

DESIGN



Two views of a converted 1930s Melbourne warehouse apartment designed by DesignInc.

Let the light shine into your home

Natural light can be brought into a dingy space without too much demolition taking place, writes **Stephen Crafti**.

A lack of natural light can make even the most generous space feel dingy. Walls appear grey even if they're painted white and rooms can have a cavernous feel. These

darker areas tend to be near the core of a home, but clever design means natural light can be allowed into them without too much demolition taking place.

DesignInc brought natural light into an apartment built in what was previously a dark 1930s warehouse. The apartment in Oliver Lane, Melbourne, is relatively large at about 220 square metres. There are a limited number of windows and the floor plate is deep, at 20 metres. "We wanted to create the feeling of one large space, while still including two separate

bedrooms," says architect John Williams, the managing director of DesignInc's Melbourne office.

"Our client also wanted quality spaces that were filled with light," he says.

Rather than inserting plaster walls to separate the bedrooms, DesignInc used 12 millimetre clear toughened glass in the form of sliding doors. Irrespective of whether the bedroom doors are open or closed, natural light permeates into the living spaces located at the core of the apartment. The ensuite bathroom also features glass walls, some

frosted, others clear. A glass floor-to-ceiling wall, forming part of the bathroom, is also connected to the living area. "We wanted natural light to filter into as many areas of the apartment as possible. You're not conscious of any divisions. It just feels like one open space," says Williams. "But the toughened glass used for the bedrooms does reduce the transmission of noise."

Architect Pierre Della-Putta, a director of Architects Ink, also wanted to shed light into the core of a house in Woollahra, Sydney.

The 1930s semi-detached house was completely redesigned.

"We relocated the kitchen and living areas to the rear of the house to maximise the property's northern aspect," says Della-Putta. Originally a lean-to bathroom was blocking the northern light. The bathroom was removed from the back of the house and relocated to the core.

And Architects Ink created a light well to allow sufficient light into the new bathroom.

The architects are now in the process of adding a second storey. "We have designed a void between the upstairs bathroom and this one. The upstairs bathroom will be more like a mezzanine, cut

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back to allow light to enter from its window into the bathroom below," says Della-Putta.

Gloss white tiles in the ground-floor bathroom of the Woollahra home also reflect light. "We didn't have the benefit of external windows, so it was important to make the space as light as possible," says Della-Putta, who was also conscious of reducing the impact of the western sun.

"The second storey will include motorised external louvres. We wanted to eliminate the heat," he says.

Architect Paul Porjazoski of Bent Architecture was given the brief to add a second storey to an apartment in Fitzroy, Melbourne.

One of only four in the block, Bent's client was fortunate to own a second-floor apartment. Originally 65 square metres, the two-storey apartment is now



double the size. The first floor comprises the main bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, dining and living areas. Above is now a sitting room and a studio.

To ensure natural light enters the kitchen and living areas, Bent Architecture inserted a staircase featuring skewed rectangular openings in the plaster and plywood balustrades.



Floor-to-ceiling glass walls and windows frame the staircase, allowing light to filter into the rooms below. "We wanted to ensure that light filtered into the belly of the spaces. It's not a strong light. It's quite diffused," says Porjazoski. "Fortunately, we were able to retain the original rooms and still manage to get light into the core of the apartment."

From left: George Street studio, Fitzroy by Bent Architecture; Woollahra semi by Architects Ink.