

Mansion

Carmel and Antun Cule didn't want to mock up a replica addition to their century-old inner-Brisbane cottage with its typical pitched roof, front veranda and over-the-door breezeways. Instead of a "fake" renovation to their Queenslander cottage, the suburban Paddington locals decided to go all out with an ultra-contemporary new wing of glass, polished concrete and wide open living spaces.

The result is a stark contrast of adjoining styles of Australian living highlighting the evolution from small-roomed Queensland workers' accommodation to a modern-day open plan lifestyle.

In keeping with Australian guidelines on heritage renovation, which recommend clearly contrasting styles when adding a new element to a heritage property, the house appears as two buildings connected by a central pillar that was once the cottage's stairwell.

Carmel Cule says they wanted to make the most of the large land area while keeping the quaint character home's façade intact when they used the width of the block for the renovation.

"I love the contemporary part of it but I also really love the cottage," she says. "I didn't want to be fake about it; I wanted it side by side, an addition to it. The old house was on the left-hand side of the block already so it made sense to design it that way."



Views of Shaun Lockyer's contrasting addition to a Brisbane cottage.

With the help of Brisbane architect Shaun Lockyer, the Cules – who run their own building company, Cule Constructions – created a lifestyle-friendly home largely across one level to suit their love of entertaining as well as their busy day-to-day schedule with three children aged 14, 12 and 10.

"I tried to incorporate the old into the new," Carmel says, pointing to the decorative breezeways above the doors that were retained inside the home. "That is my way of keeping the cottage character or feel in the house."

Lockyer acknowledges that when people see the connected but vastly architecturally different homes, "it's a polariser".

"It's not unique to have that juxtaposition between them (old and new dwelling parts); that is a dialogue that has been going on forever," he says. (But in this house) that sort of thing is not experienced as a transition from one thing to another, it is experienced straight away.

The juxtaposition of the old and the new is in keeping with the Australian heritage guideline The Burra Charter, which has been taken on around the world. The 1979 cultural heritage principles advise maintaining the original characteristics of a character property but suggest any new additions 'should be readily identifiable as such but must respect and have minimal impact on the cultural significance of the place'

"There is a sense of residence and permanence. It speaks of two quite different things but ultimately talks about one home."

He says the Cules wanted a contemporary home and loved the idea of concrete, but also loved their years living in the cottage. "They recognised the best way to do it justice was to leave it alone," he says.

The juxtaposition of the old and the new for housing additions is in keeping with the renowned Australian heritage guideline The Burra Charter, which has been adopted nationally and taken on around the world. The 1979 cultural heritage principles advise maintaining the original characteristics of a character property as much as possible. However, they suggest that any new additions "should be readily identifiable as such but must respect and have minimal impact on the cultural significance of the place".

The Charter has moved the heritage renovation scene from attempts to replicate the homes to integrating and contrasting the old and the new.

Increasing attention to character, heritage and lifestyle is expected to grow Australia's renovation industry to about \$32 billion – just under half the overall value of the nation's multibillion-dollar construction sector.

The Housing Industry Association says continued low interest rates and the expectation of reduced house-price growth over the coming years is expected to further stimulate the renovation market to grow more than 2 per cent, to more than \$34 billion.

The average cost of an architect-designed executive home can reach more than \$5000 per square metre for a renovation with high-end finishings.