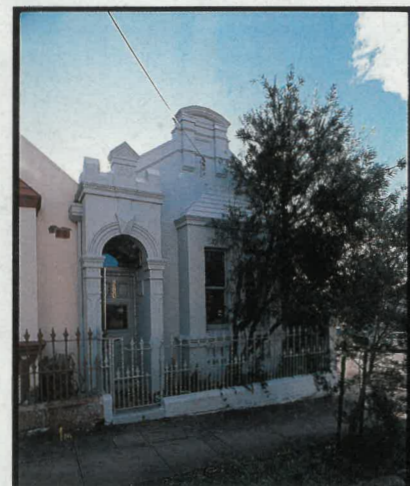


# light relief

## RADICAL CHEEK OUT BACK

An elongated steel and glass construction would seem an unlikely partner for a quaint 19th century worker's cottage. But Sydney architect Ed Lippmann has created a surprisingly harmonious dwelling embodying the Bauhaus ideals of industry and art.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEOFF LUNG



The cottage today.



Before renovation.

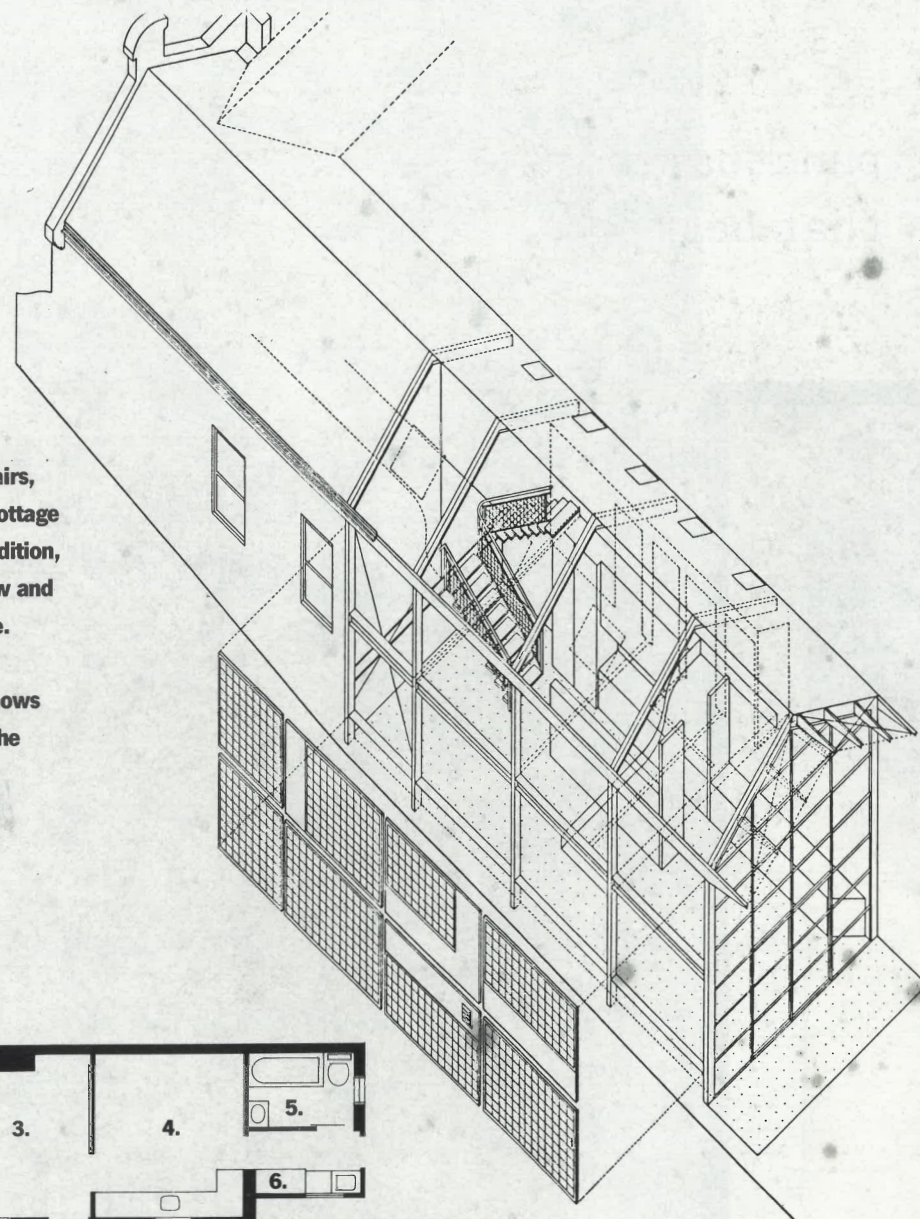
The facade of the late 19th century worker's cottage, top far left, appears unchanged from the street. In profile, however, the steel and glass addition, top left, provides a contrast that is both uncompromisingly modern yet sympathetic to the environment. Below left: the cottage profile before renovation. Opposite: the glazed, two-storey end wall of the pavilion overlooks a neighbouring park. Luxaflex vertical blinds and the extended roof protect against the western sun.



