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& inspired design

Room to Move

Issue 30. At Home with Norm Architects
Mindful Living in Melbourne
A Heritage Home Transformed

ISSUE 30 FEATURED HOMES

INNER PEACE

DESIGN studiofour
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Taking in the clean, creamy shape of this Malvern home's exterior, you'd be forgiven for thinking it was a brand new build. Instead it's the result of a comprehensive transformation by Melbourne design firm studiofour, who reinvigorated the original 1980s house for the current and future demands of a growing family.

Originally comprised of low ceilings and dark, compartmentalised spaces, studiofour started by increasing the "visual and physical" connectivity of the built form with the adjacent landscape. This was done by extending the home's structure around an existing yard to create a central courtyard and introducing large glass sliding doors to open up the home.

Left: By uniting the interior with two new courtyards, the house is now flooded with light, fresh air and aspect.





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The insertion of this courtyard integrates the natural landscape with the family's everyday life, while encouraging family interaction through the communal spaces it creates. "A largely open plan central hub was designed to provide valued together time whilst also promoting multi-tasking as required" architect Annabelle Berryman says. Adjacent to the central courtyard on one side and the rear courtyard on the other, the hub comprises of the essential spaces such as the family room, kitchen, pantry and large communal bench area, as well as an area "not dedicated to any particular function". "It is easy to assign a function to each and every square inch of floor plate, but sometimes the best spaces are the ones designed for just that, 'a space'" says Annabelle.

Left: The planning strategy was to provide a framework that fostered connection and communication, where the news can be watched as children swim in the pool.







Studiofour also looked to embrace limitations of the existing residence as opportunities in the renovation. For instance, the low ceilings of the home created a unique way to promote connection between internal and external spaces. "We recognised an opportunity to oversize and extend the existing eaves to run throughout the ground floor" Annabelle explains. "The generous eaves emphasise a strong horizontality and extend one's eye from inside to out".







By stripping back the home to encourage calm and contemplation, studiofour also struck on an important focus: mindfulness. “We believe that to truly enhance human well-being, building design needs to move beyond optimising single parameters such as temperature and humidity, to more holistic approaches that take their cues in health-supporting human behaviours and outcomes,” says Annabelle. In prioritising connection to the natural environment, to each other and to themselves, studiofour have given this family a truly priceless gift—a sanctuary to grow alongside them.

Above: studiofour looked to foster a healthy home for mind, body and soul by emphasising a connection with the natural environment.

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