



A step up

The focal point of this renovated terrace is full of twists and turns



The main staircase is effectively a work of art in itself," say the owners of this overhauled 1890s-era terrace. "It delights us each and every day and night."

It's quite something for a functional space designed to get people from one part of a house to another to be described as an artwork. But it's hard to deny that this sculptural staircase is a showstopper.

The highlight of the renovation of the Cascade St terrace house, which has been conjoined with a more contemporary terrace next door, the timber and white staircase runs through three levels of the reimagined home.

Undertaken by Sam Crawford Architects, the renovation aimed to work from the inside out to turn a dark and disjointed property into a contemporary home filled with light.

"Cascade Terrace is the union of a 1890s Victorian terrace, with only the facade and remnants remaining, and a 1980s lookalike," says Sam



Crawford, director of SCA. "The kitchen, living spaces and main bedroom were tired and cramped in height and width, and accessibility, both aesthetically and practically, was not ideal.

"The transformation worked to the strengths of a rare, extra-wide terrace and remarkable outlook over a nearby park, maximising the sense of space, light and connection to the garden, park and neighbourhood. The contemporary design resolved the competing requirements of privacy, sun and views, all within a heritage zone."

Key to the redesign was the sculptural staircase that links the living and sleeping zones. An engineering feat, every sixth step is structural steel covered in timber. The spiral form and a vaulted skylight above draw light deep into the spaces below.

"Another key aspect was maximising the existing footprint within the heritage area," says Crawford. "We used two strategies to achieve this.

First, we pushed the interior spaces out to include the vista-blocking wraparound verandahs on both levels, creating extra space and bringing in light and views.

"Second, we raised the main bedroom floor, which allowed us to then raise the living space ceiling, which, together with new floor-to-ceiling windows, brings in more light and views and a sense of space."

Multiple entry points to the lounge room were eliminated, making it comfortable for groups of 10 friends to relax together. A wall separating dining and living rooms was replaced with a spotted-gum room divider that displays ornaments and books. The piece improves connection between the rooms, while retaining separation, and opens up views for the dining room.

The connection and access between a lower-level pool room and pool/garden was improved via large floor-to-ceiling glass sliding doors (replacing walls), allowing an under-utilised north-facing



room and garden to become a sunny spot during winter. Sandstone paving inside and out now links the two spaces.

Upstairs, balancing privacy and northern sun in the main bedroom was resolved through wraparound operable timber louvres. Views were enhanced with new windows and there is a new ensuite with a park outlook. Older front parts of the house were restored and bathrooms reconfigured and updated.

The materiality is sympathetic to Paddington's heritage conservation values, with timber a key design element, with spotted-gum

window frames and louvres with European oak joinery and floors unifying the internal spaces.

Externally, painted common brick walls contrast with the finely crafted openings of steel and hardwood. Marble and terrazzo with brass handles and tapware have been used in the kitchen and bathrooms, which feature improved functionality.

The house's owners are delighted with the restoration, which offers the home a passage of light that helps it change mood through the day.

"Neither of us expected that we would feel a sense of daily joy in simply being in the new

space, yet we do," they say.

"The beauty of the house simply makes daily life a completely different experience. Whether it is catching the light illuminating a room at a certain part of the day, or admiring the changing angles of the staircase as one ascends and descends, these day-to-day experiences enrich our lives immeasurably."

CASCADE TERRACE

Project team: Sam Crawford
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Landscape Architect:
 Spirit Level Designs
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