

residential architect

hanley + wood

MAY · JUNE 2009

small green

when remodeling,
why not go both ways?

hometta's homes suite / barn brightly /
web-wise / siegal's *maison sauvage* /
graywater in b+w / news from front

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A Queen Anne caterpillar in Australia blossoms into a beautifully modern butterfly. Photo: John Wheatley and Shannon McGrath. Cover photo: Chris Cooper.

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With its prefab BrightBuilt Barns, Kaplan Thompson Architects hopes to benchmark the energy savings green design can achieve.

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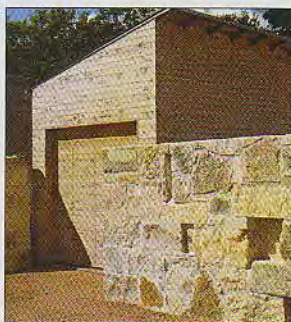


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Architect Neal Schwartz blows through a sunporch to find elbowroom and Vitamin D for a dark urban kitchen; and he unknots hidden space within the walls of a tightly bound master suite.

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small + green

The third in our series of special-focus green features addresses the triple whammy in residential architecture: small, remodeled, sustainable homes. Three times the charm.
by Nigel F. Maynard, Shelley D. Hutchins, and Meghan Drueding

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Front Studio renovates its offices with a light touch but striking graphics.



residential architect
design awards

Call for entries:
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the lady revived

The Victorian terrace house is a common typology in Melbourne, Australia. Sited on a long, narrow lot in the Melbourne suburb of South Yarra, this circa 1930s iteration greets the public with a covered, lacework-decorated front porch; a stained glass bay window; and a hallway tucked along the party wall. Topped with a terra-cotta tile roof, the one-story structure's detailing incorporates elements of the Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau styles, but its diminutive size "lends itself nicely to a contemporary addition/renovation," says architect Matt Gibson, RAlA, principal of Melbourne-based Matt Gibson A+D.

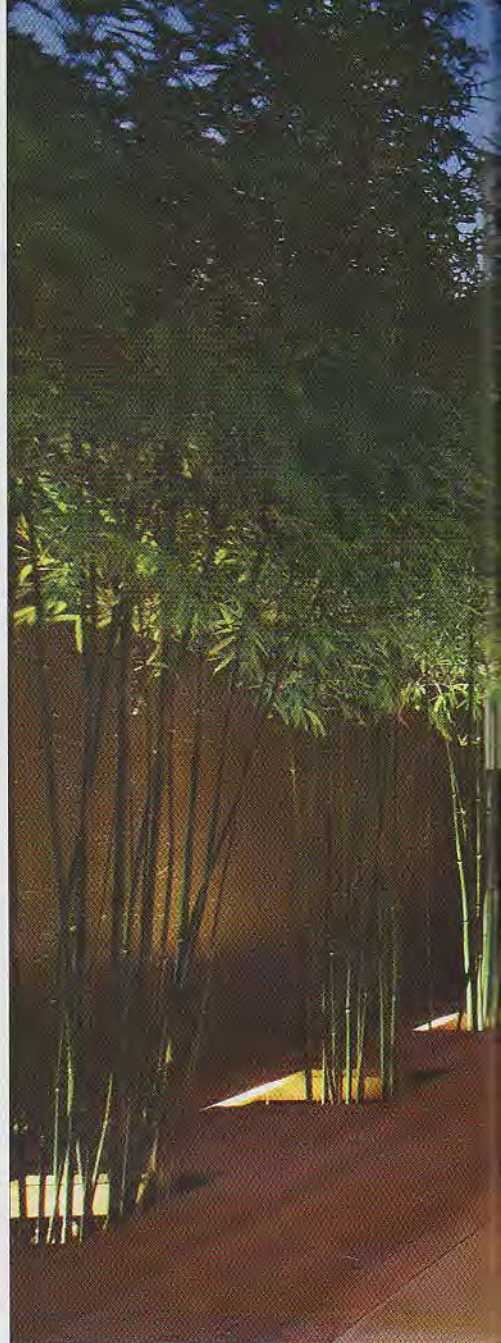
And that's exactly what Gibson did, reusing most of the existing structure, recycling and salvaging existing materials, and deploying natural and local products wherever possible to bring the house into the 21st century. "The project provides a case study for the revitalizing of inner-urban, small-plot terrace houses on economic budgets and within sustainable means," he says.

