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DARLINGTON RESIDENCE

Located near Redfern in Sydney, the Darlington House was an opportunity to experiment with a number of ideas. Pivotal to the design was the concept that nature, even in an inner city environment, can permeate our everyday lives and that the design of the house should facilitate a connection with the elements. The small site measuring 50 square metres was the greatest constraint and yet spurred the fundamental planning rethink to incorporate an outdoor bathroom. To achieve as spacious a living area as possible the original kitchen and living areas were swapped, making the kitchen the heart of the house, while the living area was positioned such that it borrowed a sense of space from the central courtyard. The bathhouse on the other side of the courtyard was connected to the courtyard by sliding screens that allow one to bathe outdoors when open. A translucent screen over the bathroom provides an organic architectural motif and privacy to living areas from the densely packed neighbourhood. The total floor space was increased to 55 square metres by converting the attic space into a loft room. Close to 120 years old, the house has layers that it is hoped may still be read and sustained, the ground floor stair remains in its original state, a sandstone threshold found between the kitchen and living areas replaced, the uneven party wall revealed in the living room emphasised with hand-carved concrete seat back, and the raw rafters in the attic space exposed. To optimise the house's sustainability recyclable 40mm thick Blackbutt timber, a sustainable yield hardwood, was used for the built in furniture such as the kitchen bench tops, living room bench and shelving. All internal finishes use zero volatile organic compound (VOC) paints or oil finishes improving indoor air quality. Other environmentally-friendly initiatives include a grey water reuse system, 3A rated water fixtures and efficient low wattage globes used in light fittings. Naturally easy to heat and cool due to its inherent size and redesign, this inner city worker's terrace is a valid ecological sustainable option. This project was short listed in the Architectural Awards 2007.



01 Out door bath-house & courtyard 02 Living room / courtyard beyond 03 Cantilevered attic stair 04 Courtyard/ bathroom view 05 Hand crafted concrete seat 06 Stairway light shutter 07 Bedroom 08 Solid timber island bench
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