

HOMEWORK DOMAIN

Top-drawer

Storage is an important part of this extension, writes **Ann Pilmer**.

YOU know you're in the presence of a serious shopper when she has more than 50 scarves and a special pull-out wardrobe rack to hang them on. In fact, Lorraine and Colin Bent are so keen on buying clothes that they built a new walk-in wardrobe to store them.

It's part of a new bedroom/bathroom addition to their Doncaster home designed by their architect son-in-law, Paul Porjazoski, of Bent Architecture and an entry in the residential alterations and additions category of this year's RAIA awards.

The Bents have lived in their house, built in the late '60s, for 30 years. They have considered moving but couldn't find anything they liked more, so decided to extend.

Mr Porjazoski, in consultation with his architect wife, Merran, came up with the oh-so-simple design. The extension was built at one end of the house off the lounge room and accessed by a door that replaced a window.

The bedroom is an airy space with two walls of louver windows on the north and south. Strategically placed windows in the wardrobe trap north and east sun and windows in the bathroom also have views.

"Stand here in the shower," says Mrs Bent, "and look up." A high window frames branches of next door's blue-green conifer. Perch on tip-toes and you can see through a port-hole inset on the opposite wall to the front gate.

Vanity drawers and doors are laminate, which looks like natural oak, topped with an off-white concrete bench.

The cleverest room is the walk-in wardrobe. Mr Porjazoski found practical pull-out racks at Ikea for shoes, trousers and the scarves, and the white laminated storage sections were built around them. Mrs Bent admits additional scarves are stored in boxes under the racks.

Along with two trouser racks, there are 12 shelves for T-shirts and jumpers, masses of drawers, and a bank of seven,



Pre-weathered copper sheets are used on external walls of the extension. PICTURE: MEINPHOTO

angled metal ventilated shoe racks for 50 pairs of shoes. At one end is a make-up table flooded with north light.

The Bents make numerous trips to Hong Kong each year where they do most of their shopping.

Mr Bent is associate dean, international, for RMIT University's business faculty. Their daughter, Kelly, and her husband, Michael, live in Hong Kong and there is a new attraction, their seven-month-old daughter, Livia.

"She's cut my shopping time down," Mrs Bent jokes.

Mr Bent never shops in

Melbourne but every time he goes to Hong Kong he buys two pairs of shoes and jeans by the dozen.

"We wanted somewhere to store our clothes where we could see them. We couldn't find things in our old bedroom. Paul has done a wonderful job. We didn't hesitate to use him because he knows what we like and how we live."

Floors throughout the extension are easy-care, sandstone-look porcelain tiles.

One reason is that the Bents' much-loved labradors, Toby and Mango, sleep on cushions on the floor, until

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they're allowed on the king-size bed in the morning.

The original Clifton Grey end brick wall has been left and it's hung with a vintage fabric from Flashback in Northcote. Above it Mr Porjazoski built a form ply cupboard to disguise the air-conditioner. TV and storage units on the opposite wall jut out like overfilled containers to play on the travel/storage theme.

The wall is clad in rubber and pre-weathered copper sheets to match the external walls of the extension, which also have irregular corners. A highlight window is screened with brushwood to filter west light and match the front fence.

Heavy ironbark beams outside the bedroom mimic exposed beams in the house.

The Bent project received an architecture award in the residential alterations and extensions category at the Victorian chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects awards announced on Friday.