



The hide of it

An old tannery takes a modern twist.

In the 19th century, the eastern suburb of Waverley was home to a tailor, a cordial maker and a tobacconist. It was also home to Ebenezer Vickery, an enterprising tanner who constructed a sandstone workshop with a pitched iron roof for his employees. The tannery that was built in 1866 still exists, but as a row of terraces (4-22 High Street). The NSW Heritage Office reckons it is one of the best examples of its kind.

People have been living in the old tannery, known as Glenrock Terrace, for years. But last year, architects Cullen Feng revamped number eight and gave one of Waverley's oldest buildings a modern stamp.

From the street, the facade retains its former glory: massive blocks of hand-cut sandstone, a veranda with a rickety corrugated iron roof supported by chamfered posts with elegant brackets and small gables over alternate upper windows.

Inside is another story. The Cullen Feng scheme is an immaculate fusion of history and contemporary design. At the front of the narrow site, the original section

Photos: Jamina Darke
Plans adapted by Robert Parkinson

of the house (a dining room, a small sitting room and an upstairs bedroom with views over the street) remains unaltered. It has the sort of interior a tanner in the 1860s might expect: big fireplaces, high pitched ceilings, rough sandstone walls, low doorways and a narrow (practically upright) staircase that leads to the upper level. But the space has been given a modern touch. "We had to strip back the layers of render and plasterboard that had accumulated over the years to reveal the original coarse sandstone blocks," Michelle Feng says.

"Then we gave the sandstone a light clean and sealed it. We embedded and renewed the original fireplaces, retained all the original moldings and installed new carpet, modern lighting, new paint and finishes."

The new, light-filled addition starts where the old section of the house ends. It consists of a kitchen, a living space, two upstairs bedrooms, two bathrooms and a scorable courtyard with rear lane access. Vitified ceramic tiles (by Zettertile) were used for flooring throughout.

In this two-storey pavilion a world away from Ebenezer Vickery's vision for his workers, Cullen

Feng has achieved an elegant marriage of old and new.

The first room the visitor steps into is the kitchen. It has white CaesarStone bench tops, almost invisible storage, a smoky mirrored splashback above the stove-top, a stainless-steel Smeg oven and smart, geometric Gineco downlights. Through the windows above the sink, a narrow lane (for pot plants, wet washing and smelly pets) can be seen. The lane is reached via a glass door near the kitchen.

Beyond the kitchen, the living space is fitted with easy going yet comfortable modular products: two Eames Aluminium Group hoppers lounge chairs, the client's family couch upholstered in Alcantara suede and an elongated wenge sideboard.

The white-walled living room's floor-to-ceiling bifold doors open to a rear courtyard landscaped with large stone pavers (Wilkinson), white river pebbles, a water feature and an assortment of large succulents and lily pillars. The garden at the front of the property has gardenias and luxur.

In keeping with the organic appeal of the site,

the architects used sandstone from an original outcrop on the property to create a mini-garage. "We call it a garage," Feng says, with a chuckle. "We all agree it's too boutique and attractive to be deemed a garage."

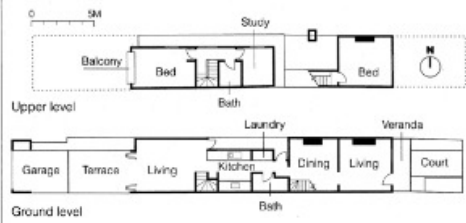
From the private balcony of the main bedroom upstairs are views of neighbouring rooftops. The bedroom at the front has views over the street. Two bathrooms have rectangular, white wall tiles, vitified ceramic floor tiles, Duravit basins, Gohle fixtures, frameless glass shower screens and CaesarStone benchtops.

At four metres wide, the site is constrained but the architects have achieved a sense of greater space. Feng says: "With council setback requirements being 900 millimetres in some areas, we decided that the best spatial solution for all rooms was to have the main stair as a double-flight stair with winders perpendicular to the length of the building, rather than a single-flight stair parallel to the length of the building."

Another trick was to bring as much light into the home as possible: through skylights, side windows and glazed doors. And in so doing, take the house out of the dark ages.



- 1 Bifold doors in the living room open to a rear courtyard landscaped with stone pavers and white river pebbles.
- 2 Layers of render and plasterboard were stripped back in the dining room to reveal the original sandstone blocks.
- 3 A veranda with a corrugated-iron roof on the streetfront is a legacy of the terrace's history.
- 4 Glass doors in the upstairs bedroom open to a balcony.
- 5 Modular products, such as hoppers lounge chairs and a couch upholstered in Alcantara suede, give the living room a relaxed atmosphere.



THE AIM
To maintain and enhance the historical appeal of the terrace and create a new two-storey pavilion linked to the original house.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?
To design: three months. Council approval: 12 months. Heritage houses can take longer than usual. To build: six months.

WHAT THE OWNERS WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY
Nothing – it's perfect.

FEATURE OWNERS ARE HAPPIEST WITH
The contrast between

the old and the new; the way that light enters the house and the flow of spaces.

INSIDERS' TIPS
Use a good architect and builder.

ARCHITECT
Cullen Feng, Michelle Feng and Jon Cullen, 9310 4305, www.cullenfeng.com.au

BUILDER
Aztec Construction (Angelo Hatzoglou), 0411 358 505

JOINER
Quality Design Kitchens, 9758 4524