

Unwanted terrace lacked only buyers with vision



Trisha Croaker

From the Drawing Board

When Susan and Robert Feltaous found their dream home in Annandale it was a house “no one wanted, and that couldn’t be sold”. It was a derelict two-storey Victorian terrace converted into flats, with a shamble of lean-tos, and a contaminated warehouse at the rear. A 12-metre high heritage wall ran the entire length of the 70-metre northern elevation.

Susan saw beauty and potential in it all.

“We knew it needed a lot of work, but the terrace could be restored. We could use the footprint of the lean-tos and warehouse to give us greater floor-to-space ratio than normally allowable in the inner city, and the heritage wall was absolutely beautiful,” she said.

Architect Will Fung and designer Tina Engelen of CO-AP Architects were engaged to design a four-bedroom family home with the Feltaouses acting as owner-builders. They prepared a comprehensive brief of requirements, including a “budgetary limit but no design limitations”. Fung said: “The site was



closely bounded by units to the south-west and warehouse apartments to the north, while the west and east offered framed views to trees and green streetscape.

“Considering these, we unfolded new additions along the length of the site, with floor levels corresponding to the natural topography – resulting in a



Let it all in ... light and a sense of spaces permeate both the living and dining areas in a house that had “no design limitations”.

series of split levels and courtyards.

“We thought the wall, which everyone shied away from, and why the property wouldn’t sell, was amazing. We saw history in it. It wasn’t perfect and was heritage-listed – so we faced the house to it rather than away from it.”

A new front door and entry area

were positioned at the rear of the terrace and act to bridge new and old. The terrace was restored and altered to accommodate bedrooms, bathrooms and a home office.

A single-storey loggia, which expands and contracts in size and shape, winds around and up into the living/dining/kitchen space at the

rear of the block. All new spaces relate to or wrap around the light-filled central courtyard and wall, and offer views from inside to outside and back inside, in the tradition of many Asian houses.

The result is a calm, light retreat of a house less than half an hour from the CBD.