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HOME & AWAY
Design trends
STEPHEN CRAFTI

Repurpose-built

Renovating a house generally means adding more room in which to move. But often, it's not the amount of floor space but the type of spaces created that count, and flexible areas sometimes make more sense.

in MELBOURNE

This double-fronted Victorian timber house in Abbotsford had a rudimentary makeover in the 1980s. Even with this update, the only connection to the garden was via a singular door. Bathrooms remained a distance from bedrooms. "We've actually reduced the home's footprint by approximately 10 per cent, even though we didn't set out to make the place smaller," says architect Melissa Bright, director of Make Architecture.

Designed for a couple with two teenagers, the brief to Make Architecture was for greater outdoor space, but also more flexible spaces, ones that weren't used for only one purpose. Pivotal to the renovation is a new wing oriented to the north-facing back garden. Featuring large

timber-clad sliding doors, akin to a brise soleil, the enclosed or opened verandah doubles as a second living area. As well as northern light, this area benefits from polycarbonate gables above these doors.

"The polycarbonate shimmers in the light, similar to the old galvanised pitched roofs in neighbouring homes," Bright says.

Bright approached the renovation in terms of creating an efficient floor plan. The family required only a small dining area for everyday use. However, during the Christmas period and on other festive occasions, the numbers expand with family and friends.

"The deck, which can be fully enclosed, functions as a dining area, allowing for up to 20 people," Bright says. The deck is also used as a television nook when the cricket is shown during the summer months. The arm of the television set swings



Flexibility first: The new verandah creates an all-weather living space. Photo: Peter Bennetts

around to the verandah. Make Architecture also designed a double-sided fireplace to ensure the verandah space was toasty during the colder months.

The renovation includes a new kitchen, with timber-veneer joinery and stone benches. A small nook to one side of the kitchen doubles as an

informal living space. Complete with built-in shelves and day bed, this nook has one "foot" in the kitchen and one on the verandah.

The house, about 200 square metres in area, still contains three bedrooms and a study.

"We spent the budget on providing quality spaces that would

be regularly used," says Bright, who concedes there is a trend to larger homes.

"If the spaces are well conceived and offer flexibility, there's no need to extend just for the sake of it."

Make Architecture can be contacted on (03) 9853 2887.



Modern aesthetic: A seamless connection to the outdoors. Photo: Luke Carter

in SYDNEY

Although this house in Lilyfield was built only about 20 years ago, the 150-square-metre two-storey dwelling required a major overhaul.

"Initially our brief was to update the kitchen area with a budget of \$50,000, but our clients realised that this wasn't going to change the place dramatically," says architect Tom Wills, director of TW Architects.

The revised budget of \$250,000 meant the architect could rework the entire house, including the three bedrooms and bathroom.

Pivotal to the architect's brief was a kitchen with a strong industrial aesthetic, akin to a sleek inner-city

cafe. "Our clients [a couple] love entertaining friends," Wills says. "He particularly enjoys cooking in front of an 'audience'."

The owners also wanted a covered outdoor space, adjacent to the kitchen, for dining. This outdoor terrace also offers impressive views of Sydney's city skyline.

"We designed the outdoor awning without any fixed columns to detract from this view," Wills says. Flexibility was also at the forefront of the architect's mind when he renovated the three bedrooms. "It was important for our clients that the house had resale value with three bedrooms," Wills says. "But they also needed additional wardrobe space." Rather

than extend the main bedroom and encroach on a second bedroom for wardrobe space, Wills borrowed space from the wide corridor.

"There are still three bedrooms, one used as a study, the other as a guest bedroom," Wills says.

One of the most dramatic changes to the feel of the house was achieved by replacing the staircase. "When you opened the door before this renovation, the first thing you saw was a carpeted staircase," Wills says. "It completely concealed these spectacular city views. It also made the house feel cramped."

TW Architects can be contacted on 9555 8087.

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