

OUT THE BACK

THE REAR ADDITION OF THIS INNER-CITY SYDNEY TERRACE IS A SLEEK TAKE ON THE OUTDOORS AS LIVING SPACE.

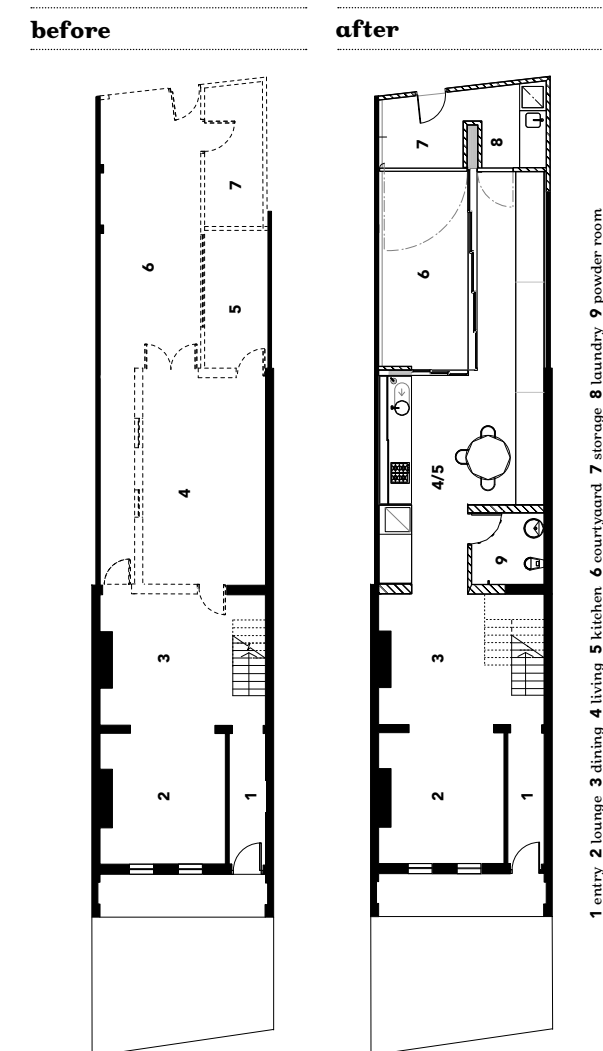
PHOTOGRAPHER: CHRIS COURT



Open and shut. **THIS PAGE:** glass doors glide back into a recess. The banquette has been upholstered in 'Dario' by Zimmer + Rohde; the interior wall is painted half-strength Dulux 'Mud Pack' and the 'Raw' box table is from Zuster. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** 'Cashmere' pavers from the Eco Natural Range by Eco Concepts have been used inside and out. The 'Tabouret 45' stool and 'Brut Verni' table are by Tolix. Details, last pages.



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B+A

Aim of renovation To take a Paddington terrace, and all the charm that goes with that, and do something creative and contemporary with the rear. Also, one of the typical problems with these properties is light and ventilation and that needed to be resolved.

The solution It was all about getting the kitchen to one side, pushing the amenities to the back and, therefore, opening up the house to the backyard.

How long did it take? Seven months.

Is there anything you would have done differently? No, the client really enjoys the space.

Which aspect of the renovation are you happiest with? It’s a successful integration between the inside and outside spaces as well as the new and the old.

Materials of interest
Concrete pavers: ‘Cashmere’ Eco Natural Range pavers from **Eco Concepts**, 1300 131 413.
Joinery: Slatted timber wall in ‘Smoked Oak’ from **Precision Flooring**, (02) 9690 0991.

Architecture and design
Nick Tobias and Debbie Pollak, Tobias Partners
 2 Hampden Street
 Paddington NSW
 (02) 9361 4800.

Builder
John Nettle
 Trinity Constructions
 0413 115 391.

Any specialist trades you would recommend?
Joiner – Timberline Joinery, (02) 9316 7482. **Engineer – Partridge Partners**, (02) 9460 9000. **Sliding doors – K&K Shopfitters**, (02) 9316 9929. **Lighting – Pulvin Composite**, (02) 9879 3699.

HERITAGE CONCERNS ASIDE, the main issue Sydney architectural firm Tobias Partners had to confront in their renovation of a Paddington terrace was the lack of outdoor space.

“The heritage issues don’t allow you to do anything on the top floor or to the front facade, but the main thing here was physical space,” says Nick Tobias, managing director of Tobias Partners.

Confronted with a 1970s lean-to extension at the rear and a narrow backyard barely big enough to house a washing line and a few pot plants, the firm’s first objective was clear – make the most of this exterior space, typically the most under-utilised area of original terraces. The solution to this problem would also go a long way to resolving the house’s ventilation and light issues, at least on the ground floor.

“I suppose what the client liked about our concept is the amount of use you get from the outdoor space when before there was none. Even though you have limited space, you really get to enjoy it as if it’s one room once those doors are open,” says Tobias.

“Those doors” are elegant, streamlined creatures that replaced the tiny set of French doors the current owners inherited. Made from glass and aluminium, these floor-to-ceiling doors glide seamlessly into a recess in the timber slatted wall that forms the back wall of the property – “a bit of a take on the back fence” – leaving barely a trace of their existence behind them.

It’s a seamless look between outside and in, aided by the use of the same flooring material throughout – a very solid concrete paver. The L-shaped blade steel columns were another carefully considered choice, impeding sight lines far less than their far bulkier relative, the square column.

When the doors are open, the back area of the house becomes an open-plan living room with ample space for entertaining. When they’re shut, the resulting long, narrow gallery provides an intimate zone for lounging around on lazy weekend afternoons. It’s an inviting space with generously upholstered wide banquettes covered with a collection of colourful custom-made cushions.

“When the client first looked at the plan, they said, ‘How does this work?’ It’s not very traditional, but we’ve got a very traditional setup in the dining room, so it’s a counterpoint to that. It’s a different way of using an interior but it works very well,” says Tobias.

The new extension sits well against the turn-of-the-century fabric of the main house. Here, original features have been retained and matched with modern inserts. For example, the dark timber joinery flanking the dining room’s marble fireplace and the stainless-steel fire box inside it sit harmoniously alongside the original plasterwork and timber floorboards while still being clearly defined as new.

“My general philosophy with old and new is that the two should exist together beautifully; as long as you’re very, very clear what is old and what is new in the way you design and detail. I don’t like blurring the lines between the two,” says Tobias.

Part of the brief was to include a dedicated laundry, not the washing machine in a cupboard solution so favoured today, and it is comfortably housed in an amenity block at the back, behind the timber slat wall. Here too, is the washing line, mounted on the back of the wall and a section that includes storage for the couple’s bikes and a door that leads to the rear lane. In fact, every square centimetre has been well and truly accounted for.

VICTORIA CAREY



THIS PAGE, FAR LEFT: a skylight brings some much needed light to an upstairs bathroom. **LEFT:** the original backyard was seldom used for anything but hanging out the washing. **OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT:** a ‘Fuscia’ pendant light by Flos crowns the formal dining room table. **RIGHT:** the banquette provides comfortable seating as well as convenient storage. Eames ‘DCM’ chairs clustered around a Saarinen-style table create an informal dining area. Details, last pages.