



LIVING

sculpture

An environmentally sustainable design that takes some of yesterday and blends it with the future

In taking on this renovation of a tired, run-down, double-fronted Victorian cottage that had undergone several renovations but was now in need of a serious update, architect Nic Owen was faced with several challenges: heritage, practical and environmental.

"The timber Victorian cottage is situated on a corner block with a north-facing backyard. The site is in a heritage overlay, which protects the original cottage. The alterations and additions have aimed to respect and preserve the original building while creating a contemporary piece of architecture that



before



before

enhances the historically significant cottage," Nic said.

When it came to the practical considerations of the project: "The owners wanted to retain a large backyard, and the council's heritage adviser requested that the first-floor extension be set back some distance from the street. Middle ground was reached," said Nic.

The owners wanted a home for their young family that would provide extra space, consider the environment and, most importantly, be an exciting place to live in — all this on a small piece of land in a highly protected heritage precinct.

"The project was a large renovation and extension. The front of the house (front two rooms and existing hallway) were retained and restored to their former Victorian glory. The remaining

rear of the house was removed and replaced with a modern, sympathetic double-storey extension," said Nic.

"A challenge was marrying the original heritage cottage with a contemporary modernist structure. Our architectural philosophy at Nic Owen Architects is to respect the original building, paying tribute while not reproducing the past. We spent a lot of time designing the modern extension so it did not compete with or overpower the original building, while still creating a progressive, contemporary structure.

"The design was to be timeless, therefore greatly influenced by the modernist architecture movement. To avoid the stark white and often mechanical feel of some modernist buildings, natural timbers and materials were used throughout the house, giving the spaces a warm and cosy feel."





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The first-floor gable form was inspired by the old stable buildings located at the rear of many local Victorian dwellings.

"We borrowed a historic stable-type form from the local neighbourhood and, giving it a contemporary edge, added it to the rear of the existing cottage. The two external structures were tied together visually by using traditional materials such as weatherboards in new and exciting ways.

As with many projects of this age, paying tribute to the home's past was an important consideration. "While not an unusual challenge in the inner city, lengthy dealings with the local council and their advisors on planning and heritage issues delayed the project," Nic said.

"The house is also on a small site which, while placing constraints on the project, was overcome with the creative use of space and materials. These include designing multifunctional spaces that can easily be converted to different uses. For example, the children's games room can be used as a guest bedroom and the study can be converted into a fourth bedroom should the need arise in the future.

"Inside, we opted for a juxtaposition of internal fittings so as to invite respect and appreciation for both the heritage and contemporary elements.

"There is a clear delineation between the original cottage and the modern extension, made obvious with the use of bright colour throughout the newly built elements. Splashes of colour

and interesting architectural elements throughout the house make it an exciting place to live in.

"The result is a house that cleverly straddles a century of architectural history, respecting its heritage while pointing to the future."

If money were no issue, Nic said the project would have included replacing the existing run-down shed to the rear





Ground Floor Before



Ground Floor After



First Floor After

of the property with a double-storey studio to complement the house. This has been postponed for a future project.

Faced with environmental concerns, such as using water and energy efficiently, Nic ensured the project had a green touch.

"The primary function of the renovation was to provide a home for a family of four that embraces and respects the environment while protecting and sheltering from the harsh elements. The house has been designed to efficiently use valuable resources and can honestly call itself "green", creating a beautiful home that can be enjoyed by the clients now and well into the future," Nic said.

A 20,000-litre underground water tank has been installed to allow for water catchment that is used for gardening, laundry and toilet flushing.

Renewable timber species were also used throughout the entire renovation, and Cool Colour paint technology by Resene reflects the sun's heat. High-rated insulation throughout existing and new walls and ceilings ensures the home is cool in summer and warm in winter.

To control the sun, solar heat minimisation was achieved through static and retractable sun canopies, while an automatic retractable shade cloth was placed over the decking area and large overhanging eaves were designed for the ground-floor meals

area. The first-floor deep window frame/canopy acts as solar control and privacy screening of the neighbours' rear yard.

"The most successful part of the design is the rear timber deck with an automatic retractable shade cloth. This is a great space where you can be in total control of your environment while still enjoying the natural surrounds. This outdoor room blurs the boundary of internal and external space, inviting the owners to appreciate their landscaped garden," said Nic.

"Architecture is about designing and creating spaces for people to live an enhanced aesthetic life. This is accomplished in the Cooke house through an efficient and functional arrangement of space and utilities, which encourages an expressive and creative lifestyle.

"The extension employs an intelligent use of light through skylights and well-placed windows, and multifunctional space combined with a scattering of pizzazz and a sprinkling of colour (coloured glass and bright complementary feature colours displayed throughout the house).

"The result is a house that is innovative, stimulating and demonstrates an environmentally sustainable design, clearly the way of the future. The house is both a machine for living and sculpture to live in."



PROJECT PARTICULARS

This project was designed by:
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This project was built by:
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 Licence Number: dbu-21543, mbav-61175

Flooring
Kitchen/dining/living: Polished timber, blackbutt
Bedroom: Carpet
Stair: Polished timber, blackbutt and carpet
Outdoor: Blackbutt timber deck

Walls
Kitchen/meals: Painted plasterboard walls, hoop pine plywood ceiling
Living/bedroom/stair: Painted plasterboard walls
Outdoor: Blackbutt timber cladding and painted hardwood cladding
Other: All internal paint Resene

Kitchen
Benchtop/splashback: Smartstone
Cabinetry: Two-pack, hoop pine solid plywood, blackbean solid plywood
Other: Bulkheads hoop pine plywood ceiling

Sanitary Fixtures + Bathroom Fittings
Supplier: Reece
Cabinetry: Two-pack, hoop pine solid plywood benchtop, blackbean solid plywood, two-pack

Lighting
Supplier: Richmond Lighting

Windows + External Doors
 Custom timber HW doors and windows for paint and stain finish

Outdoor
 Blackbutt timber decking, Issey Verasun retractable shade cloth, Atlantis 20,000-litre underground water storage tank, dark timber cladding painted in Resene Cool Colour paints (technology used to reflect the sun's heat)

THIS PAGE A 20,000-litre underground water tank has been installed to allow for water catchment that is used for the laundry.