



FINE DETAILS ... quality joinery and carpentry and detailed design, including plans for each and every window, enhance the appeal of this spacious remodelled Queenslander.

Photographs // Jeremy Veitch

Hidden within this grand Chelmer house is a skeleton. For what was a two-bedroom, one-bathroom cottage is now an unrecognisable version of its former self with four bedrooms, two home offices and several living areas over two levels.

The new footprint is almost three times that of the original but, surprisingly, the house sits comfortably on the 1138sq m block. Indeed, the property inhabits the space with a street appeal more in tune with the neighbourhood of similarly sized homes and distinctive architectural style.

Architect Tania Coward found that by raising the original structure by just over a metre and moving it 4.5m to the south of the block she could incorporate the required layout while still retaining the structural proportions of this grander style of home.

One of the major results of using so much of the north-east side of the block is that the formal entry to the home had to be changed. It now sits more to the centre of the facade and the old entry was filled with a window.

"I had to change the focus of the entry but I didn't want it to be glaringly obvious as to where the original entry was," Tania says. "Much thought and planning went into how the new entry would work because it dictates the circulation inside the house."

Tania is of the firm opinion that it was not worth keeping the original entry – for the sake of posterity – if it did not allow for a natural flow of traffic into and through the home.

She is also of the belief that "you should never underestimate the value of views from inside to the garden". That is why, rather than using french doors, Tania had full-height double-hung windows installed wherever possible.

"I believe that you should seize every opportunity to see the outside coming in, after all that is what Queensland architecture is about," says Tania.

It's also about being practical. With our climate and lifestyle, there are some obvious design strategies that, while they may seem conservative, actually work. For instance, Tania allowed for wide verandas and more of them.

"Verandas pull the heat off the main building," Tania explains, and for the owner, they are some of the most used spaces in the home.

"Hopper windows over the doors at a high level are also the sensible solution for drawing rising hot air out of a room," says Tania, pointing out those used in the formal lounge room.

There are some 32 windows throughout the house, a mixture of standard size and full-height double hung. None of these windows are restored from the original house. Like most of the

well-worn cottage, including the veranda and interior VJ walls, they were too structurally unsound to be salvaged.

Tania had documentation drawn up for each individual window and door in the home to ensure they were placed correctly in relation to the scale and proportion of the whole structure. Tania is adamant that only this level of detail could have achieved the end product that the owners now enjoy and appreciate: classic and detailed design with quality joinery and carpentry.

Having seen many restored Queenslanders, the owner was mindful of the slick remodelling that can belie a lack of care when it comes to finer details.

"A house can appear lovely at first inspection but when you look closer you just know that things have not been done properly," he says.

With builder Ian Wilson turning Tania's plans into reality, the owner's dreams for the house were in safe hands. In 2007, Ian Wilson won the 2007 Master Builders Brisbane Housing & Construction Award in the Home Renovation/Remodelling Project category for this Chelmer classic.

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