



## Live it up

Old bones stand strong with outdoor focus

**R**ob Claut has thought about the potential of his New Farm Queenslander since he bought the corner block for a modest sum in 1982. "It was a dream of mine forever," Rob says. "We had contemplated moving and looked at units for a couple of years but then we just bit the bullet and decided to build."

For more than three decades Rob kept a record of the sort of outcome he hoped to achieve in his own renovation and extension. His 30-year-old "scrapbook" was the reason he engaged the services of architect Shaun Lockyer. "When we decided to do something I got the scrapbook out and sorted the pages into piles. I realised the biggest pile was Shaun's (design work)."

Despite the house's deteriorating condition, the turn-of-the-century home proved to have the good bones required to achieve the transformation Rob and his partner, Diana Cuman, had hoped for.

"The house was really not in great shape but what was interesting was the form of it, which is actually still visible," Shaun says. "We took away almost nothing. Pretty much all of the original structure is still there."

The most drastic change took place at the start of the build when the original house was slightly raised and repositioned closer to the street corner. "We tried as much as possible to push the house into the corner so we could create a northeastern and northwestern garden so we could establish living on the northern side of the house with as much space and light surrounding it," Shaun says.

The larger garden area created by the house's repositioning made room for a brick and timber outdoor room. The new extension "dips" on to the side of the house creating a peninsular room which extends from the central dining room. Dark



architecture  
with MICHELLE BAILEY

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rendered exterior walls contrast with the white weatherboards of the original house elsewhere.

The blackbutt timber-lined interior also distinguishes it from other rooms. Sliding windows on the eastern and western sides make it possible to capture breezes, with frosted louvres on the northern facade balancing privacy and air flow. "This (outdoor room) is where Rob and Diana live day to day so to have it open but protected is very practical," Shaun says. "At this (raised) level you get bay breezes and the nicer outlook."

Tree-lined New Farm streets are a welcome backdrop, particularly on the northern and western sides with street views. "We don't have any artwork at present but the framing of the windows is the artworks," Rob says. "Before you could look out but never see sky. Now you can."

Views were once heavily compromised because prior to the renovation a built-in veranda on all four sides blocked light and views to interior rooms. Natural light levels have also significantly improved as a result of several lightwells in the kitchen and living areas.

Evidence of the original house is most present in the dining and living rooms which coincide with the largest and most elaborate spaces of the old Queenslander.

"The attitude was to keep the detail where the detail was. We kept the original form of the ceilings too," Shaun says. "It's not a complicated idea.

We took the cues from what was here to make a contemporary house that respected its history."

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