

HOME STYLE

JOHANNA
LEGGATT

Outward looking

A clever renovation delivers light and views to a dark and dated 1960s home



Photos: Tatjana Plitt



IT'S hard to beat that holiday feeling of stepping outside your tent or caravan and taking in the expanse of landscape in front of you.

It's a feeling Bent Architecture director Paul Porjazoski set about capturing with the renovation of this dark, dated 1960s house in Pascoe Vale South that's home to a family of four and two dachshunds.

The house now has a new, stunning living, dining and kitchen space that extends right into the garden, drawing in views through generous expanses of glass.

"It's open and outward looking, feeling more like a sheltered place in the garden than a traditional living space," Mr Porjazoski said. "We have the environment for this kind of indoor-outdoor living, so we should make the most of it."

CLEVER THINKING

The new rear living area features a stack of clever ideas.

First, there's the high, sloping ceiling, which gives a sense of airiness, and the high-set louvred windows, which capture sky views, cooling breezes and northern light, warming the concrete floors for passive heating.

Blurring the boundary between inside and out are the brick pavers that extend into the room, and the brick window seat that extends into the garden.

A plum position for chilling out is the window seat next to a bank of casement windows. "This special seat is bathed in golden northern light, making it the perfect spot to sit with a cuppa and a book," Mr Porjazoski said.

MAKEOVER MAGIC

The new living space is not the only improvement. The home's original part has also been significantly updated.

"The house was looking very tired and hadn't received

a lot of love over the past few years," Mr Porjazoski said. "We're talking old 1950s wallpaper and carpet that had never been touched."

As part of their brief, the owners wanted three bedrooms and two bathrooms and to keep the existing rooms as intact as possible — a wise financial decision, Mr Porjazoski said.

"You can chew up a lot of your budget remodelling your existing floorplan and it's a trap that a lot of people fall into," he said. "One of the tricks is to try, as best as possible, to keep the outline of the existing rooms."

From an environmental perspective, the architect and owners were also keen to keep the front of the house.

"It is always sad when you're travelling around the suburbs and it seems that houses only have a 30 or 40-year lifespan before ending up in landfill," Mr Porjazoski noted.

The existing living room at the front was made over as a second living space for the children. And the main bedroom was refurbished and an ensuite added. One side of the home was then remodelled to create two bedrooms and a family bathroom. "This was all accommodated under the existing roofline," Mr Porjazoski said.

Old windows were replaced with double-glazed alternatives, and skylights now allow natural light to flood in. Recycled messmate timber was used for floorboards, wall panelling and cabinetry.

"Aside from being environmentally responsible, recycled messmate has a warmth and character that cannot be replicated with new timber," Mr Porjazoski said.

PERSONALITY PLUS

Plenty of character has been injected into the home through novel touches.

At the entry to the girls' bedrooms, for example, are nooks. "The nooks allow them to hang their clothes or take a seat and put their shoes on," Mr Porjazoski said.

The kitchen bench is a standout. Tiles decorate the front, an overhang acts as a breakfast bar, and a footrest pole adds comfort factor. Decor wise, many pieces in the home have a mid-century feel, which adds a funky note.

"The owners brought in their own furniture and art and have had a big influence on the look of the living zones," Mr Porjazoski said.

The landscaping at the front of the home was carefully considered. Drought-tolerant plants provide easy-care greenery and a raised veggie garden with a bench seat invites the owners out to tend produce and enjoy the sun.

"When I was growing up, we spent so much time playing in the streets and neighbours' front yards and I think we have lost that," Mr Porjazoski said.

"People now spend more time in the back of their houses and what we've ended up with are front gardens that are purely ornamental. We wanted to have a front garden that people and kids could use."

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