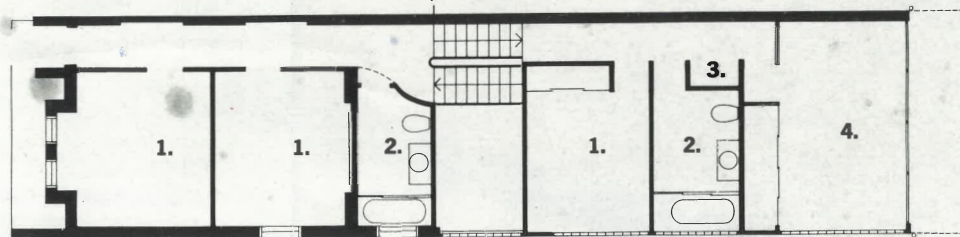
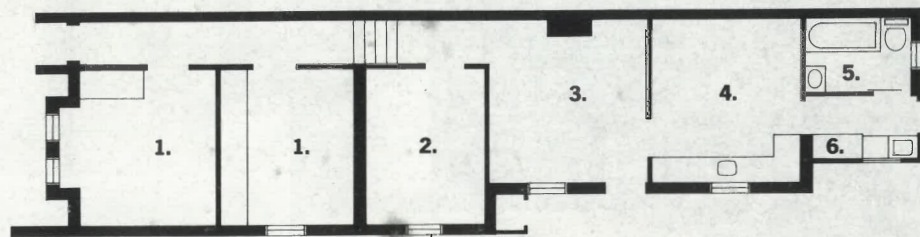


Prefabricated steel stairs, left, link the original cottage with the open-plan addition, with living areas below and private quarters above.

Extensive use of skylights, controlled by internal louvres, provides light and ventilation. Axonometric plan, right, shows the prefabricated steel addition which, while extending the original building form, is both structurally and visually independent of the masonry cottage.

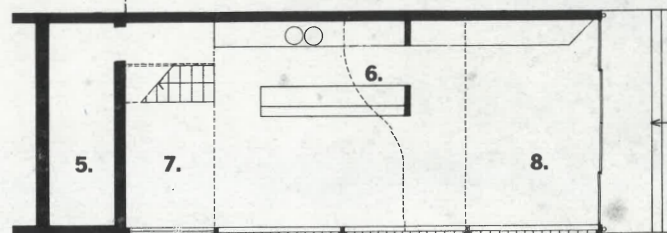


Original floor plan.



Ground floor.

New mezzanine floor.



New lower floor.

Left: plans show the dramatically increased living areas created by the split-level addition. Opposite: in the living area Fritz Hansen Easy Chairs from DeDeCe, Pymont, NSW, sit opposite a Bertoia upholstered chair from Artes, Glebe, NSW. 'Memory of Oceania' by Matisse, woven by Designer Rugs, Marrickville, NSW.

**Before**

- 1. Bedrooms
- 2. Studio
- 3. Living
- 4. Kitchen/dining
- 5. Bathroom
- 6. Laundry

**After**

- 1. Bedrooms
- 2. Bathrooms
- 3. Laundry
- 4. Studio
- 5. Cellar
- 6. Kitchen
- 7. Dining
- 8. Living

From the street the character of the house has remained unchanged: a single-storey, late 19th century semi-detached worker's cottage. Alongside its neighbours it contributes to a rambling Victorian uniformity in this inner-Sydney suburb. For the family who lived here, the space had become increasingly cramped. The rear of the house was semi-dilapidated, poorly lit and badly ventilated; a narrow corridor led through a diminishing series of rooms stepping down at irregular levels to the back garden.

