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home

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You beauty

Raw materials reveal an old cottage's charms **14**



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Renovate

The brief

To convert a run-down worker's terrace into a modern, light-filled home for indoors and out



ARCHITECT

Sam Crawford Sam Crawford Architects, samcrawfordarchitects.com.au

BUILDER

David Moses Horizon Habitats, horizonhabitats.com.au

THE SOURCE

Benchtops Calacatta marble from Granite Marble Works, granitemarbleworks.com.au
Flooring Stained oak timber from dD Hardwood, ddfloors.com.au
Tiles Travertine tiles from Onsite, onsitesupply.com

Things of stone and wood

Concrete and timber have changed this terrace for the better, writes **Chelsea Clark**

The original plan sounded simple enough: transform this old eastern suburbs terrace into a modern three-bedroom, light-filled home for 21st century living.

The facade would be preserved to maintain the character and turn-of-the-century charm of the worker's cottage while the rear would be converted from a dark, cramped living space to an open, liveable area with a seamless indoor-outdoor connection.

But for builder David Moses what transpired was basically a full rebuild when the discovery of termites meant the facade would have to go.

"The property was very old and most of the structure was termite-ridden," says David.

"Our initial plan was to keep the front part of the building but we found out pretty quickly that wasn't a viable option."

Because of the property's history, the facade was rebuilt in the original style with weatherboard timber panelling and corrugated ceiling on the first floor balcony.

But step inside and it's a completely different picture with a modern interior inspired by the use of raw materials such as timber, concrete, stone and steel.

Concrete ceilings

One of the most striking features of the home is the off-form concrete ceilings in the downstairs living area.

A trademark of the industrial style and popular on walls in many modern home designs, David says the owners of the Woollahra home opted to use it because of the texture the technique can create.

Off-form refers to concrete cast against formwork where the finished product takes on the texture of the board it is cast against. For instance a concrete panel cast on woodgrain



will have a woodgrain texture. "The rawness of the finish and the fact that it adds a bit of texture was the appeal of using it in this particular project," says David.

"Until recently it's mostly been used on walls and floors but the idea of using it on the ceiling is definitely growing in popularity. It can be a more expensive finish but the result always looks great."

And far from creating a cold or uninviting environment, when paired with timber flooring, cream walls and rich shades of caramel the result is warm and welcoming while still being contemporary.

Bringing the outdoors in

A seamless transition between the rear courtyard and the home's open-plan living area was one of the key elements in the conversion of the design from a post-Federation cottage to a comfortable home.

Full height glass stacker doors ease the transition from timber flooring in the living area to a tiled courtyard along with the use of a small recessed channel filled with pebbles.

The connection between the two spaces is further emphasised by the inclusion of a low-level window running the length of the living room and exposing a small outdoor garden



Extensive storage and seating combine in this built-in robe and window seat.



which is in turn connected to the courtyard. In the reconfiguration of the facade, the home's main entrance was moved to the side of the home and is now positioned underneath a staircase with open risers leading to the first floor.

With the rear stacker doors open, this arrangement allows for a flow of light and air through the entire home significantly opening up what could easily be a dark, confined space.

In the kitchen, a feeling of light is further established through the use of paler shades of timber and an extensive use of Calacatta marble both on the oversized island bench and splashback as well as a built-in TV unit in the living area.

Raw and natural finishes were continued upstairs in the home's two bathrooms with travertine tiles used extensively along with timber cladding.

Exposed steel beams and awnings on the exterior of the home adds to the raw finish and this is echoed inside through the use of steel on the staircase stringer and balustrade linking the floors.

Site issues

Despite the flawless finish, David says the seven-month build — like any other — was not without its own issues.

The termite problem was identified early on in the demolition process but David says the home's location on a narrow street and a small block of just six metres in width caused issues with site access.

"There's always going to be things you encounter as you go along with any project," says David.

"In this case though, any problems or issues we had were addressed very quickly in weekly meetings with both the owners of the property and the architect.

"The fact we were all able to collaborate so closely meant that anything that did come up didn't become a big issue because everyone was able to ask questions and get guidance when needed."

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Pictures Brett Boardman

Natural selection

Stone and timber are strong elements in this home designed by architect Sam Crawford. Working with natural materials can be a challenge but ultimately results in a home that exudes warmth and a sense of permanence.

