

Cottage industry

Grand ideas and much trust transform a rough gem

When New Farm couple Ann and John first spotted what would become their new home in the suburb, they called architect Shaun Lockyer. After seeing some of the properties Shaun had worked on previously in New Farm, they had no doubt they wanted him to design their new house, and they wanted to know if he approved of the 1930s cottage they had chosen. “He saw the potential immediately,” Ann says. “And with his backing, we decided to go for it and work with him.”

The 1930s Beeston St house had previously been renovated, but needed a lot more work. Shaun’s plan revolved around the incorporation of voids to increase light and create an airy feel. The inner-city cottage has been extended to include three bedrooms and an open office area on the top level with extensive city views. The

pool out the back has been renovated and charm and character have been added throughout – from the Mafi flooring (a re-engineered product in limewashed American oak) to the natural timber panels on the outside.

The large open kitchen features a long island bench and there are glimpses of the sky throughout with a clever use of skylights.

“I think the finished product here is ultimately much more unique than a new house,” Shaun says. “This site was quite small and in that situation, people often just want to pull the house down, but keeping the original is much nicer. A small extension was added out the back (where the upstairs bathroom and walk-in wardrobe are now), but that’s about it. We’ve kept a lot of the original building.”

Both Ann and John are thrilled with the renovation. They moved in on the Australia Day weekend this year. And while both parties



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agree there were stressful moments during the construction, the issues were overcome with plenty of communication. “When you get to stress points in the development, you have to have a robust conversation and everyone knows that you are honest,” Shaun says.

“Ann and John were very open to our ideas, from creating a hole in the upstairs floor to open up the attic and roof space, and adding the garage space where we excavated.”

The hole, or void, in the upstairs floor was a sticking point. “We just couldn’t get our heads around that,” Ann says. “But when Shaun was talking about trust, I remembered our initial interest. We trusted him completely and loved his underlying style.”

An attic upstairs has been opened up to make space for the office. A window with a hydraulic gas strut opens up to provide city views.

“When they initially cut in the window, the difference was amazing,” Ann says. “It really frames the whole space.”

Black features throughout, including in the steel balustrade and painted timber stairs. Natural timber has also been used and the two bedrooms downstairs have skylights. Sliding stacker doors open to the front veranda and original white french doors have been retained.

The office can be used as a fourth bedroom if needed.

“We really wanted it to be a big open office area,” Ann says. “It’s our house and we have to live in it, so we wanted to keep it open.”

Travertine tiles have been used on the walls in the bathroom, and black slate on the floors.



Outside, a sink and bench space have been added to the barbecue area and a pandanus tree has pride of place next to the pool.

“We go walking around this suburb a lot and there are some beautiful houses around, but I say I’d rather have our house than any others because it’s a wonderful house and we love it.”

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FORM AND VOID ... Skylights throughout let in the light. **PHOTOGRAPHS** • Scott Burrows