

TWO BROTHERS HAVE CREATED A MODERN LIVING SPACE THAT CREATIVELY BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN ITS HISTORIC ORIGINS AND PRESENT-DAY AESTHETICS

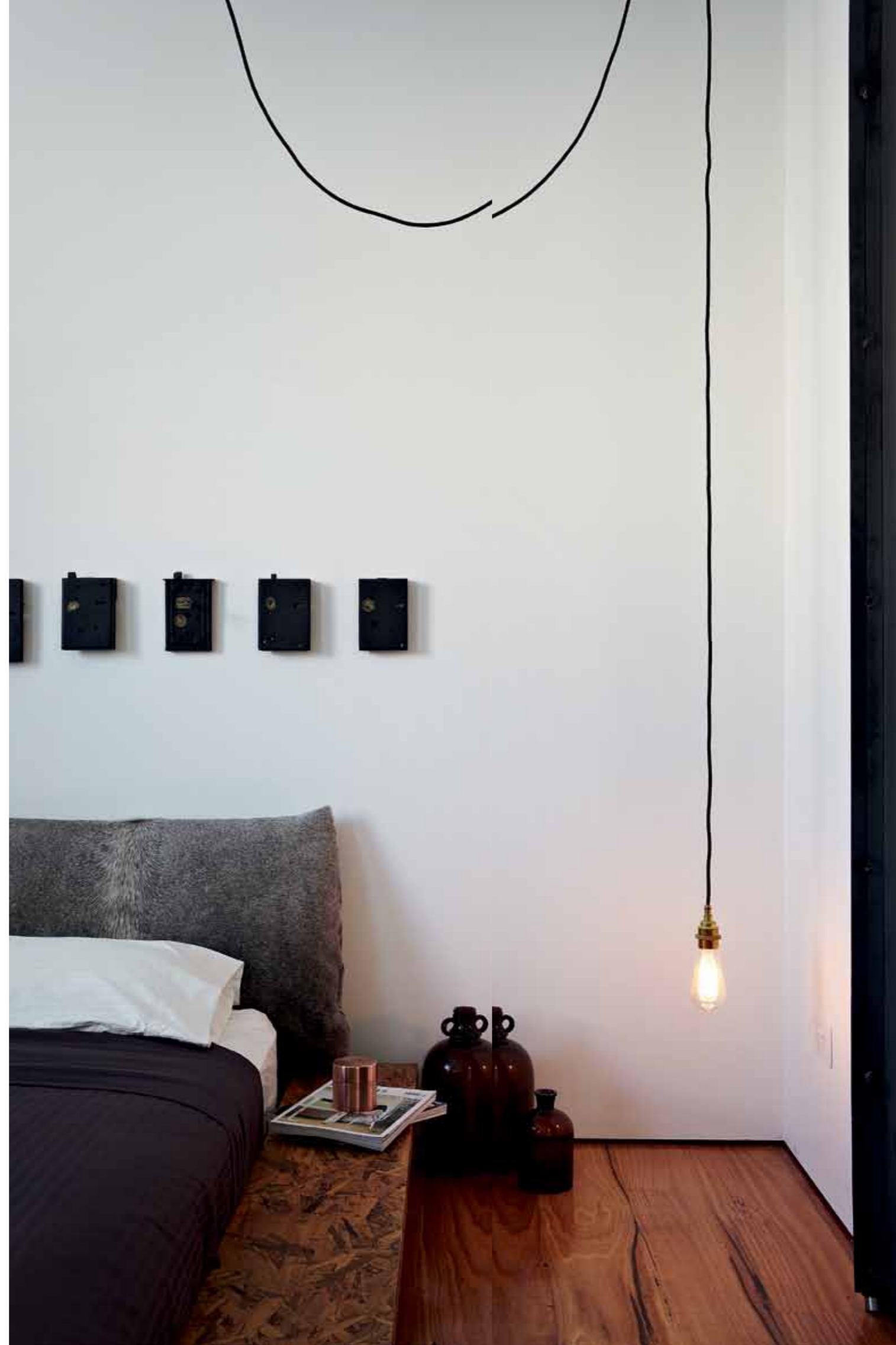
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The PAST is PRESENT





ABOVE: The living room doubles in space when the glass doors open out onto the courtyard. **RIGHT:** Antique locks and filament lighting recall the origins of the Victorian worker's cottage. **BELOW:** All artworks, fittings and furnishings are created by LifeSpaceJourney. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Modern furnishings work in harmony with vintage elements, such as floorboards reclaimed from a warehouse ceiling.



When Glenn Lamont purchased his property in Melbourne's inner-city suburb of Kensington three years ago he barely glanced at the house itself - he was interested in it for the vacant land behind and to the side, with a view to developing the site. The sagging Victorian worker's cottage, Glenn says, "was very dark, depressing and enclosed - it was virtually unliveable". Not any more. A two-year labour of love for Glenn and his brother Justin - co-founders and creative forces behind design and development consultancy LifeSpaceJourney - has resulted in a brilliant reinvention of the original abode, creating a modern, inner-city pad that pays homage to its Victorian heritage.

Wary of over capitalising and eating into the land pegged for his future development, Glenn chose to retain the footprint of the original house in his renovation. Collaborating with John Mercuri and Steve McKellar from ODR architects on the project, the Lamont brothers aimed to take the house back to its roots. "We followed the original Victorian layout - we wanted to maintain the integrity of the original house but merge it with a new modern feel," explains Justin.

