

TIGHT SITES

good manners

A four-metre-wide site in a heritage zone in Sydney has been made to comfortably accommodate a three-bedroom, two-bathroom house thanks to a clever and well-mannered addition by Cullen Feng.

THIS CONTEMPORARY TRANSFORMATION of a mid-Victorian sandstone worker's terrace – located in the Sydney beachside suburb of Waverley – is an exercise in elegant restraint. For a start, there is no visual antagonism between the old and the new: A quiet, refined palette of contemporary materials which complements, rather than competes with, the old certainly sees to that. And there's also the all-important degree of separation: the new two-storey rear addition was designed as a separate pavilion, allowing the form of the original one-up-two-down terrace house to remain virtually untouched. And despite the new internal spaces opening up to the light and air, their proportions are in keeping with those found in the original part of the house. Put simply, it's a demonstration of architectural good taste.

Despite the site's long and narrow shape (4 m x 35 m), architects Jon Cullen and Michelle Feng, of Cullen Feng, have managed to meet the owner's requirements for a three-bedroom, two-bathroom house. The amount of careful consideration required to accommodate everything and relate the various spaces to each other is obvious.

The new pavilion replaces an existing skillion-roofed addition. "It wasn't actually a lean-to because it was built as a separate structure, with a laundry at the end of the kitchen," the owner explains. "At some stage someone decided to join the kitchen to the house, so they'd boxed in the gap."

In a way, Cullen Feng's new solution bears certain similarities to the older add-on it has replaced. The pavilion addition does not intrude on the original part of the house either, but stands slightly apart. It is linked by a one-storey vestibule with a glazed door on its northern side that provides a light and airy transition zone between the building's two distinct sections. "We thought it was quite important to separate the old house from the new addition so you knew when you were passing

