

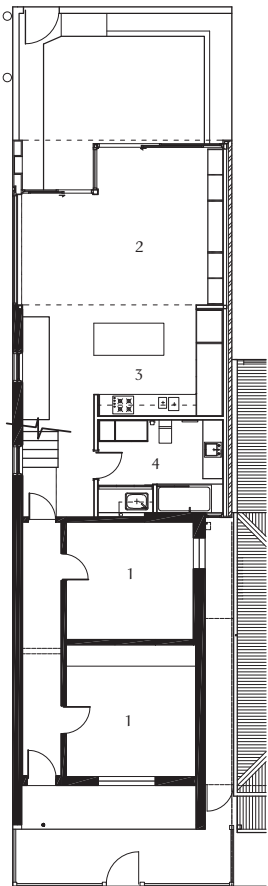
PROJECT

# THE MULTITASKER

• NIC OWEN ARCHITECTS •

Extending the confines of a small Victorian terrace, Nic Owen Architects brings peace to the demands of family living.

Words by [Anna McCooe](#)  
Photography by [Rhiannon Slatter](#)



- 1 Bedroom
- 2 Family
- 3 Kitchen
- 4 Bathroom

Ground floor plan 1:200



01 The kitchen shares its borders with a small office as well as living and dining areas.





**S**pace, in Melbourne's inner city, may well be the final frontier. For the urban family living in this tiny Victorian terrace, it wasn't an obstacle that could be hacked full-throttle but rather one that took a more sensitive approach. Enter architect Nic Owen. Delicately and with considered resolve, Nic negotiated site restraints, heritage and planning controls and the principles of passive design to give his clients the space they so desired.

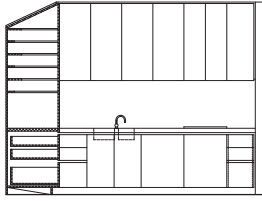
"We had very strict parameters to play with. The site is small and the area is very dense but a double-height extension would provide added light and vertical space on a very small footprint," says Nic.

Internally the space is still small, but every inch operates in overdrive to cater for urban family life. "We call it caravan design – fitting a lot of functions into very small spaces," says Nic. In classic architectural terms: less is indeed more. "People interact better in a well-designed small space, you just have to make it work well and work hard," he explains.

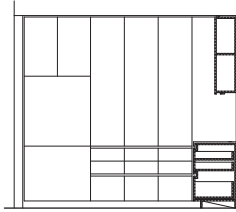
The kitchen joinery and the joinery of the whole home is the key to the success of the small terrace. Each piece was resolved as one to fit within the overall building envelope, while the abundance of accessible storage keeps the space unencumbered. Full-height

**02** Full-height cupboards sit within the home as walls.

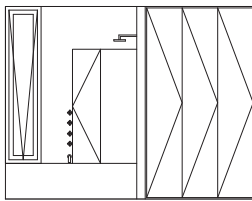
**03** Timber accents and polished concrete deliver a calm space for respite.



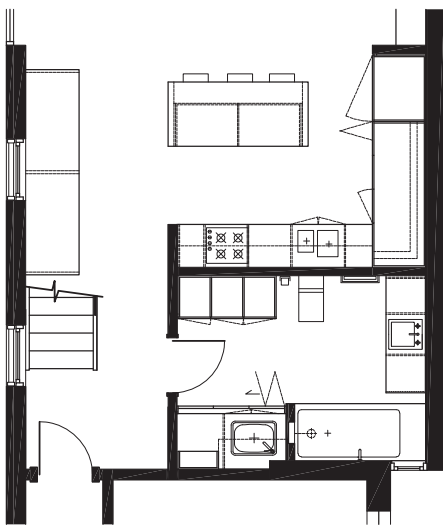
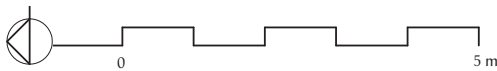
**Kitchen east elevation 1:100**



**Kitchen north elevation 1:100**



**Bathroom/laundry elevation 1:100**



**Kitchen and bathroom 1:100**



cupboards, with handleless doors sit within the home as walls. Kitchen appliances are integrated with cabinetry and a large pantry, with enough storage space for small appliances and utility space for preparing toast and coffee, is enclosed behind bifold doors.

The kitchen shares its borders with the living and dining space and even a small office to bring fluidity, ease and informality to the everyday. A pared back palette of solid Australian plantation blackbutt, white Laminex and a CaesarStone benchtop lends the open-plan area a feeling of unity and enhances space and light throughout.

The bathroom also works overtime as a laundry and utility space. The washing machine, dryer and shelving for sorting and folding are all hidden within a neat joinery unit, dissolving the need for a dedicated room.

As hardworking as it may be, the bathroom still delivers respite thanks to the honest simplicity of timber and polished concrete and a carefully placed window, which reveals glimpses of the private courtyard beyond. Photovoltaic cells and solar hot water panels on the north-facing roof also generate energy and hot water for an indulgent bathroom experience with conscience. K+B



#### Architect

##### Nic Owen Architects

260 Elgin Street  
Carlton Vic 3053  
+61 3 9347 1140  
[nic@nicowenarchitects.com.au](mailto:nic@nicowenarchitects.com.au)  
[www.nicowenarchitects.com.au](http://www.nicowenarchitects.com.au)

#### Practice profile

The practice specializes in residential architecture, that responds to each individual site and environment, creating unique and elegant forms that contribute to the wider community.

#### Project team

Nic Owen

#### Builder

Kleev Homes

#### Consultants

**Joinery:** Rochet Kitchens

**Interiors:** Nic Owen Architects

#### Time schedule

**Design, documentation:**

8 months

**Construction:**

7 months

#### Kitchen products

**Internal walls:** Plasterboard, painted; solid plaster rendered brickwork

**Flooring:** Blackbutt hardwood plywood sheet flooring, clear polished finish

**Joinery:** CaesarStone 'Ice Snow' kitchen benchtop; polished blackbutt plywood study, desk and low joinery unit benchtop; prelaminated Laminex 'White' joinery fronts with natural finish and ABS edging; solid blackbutt plywood joinery fronts; toughened glass splashback with 2-pac polyurethane colour to back

**Lighting:** Compact fluorescent; hidden strip fluorescent and fluorescent pendant lighting

#### Sinks and tapware:

Tradelink Afa Flow double bowl undermount kitchen sink; Tradelink Posh Solus kitchen mixer tap with spray

**Appliances:** Blanco underbench oven, cooktop, rangehood; Fisher & Paykel refrigerator; Bosch dishwasher

#### Doors and windows:

Commercial Aluminium 400 series box section, low-e double-glazed clear glass

**Furniture:** Teak 1960s

Swedish extendable dining table

**Other:** Artwork, oil on canvas by Josie Backhouse

#### Bathroom products

**Internal walls:** Plasterboard, painted; white tiles

**Flooring:** Polished exposed concrete with clear waterproof finish

**Joinery:** Solid blackbutt timber with clear 2-pac finish vanity benchtop; prelaminated Laminex 'White' natural finish with ABS edging joinery fronts

**Lighting:** Compact fluorescent; strip hidden fluorescent on auto sensor switch

#### Tapware and fittings:

Porsher tapware; Gen X accessories

**Sanitaryware:** Stirling pressed steel bath; Caroma Liano underslung basin

**Doors and windows:** Commercial Aluminium 400 series box section, low-e double-glazed clear glass; full-height flush panel 2-pac internal door and laundry bifolding doors

04 A unique angled roof frames the living spaces and deck.