

AYR
HOUSE
BY HA
ARC



A stable-like addition grafted onto an end-of-row terrace in Melbourne’s inner-north-west delivers light, space and aspect within the constraints of a tight urban lot.

Words by Elizabeth Kaye Campbell
Photography by Michael Pham

Row or terrace houses are a defining feature of Melbourne and Sydney’s inner suburbs, admired for their architectural beauty but often associated with a lack of thermal comfort, particularly in winter. These homes are typically small, narrow and tightly packed, leading to dark, cold interiors that can be difficult to adapt to modern living and a changing climate. Ha Arc’s recent renovation responds to this common set of pitfalls by reconfiguring and restoring a single-storey end-of-terrace house, enhancing its comfort, functionality and longevity while respecting its historic charm. The adaptation focuses on light, space and aspect, transforming the home within the constraints of a compact suburban lot.

The house retains its original facade, preserving its aesthetic appeal and street character with a restored front and new roof. The true transfor-

mation becomes evident from the side street, where a new extension emerges as a distinct volume. Ha Arc director Nick Harding describes this as a “diagram visible to passers-by,” showcasing what is possible in a terrace house when passive design principles are applied with consideration and respect. A low connection links the original house with the new extension, subtly revealed behind a textured brick wall and a new side entry. The pitched-roof extension was shaped by several factors: the client’s brief, the desire for northern sunlight, and the practical limitations of the site and budget. It also references the history of the neighbourhood, subtly recalling the proportions of the stables that once populated the area.

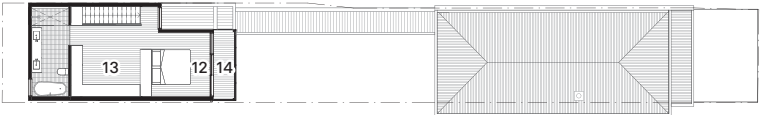
The clients, who had lived in the original house for more than 15 years, sought a renovation that would transform the house into their forever home.

01 A new living space spanning the width of the site is unlike the narrow and dark rooms common to terrace houses.

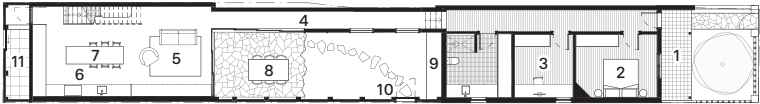
02 The addition is legible from the side street, where a gate in the perimeter wall functions as a second entry to the home.



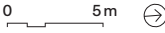
- 1 Entry porch
- 2 Guest bedroom
- 3 Study
- 4 Link
- 5 Living
- 6 Kitchen
- 7 Dining
- 8 Outdoor dining
- 9 Barbecue
- 10 Side entry
- 11 Service yard
- 12 Main bedroom
- 13 Robe
- 14 Garden deck



First floor 1:400



Ground floor 1:400



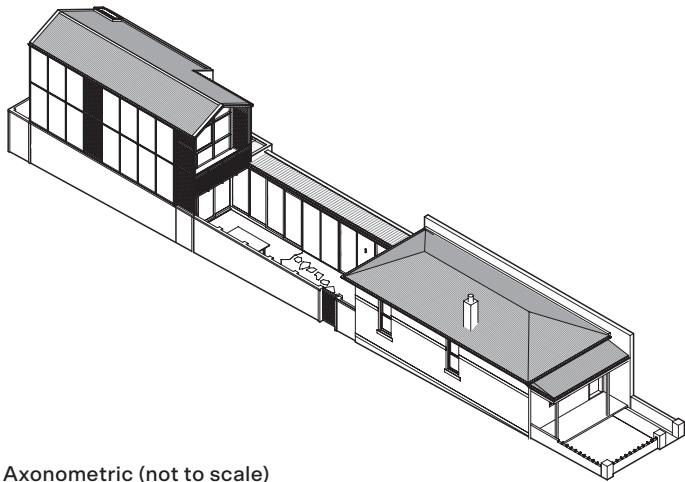
Ayr House is built on the land of the Wurundjeri people.	 Naarm/ Melbourne, Vic	 Alteration + addition	 2 Couple	 2 + study	 2	 Site 204 m² House 171 m² Courtyard 42 m²	 Design 2 y Build 1 y
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They were drawn to Ha Arc’s Kensington Cathedral (see *Houses 120*), particularly its gabled roof and natural light, which aligned with their vision. As they share, “...one of our favourite things to do now is simply lie in bed and look up at the pitched ceiling or out to the sky.”

Sustainability was central to the adaptation, as it is in all of Ha Arc’s work. Given the east-west orientation, maximising northern sunlight was key for both energy efficiency and comfort. The design achieves this through the use of a central courtyard, which not only brings light into the depth of the plan but also acts as what Nick terms a “private open sanctuary.” This courtyard provides passive heating, natural ventilation and a connection to the outdoors, reducing the need for artificial heating and cooling.

The courtyard also creates a sense of openness, allowing the living, dining and kitchen areas to flow into one another. This spatial flexibility supports the household’s seasonal rhythms and the clients appreciate how opening and closing the stacking doors makes the space feel larger and more adaptable. The ability to open-up to the courtyard makes the home ideal for entertaining in warmer months and supports the needs of daily life throughout the year.

Through a thoughtful integration of the site’s history, the clients’ needs and the challenges of inner-suburban living, Ha Arc has created a home that is both functional and sustainable. The design demonstrates how careful, sustainable design can improve comfort, efficiency and aesthetic value in domestic life. The result is a space that honours the past while looking towards a more sustainable future, offering a balance of familiarity, practicality and environmental responsibility. ©



Axonometric (not to scale)



03 The addition is an extrusion of the scale and proportions of stables that once populated the neighbourhood.

04 Stacking doors support seasonal adjustments to connect house and courtyard.
Artwork: Paul Snell.



Products

Roofing: Lysaght Custom Orb in 'Zincalume'

External walls: Brick; Axon from James Hardie and silvertop ash shiplap and battens in Dulux 'White Half Duck'

Internal walls: Plasterboard in Dulux 'Natural White'

Windows and Doors: Tasmanian oak frames; levers from Bankston Architectural; hardware from Tradco and Zanda

Flooring: Burnished concrete; Tasmanian oak in Bona Traffic 'Ultra Matt'

Lighting: Downlights from Light Project; dining pendant from About Space; Nelson Saucer pendant (bedroom); Pastille disc light from Sphera Lighting

Kitchen: Tasmanian oak joinery, solid and veneer; woven wire mesh from Locker Group; Manetti tiles from Artedomus in 'Litos Naturale'; Grey Tundra limestone; Oliveri sink; Zip Hydrotap; Astra Walker tap; Fisher and Paykel appliances

Bathroom: Manetti tiles from Artedomus in 'Litos Naturale'; Pila tiles from Perini Tiles in 'Plus White'; Kado bath; Roca and Memo Zenna sinks; Astra Walker tap, showerhead and towel rail in 'Urban Brass'; shower rail and mixer tap from ABI Interiors in 'Brushed Brass'; Chairman knurled handles from Manovella in 'Brushed Brass'

Heating and cooling: Daikin airconditioning

External elements: Bluestone crazy paving from Eco Outdoor; spotted gum decking in Cutek Natural Wood Preservative



05 A consistent material palette creates cohesion between zones of the home.

06 Tasmanian oak joinery in the first-floor bedroom and robe helps the space feel both voluminous and cosy.

07 The pitched roof is legible in the main bedroom, maximising access to northern light.



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