

Flexible for families

SEDDON SMART HOME

LOCATION: House renovation and extension, Seddon, Vic

MATERIALS: Plywood E0 MDF cabinetry, reclaimed pressed metal, Victorian ash double-glazed timber windows, recycled red brick

ARCHITECTS: Shae Parker McCashen of Green Sheep Collective, and Sam Gardiner

PHOTOGRAPHY: Emma Cross

“THE BRIEF FOR THIS RENOVATION AND EXTENSION WAS to create a home that is modest in size and budget but still allows great flexibility and function for a family,” says Shae Parker McCashen, of Green Sheep Collective, one of the architects who worked on this project in Seddon, in Melbourne’s west. “It seeks to make smart, effective use of very tight spaces – to make every space work as hard as it possibly can.”

The extension adds an open plan living, dining and kitchen on the back of the existing heritage home.



In the dining area, upholstered bench seating doubles as dining seating and as a comfortable, sun-drenched day bed; because it’s built-in, it makes the room feel bigger than it really is. Storage boxes under the seats hold all manner of toys and equipment, reducing clutter. More storage is provided by the open shelving between the dining and living areas of the open plan space. Shae explains: “The whole extension is one big volume, but the shelves help define the spaces.”



A mezzanine is used for storage, sewing and craft, kids' sleepovers, and as accommodation for guests (the couch folds out to a bed). "Large openable skylights increase the perception of light and space, and double as 'thermal chimneys' to assist natural ventilation in summer," says Shae.



A second storey wasn't an option given the tight budget, so the designers made the most of the volume created by the cathedral ceiling to put in the mezzanine. It sits above the pantry and the study nook, both areas that don't need the feeling of space given by the generous ceiling height elsewhere.



The stairs to the mezzanine slide sideways and pack away into the built-in study furniture, ensuring they don't intrude visually or practically when they're not in use.

