

Dream renovation a reality

RENOVATING their semi-detached cottage in Bronte was a long-held dream for Greg and Kim Box. The dream even predates their marriage.

“This has been Kim’s vision – it was her mother’s place originally,” Greg said. “They didn’t have the resources to renovate and so this is in a way a homage to my mother-in-law.”

The three-bedroom home with its wide hallway and ornate original ceilings has been modernised without culling the period charm. The property’s existing footprint has been retained, with a pergola added to the back living area which leads out to the garden.

“It’s light, bright and airy,” Greg said. “The way it’s turned out is pretty much as it was in our minds.”

Getting the end result they’d hoped for meant spending time researching and hiring an architect to guide their vision. Enter British-trained Richard Hall.

“There was an article about a house Richard Hall had done and we liked it. My wife rang and asked, ‘Who’s this bloke and how can we get in touch?’” Greg said.

“It’s been a collaborative effort. My wife

spent three hours looking for the right range hood. We’d been arguing about it for two days. The fact we didn’t live here while the renovations were taking place helped.”

The biggest demolition brought down the wall that separated the lounge room and kitchen. The original kitchen had timber cupboards and dark tiles and barely captured any light. “We had to have a light on in the middle of the day,” Greg said.

A combined lounge, kitchen and dining area that opens out from french doors onto the garden has brought the period home into the 21st century.

Stainless-steel fittings are a continuing theme, featuring on kickboards, light switches and the fireplace.

Many of the fittings were sourced online, including door handles and a vanity unit from Queensland.

When it came to the bathroom, Greg’s idea to take in the linen closet situated just outside the bathroom entrance was just what Hall had in mind. It allowed for an additional one metre of space and a contemporary look with both a freestanding bath and separate shower.

“The bigger tiles were Richard’s idea,” Greg



said. “Originally it was dark and green – very ’60s.”

Although lighting didn’t feature high on their list of priorities, recessed lights were chosen so as not to take away from the effect of the original ceilings.

Alexandra Selfe, Richard Hall’s marketing manager, said the idea behind the renovation was to draw the eye out into the garden.

“Only a few walls were taken down and Richard was given artistic freedom,” Ms Selfe said. “The clients were supportive of that. They didn’t scrimp on fixtures and fittings and they invested in high-quality European appliances.”



Photos: ALAN PLACE

GREG'S TIPS FOR WANNABE RENOVATORS

1. Go into it expecting delays and cost overflows.
2. Have a vision in mind before you start.
3. Use the internet for research and don't be afraid of purchasing fittings and other supplies online.