC



OLD EDWARDIAN, NEW PAVILION

Brick is a key material in this project – it is used for both the existing and new parts of this house. We are in Prahran, one of the older parts of Melbourne’s great suburban expansion to the south-east, which started 150 years ago and continues to this day. The original house is an Edwardian red-brick cottage, with its bricks laid in the traditional way, in the stretcher or running bond method. In contrast, the new house uses light-coloured bricks turned on their side, but still in an interlocking stretcher bond. Using brick in this way allows for smoother corners, so the bricks read as a continuous band that wraps along and across the site.

It’s a long and relatively thin site of 9 metres, somewhere between the size of a single- and double-fronted house. This type of site is well exploited by the Edwardian house, which typically does not run boundary to boundary, allowing space down at least one side of the building. This is true here, for both the original house and the new extension, and only the middle of the site is boundary to boundary for a few metres. This approach allows light in throughout the house, and prevents a sense that outdoor spaces start at a clearly defined line.



*THE HOUSE AND STUDIO PROTECT THE
SMALL COURTYARD GARDEN TO PROVIDE A
CALM RETREAT FROM THE STREET. IT CAN
HANDLE THE KNOCKS OF FAMILY LIFE.
— OWNER*

REMAKING FOR FAMILY LIFE

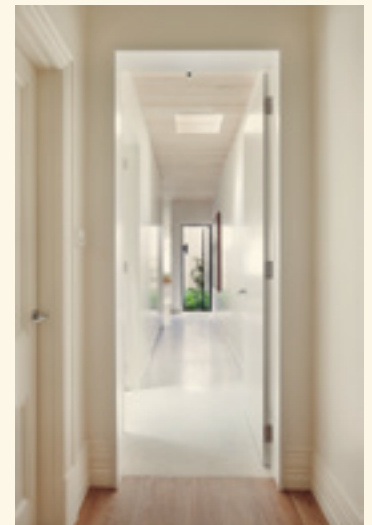
The house has three outdoor spaces – the densely landscaped front yard, the paved backyard and a small lusciously planted light court that brings greenery right into the heart of the house, the kitchen.

Space can be defined through furniture, not just walls, and here the main lounge space is formed through a wonderful light tan built-in leather couch that wraps around three sides. The couch follows the line of the curving glass that visually connects inside and out, and the whole family and many guests can sit here, gathered on three sides facing the fireplace. The lounge space is almost a pavilion in the rear yard, pushed up against the southern boundary, allowing north light to fill the space, shaded by the overhanging brick fascia above. In the dining area, up against the boundary, are bar and study niches, which can be revealed through an ornate perforated white screen sliding across.

In a family dwelling, service spaces can be just as important as living spaces, and here the utility spaces are clustered together in the middle of the house – bathroom, ensuite, pantry and laundry, with the latter having a door to the outside for drying clothes in the sideway. These small rooms also allow for critical storage, which is so often not adequately catered for in dwellings, and is always better built in than added on with furniture later.

OPPOSITE: The perimeter couch, a welcome and generous place to gather, wraps around three sides of the space.

BELOW: A bar and study niche are hidden by a perforated sliding screen.



NEW SUBURBAN

BELOW: A rounded black-glazed brick kitchen wall separates a cosy linear sitting room.

OPPOSITE: A small lusciously planted courtyard offers greenery and brings light deep into the interior.

The downtime of family life – hanging out and watching TV – has also been considered. Behind the rounded, black-glazed brick kitchen wall is a linear sitting room, a cosy and intimate space that is connected to the rear yard. Glazed sliding doors from here and from the dining space link the interior and exterior spaces. The rear garden's hard landscaping suits young children and is ideal for playing and running around. The yard finishes in a deep blue plunge pool, a family favourite.

Flexibility is ensured through a studio space at the back of the site, above a garage facing onto a rear lane. The studio consists of a decent-sized room, storage area and bathroom, thus making it flexible for a number of uses. It serves as a fourth, or guest bedroom, but can work as a home office or several other options, as it is accessed by an external stair. As the only first-floor element, the studio has to deal with overlooking neighbouring gardens and sun from the west-facing glazing. These issues are dealt with through a fluid curving screen of vertical timber battens that ripples around the exterior of the first floor. The battens are denser at some points to provide visual screening, floating nimbly over the pool and brickwork below.



REMAKING FOR FAMILY LIFE



