

# STEELY GAZE

Metal frames fashion a contemporary edge around this heritage home, transforming a dreary outlook into an asset and infusing the interiors with a lighter mood.

Photographs SHANNON McGRATH Words CARLI PHILIPS Styling LEESA O'REILLY



This page The mesh windows on the studio and garage are transparent enough to let in suggestions of colour that change with the light and time of day. Opposite page Vintage and contemporary pieces mix in the living room. Dining table from Graham Geddes Antiques. B&B Italia 'Doyle' chairs. Loom rug. Artwork by Marnie Haddad.

It's not every day the focus of a home renovation becomes the garage facade, but for this Melbourne house its redesign was integral to the property's new life. An original 1900s Victorian in Albert Park, the home's rear living and kitchen area had sliding glass doors looking onto a depressing courtyard and dreary, double-storey garage rendered in unattractive acrylic. "Because of the huge plate glass windows we had to improve the outlook," says architect and interior designer Anne Hindley. "The occupants of the main house look onto this so we could not afford for it to be an eyesore. It looked cheap and nasty because it was so flat and the brick veneer made it look thin."

The original windows over the garage cum studio were opaque so it felt "claustrophobic and oppressive up there", says the designer. "You felt trapped and frustrated to sense the trees outside but not be able to see them." Replacing windows with slightly more transparent glass made a huge difference. "Now you can see leaves shimmering, the colour of the sky, and the sun streams in, but you can't quite focus on anything ugly or private going on in the neighbouring yards. It has abstracted reality."

Flat windows have been fitted with protruding steel reveals that give the illusion of a thicker wall and create long, dancing shadows. "The mesh screens change their appearance from day to night and the render also looks amazing when it has rained and is wet and blotchy. It will patina over time and become green with ivy." Now, the aspect from the living area looks towards a beautifully



This page, clockwise from top The dark floor and joinery and black fixtures juxtapose with the white wall, ceiling and bench top to render a beautifully dramatic kitchen. A steel-framed window was installed to reveal the pool and garden. 'Paulistano' armchair by Objekto from Hub. Poltrona Frau 'Bob' coffee tables. Mater bar stools from Cult. **Opposite page** The new pool fence plays back into the garage's steel windows.





This page, clockwise from top left Mirrors and lights create an expansive ensuite. &Tradition 'Mass Light NA5' pendant. An Agape 'Ottocento' bath stars in the guest bathroom. A guest bedroom. Many original features remain. Opposite page Custom bedhead, cushions and bed linen from Seneca. Tom Dixon 'Beat' lamp.



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proportioned structure reminiscent of the early modernist-style of Villa Noailles in Hyères in southeast France, where Anne had lived for a number of years. Subconsciously, she says it may have had an “influence on the rhythm of the doors”. The courtyard has been re-landscaped by Kate Seddon, the pool fence replaced by fine steel and the pool re-tiled in a translucent navy.

To save rebuilding, the home’s shell was retained. While the blueprint remained largely untouched, Anne says that the house had “lost its soul” so the renovation was “really about bringing that back”. To the right of the central spine is a guest bedroom and a room that now functions solely as a dressing room. To the left is the master bedroom that leads to a new ensuite overlooking a small east-facing courtyard. Steel-framed doors further down the hallway mark the threshold between the private spaces at the front of the house and the more public ones at the rear. A guest bathroom features on the left and a laundry to the right before unfolding into a living, dining and kitchen area that had undergone two, very bad and very brash, renovations.

In the living area, furnishings throughout are rich and chocolatey including B&B Italia ‘Doyle’ dining chairs, a Poltrona Frau ‘Grantorino’ sofa and Mater dark-stained beechwood stools. The positioning of the rear windows amplifies the depth and shadow of the black-stained Tasmanian oak floor. “It’s not always about exposing everything in bright light all the time – it’s about creating a mood, selecting what you see and how much light you let in.”

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SPEED READ

» Architect and interior designer Anne Hindley was called on to give this Victorian home a facelift and to improve the outlook onto a tired courtyard and dull double-storey garage and studio. » There, flat windows were replaced with protruding steel reveals that give the illusion of a thicker wall covered by steel mesh screens that create animated patterns. » To save rebuilding and hasten the renovation the home’s shell was retained and the blueprint remained largely untouched. » In the main house, framed views and layering devices enhance a feeling of space and calm. A new steel-framed window was installed to enjoy views to the garden. » The palette of chocolates, white and neutrals adds its understated drama throughout.