

# A delightful addition

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A new addition makes a small Northcote cottage light, warm, functional and cosy.

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**IF EVER THERE WAS A HOMELY HOME TO MAKE YOU FEEL** comfortable, cosy and happy, it might just be this one in the Melbourne suburb of Northcote. The renovated house, home to designer Emily Wright of accessories label Nancybird and her partner and ecologist Robert, marries an impeccable and eclectic interior aesthetic with a keen sense of environmental stewardship.

Emily and Robert commissioned architect Olivia van Dijk to redesign the weatherboard house, giving the façade a fresh coat of paint but focusing on bringing much more warmth and light into the south-facing living and kitchen areas.

Together they decided on a single-storey extension incorporating living, kitchen and dining areas, as well as a new bathroom and laundry. It was Olivia's job to design it to be highly functional, light-filled and based on passive solar design principles. Emily and Rob wanted an addition that didn't mimic the original cottage but complemented it in materials, scale and presence.

"The extension needed to open up to the south to build a strong connection between the new living space and the garden, so one of the challenges was to bring northern light into the home in an interesting way," explains Olivia. Her design opens the living room

to the north through a courtyard and angled roofline with clerestory windows. "I'm really happy with how the project has worked out ... it feels spacious and open but still has a lovely sense of intimacy, warmth and craftsmanship," she says.

Emily commissioned furniture designer Damien Wright of Wright Studios to craft the kitchen Olivia had designed. He used local and recycled timbers, including yellow stringybark for the cabinetry and recycled mountain ash. The benchtop was made from hardy stainless steel.

Rob and Emily went over their budget, with the design and build costing about \$340,000, including design fees and unexpected costs. "Our budget was initially much lower than this, but to do justice to the design we decided to go for better materials, such as a more bespoke kitchen using handmade hardwood veneers instead of ply. We also needed to do things like restump the existing house which added quite a bit of associated costs."

Emily and Rob are thrilled with their revitalised cottage. "The light, the sense of scale and proportion are great," says Emily. "I also love the way in which the back room blends with the outdoors." **S**





➔ The south-facing rear of the semi-detached Northcote home looks out onto a water-efficient rain garden designed and landscaped by homeowner Rob with indigenous semi-aquatic plants and recycled pavers.

➔ "We love the functionality of the kitchen; the space works easily with us both in there," homeowner Emily says of the kitchen designed by architect Olivia van Dijk and fitted out with recycled timbers by furniture designer Damien Wright.







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The windows overlooking the garden to the south are raised to enable better use of the living space. Double glazing and a better insulated building fabric mean less noise seeps in from outside.



LEGEND

FLOOR PLAN

- ① Living
- ② Dining
- ③ Courtyard
- ④ Kitchen
- ⑤ Bathroom
- ⑥ Laundry
- ⑦ Bedroom





# Northcote cottage

—Specifications

## Credits

### DESIGN

Olivia van Dijk

### BUILDER

Martin Brothers Building

### KITCHEN CABINETRY

Damien Wright,  
Wright Studios

### PROJECT TYPE

Addition

### PROJECT LOCATION

Northcote, VIC

### COST

\$300,000-\$350,000

### SIZE

Existing house 80 sqm,  
addition 52 sqm,  
land 293 sqm

## Sustainable Features

### PASSIVE DESIGN

- Passive solar design principles incorporated into a new single-storey addition
- Double-glazed windows throughout the entire house, except for the existing street-facing window.

### BUILDING MATERIALS

- EcoFoam insulation pumped into the walls of the existing weatherboard cottage and roof
- Fletcher Sisilation installed under the existing house's new roofline and the addition's roofline. Pink batts installed under the attic floor and above bedroom ceilings.
- Openable windows installed in the living area at high and low points for airflow
- Secondhand bricks used for all new brickwork, including the fireplace which was built with bricks from the original fireplace
- Blackbutt and mountain ash used for the window frames, living room ceiling and kitchen floor
- Furniture maker Damien Wright used local recycled timbers - yellow stringybark rafters from an old Footscray factory and mountain ash floorboards from a house demolition in Kew - to fabricate kitchen and dining joinery.

### ACTIVE HEATING/COOLING

- Hydronic heating installed throughout the house - underfloor in the living area and wall panels in bedrooms.

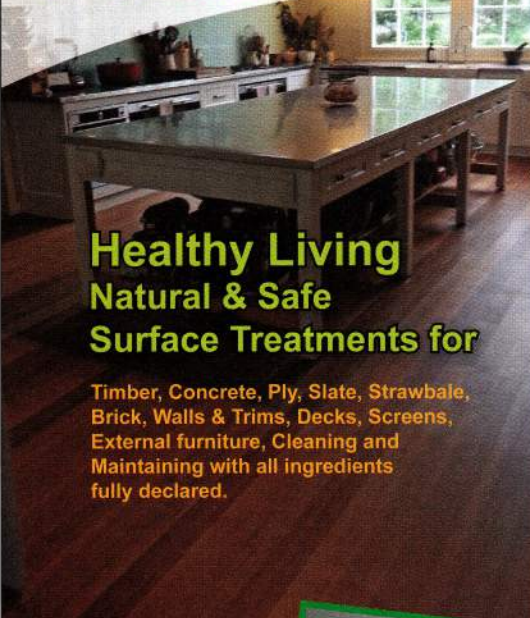

### PAINTS, FINISHES & FLOOR COVERINGS

- Livos oils applied to external windows
- Porter's Paints sealers applied to internal windows and concrete floors.

### OUTDOORS




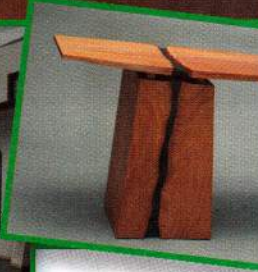
- Water tank feeds water to the laundry, toilet and garden tap
- A rain garden installed to reduce stormwater runoff has been planted with indigenous semi-aquatic plants.

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