

homes



CHARACTER *building*

RENOVATING ENSURES A HAPPY MIX OF
OLD AND NEW



An Unley couple loved the character of their 1900s home but also wanted to bring it into the 21st century.

They worked with Urban Habitats on a renovation project which transformed the ageing property into a modern, energy and space-efficient family home.

The house, the last in a row of four properties, previously had a single bathroom, small kitchen, a limited entertaining area and no parking.

Urban Habitats was able to create a study, two bathrooms, large kitchen/entertaining area and off-street parking for two cars.

“We really liked our fuddy-duddy house so we wanted to try and preserve its character, particularly the streetscape,” co-owner Martyn says.

“It’s worked out so well . . . we don’t feel trapped in some brand new place without any character but it’s also still modern and liveable and has a clean aesthetic.” Martyn and his partner were adamant they wanted to renovate the original home rather than start from scratch.

“A knock down and re-do may have been a cheaper proposition, and it’s not just heartstrings of keeping what we had before, but I tend to think a lot of

environmental energy is embedded in the original structure and it’s worth keeping,” he says.

It was important to the couple that the Maud St façade be maintained but the back of the property was a whole different story.

The walls in the main house were stripped, repaired and reinforced and new cornices and skirting boards added. The original floors, doors and some windows were retained and refurbished and the home was completely rewired.

A key feature is the newly created kitchen, lounge and dining area which replaces a 1980s lean-to at



the back. The bright, open space has hand-polished concrete floors.

"We're not necessarily huge entertainers but the kitchen was a big thing for us and we did things like embed the stovetop in the bench which can be tricky but has worked well and means you can stand and chat to people while cooking," Martyn says.

The changed layout also meant Martyn and family gained a second bathroom with floor-to-ceiling large format tiles and skylights.

"The old kitchen is now a main bathroom and we had fond memories of it, it was cosy and small, but

the repurposing was really good as we were able to add a bath which is good for us with a small child," he says.

Urban Habitats used a variety of ideas to improve the home's energy performance including an insulated skillion roof with a projecting eave, large sliding doors, ducted airconditioning, reversible ceiling fans, clerestory windows and electronic louvers.

"The energy performance was really, really important to us and we wanted to make it cooler in summer and warmer in winter ... and it's working noticeably well so far," Martyn says.

The couple admit they had high expectations which Urban Habitats easily met.

"The whole process was so easy. They were exceptional managers of time and budget and this on-time and on-budget thing can't be stressed enough," Martyn says.

"When your house is being renovated it becomes the biggest thing in your life at that time and these guys made the seven-month project a really enjoyable process."