

FAMILY ROOM

In the extension, the architects played with the idea of how solid materials, like the concrete here, create a sense of historical permanence.

Budapest **sofa**, Baxter.
Bohemian **armchair**,
Moroso. **Rug**, Halcyon Lake.
Stellar Grape **floor lamp**,
Pulpo. **Curtains**, Lovelight.
Various **decorative objets**
by Ella Bendrups, Kirsten
Perry, Oh Hey Grace, Alison
Frith and Jane McKenzie.
Roly Poly **armchair**, Faye
Toogood for Driade



TWO OF A KIND

PHOTOGRAPHY Tom Blachford/Living Agency
WORDS Tina Hom/Living Agency

A striking modernist extension comes together with a traditional Victorian home in Melbourne to create something truly spectacular in a unified way



Originally built in the 1880s, this Victorian house is ingrained with history and character. Its renovation by the team at Neil Architecture and interior designer Megan Hounslow was all about combining the

careful restoration of the 140-year-old building with a striking new extension. ‘The family wanted to honour the traditional elements of the existing house, while maximising modernity,’ explains architect Daniel. ‘This project encapsulates this concept of dualism with solid, heavy materials simultaneously creating a sense of historical permanence and crafting a warm, inviting home reflective of a contemporary way of life.’ It’s a desire shared by the project’s interior designer Megan: ‘I felt a responsibility to preserve the home’s period character by engaging traditional craft techniques and hand-honed trades,’ she says.

Concrete features prominently throughout the new addition. Its strong materiality echoes the solid brick construction of the existing Victorian section of the house. The bold, striking concrete ceilings, columns and fireplaces were painstakingly crafted under cover of a large tent to produce a consistent finish and are juxtaposed against tumbled-edge limestone flooring, warm timbers and marble.

The architects have chosen to highlight the connection between the existing building and the new addition: ‘We used the threshold between old and new to give the journey through the house a sense of drama, so a two-storey-tall volume, containing a suspended staircase, sits at the end of the existing hallway and high-level windows flood the space with light,’ says David, a director at Neil Architecture.

Sightlines that connect the different zones in the property became important elements of the design. ‘Light and shadow play a critical role in our work – we’re really interested in how the quality of light can affect the mood of a space,’ explains David. ‘For example, standing at the front door, one is able to glimpse the staircase against its fluted concrete backdrop, framed through a

series of ornate arches, with the light from the stairwell bouncing around the polished plaster hallway.’

Elements from the original house are reinterpreted in the contemporary extension, so there is a considered movement from old to new and from the ornate to the robust. ‘A new design language was developed to complement the house’s heritage, restoring its integrity while embedding it firmly in a modern

aesthetic,’ says Megan. New details were designed and curated to match the existing quality of the original house. So, taking a cue from the original ornate cornice work, fleur-de-lys motifs and heraldic mouldings, Megan’s company engaged skilled craftspeople to provide a range of tactile touchpoints. These include custom fluted concrete tiles in stairwells, slimline steel fabrication in balustrades and bespoke joinery in the main living and kitchen area. Walls in waxed Venetian plaster and floors in Australian blackbutt timber provide a pared-back backdrop. The muted palette provides the perfect stage for carefully curated furnishings, including several iconic contemporary design pieces, as well as a collection of eye-catching rugs. Together these pieces create an engagingly tactile environment.

The finished house is a triumph of architecture, interior and landscape design teams working in step. Eckersley Garden Architecture designed the lush gardens to help promote cohesion between the two parts of the house and the external spaces give more opportunities for the family to come together. ‘This home is a homage to beautifully crafted details and material and spatial exploration,’ David says. ‘It’s truly the sum of its many dedicated trades, craftspeople and artisans.’

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THE DESIGNERS

Melbourne-based architects Daniel Riddell and David Neil of Neil Architecture and interior designer Megan Hounslow worked on the reimagining of this Victorian house for a professional couple and their two sons.

THE PROPERTY

A single-storey Victorian house with a three-storey extension. In the original part of the house is a formal living room, a library, a main bedroom with en suite and dressing room, a guest bedroom with en suite, a cloakroom and a laundry. The extension has a kitchen-diner, family room, two bedrooms, a bathroom and a study upstairs. The lower-ground floor of the extension has a garage, a games room, a music room, a bathroom, a laundry and storage areas.



neilarchitecture.com.au; meganhounslow.com

KITCHEN

'Blackbutt timber combines with tumbled limestone, Brazilian marble and volcanic tiles to form a sensory experience,' says interior designer Megan.

Esagono Green 01 hexagon **splashback tiles**, Cotto Etrusco. Moroccan limestone **floor tiles**, Eco Outdoor. Blackbutt **joinery**, Megan Hounslow. Custom **extractor hood**, Qasair. Neva Light **bar stools**, Artisan



DINING AREA

'The family wanted to honour traditional elements of the existing house in the extension,' says architect Daniel. Hence the more classic flooring here and a modern light that nods to the ornate chandeliers of the past.

Tense **table**, MDF Italia.
Miss **dining chairs**, Tobia Scarpa for Molteni&C.
Talisman **chandelier**, Apparatus. Custom **joinery**, Megan Hounslow



FORMAL LIVING ROOM

'This space in the original part of the house is a playful take on bourgeois decadence and Victorian eclecticism in the forms, textures and colour of the decor,' says Megan.

Cipria sofa, Edra. Cloud pendant, Apparatus. Custom silk rug, Halcyon Lake. Vase, Simone Karras at Craft Victoria



MAIN BEDROOM

'I wanted to create a bedroom that was the epitome of restful, understated elegance,' says Megan. 'The raw hardwood floors, wicker and Venetian plaster bring warmth and are balanced with a cool palette of soft grey and mauve.'

Mae **bed**, Adam Rogers for Radnor Made. **Bed linen**, Bedouin Societe. **Curtains**, Lovelight. **Vase**, Simone Karras. **Candelabra**, Ebony Russell



THIS HOME IS A HOMAGE TO BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED
DETAILS AND MATERIAL AND SPATIAL EXPLORATION

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EXTERIOR

The strong materiality of the extension echoes the solid brickwork construction of the home's Victorian facade.

Roly Poly **armchairs** (centre), Faye Toogood for Driade, Nevada **table** and Manao **seats** (left), all Paola Navone at Baxter. **Garden design**, Eckersley Garden Architecture