

SFGate.com**TAKE TWO****Elevating a concrete yard to glamorous heights**

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San Francisco architect Jonathan Feldman and designer Lisa Lougee found an outer Noe Valley fixer-upper that they thought they might live in. That meant designing a friendly play yard for their child, in place of what was a flat patch of concrete and gravel.

"We also wanted a raised section to be able to see views blocked by fences," says Feldman.

Landscape designer Loretta Gargan, with whom Feldman has designed several projects, soon found a solution: separate sections that gradually step up the hill. Just off the family room, an Ipe wood deck rises to meet a patch of lawn, over which large slabs of slate are laid in a row toward a stepped deck from where, sitting or standing, you can take in downtown views. No ugly handrails were necessary for the under-30-inch-high sections, but a slatted fence and concrete-and-wood bench are fine dividers. Gargan's low steel planter, made by Walter Craven, brings the garden "in" when the family room doors slide open.

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