What has changed dramatically is the use of light in the building. Sunlight is drawn in for much of the day via large slot skylights in the hallway, bathroom and kitchen. The two bedrooms had their doors replaced with 1.5m wide, 240kg steel sliding doors that have been laser cut with the geographical coordinates of the site. When open they allow light to bounce into the bedrooms from the now bright hallway. Mirrors feature strongly to increase the sense of space and light. And far from a traditional, closed-in Victorian living room, the bright living area doubles in space to combine with the striking charcoal-stained cypress timber of the rear courtyard when the three large, jambless feature doors are opened.

Architect statement

The Hardiman Street extension is the first stage of a larger project which will eventually see the original double-plot, single-title property developed into multiple typologies for inner suburban living.

The brief evolved throughout the design phase, from a simple refurbishment into a bespoke extension which was tailored with close consideration of the client's needs and expectations, to the point where the client chose to reside in the completed residence.

The constant development and refinement of the design brief led to a clear and consistent methodology, which addressed various aspects within the design in a clean and simplistic manner. Heritage controls defined the existing layout to an extent. Existing bedrooms were retained as the front two rooms, followed by a new bathroom/laundry and kitchen. This left the living room as the remaining space, defined by the previously concealed chimney that is now a celebrated feature with a clear connection to the newly defined courtyard at the rear.

Day lighting was addressed by introducing skylights to a once dark passageway and to new ancillary areas in the bathroom/laundry and kitchen. These areas feature mirrored finishes to several joinery items, including the laundry, fridge and kitchen, and bathroom splashbacks that reflect space and light into honest, functional spaces.

Material selection and composition followed the methodology, with recycled timber floors in a natural finish and laser-cut steel sliding doors in a natural, oxidised finish. New internal wall linings are crisply supported by sharp, steel shadow line details.

JOHN MERCURI, ODR ARCHITECTS



Apart from a few requisite downlights, all electrical lighting used in the house is in the form of sculptural LifeSpaceJourney pieces that provide ambience. "We used classic filament lighting with phased-down Edison-era globes, which highlights the past. The hand-spun shades in copper and raw metal add a new interpretation to the ancient lighting ideas often found in Victorian homes," explains Glenn.

For the interior colour scheme, the brothers went for a simple palette of white and black with accents of gold – the front door and downlights – or yellow – the bathroom door and the kitchen mixer. In another nod to its Victorian roots, some of the new, powder-coated furniture pieces match the colours featured in the original house. "As we were demolishing parts of the house we came

across layers of the traditional pastel colours that were used as trims in Victorian homes," Justin says. "We returned these shades to Glenn's house via the furniture."

The thematic marriage of old and new continues with the choice of materials throughout, with reclaimed, up-cycled timber featured alongside new, raw materials. The floorboards are reclaimed ceiling joists from a Queensland warehouse and the black-stained joinery in the sleek kitchen is constructed with oriented strand board, which is also used for the restored fireplaces and Glenn's custom-built bed. Part of the clever system to access the high-rise storage throughout the house, the raw-metal ladder that moves from room to room as needed provides an industrial touch.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Light paints the walls with tones carried from the accented features in the house; The gold front door makes for a solid entrance; The feature tapware in the kitchen and high-rise storage system; A yellow door opens into the bathroom.



PROJECT DETAILS

ARCHITECTS: ODR Architects with LifeSpaceJourney
PROJECT AND DESIGN ARCHITECT: John Mercuri of ODR Architects
PROJECT COST: \$260,000
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Dominic Pratico of RCC Consultants
BATHROOM: Bluestone tiles, porcelain Zero range and chrome Satin Tara range fittings from Rogerseller
BUILDER: Ean Power of Canterbury Homes
CAD DRAWINGS: Alex Smith of ODR Architects
CLADDING: Black-stained Cyprus pine shiplap boards from Frencham and white-painted pine weatherboards from Canterbury Homes
CONSTRUCTION: 18 months
DESIGN AND DOCUMENTATION: 8 months
DESIGN ARCHITECT: Steven McKellar of ODR Architects
DESIGNERS: Glenn Lamont and Justin Lamont of LifeSpaceJourney
DOORS: Recycled timber front door with gold-paint finish from Urban Salvage, internal laser-cut steel doors and glass door from LifeSpaceJourney, black-coated steel-framed door from Liquid Lines
FLOOR AREA: 106m²
JOINER: Reo Richardson of Creative Design
JOINERY: Black-stained and clear-sealed oriented strand board
KITCHEN: Black granite bench, Mary Noall tapware
LIGHTING: Downlight and suspended dining light from Euroluce, Edison lamps in spun brass fittings by LifeSpaceJourney.



ABOVE: Justin and Glenn Lamont of LifeSpaceJourney.

With its vast white walls – that appear to float above the floor due to the absence of skirting boards – the house has the feel of a gallery. That the space is dotted with LifeSpaceJourney furniture and lighting prototypes adds to this feeling, giving the sense of an intriguing space where ideas are explored and tested, and the walls form the perfect backdrop for the artworks and sculptures created especially for the home. Old locks – many of which came from the original house – were painted matt black and arranged above Glenn’s bed. It’s the same story with the recycled doorknobs, arranged by the front door to form a coat rack.

Other pieces on the walls include sections of burnt timber, fragments from 44 gallon drums, and plough points – all retrieved from the family farm Glenn and Justin grew up on.

“I wanted to bring farm life into the city,” Glenn explains. “It references the ancient worker-style cottage and the industrial warehouse context of Kensington, and it’s a permanent reminder of my farming heritage.”



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Attached to long cables, the lights can be moved around, changing the way a space works; The outside view into the rear courtyard; The original facade belies the thoroughly modern interior of the house; The steel-framed glass doors that separate the courtyard and living room.