The architect embraced many of the home's period elements, using them to inform his design. He kept the details on the façade and maintained the size and layout of the two bedrooms in the front of the house, but he moved the bathroom from the rear and extended the back to create an open kitchen/living space. The bath now occupies the middle of the house and has a better relationship to a light-facilitating interior courtyard.

Gibson oriented rooms toward the interior and exterior courtyards to encourage natural ventilation and used vents to these outdoor areas to promote airflow under the house. Interior surfaces are finished with natural oils, natural wax, and low-VOC paints to promote clean indoor air. Large sliding doors and a central pivot door create thermal zoning, and extended eave linings provide shelter from the sun. "Passive cooling and breezeways enable supplementary air conditioning to be used only on the very hottest days," Gibson says.

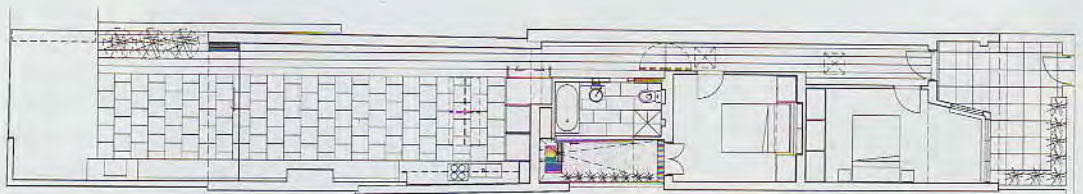


The decorative lacework and stained glass bay window on the façade of this 1930s Victorian-Federation hybrid house belle its modern, light-filled interiors. Full-height folding doors (right and opposite) bring in light and open up the house to a concrete tile-and-wood patio and garden.





project: Talbot Residence,
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
architect: Matt Gibson A+D,
Melbourne
general contractor: O'Neill &
Vogel, Melbourne
project size: 1,098 square feet
(before), 1,173 square feet (after)
site size: 0.03 acre
construction cost: Approximately
\$145 per square foot
photography: John Wheatley and
Shannon McGrath



The highlight of the large living space is a site-poured concrete banquette/bench that crosses the threshold to become the outdoor countertop.

The home's interior is a contemporary, yet warm mix of salvaged items—lumber, bricks, and mirrors, for example—and natural products, such as stone walls, sisal carpets, tree bark blinds, and bamboo shade screens. “The kitchen bench top was poured on site using materials from the site, concrete tiles were made locally, the floorboards and furniture timber were salvaged from a local factory in Richmond [another Melbourne suburb], brickwork was reused, and the bronzed outdoor mirror became a last-minute design decision to be reused on the rear fence,” he explains.

“I think the recycling notion in this building is a more holistic approach, as opposed to a literal one of items being recycled,” he adds. “It’s the recycling behind the scenes that makes the building cost-effective and embodied energy-effective.”—*n.f.m.*

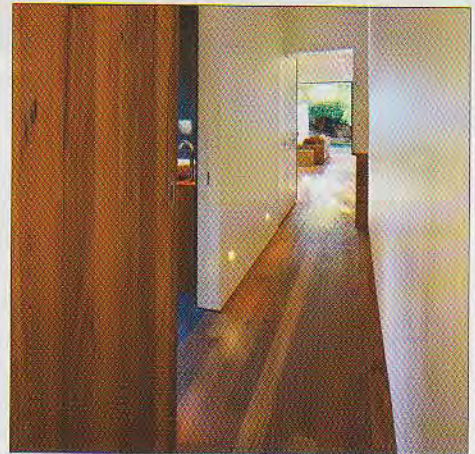


super savings

Salvage lumber and other reclaimed building products are worthy choices, but architects shouldn't forget the intrinsic value of reusing a building's existing structure. This house has its share of recycled boards, bricks, glass, and other materials, but it's the less obvious recycling that provides the biggest bang for the buck, says architect Matt Gibson, RAIA.

“Recycling the building's ‘superstructure’—including its envelope and other structural elements—led to an [approximate savings] of \$100,000,” he says.

Recycling incidentals, on the other hand, reduced overall costs by roughly \$10,000 to \$20,000.—*n.f.m.*



The project's rich material palette is strategic. The dark slate tiles in the relocated bath provide contrast and variation for fixtures and fittings, while salvaged lumber throughout the house ensures soothing continuity.