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Light industrial

Inner-city renovation
is beauty in the raw

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Light duties

A once cramped cottage is now a bright and airy haven, writes **Krista Wilson**. Photos John Fotiadis.



A The internal staircase, covered in Vitrapanel, juts into the alley beside the front door
B The serene bathroom **C** The concrete kitchen bench appears to float in the room **D** The old terrace was tiny **E** Colourful paintings soften the home's raw, industrial feel **F** Frosted-glass louvres allow lots of light into the home **G** Window boxes offer a touch of the Mediterranean



It was a dream find. The worst house in the best street but brimming with possibility. Its artist owner held on to the prime find in Surry Hills for a few years while travelling between New York and Sydney studying, before employing the skills of architect Trevor Hall.

"I wanted to transform it from a dump into something groovy by someone who was up-and-coming in architecture," says the owner.

The original single-storey house consisted of one room combining the lounge and bed, and a tiny bathroom and kitchenette. Today, the renovated home is light, airy and modern.

The new design was driven by the client's desire to capture a raw, industrial look reminiscent of her time in New York lofts and warehouses.

"It's all the things I've loved all my life – raw materials such as wood and concrete, and I just had to have a red kitchen," says the owner.

Striking a balance between an industrial look and a comfortable home was difficult but achieved by installing bright '60s furniture in lime-green and hot-pink and hanging colourful paintings throughout.

"I had to keep reminding Trevor that I was a girl and to not make it too harsh," she says.

Compressed design

On the ground level, the house consists of a kitchen, living and dining area (which the owner uses as her studio), an office and laundry moonlighting as a cupboard.

The two bedrooms and a bathroom are upstairs.

Getting there wasn't easy, with many issues to contend with before construction could go ahead. Mainly, these were the result of objections made by neighbours.

The initial design was much larger than the finished product, with the second storey having a large bedroom at the rear, plus an ensuite and a small sitting area.

"Gradually, it got compressed," says Trevor. "We just had to keep working down this building envelope so that the morning sunlight could get into all the yards behind us."

The final design resulted in the exterior of the building featuring a series of levels to allow sunlight to sneak through.

Trevor also had to correct a few design faults in the original structure, the most significant being the placement of the front door, which was

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