

Looking over the skeletal steel staircase (with vinyl-wrapped treads) from the new loft in the attic of the old cottage, towards the living room in the new pavilion. Sofa from DeDeCe; butterfly chairs from QM20 Artefacts, and Isamu Noguchi coffee table from Herman Miller.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY FARSHID ASSASSI

open minded

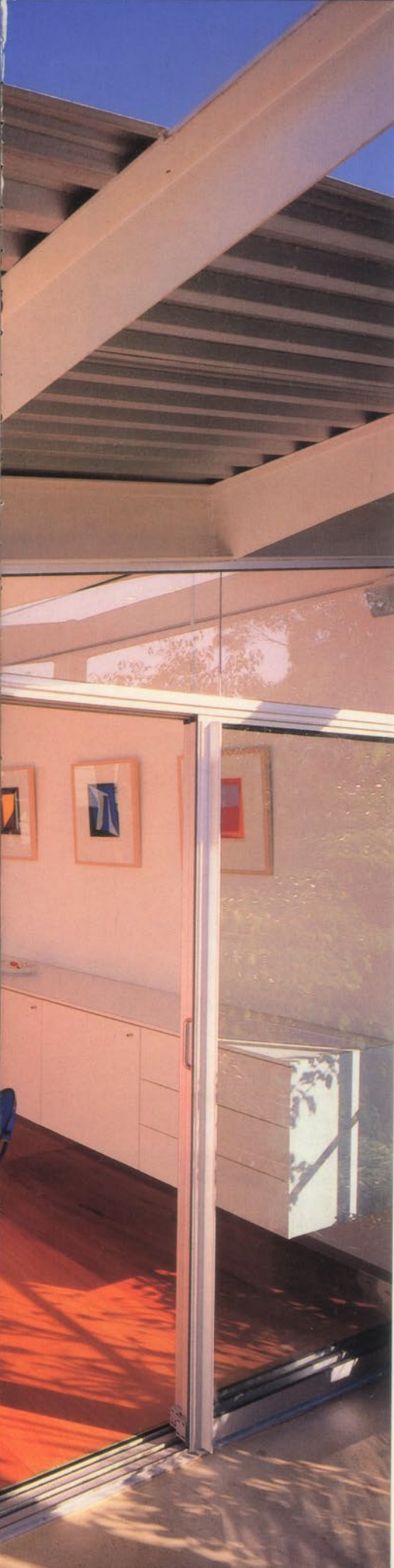
Sunlight and breezes give a beach-shack mood to a cottage in the city.

TRANSFORMATION



Looking from the new courtyard to the internal stairwell, **top left**, that links the old cottage and the new pavilion. **Top right** and **above**: before renovation. **Above, centre**: the rear facade faces north to the water. **Right**: the new pavilion with living area above and main bedroom below.





Two classic questions arise with any decision to add a back extension to an old house. Should the new addition look like the original building or be styled to the current moment? And what are the appropriate techniques for bringing sunlight into dark, vintage rooms?

Sydney architect Ed Lippmann has clear views on these dilemmas, apparent from a scan through his portfolio of 'high-tech' houses and industrial sheds, built with steel and glass.

Like Norman Foster, his former employer in London, he designs modern buildings that are neat and minimal, economical and efficient, clean and bright – and rather more healthy than the average Victorian terrace house. While it's often claimed that modernism starves the soul, living in such houses, especially in a warm climate, can elevate the senses to a halcyon state.

Although it is wedged into a high-density Sydney suburb, Lippmann's latest pavilion, added to the back of a weatherboard worker's cottage, has the kind of shoes-off, layabout mood of a shack at the beach. Breezes rustle lightly through the louvres, the sun streams in . . . and, as you would expect, there is a



The living area, **main picture**, viewed from the balcony. **Opposite**, from top: new spaces in the old cottage include a loft, with Velux roof window; a kitchen and dining area; and a bathroom on the basement level. **Above**: the stairwell viewed from the entry level. **Below right**: detail of the old cottage; the shed in the foreground was demolished to make way for the new pavilion.

water view from the balcony.

The owners, Andrew and Martha Horton, brought this property as a one-bedroom shack in derelict condition, and contacted Ed Lippmann to plan a low-budget transformation similar to his design for another house nearby. They also convinced Andrew's father, Grant Horton, a retired engineer, to supervise construction.

Despite a site area of less than 100 square metres (width only 4.8 metres), the house has been enlarged to include two-and-a-half bedrooms (the half-bedroom is a loft), a living area with a north-facing balcony wide enough for lunch parties, a kitchen, a dining area and a bathroom – all distributed over three floor levels. Simple finishes, such as painted plasterboard, melamine and plywood, kept costs low.

The key decisions were to place at the heart of the house a small courtyard (external) and a skeletal (internal) staircase to all floors. These elements link, but also separate, the old cottage from the new pavilion. The court traps sun to be conducted through both parts of the house via glass walls and the open stairwell. This simple yet effective system gives the interior dynamic patterns of sun and shadow, and a sense of transparency, without losing privacy, that is rare in the inner city. **DAVINA JACKSON**

