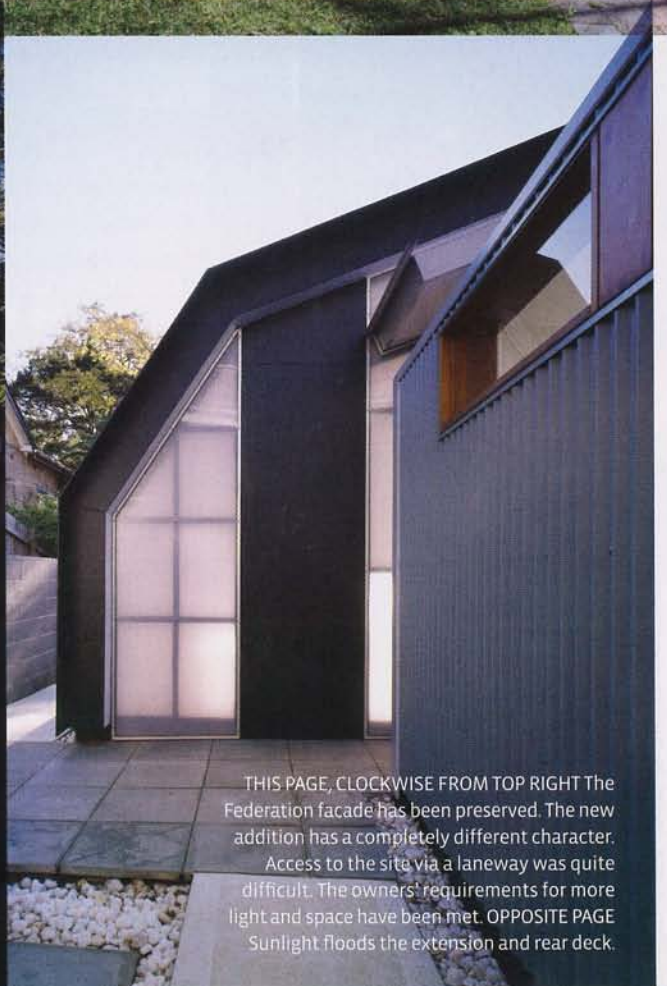


# NEW WAVE

An ultramodern addition to a Sydney Federation house is a surprisingly harmonious fit, complementing as well as contrasting with the period detailing.

PHOTOGRAPHS BRETT BOARDMAN WORDS MADELEINE HINCHY





THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT The Federation facade has been preserved. The new addition has a completely different character. Access to the site via a laneway was quite difficult. The owners' requirements for more light and space have been met. OPPOSITE PAGE Sunlight floods the extension and rear deck.

## FEDERATION RENOVATION



BEFORE

**"IT WASN'T WORTH TRYING TO MIMIC THE EXISTING FORM AND DESIGN OF THE HOUSE. IT WAS BETTER THAT THE ADDITION SPOKE FOR ITSELF, YET SOMEHOW WAS COMPLEMENTARY IN SCALE."**



A striking contemporary addition to a Federation house on Sydney's north shore demonstrates how dramatic new forms can complement and enhance historical architecture.

Viewed from the laneway access above, the Wave House appears deceptively modern. Industrial corrugated steel walls and roofing gleam in the sunlight and, at night, exterior polycarbonate sheeting provides privacy for the inhabitants and an inviting glow to passers-by. Move to the north of the property, however, and the perspective is surprising. The house reveals its Federation origins with original living areas, entrance and facade, complete with period elements, such as decorative eaves, chimneys and a modest wraparound verandah.

Clients Peter and Lisa Sewell bought the property in December 2005 with the intention of renovating. But they decided to live in the house with their two young children for six months to work out what they needed before enlisting Sydney-based architect Sam Crawford. "We decided we needed more light and a bigger space, but we wanted it to be homey, not a display home, and Sam just seemed to grasp that," says Lisa.

The architect had a brief to design new family-friendly living spaces, including a sunlit living and dining area, laundry, ensuite and outdoor entertaining area. The renovation would replace a series of unsightly and impractical asbestos and termite-ridden additions to the property dating from the 70s and would add 50 square metres of living space. The project was driven by a tight budget but Sam says he was excited by its modesty. "It was just doing what the clients needed to do and there was sufficient budget to do the job well rather than having a whole lot of different spaces and compromising on them because of a lack of budget."

The decision to leave the Federation sections of the house intact, contrasting the period elements with the contemporary design, was due to practical as well as aesthetic considerations, he says. "The approach we took was that it was best to leave that part of the house as much as possible in its original condition, because those areas worked well for the family. Lisa and Peter agreed that it wasn't worth trying to mimic the existing form and design of the house. It was better that the addition spoke for itself, yet somehow was complementary in scale."

Creating new rooms that would be well-lit and harmonious with the original residence was a challenge that inspired the wave-like design of the structure. "The nature of the site meant that the only available space for development was on the south side of the property. That left us with a problem, because it is not terribly desirable to put living rooms to the south, as you don't get winter sun." To enhance the light, the architect devised a curved form that suspended the roof, mirroring the original tilt of the period roofing and enabling the northern winter sun to penetrate the rooms via a series of elevated glass louvres.

The form is echoed in an exterior overhang that provides shade to the outdoor areas and works with a sheer external blind, sheltering the living room from the afternoon sun and framing the magnificent views over the valley to the west.

Peter and Lisa trusted Sam and project architect Nic Tang to choose fixtures and materials that would work in with the overall design and survive the wear and tear of family life with two small boys. Feature walls of polycarbonate sheeting, lightly toned bamboo flooring, and a bright palette of painted joinery and tiles were used to further illuminate the rooms, creating a play of light and an informality that is a welcome juxtaposition to the darker and more formal parts of the house.

The renovation took nine months, partially due to the prohibitive nature of the laneway access to the house. The family moved in on Christmas Eve 2007 and Lisa said that it immediately felt like home. "Within a day we felt as if it had always been here." [5]

#### FACT FILE

**ARCHITECT:** Sam Crawford of Sam Crawford Architects ([samcrawfordarchitects.com.au](http://samcrawfordarchitects.com.au)).

**ENTRY WAY:** Concrete pavers and Arctic river pebbles, both from Eco Outdoor ([ecoo outdoor.com.au](http://ecoo outdoor.com.au)).

**PAINT:** Dulux ([dulux.com.au](http://dulux.com.au)) paint was used throughout, with the interior walls in Lexicon. **FLOORING:** The honey-coloured living-room floor is bamboo from Eco Flooring ([www.ecoflooring.com.au](http://www.ecoflooring.com.au)).

