

Renovate

The brief

To extend a 1930s home to make the most of its park setting while catering for the needs of an extended family, but without losing the character of the original home.



ARCHITECT

Studio [R] Architecture + Design
studior.net.au

BUILDER

Ferrocon Construction + Management
ferrocon.com.au

Landscape Design

Amber Road amberroaddesign.com.au

THE SOURCE

Living room and bathroom tiles

Skheme, skheme.com

Renovation Gertrudis

Brown face brickwork

Austral Bricks, australbricks.com.au

Fireplace

Jetmaster Heat & Glo, jetmaster.com.au

Downlights, pendants and

step lights JSB, jsblighting.com.au

Artemide, artemide.com.au

Edison Light Globes,

edisonlightglobes.com

LED strip lighting

Superlight, superlight.com.au

Tapware

Geo Viva from Accent International,

accenttapware.com.au

Outdoor furniture and accessories

Tait, madebytait.com.au

Spence & Lyda, spenceandlyda.com.au

Fixed skylight Velux, velux.com.au



Are you renovating? Tell us about it at
[facebook.com/DThomemagazine](https://www.facebook.com/DThomemagazine)



Set sail for a new adventure

An old P&O-style home shows it still has plenty of life left in it, writes **Robyn Willis**

It's a little disheartening, to say the least, when you invite builders and architects to tender for the renovation of your home and they tell you to knock it down and start over again.

But that's what the owners of this 1930s property in leafy Killara were faced with when they decided to reinvigorate the family home.

With their own children grown and leaving the nest, they wanted a family "seat" of sorts where relatives and friends would feel welcome to drop by.

But with a 750sq m block to play with, they were being nudged towards demolishing the old home in favour of something larger.

When architects Sam Rigoli and Mark Szczerbicki looked at the house, however, they saw merit in the solidly built P&O-style home that had clearly seen better days.

"Because the land was so large and it was an open site, there was a push to have a larger showpiece home with a view from the street," Mark says.

Sam pointed out many of the features typical of the style such as curved walls and balustrades and the extensive use of timber would be prohibitively expensive to reproduce.

"The curved staircase could never be replicated and, although the windows were a little rusty, my position was you would not be able to recreate that quality if you knocked it down," he says.

New beginnings

It didn't take much to convince the owners to restore the original house and extend at the rear with a pavilion to provide the new open-plan living area they desired.

There are generally two schools of thought when dealing with heritage architecture. One suggests that any new work replicates the old,



right down to the building practices. The other approach is to create something entirely modern in contrast with the original building.

Sam and Mark proposed to take the middle road, recreating the past where it made sense and designing uncompromisingly contemporary spaces where it worked best.

"We tried to explore the possibilities of the new and the old and how they could merge in the middle," Mark says.

Starting with the original fabric of the house, Mark and Sam oversaw the restoration of everything from window frames and stained glass to the solid timber staircase with

curved balustrade. "The joinery was relatively complex and there are some specialised finishes in terms of the ceilings," Mark says.

"There was an existing stained-glass window that needed help and we decided that if it was an existing element that was imperfect, we didn't want to replace them with something else."

When it came to extending the upper floor to make room for the new main bedroom suite, Mark and Sam decided to extend the timber-lined ceiling.

"It was a beautiful ceiling so we extended it. A lot of people might have liked a pristine



In a nutshell

- ✓ If you're not happy with the first builder or architect you speak to, get a second opinion.
- ✓ Be careful what you choose to knock down. It may be hard to replace.
- ✓ Consider landscaping and lighting right from the start of the project.



Old and new came together in this house with the timber ceiling (below) extended and the original P&O features restored wherever possible. Landscaping reflects the home's parklike setting.

plasterboard ceiling but this gives the space so much more," Mark says.

Park life

Given the house backs on to a park, they designed a thoroughly modern open-plan kitchen, living and dining space with an uninterrupted opening facing on to it.

This created the "open-door" approach the owners wanted so that they could easily see younger family members or even neighbours at the park and invite them in.

Both Sam and Mark designed the space with the outdoors in mind and firmly believe the landscape plays an integral part in the design of the house.

"The design and the landscaping go hand in hand and they are the main considerations at the start of the design process," Sam says. "If you look at our initial concept drawings, it is all about how we connect those spaces."

"It is such a unique site."

Although the extension met the criteria for complying development, Sam and Mark made sure that everyone from the landscape architect to the lighting designer and engineer were involved from the start.

"If you take out any one of them, it is not a complete project," Sam says.

Built to last

As with all old houses, the renovation process was a bit of a Pandora's box.

"There are always things you might not anticipate, like you have to fix the roof above the stair," he says. "We had to fix some leaking problems but there was nothing so major that it was not worth keeping the house."

Sam and Mark used the opportunity to explore ways of integrating the old space with the new and exposing the old house for what it was, including the original brickwork in the kitchen.

"We build robustly and build to last and we try to do that in our new work but also to preserve that when we find it," Sam says.

robyn.willis@news.com.au
Pictures Tom Ferguson



The original staircase and balustrade were restored.

