

SOUTH MELBOURNE TERRACE

Petersen D91 bricks create a beautiful forever home in South Melbourne



Creating a sleek and modern, yet hard-wearing extension that sits comfortably alongside the character of the existing South Melbourne Terrace was no mean feat for Eliza Blair Architecture. The owners had lived in their home for 15 years and wanted to retain the building's little quirks and character as much as possible, given its history as a general store.

So, the real talent of Eliza Blair was not in stripping the bones bare and totally transforming the space, as any architect would love to do. It was in creatively using the existing quirky features the owners loved and turning them into opportunities. For instance, retaining the existing steel stair—though adding a new balustrade—as well as the fireplace, which runs up both levels and divides the kitchen and dining room. Even though removing it would have opened the rooms up to create a view to the garden, retaining it and exposing the bricks was a clever way to zone the spaces and anchor the design, while providing a reminder of the home's unique past.

South Melbourne Terrace is a three level forever home that will function well for this family of four to 'grow up' in. It's basking in natural light and presents a seamless connection from the rear living area to the outdoors, making full use of the back yard's majestic gum tree.

As a forever home, the owners wanted long-lasting materials, and bricks were their

material of choice. "My clients fell in love with the Petersen D91 bricks; they loved the tonal variation. And I really liked the tone and texture, too. In fact, it all worked quite organically because we were trying to reference and celebrate the colours of the beautiful bluestone building next door ... and the tones of the D91s also really respond to the tones of the gum leaves in the back yard," Eliza comments.

One of the highlights of the extension is the Petersen D91 brick pillar that creates an inviting indoor/outdoor connection, flowing from the back door to the living room inside, culminating in a cosy reading seat. "That little cosy nook gets all of the afternoon sun, and my client keeps telling me that the bricks look stunning in that corner with the warm evening light coming in. This is where my client loves to read her book ... I just love hearing these anecdotal stories of how they live in the house once it's all completed," Eliza remarks.

Petersen bricks are paired with aluminium plantation shutters for shading and privacy throughout the top story. It's an elegant marriage that's perhaps best showcased in the upstairs master bedroom, complete with a unique and luxurious balcony bath—another must have in the brief. Here the owners soak under the stars while gazing out to their treasured gum tree.

Throughout the extension, the Petersen bricks and aluminium are beautifully balanced against the remaining palette of Sawn Oak and Nero timber veneer for added warmth, Cararra marble benchtops, a concrete slab for the living area and stone floor tiles in the wet areas. It's a minimal and sleek palette, again reflected in the magnificent interior design – the brainchild of Studio Tom.



South Melbourne Terrace is exquisite. Eliza Blair Architecture and Studio Tom are to be congratulated for creating a unique, character filled, forever home that says modern minimalism while celebrating the rich history. So, watch this space. As the project that launched Eliza Blair Architecture, South Melbourne Terrace is giving us just a tiny taste of the thoughtful projects we will no doubt see from Eliza Blair Architecture in the years to come.

Architect: Eliza Blair Architecture
Product: Petersen D91 bricks
Interior Designer: Studio Tom
Builder: Kleev Homes
Photographer: Shannon McGrath