





## A Backyard

This townhouse was built behind a worker's cottage. The architects renovated the cottage, subdivided the land, and built a new three-storey townhouse in the backyard. As the cottage backed onto a small street, the new townhouse was able to have its own street frontage.

Located in a semi-industrial inner-city area, the 'backyard' site only measures 7 by 15 metres. 'The dimensions were extremely tight. The only way to make it work was to design three levels,' says architect Jane McDougall of Alsocan Architects. The rendered masonry townhouse occupies almost the entire site. A couple of metres in one corner of the site were allocated for a small courtyard garden. Another portion of land in the centre of the site acts as a light well for the townhouse.

There are two bedrooms on the ground level, together with a bathroom. There is also sufficient space to provide car parking for two cars in tandem. On the first floor are the open-plan kitchen, living and dining area, and on the third floor is the main bedroom. To allow the client to

appreciate the city skyline, Alsocan included two terraces, one adjacent to the living area, and a smaller terrace on the third level. 'We tried to make the spaces as open plan as possible. The main focus is through the windows at either end of the spaces,' says McDougall.

While the kitchen is open plan, it is loosely defined by a central bench and hanging shelves, suspended from stainless-steel rods. The veneered kitchen cupboards also feature glass interlay, adding a transparency to the kitchen. To link the second level to the main bedroom above, the architects incorporated a stainless-steel spiral staircase. 'The floor area is reasonably tight. A staircase any larger would have appeared out of scale with these spaces,' says McDougall.

Even the main bedroom and bathroom have been reduced to one open space. The only division is the change in flooring, timber for the bedroom and tiles for the bathroom. A toughened glass shower screen over the bath is one of the few obvious divisions.

**Alsocan Architects**

Photography by David Beynon

