

WHERE TO LIVE | COVER STORY



# WELCOME TO CLEVER, CLEVER LAND

Beyond the front fence of this Prahran house, MARIA HARRIS discovers a marriage of old and new that is something really special.

**Main:** Simply spectacular, the outdoor entertaining area boasts plenty of room.

**Top:** Walk down this side path to discover something special.

**Above:** The kitchen is designed for cooking, not just to be decoration.

**POSTCODE 3181** There are houses with extensions and then there are those where much more than mere rooms have gone into the mix and the end result is spectacular.

This Edwardian house, in a street off Deaking Road, fits into the second category. It gives no hint of what lies beyond the front fence, but take a walk down the side path and you soon realise that you have stumbled onto something special.

Commercial builder Nigel Brown and his family bought the house, which he describes as "being a little house on a big block", five years ago. Today that little house has grown to about 30 squares of absolute style and flexibility.

"The aim was to turn it into a much larger house, while keeping the ceilings high and providing detailed joinery in each room," says Brown.

"The idea was to have a separate zone for the children and to make everything in the house usable."

Today it has five bedrooms, three bathrooms, including an en suite, a retreat, a very large living and dining area and seven metres square deck for outdoor entertaining.

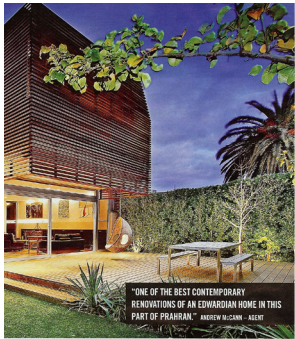
This was a large project with a lot of thought.

Architect Michael Baker, of Zambaker Architects, was engaged to do the massive extension.

The entrance is from a covered porch at the side of the house into a luxuriously-finished area that signals the separation between old and new. The kitchen – designed to cook in, not just to be decoration – is equipped with five stainless steel appliances, commercial-quality Quasar rangehood, Casartone benchtops and elegant timber cabinets above the bench. Customised white cabinets, including the pantry, line a corner wall.

On the other side of the "breakroom" pathway is the magnificent living room, which incorporates dining and television areas. Engineered with plenty of steel, with no supports to spoil the openness of this room, it also has hidden air-conditioning vents in bulkheads.

The living room has an open fireplace with built-in wood storage, plus cupboards with doors that slide back into cavities for seasons. The dining section of the room is large and is lit by three overhead pendant lights. But even more interesting is the natural light that comes from windows that go from the face to the mid point of the walls. This was a step of re-orienting



"ONE OF THE BEST CONTEMPORARY RENOVATIONS OF AN EDWARDIAN HOME IN THIS PART OF PRAHRAN." ANDREW MCCANN – AGENT



**Left:** The main bedroom has a walk-through wardrobe and a deluxe en suite.

**Far left:** The living room is warmed by its open fireplace.

huge glass door slides open to the rear deck, which creates a massive outdoor entertaining area. The deck steps down to the lawn (lake), which is fringed with garden and has Mandarinas peering on the fence line. The two-level extension features Cabotwood cladding and has dramatic cedar battening that acts as a sun shade for the house.

Ceilings of 3.2 metres match ceiling heights in the existing Edwardian home where three bedrooms at the front have pressed metal ceilings. In these rooms, vivid green walls and white pressed metal ceilings contrast with the mainly neutral tones elsewhere. The children's bedroom nearby has a wet area of bath and shower.

This is a clever marriage of clever architecture, clever use of space, clever storage, clever low-maintenance garden, and clever ways to extend an irregular shaped block.

The large linen room, tucked out of sight behind the wide timber staircase, has more storage and a door to a deck and service area.

Upstairs, the first-floor retreat is big and opens with filtered light. The main bedroom is a great big room with a walk-through wardrobe plus built-in storage and a sliding door that opens to the deluxe en suite with bath at one end and shower at the other.

Another bedroom on this floor is attic-style, with a bathroom and powder room next to it.

Another bedroom on this floor is attic-style, with a bathroom and powder room next to it.

5 3 2

BENJAMIN MACKAYDON, 2254 5000

41 Cleverham Avenue, Prahran

Price: \$2 million - \$2.25 million

Auction: July 31 at 12.30pm

**Fast Facts:** Architect designed renovations and extensions, on walls, walk-in wardrobes, high ceilings, hydraulic heating, polished floors, air-conditioning, water, stone, extensive storage in all rooms, Jetmaster ocean fireplace, indoor-outdoor entertaining, ConcealStone kitchen, five appliances, Cat 5 data cabling, wired for surround sound, professionally designed garden.

**PRAHRAN**  
5 KILOMETRES SOUTH-EAST OF THE CBD

It's groovy, fashionable and is filled with upscale and quirky shops, cafes and bars. The South Yarra end of Chapel Street is home to many high-end fashion shops, but Grove Street is known for its cafes, bookshops and music and quirky clothing shops.

By the 1920s, Chapel Street rattled the city as a mecca for shopping. Large stores included Reed's Corporation, built in 1914, and then later traded as Brown's Corner Store (now Pen Pen Central) and The Big Store, which is now occupied by Cabel.

Blocks of housing commission flats were built in the 1960s, adding to the diversity of the population. Prahran also had factories, including the fledgling Taito Chocolate factory, which has now been turned into chic, trendy apartments.

Similarly the Jam Factory shopping and entertainment complex once produced 30,000 pairs of shoes a week by its open fireplace.

For food shopping, the Prahran Market has been an iconic centre for locals since the 19th century. Its meat stall, fish and fruit and veggie stalls are among the most famous in the city.

Housing is mainly Victorian and Edwardian, with some magnificent double-story Victorian houses with towers in streets such as Grosvenor Grove in East Prahran. There are also smaller single and double-story cottages and apartments.

**How fit is suburb has moved: UP 45.0% per cent from the March**