The wife, an artist, needed studio space with natural light and a "poetically ambient" living space, robust yet friendly, for the young family. Her husband's concerns were more pragmatic, relating to building costs and performance.

Having visited a few houses by Sydney architect Ed Lippmann, they were impressed by the openness and light in the steel and glass structures and were interested in using similar lightweight materials.

Lippmann's solution took advantage of the gradual slope of the land to create a split-level addition, maintaining the existing two bedrooms at the front and creating a new, flexible open space at the rear with living areas below and private quarters above. The addition extends the existing roof profile with insulated zincalume steel replacing the old tiled roof throughout, unifying the building into one form.

Despite the modern character and materials used, the building remains sympathetic to the environment. Contained in one form are two buildings both representative of their times, almost a century apart. The contemporary, essentially transparent, steel and glass addition is not antagonistic to the old building but rather enhances its appeal.

Construction methods and materials highlight the contemporary attitude. The end wall of the pavilion is two-storey and fully glazed, overlooking a park. The overhung steel roof provides protection from the western sun, and Luxaflex vertical blinds add further sun control.

The long, northern wall of the house, facing a side street, was extended right to the boundary. A glass block wall combined with panel infill provides natural light to the interior without compromising privacy.

A concrete slab provided the base for a series of steel portal frames. The new prefabricated structure is both visually and structurally independent of the original masonry building. The steel channel frames for glass block and glazed end wall infill, as well as floor, roof beams and steel stairs, were made at the same time as the main frame. The steel assembly was erected in three days, allowing the builders, Redera Pty Ltd, to complete the project within four months.

The steel frames enable both internal and external walls to be non-loadbearing and therefore lightweight, with site-assembled dry construction advantages and economies in cost and time.

A glass block wall provides natural light to the interior of the house without compromising privacy.



Extending the side boundary to its full width meant restrictions to any window openings on this face, and so ventilation comes from overhead. Operable skylights and roof ventilators are used extensively on the upper floor and are controlled by internal louvres.

The engineering, factory finishes and high-tech appearance of the extension, punctuated by yellow accents, create a spacious ambience that belies the actual dimensions. Like the Bauhaus ideals Lippmann espouses (he worked in the New York offices of expatriate German Bauhaus master Marcel Breuer), the house could be said to embody the relationship between "industry and art". Lippmann's solution explores exciting possibilities using prefabricated structures and lightweight materials to provide a flexible, open and livable environment well suited to the spirit of our times.

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The steel framework with glass block walls and panel infills, below, creates a high-tech atmosphere for contemporary furnishings: Le Corbusier chaise from Artes, Ian Moore dining table from Anibou, Redfern, NSW, with Mies van der Rohe dining chairs.

