

BACKYARD BONUS: DESIGN PROFILE SPACE SAVIOUR

AS THEIR KIDS EDGED TOWARD ADULthood, ONE MELBOURNE COUPLE CREATED A SELF-CONTAINED SUPER STUDIO DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

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DESIGNER TIP

Take the time to find the right builder for your project. Although this studio was designed with basic brick veneer on the side plus lightweight fire-rated construction board to fit a tight budget, costs threatened to blow out when the project was put out to tender. "It was a small project and the builders didn't want to do it so attached a 'too-hard factor' price – about 70 per cent over," says Gary, the architect. He and homeowners Kirsten and Shane put the job on hold until Dimpat Constructions came to them, wanting to collaborate. "We didn't have to make any changes we just needed to work with the right people," says Gary.



Second living room, teen retreat, home office, in-laws' suite – this studio in Melbourne's inner north proves you can have it all. Just not all at once. Owners Kirsten, 43, and Shane, 46, needed more living and breathing space as their kids, Catie, 21, and Liam, 17, gained independence. Luckily, there at the back of the garden was a shining beacon of under-utilised potential – a pergola and barbecue area on 50 square metres of destitute real estate. "We considered extending [our home] up and out but we really wanted an independent space," Kirsten says. Cue architect Gary Windiate, who created a multipurpose studio with designer finesse. "It was important that the studio felt good to be in," Gary says. "If no-one wanted to use it, it would have been a disaster!" Adds Kirsten, "The kids can play music that can't be heard from the house and it's really peaceful when you're there by yourself. I'd say it's the best room in the house, but it's down the garden path."

"THE STUDIO IS AN *extremely flexible* AND LOVELY SPACE TO BE – WE ALMOST HAVE TO COMPETE TO USE IT"

~ KIRSTEN, HOMEOWNER

OUTSIDE IN Instead of solid paving, stepping stones (above) allow the whole lawn area to read as one. "We didn't want to break it up," Gary says. "It still remains as a grass area and you can put a table across the path." Gary made a point of fragmenting the studio exterior with corrugated fire-rated board, brick and timber. "We didn't want just a blunt facade, but a bit of animation," he says.

EASY LIVING For the concrete floors (right), Gary and his team simply polished the structural slab. Rather than pouring a screed (a refined top layer) they over-poured the slab and lightly ground it back to expose the aggregate, then applied a light seal. The coffee table and couches (opposite left) – both Danish sofa beds – are from Innovation Living and amp up the studio's multifunctionality. >

OFFICE JOB

Shane and Kirsten occasionally work from home and the desk in the studio, lit by a replica Dokka pendant from Lucretia Lighting, gives them a dedicated space to do so. Meanwhile, the silvertop ash V-joint panelled wall brings the exterior material inside and also cleverly blurs the door to the bathroom.





BATHROOM BASICS The bathroom (above & below left) shares the same Scandi-inspired design language as the living space (top left), featuring concrete-look tiles from Delucia Tile Gallery wrapped up the wall. Gary kept prices down by going for a generic, hardware store-variety basin, then invested in a Grohe double shower.

STORAGE SUCCESS Hovering above the floor, the timber cabinet (above right) is a piece of practical magic. “When you mop the tiles you don’t touch the joinery,” explains Gary. The custom Laminex Tasmanian oak timber veneer and Caesarstone vanity (below left) floats too, and features push-catch doors for an uncluttered feel.

LIGHT WORK The studio is built boundary to boundary to make use of every inch of precious real estate. Achieving this while delivering sunlight and privacy for the neighbours required a bit of architectural gymnastics – the wall on the boundary is lowered and then steps in at a higher level. Highlight windows offer northern light (above left). **HB**

“WE NEEDED TO CREATE A SPACE THAT FELT CONNECTED TO THE HOUSE, BUT HAD AN OBVIOUS DISCONNECT”

~ GARY, ARCHITECT

THE DETAILS

BUDGET BREAKDOWN:

Bathroom fittings \$10,000. Framework and walls \$20,000. Furniture \$8000. Landscaping \$12,000. Slab \$12,000. Windows and doors \$12,000.

TOTAL \$74,000.*

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