



Renovation

JENNY BROWN



Wherever you want it
Domain offers the best property coverage
on your tablet, smartphone or online

Repurposed for the moment

Warehouse project an exemplar of all that is worth doing when adapting an old building for a new use.

One of the classic tenets of design holds that proportion and relationship are attributes that make objects and buildings aesthetically pleasing over the long term. Invention is another, but not when it is affected for its own sake.

Short-term, stuck-on novelty is the quality that guarantees a short life cycle and fast relegation to the bin of laughable fashion fripperies.

In the remaking of a small warehouse in Carlton into five separate dwellings, Melbourne architectural firm DKO has created an exemplar of all that is worth doing when adapting an old building for a new use.

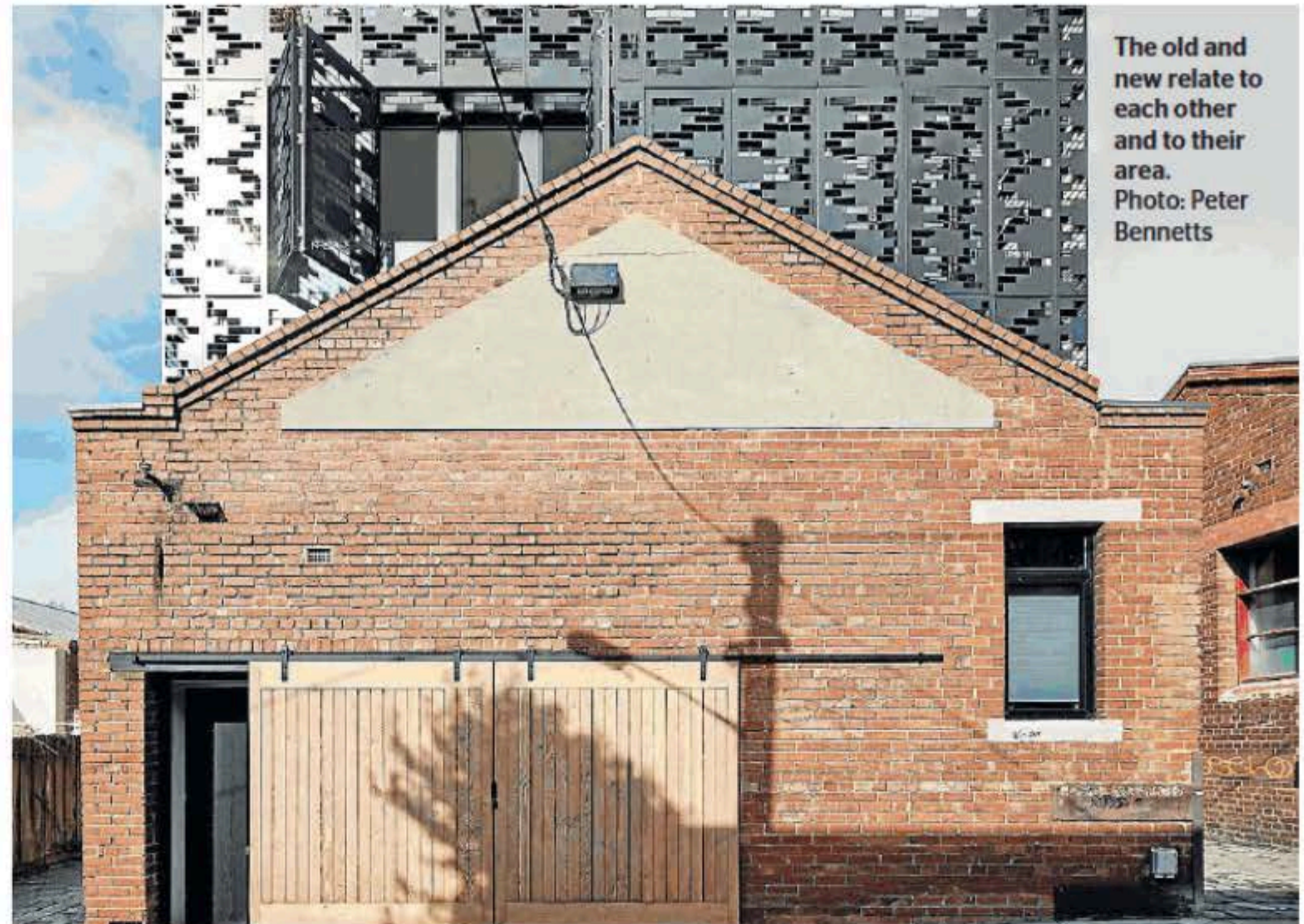
The distinct old and new form proportionally relate to each other and to their neighbourhood. The invention – that upper-level facade of black perforated steel that screens for sun and privacy and

that design director Jesse Linardi says during the daytime “makes the space inside really ambient and unusual” – is a brilliant piece of work. And this, says the description of the development into four two-bedroom homes with roof decks, and a one-bedroom apartment at the rear, is how to create an interesting structure that “occupies the present but talks to us about the past”.

The Victorian-era brick building on the site between two lanes, Linardi says, “had gone through a number of different lives”.

“It had been a metalworking factory, a textile factory and, when we got to it, was near derelict but there was a student living in it.”

After taking out the asbestos and gutting it to front and side brick boundary walls, the new vertical apartments of three levels each; two of which share the front boundary and the peaked front



The old and new relate to each other and to their area.
Photo: Peter Bennetts

parapet wall; two that occupy the waist of the building, and the one small dwelling at the back boundary, are modern and have upper-edge walls made out of glass “so they are double facaded”, the architect says.

“Behind the black screen, which

is openable on the front with bi-fold doors, it’s a glass building.”

The glass is recessed back from the screen which is patterned, with random rectangular spaces, but that, Linardi explains, references the patterns in the bricks down below and in a nearby church.

The choice of black for the upper-level box and the bulk of the “pared back” internal joinery was because he sees it as a neutral but also to try and let the building be “the moment” of the piece.

dko.com.au