

DREAM HOME: ANNANDALE Jane Burton Taylor

From factory to sanctuary

A sense of joy, not to mention sunlight and spaciousness, was missing from this once-elegant Victorian terrace.



Breezeway ... the kitchen and dining area has bifolds in both directions.

When Shaun Carter's clients bought their Annandale terrace in 2002, it was battle-scarred.

For decades it and its two neighbours had been part of the old Darrell Lea chocolate factory.

When the factory was closed in the late 1990s, a subdivision returned the house to its identity as an individual residence.

By the time the new owners moved in, the once-elegant Victorian terrace had lost most of its original features.

It was a maze of dog-leg halls leading to sunless rooms. And it had in place a development application that Carter says would have compounded the monstrosity to which it had been subjected.

"It had a DA for a layer-cake, four-storeys slab-on-slab with no light coming in," he says.

"My clients wanted an urban retreat. Their brief was that they liked to come home from work and shut the world out, to be in their own private domain."

Carter also aimed to add light, air and a dose of what he simply describes as "joy". Early on he had the idea of converting the chaotic and gloomy planning of the existing terrace into a three-storey courtyard house.

He essentially cut into the middle of the terrace, creating a central courtyard that provided a sense of both sanctuary and space. He then installed a stairway up the side of the courtyard, providing views down into the indoor-outdoor space and across to the rooms on its other side.

Standing on the street front, Carter explains how he first wanted to reinstate

'It is the idea of the prospect beyond, whether you can get there or not.'

Shaun Carter, architect

the house's external identity. He did this initially by painting it, so it stands out from its neighbours, and by reinstating its first-floor balcony.

"The idea was to make it look like an 1880s terrace again, then as you walked in you gradually reveal this inner sanctum," he says.

As you walk in, you are struck by the warmth of the old sandstone walls and their patterning of delicate markings made by a convict's pick.

Out of the ruins

Carter says his team had no idea what it was uncovering when it first pulled the old render off the walls. The same discovery was made in the classically proportioned front guest room, just to the right of the entry.

The architect explains that the sandstone was clearly recycled from another building. He points out the blackened blocks that appear randomly in the wall and which he says would once have been part of a fireplace.

The journey into the contemporary incarnation of the house starts just beyond the convict sandstone of the entry hall. Stairs run across the plan - from boundary wall to boundary wall - leading up into the main living space and the internal courtyard.

Carter and his clients deliberately opted to start the courtyard on the first floor and position the main bedroom and home office below it, on the darker ground floor.

"The clients are early risers. By lifting up the courtyard, it helped them not get up really so early," he says.

It also allowed him to introduce a galley-like office for one of the owners,



who does a lot of her work from home. It runs along one wall and opens out to the metre-wide back garden. Upstairs from these subdued, intimate rooms the mood changes dramatically. The space opens up and light pours in.

