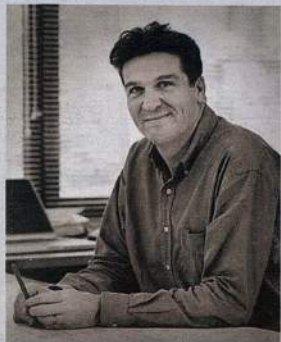


Renovate

The brief

To create an unobtrusive new level on a semi-detached cottage that will open it up to the light and provide additional bedrooms upstairs and open plan living on the lower floor.



ARCHITECT

Utz Sanby Architects utzsanby.com

BUILDER

CKJ Building Services
ckjbuildingservices.com.au

THE SOURCE

Arne Jacobsen Series 7 dining chairs

Cult, cultdesign.com.au

Coco Flip pendant lights

Cult, cultdesign.com.au

Ground floor joinery Caravello Joinery,
caravellojoinery.com.au



Taking one for the team

A semi-detached cottage benefits from a co-ordinated effort, writes Robyn Willis

Working with family or friends is generally considered a great way to ruin a relationship.

But, as this project shows, working with teammates is another thing entirely.

When the owners of this semi-detached Federation home in Wollstonecraft were looking for the right professionals to do their renovation, they didn't have to go far, as architect Duncan Sanby explains.

"I play football with the owner and the builder is in the same team," he says.

The owners wanted a little more space than the single level two-bedroom semi, with its series of rooms at the rear, was providing.

Ball games

So they passed the ball to Duncan, as it were, to come up with a design that would offer something more spacious with better access to natural light.

Getting approval to renovate semi-detached homes can be difficult because of council concerns about maintaining symmetry across the two properties.

Just to make it more interesting, this house was part of a row of eight matching semi-detached dwellings, none of which had been extensively renovated.

But Duncan says it was ideally positioned next to the last house in the row with good potential for natural light and slightly less visible from the corner.

Given he proposed to add another storey to the house, Duncan was somewhat apprehensive that he was in for a long negotiation with council.

Instead, it was approved in six weeks.

"You would think that we were under quite a lot of pressure from council but this was approved without any problem at all," he says.



"It was incredible and I still don't understand how it happened."

Council's decision might have been helped by the nature of the extension.

Upstairs, downstairs

The original bedroom at the front was maintained while the builder knocked through to the second bedroom and converted it into a walk-in robe and bathroom.

The upper storey, which includes two bedrooms and a bathroom, has been designed for minimal visibility from the street with raked ceilings to maximum ceiling heights.

Downstairs the ceiling is lower over the living space and then becomes higher over the kitchen and dining room, increasing the sense of space and light.

"We kept the original external walls but otherwise it was completely rebuilt at the back," says Duncan. "We did not extend the house any further out the back, apart from adding a little shading for the internal spaces."

Bi-fold doors provide seamless access to the existing courtyard

While the lower ceiling height in the living room creates a sense of intimacy, especially during winter, the success of the open plan



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Inside story
Carefully planned joinery means the ground floor space can be open plan without having to compromise on its functionality. Storage has been balanced between open and closed shelving, while the timber trim gives the whole unit a slightly unfitted feel that almost floats in the space.



design is down to the continuous line of joinery that runs through it.
"The top of that joinery folds around like a ribbon," he says. "We wanted to make it a seamless piece of joinery which raises up around the kitchen and then folds back down in the dining space."
In effect, the joinery is the unassuming engine of the ground floor providing both services and storage.

Forward pass

With detailed drawings at hand, Duncan then passed the ball to builder Chris Cowley from CKJ Building Services.

Budget was the driving factor on this project, says Duncan, so he took a back seat during the six-month construction phase.

"It was a different style of contract so that the builder took decisions to do the work for the set price," says Duncan.

This meant less stress for the owners but it inevitably resulted in compromises.

"There are a few things I might have done differently but they are more architectural details and they would have cost more money," he says.

However, Duncan says they were always on hand in case questions arose.

Ultimately, it was an exercise in trust for all involved that resulted in a renovation that well and truly met the owners' brief.

Duncan admits there is something to be said for having prior experience working in a team with the builder and the owner.

"When you're part of a football team, you do your own thing but if everyone does their individual part, then the whole team works," he says. "That's what we did."

"I did the design and got it approved and then Chris took over and did his thing."

The level of finish and the space achieved has also not gone unnoticed in the neighbourhood, particularly among residents from other semis in the row.

"There have been a few people who have approached us since then to say they liked what we did with it," says Duncan.

robyn.willis@news.com.au
Pictures Marian Riabic



The new upstairs bedroom follows the roof line to maximise ceiling heights. High windows frame the view.

