

## HOME MATTERS



LOUISE SURETTE

Photos: Tatjana Plitt

**STAIRCASE SHELVING**

While the original brief asked for lots of storage, there was also a specific request for book storage, with the owners having a large book collection.

Mr Liu decided to offer a solution that would provide easy access, as well as allow books and objects to be on display.

He designed stepped shelving along the staircase, which has great visual appeal. It is also handy as there is a landing upstairs that provides a nice quiet spot for reading so anyone can grab a book on the way up the stairs.

**SLIDING DOORS**

With three children and a big extended family often visiting, the owners wanted a floorplan with a large open space, along with cosier retreat areas.

Because the original floorplan was quite deep, Mr Liu decided to design a central pod in the middle of the ground floor.

From here, sliding doors create smaller or larger spaces as required.

"The sliding doors give the flexibility to shut off a space like the living area from the rest of the house," Mr Liu explained, adding that one of the sliding doors cleverly slides to conceal a wall-mounted television.



# Time for a change

A raft of clever ideas has transformed a Doncaster home from 1970s drab to modern fab

**WALL PANELLING**

Instead of minimising the look of the central pod in the downstairs floorplan, Mr Liu decided to give it a point of interest so it would stand out from the white walls.

He had it clad with timber-look melamine from Polytec so it essentially looks like a wooden box. The open-plan spaces wrap around this box, which is useful in its own right as it contains a guest bathroom, pantry and coat cupboard.

"The original house felt quite disjointed," Mr Bishop said. "John was able to create that centre area that not only allowed for the zoning of the house, but utilised the space as well."



Portrait of John Liu: Chris Groenhout

**W**ITH a view they couldn't enjoy, friends and family they couldn't entertain and personal items they couldn't store, a Doncaster couple knew their 1970s home needed renovating.

The house was a solid brick structure, but with three growing children, the couple wanted more space.

They also wanted something with a more open and flexible floorplan and a brighter interior that would also capitalise on the views from their location — directly across the road from a large park.

Enter architect John Liu, from Inbetween Architecture.

Not only was Mr Liu able to come up with solutions for these dilemmas and more, but was also able to introduce beautiful design elements in the process.

Owner James Bishop said the final outcome surpassed his and wife Emmy's expectations.

"We are living in the house in a way that is even better than we had imagined," he said.

On these pages are some of the home's top design ideas.



[inbetweenarchitecture.com.au](http://inbetweenarchitecture.com.au)  
[apid.com.au](http://apid.com.au)





**BUILT-IN FURNITURE**

The brief to the architect included a request for a lot of storage.

"My wife is extremely organised and likes her things to have their own location so she was keen to have more than adequate storage," Mr Bishop said.

The built-in pieces include cabinets in the dining and living areas, as well as desks and shelving in the study and living areas.

For Mr Liu, the request was the chance to bring in some interesting materials and tie the separate areas together.

He used melamine from Polytec in shades of timber and grey because it looks good, is low maintenance and is easy to clean. It also complements the home's extensive wall panelling.



**PATTERNED TILES**

Grey tiles in mixed patterns grace the kitchen and laundry floors and also the laundry splashback.

They were chosen by interior designer Aldona Pajdak, from Aldona Pajdak Interior Design, who collaborated with Mr Liu on the home, working on the overall interior direction, joinery design and finishes.

The tiles, while subtle in their own right, contrast especially well with the minimal look of the house.

Mr Bishop questioned the tiles initially but was soon sold on them once the look was complete.

"We were a bit scared of them at first," he said. "But when it was all together, it looked fantastic."



**FLAT ROOFLINE**

The home faces north and overlooks Ruffey Lake Park.

Having a way of enjoying the views and the sunny exposure was an important element to the overall plan for the house.

According to the owners, the gabled roofline of the ground floor in the original house meant most of the view to the park from the upper floor was blocked.

Now, with a flat roof, and bigger and better windows, not only can the family see the park across the road from inside the rooms of the upper floor, they can also enjoy it from the upper level's new balcony.

The view from the lower-level living area, which has a balcony above the garage, is also now much better. New floor-to-ceiling windows and glass sliding doors give the family wider views to the park.



**PATTERNED BRICKWORK**

Once windows and balconies were sorted, Mr Liu turned his attention to another facade element: the entry.

Here, a brick wall has been installed, providing privacy screening between the entry and the living room and also working as a porch feature.

He used old bricks from the original home to create the wall. While he could have created just a plain brick wall, he decided to design a perforation pattern in it.

"It gives some visual interest, but you still can't see completely through it," Mr Liu said.