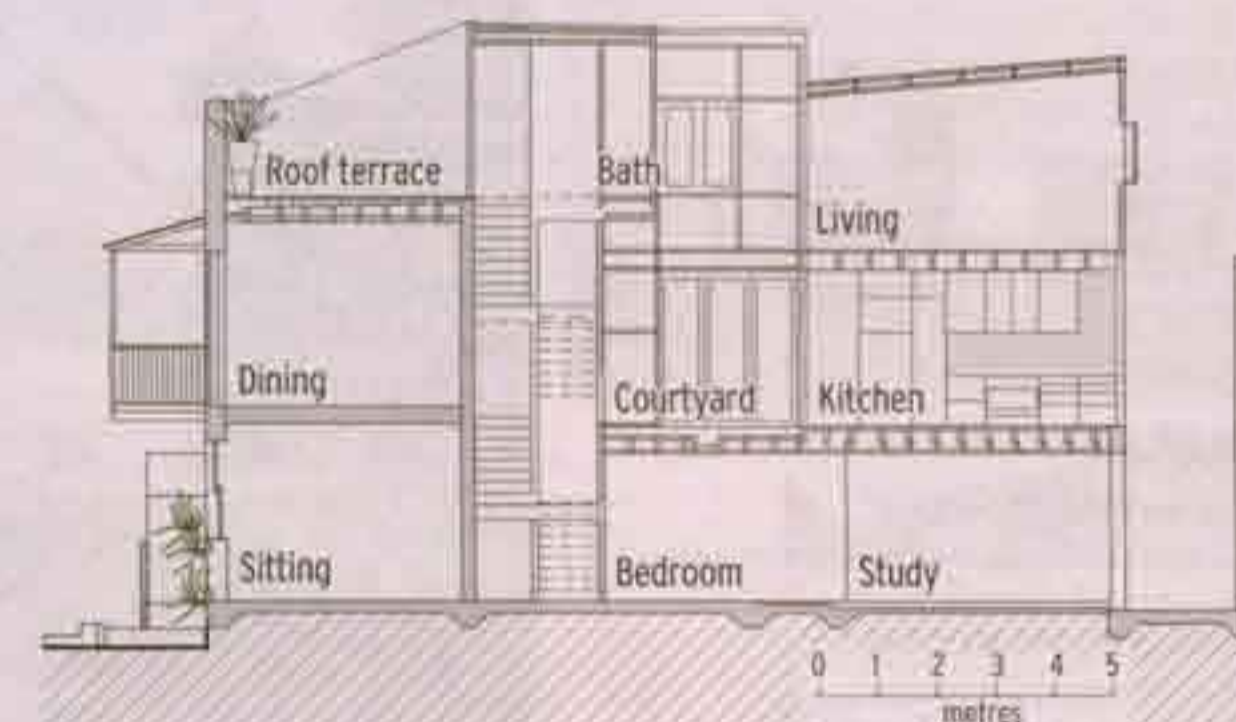
The central courtyard is a charming space that serves as a second living room. It is bounded by the stairs, a corridor with bifold doors, a kitchen-dining room and the wall of the adjoining terrace. The house is like a miniature of a Renaissance

merchant's house. It has a central courtyard, paired with a stairway that allows you to look across into other rooms as you walk up into the house.

Like this centuries-older model, the Annandale terrace has private rooms off its circulation spine. For example, there is a formal dining room at the front street side of the house. It is directly above the ground-floor guest room and mirrors its old-fashioned proportions and high ceilings.



Joy division ... (above and left) the courtyard gives an open, sun-filled space in the middle of the house and adjoining rooms.



Temperature check ... the recycled sandstone walls help keep the house warm in winter and cool in summer. Photos: Brett Boardman Photography

AIM
To make a private urban site.

BUDGET
\$440,000.

TIME FRAME
Three years.

OWNERS' FAVOURITE FEATURES
The way the house opens up to the courtyard.

INSIDER'S TIPS
Embrace the ideas of where your clients want to go.

- GREEN POINTS**
- Cross-ventilation.
 - Reuse of the shell of the original building.
 - Lower sandstone walls serve as thermal mass to keep house warm in winter and cool in summer.
 - Vertical vegetable garden on rooftop terrace with recycling water.

BUILDER
Paul Fitzgerald of Hampstead Homes, 0418 254 422.

ARCHITECT
Shaun Carter of carterwilliamson, 9799 4472.

Outdoor spaces

In the terrace the clients inherited, this room had only windows facing the street. Carter converted these windows into french doors and bolted on a balcony so that the room now opens out to an outdoor space.

"The design was all about having these rooms next to indoor-outdoor spaces," Carter says. "It is the idea of the prospect beyond, whether you can get there or not. It adds a sense of connection with the outdoors."

Continuing up the stairs, you arrive at a sitting room with bifold windows opening down on to the courtyard.

On the other side, wrapped in a U-shape around the stairs is a second bathroom. Behind this is a rooftop terrace, with a clever vertical vegetable garden on the walls.

The owners say their brief to reinvent the terrace was definitely fulfilled.

They now have a home that is completely private, despite its location in a relatively dense part of the city.

They have a variety of spaces in which to work, relax and entertain.

Plus they have sunlight, outdoor space and, most importantly, a peaceful and playful domain all to themselves.