



## An unusual tale

It has the shape of a fish fin, but the modern look of this extension is just the end of a classic Queenslander

Once described as a "dog box", this Windsor house has come a long way since it was purchased in 2002 by the current owners. That description was obviously coined before a major renovation that began in October 2008. It ended last November after the cottage had been raised, moved slightly forward on the block and then extended towards the back.

A little more than 12 months of construction to bring life to the big-picture plans afforded the owners plenty of research time on the smaller details that, while minor in respect to the work done on the bones of the house, are important to the overall transformation.

"When we bought the house, all the features of the Queenslander had been removed," says one of the owners, gesturing towards the decorative touches now gracing the verandas, such as those distinctive curly brackets, carefully chosen to suit the traditional look.

"We've loved bringing back the beauty of the Queenslander," adds the owner, who has also relished the chance to inject her own individual style. Architect Charles Howroyd, from CDI Architects, was there to help in the final stages of the

WITH FRANCENE RIDLEY



**GOOD FORMS** ... a different approach to an extension results in more living room and a brighter kitchen and bathroom – all are new chapters in the story of the original house that's in Windsor. **Photographs** // Richard Waugh

design process, while Brad Taylor from Arco Eco began with the first drawings.

The brief was to ensure the house accommodated five bedrooms (two upstairs, three down), a large veranda, TV-living room, study and a roomy kitchen. Storage space for 10,000 litres of rainwater was found and, even the pool made the final cut.

Of the original house, little remains the same – for example, the ensuite and walk-in wardrobe of the main bedroom upstairs used to be a bedroom. On a smaller scale, it's the simple changes that make "the world of difference", says the owner.

In what is now a sitting room at the entrance to the house, one wall has been converted to make an opening to the veranda. Windows and french doors allow much more light to fill the room and provide an outlook to the city.

The extension at the back of the 407sq m block has the weatherboard look of the Queenslander style, but a cottage built

between the wars certainly would not have had the back exterior wall sloping at an angle to the ground as this house now does – "it resembles fins", says the owner.

This is where the house starts to deviate from the strictly Queenslander style to a new suburban aesthetic, albeit still within the confines of town planning codes: small lot, demolition and character.

The unusual shape of the extension could be incorporated because it can't be seen from the street front and, therefore, does not have an impact on the "character" of the surrounding built environment.

If you happen to look back up at the house from somewhere behind the block, then it's definitely not something you would miss. The inclining wall adds a new dimension – a skillion effect – to the regular shapes and angles of the rest of the house. It brings new meaning to the traditional pavilion added to the backyard.

The sloping wall belongs to the part of the extension that houses the TV-living room upstairs. Next to this area is the functional and stylish kitchen, which has views of the surrounding suburbs, but none of an overflowing pantry that is cleverly hidden behind sliding doors.

Initially, the plans included a walk-in pantry but the owner says the sliding door solution works just as well.

Downstairs, there are bedrooms and living spaces for the children, who have settled into their new digs quite happily.

Now with more space and light, the family has moved beyond living in a "shoebox" – and even the dog box – and it's all within the right codes.

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