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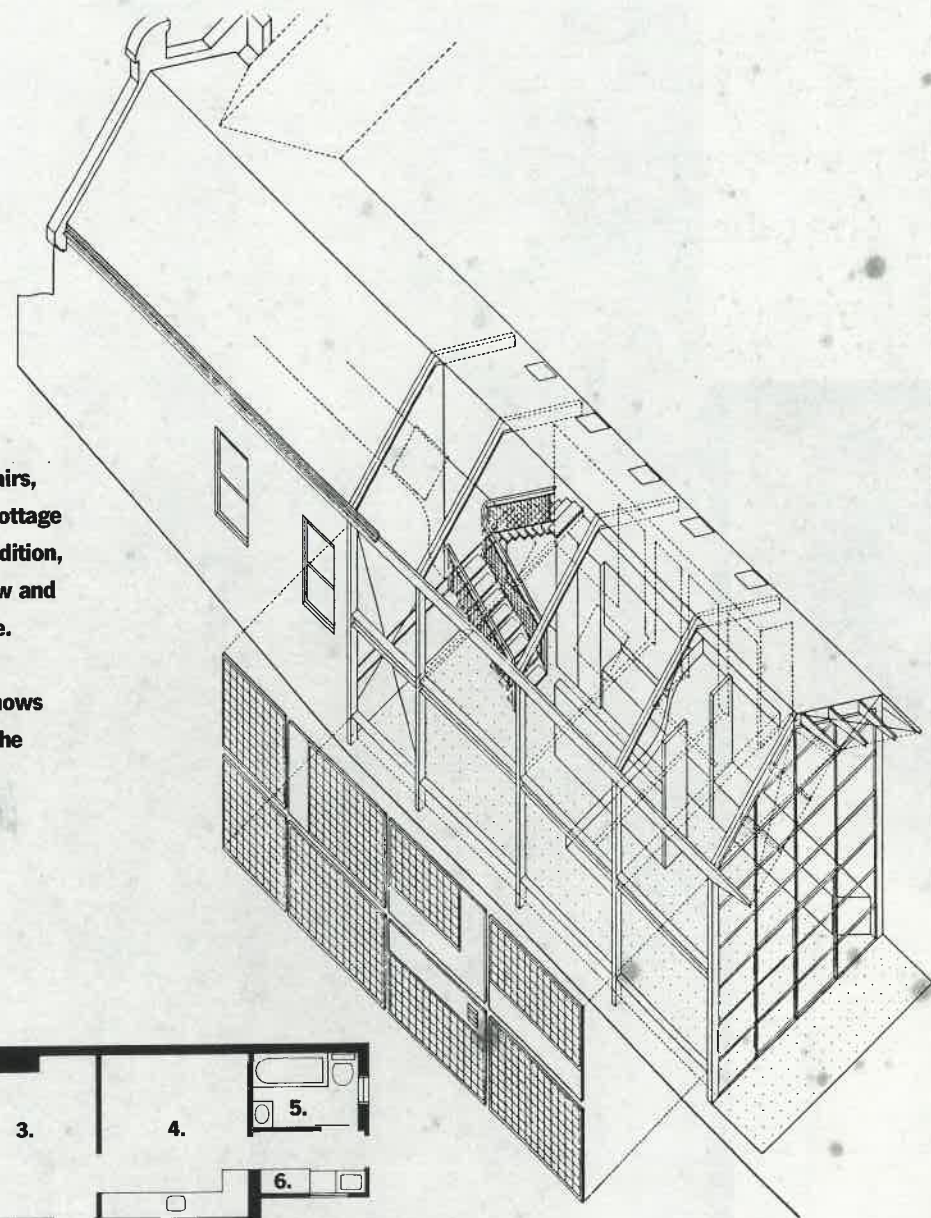
punctuated by yellow that belies



Vinyl flooring in the family living areas, opposite, is Nairn Coateesoft 8149. Strong yellow colour accents are provided by 'Sunflower' Laminex on the kitchen wall and Dulux 'Kalgoorie' paint on the stairs and handrails.

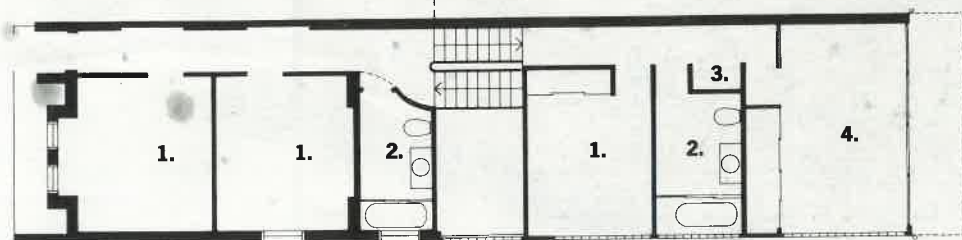
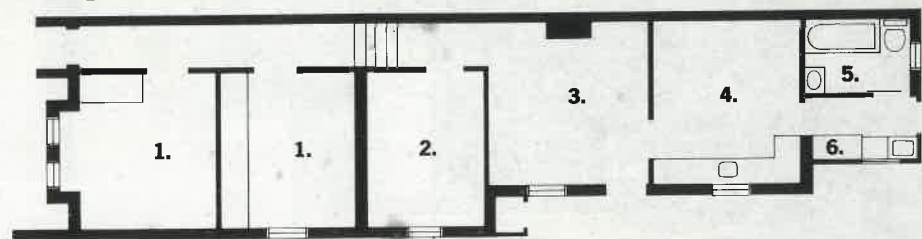


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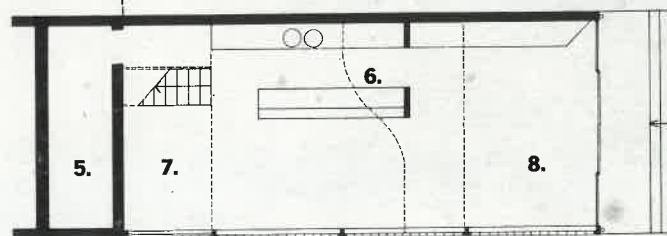
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