

Everything in its place

Architects can turn humdrum storage into an attractive feature, writes **Stephen Crafti**.

Storage is often foremost in people's minds when they move to a new dwelling. Whether they are scaling down from a family home to an apartment, or catering to a growing family, people constantly request sufficient storage.

"Storage is one of the most common requests from clients," says b.e architecture's Andrew Piva. "We're usually asked to provide more storage than they now have, but people don't want to feel as though they're surrounded by cupboards."

Piva says there have been increased requests for cloak/mudrooms. A cloakroom is a storage area for shoes and coats and access is often from a garage.

Piva's practice designed one for a coast house in Victoria. It includes cupboards, open shelves and racks for items such as suitcases. There are pigeon holes allocated to each member of the family.

"We also incorporated a bench seat so the family can sit down and take off their shoes before entering the living areas," says Piva.

b.e architecture designed built-in

bench seats for one of the outdoor terraces of the house.

The benches double as storage units for items such as outdoor cushions and sporting equipment.

In the living room adjacent to this terrace is an L-shaped built-in bench framing two sides of the space. It contains board games, throws, CDs and books.

"People want generous storage. It gives spaces an uncluttered feel," says Piva.

Inare Architects also says storage is important. It provided storage in the kitchen and living areas for a large family home in East St Kilda, Melbourne.

The family room has almost a whole wall of built-in cupboards, which are made of timber and look like wall panels.

"These cupboards conceal everything from audio-visual equipment to the television set," says Inare co-director Reno Rizzo.

The cupboards have lighting inside and generous shelves.

"One of the problems with storage is ensuring the shelves aren't too deep. You want to be

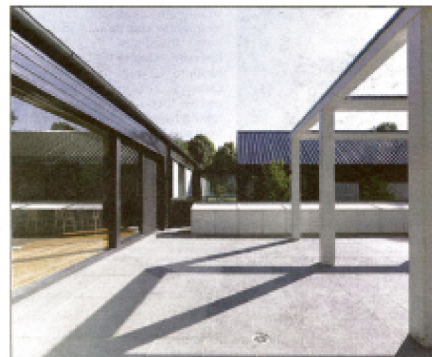


From left: Inare's unit, Cullen Feng linked a period home to a new wing with a library, b.e terrace bench seats, Cullen Feng's floor-to-ceiling bookcases. Photos Alex Lewis, courtesy Inare, courtesy Cullen Feng, courtesy b.e architecture

able to easily reach things," says Rizzo. As the East St Kilda family grew, they needed more storage.

"They wanted a storage unit for the children to hang bags, coats and for shoes when they came home from school," says Rizzo.

To accommodate this, the architects designed a plywood unit in the hallway adjacent to the garage. This unit has curved rib-



like fins. To ensure the children have their own section, the unit has joinery in a variety of colours.

"Even the toddlers know which section belongs to them," says Rizzo.

Rather than appearing as ordinary cupboards in the hallway, the form is a sculptural feature.

Cullen Feng Architects recently included generous storage areas in

a renovation to a period home in Narraburn, Sydney.

The federation house was kept intact, but the architects added a contemporary pavilion-style wing to the rear of the house. A library with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves links the old with the new.

"We wanted to create a clear distinction between the period house and the new wing.

"It was also an opportunity to create space for the owner's extensive book collection," says architect John Cullen, co-director of the practice.

Cullen Feng also designed cupboards and extensive joinery in the home's contemporary wing.

There are floor-to-ceiling polyurethane cupboards across one wall of the kitchen and timber cupboards in the living areas.

The joinery in the living area includes numerous drawers for items such as media equipment.

Cullen says getting the storage right is about filling a house with as many cupboards and drawers as possible.

"The art of good storage is when it doesn't overwhelm a space.

"Everything that needs to be concealed is, and everything is easy to get to," says Cullen.



People don't want to feel they are surrounded by cupboards.

Andrew Piva, b.e architecture