

home



**THE HOUSE**  
Extending and sympathetically revamping a terrace.

**TIME FRAME**  
One year

**BUDGET**  
\$250,000

- GREEN POINTS**
- Central slot courtyard assists cross-ventilation
  - Passive solar design in solid brick masonry floors
  - Large awning reduces summer heat in west-facing living area
  - Ceiling height glass panes increase natural light
  - Recycled or plantation timbers used
  - Bricks from existing building used as fill for a concrete slab
  - Drought-tolerant plants
  - Timber privacy screen and seating along the back alley

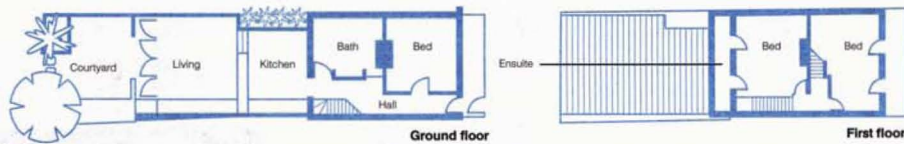
**FEATURES THE OWNERS ARE HAPPIEST WITH**  
The stone wall, brick floor, cabinetry and ensuite.

**INSIDERS' TIPS**  
Ferguson warns renovating inner-city terraces can be opening a proverbial can of worms, so be prepared to make compromises if you don't want the old parts to suck up the budget. He advises that retaining some of the original features maintains the integrity of the building and cuts costs.

**ARCHITECT**  
Tom Ferguson, 0409 923335

**BUILDER**  
Steele Associates, 9319 0333

**JOINERY**  
S & C Carr, 9809 6991



# The rough with the smooth

Exposed sandstone, a lopsided wall and painted bricks are reborn in a polished scheme, writes Susan Redman.

- 1 The European ash wall unit lines the southern wall.
- 2 Tom Ferguson stands in front of the unevenly hewn sandstone block wall.
- 3 The bathroom was installed into the old lounge room and an ornate pendant lamp was retained.
- 4 The master bedroom's ensuite is in the balcony.
- 5 A bench of stained Tasmanian oak divides the living room from the kitchen.

Photos: Quentin Jones  
Plans adapted by Robert Parkinson

Tom Ferguson immediately recognised the dilapidated Rozelle property as what he'd been looking for – a rough diamond. Despite its shabby appearance, the two-up, two-down terrace had a remarkable architectural feature in the form of unevenly hewn sandstone block walls on its street facade and through its centre. Considering this alone, the young architect could foresee the building's future. Snapping it up as a family investment, Ferguson embraced the historic, textural attributes of the house and, in its final design, contrasted them with dramatic modern components.

"I'm a strong believer in retaining older and perhaps rougher elements of existing houses, albeit painted and restored, and juxtaposing them with clean, contemporary forms and materials," he says.

Ferguson lived in the decrepit house for five years before starting an overhaul and building a contemporary extension on the rear. Throughout the design process, the visual and tactile appeal of the stone walls reinforced his interest in the dynamics of surface texture.

"I wanted to keep as much of the original house as possible," Ferguson says. "The exposed sandstone, the lopsided shiplap wall in the main bedroom, the painted bricks in the ensuite and the existing borer-riddled timber floor all added character."

To conserve his budget for grander plans in the rear of the house, Ferguson preserved and refurbished much of the building. On the ground floor, the floorboards and narrow staircase, with worn treads, have been stripped and polished to a mellow sheen.

The old coal-burning fireplaces have been saved, their mantels stripped and repaired.

Even in the ground floor bathroom, once a lounge room, Ferguson conserved original features. "I felt some indication of the former use of this room should be retained, which meant keeping the fireplace and ornate pendant lamp and inserting the new work without [affecting] too many walls. This allowed another opportunity to express the old and the new together in one room."

**'I'm a strong believer in retaining older elements and juxtaposing them with clean forms and materials.'**

Tom Ferguson

In planning terms, installing the bathroom in the old lounge room was a bold move but, as Ferguson explains, it was pivotal for the whole design, as it "opened up possibilities for the new space at the rear".

It also allowed for the central stone wall, which marks the end of the old and beginning of the new parts of the house, to be left untouched. This coarse feature connects the front and back sections of the ground floor and provides a textural backdrop to Ferguson's chic rear addition.

It is in this large new annex that Ferguson's aesthetic influence becomes apparent. "I think my style is a mix of modernist forms and Sydney School materials. The bricks, concrete, timber and glass I use here have an honesty in regards to their surface, but there are also structural gymnastics involved – floating ceilings and large eaves for

example, which are employed in order to achieve the clean interlocking of three-dimensional forms."

Furnished with mid-20th-century seating, tables and other decorative collectables, the extension has all the requirements for stylish open-plan living. The ceiling height of 3.6m over the lounge room accentuates the feeling of spaciousness, and is made more dramatic by a low ceiling of dark stained timber over the adjoining kitchen.

The European ash wall unit, which lines the entire southern wall, is a clever illustration of how Ferguson connects the split levels of this new space, from kitchen to living rooms, while still partly dividing them with a perpendicular kitchen bench of stained Tasmanian oak. Ferguson concedes that this interconnecting module was a significant proportion of the total renovation cost, and that he spent a considerable amount of time doing 1:5 detail drawings, yet it is an elegant solution to the space problems presented by the narrow terrace.

Providing adequate natural light was also tricky, says Ferguson, whose regular work as an associate architect for Cracknell & Lonergan Architects routinely presents him with the space-light dilemmas of similar inner-city projects.

"The rear of the house faces south-west, which isn't ideal," he says. "To ensure light entered the centre of the house throughout the day, I created a 'slot' courtyard on the northern side opposite the kitchen and a highlight window running along the southern side over the lounge room."

The courtyard has a large, sliding glass door that helps with cross-ventilation. From a vantage point close to the sandstone wall, Ferguson likes to sit at the kitchen table and appreciate his new digs: "The smooth concrete, the terracotta bricks, rough sandstone, the slot courtyard garden where the breeze comes in and natural light make it a lovely space."

