



## Brio® spoke with Melbourne Architect Marc Dixon

### Tell me about yourself and your architectural practice

I run my own architectural practice located in Melbourne's CBD with a range of clients. Our projects have included residential, commercial, local government, social housing and even theatre sets for the local school plays!

Our focus remains on attention to the immediate surroundings and orientation. We encourage natural resources like passive solar techniques and cross ventilation in the build. A highlight for this office is the "Lovely Ladies House", a weekend share home in South Gippsland currently featured on the Australian Institute of Architects web site.

### What is the best part of your job?

We enjoy staying in touch with the community. The office is dedicated to Architectural Education through participation in Design Based Architectural Courses at Deakin University Geelong.

Having my own practice is terrific. It started from the attic in my home, and graduated to an office when I got kicked out.



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### **What was the background to the Box Hill renovation?**

The home is a traditional brick veneer – a beautiful, Bungalow style street frontage. Like many older home designs, the kitchen, living area and formal dining areas were separate chambers connected in some cases by double doors.

The Client wanted to create an integrated living, cooking and eating area that flowed seamlessly out to the backyard. They wanted to bring the toilet inside, provide a separate bedroom for each of the two children and create a spare room “sleep out”. The new kitchen was to be a setting for social gatherings as they entertained family and friends in their backyard.

### **What was your vision for this project?**

On behalf of the Client: we reviewed how the family wanted to live in the house. Unlocking the boundary between inside and outside was a key to solving their brief. The external massing is arranged to open up to the north east while maintaining a sense of enclosure on the rear deck.

### **Were there any obstacles to achieving that vision?**

Heritage concerns were a consideration, a planning overlay meant there were heritage constraints to work within. The new work does not mock the existing construction which stands alone as a beautiful house. The new work was designed purposefully to stand apart from the original. The new components are well setback from the original cottage and connected down low. This provides for separation between old and new. The lower connecting element acts as a transition zone between the old and new.

### **What made you select Brio Single Run sliding hardware?**

The family enjoy a barbecue, and our client maintains the kitchen as the centre of activity. The open plan allows the “unlocking” of the kitchen to maximise the space. Brio is a leader in hardware for sliding and folding doors, a company that could achieve what was needed. I selected a 3 panel sliding door with Brio Single Run hardware. This did the job, and opened up 60% of the opening of the door face.

### **What made you select the Brio 612 Retractable Pleated Insect Screen?**

The 3 sliding panel can be put into any position. The screen runs the full width of the opening, so it can screen regardless of where the sliding door panels are.

The Brio 612 screen, has the widest width on the market and can screen where others cannot. The opening is 6.6 metres wide, so I specified Brio, it was the best choice for the job.

### **What do you see as the advantages of the Brio screen in this project?**

By using a Brio screen the family did not have to live with a big ugly retracting box to conceal the screen mesh. The site provided little opportunity to conceal a box, so I was thankful that with the Brio screen I didn't have to worry about it.

### **How do the owners enjoy their new living and entertaining space?**

All of my staff and I were invited back to the home for a Saturday BBQ. The client has been very complimentary.

