MODERN GREEN HOMES

Sanctuary

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Flexible floor plans, student studios, shared projects and multigenerational living; knockdown-rebuild timber salvage and reuse; ideas for permeable paving and more

OFF *the* PLAN

Creatively different approaches to housing



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Linking lives

DESIGNER
Open Studio Architecture

BUILDER
MRC Constructions

PROJECT TYPE
Alterations and addition

LOCATION
Flemington, VIC
(Wurundjeri Country)

SIZE
14m² addition

WORDS
Jacinta Cleary

PHOTOGRAPHY
Open Studio Architecture

In inner-suburban Melbourne, a small but clever addition connects two Edwardian homes – one occupied by a couple with young children, the other by one of their parents – to enable a shared multigenerational living arrangement.

Rather than extending the smaller house and carving off garden space, Open Studio Architecture proposed a minor layout rejig and the addition of a 14-square-metre 'bridge room' between the two homes. The bridge is a shared space with immediate benefits, allowing the family to access underused rooms in the larger home next door and providing a study and music area. A room in the larger house is now a bedroom for the teenaged granddaughter, and the oversized laundry has been transformed into a spacious, barrier-free bathroom ready for ageing in place.

"It was about using what was already there," says architect Britta Klingspohn. "The family appreciated their garden and didn't want to lose it, and the budget wasn't massive. This solution allowed us to do something with a quarter of the budget we otherwise would have spent extending the smaller home."

The new space links the homes physically but preserves their independence: it's been designed to make it easy to divide in future if needed. Footings along the boundary line allow for a wall to be built, returning the homes to separate dwellings.

The rejigged layout resists conventional design, with no 'parents' retreat' or large open-plan area. Instead, the series of small, connected rooms can evolve in use over time. "It's not a share house by any means," says Britta. "The







Facing page The two homes are connected by a new 'bridge room', allowing for more flexible multigenerational family life. **Above** What was a bedroom in the young family's house now leads to the linking section; together they provide music and study spaces and allow one of the rooms in the larger house to be pressed into service as a teenager's bedroom.

older and younger generations each have their own house and everyone has privacy, but there's a space to come together, too."

North-facing glazing and a bank of louvres in the bridge room provide natural light and ventilation, and a productive garden is shared by all. With its quietly radical approach to space and family, the project shows how small interventions and creative thinking can support multigenerational living. S

FLOOR PLAN





LEGEND

1. Parent's house
2. Young family's house
3. Bridge room/study
4. Music/multipurpose room
5. Granddaughter's room
6. Accessible bathroom