



## Modern love

Generous outlook transforms ugly duckling

**T**he renovation of this mid-century, brick home in Indooroopilly is a celebration of a bygone era. The changes made highlight the many ways lifestyles have evolved since 1957 when the house was built. A small, dark living room, an enclosed kitchen and a disconnected garden were some of the areas hugely improved by new spatial arrangements. A new terrace and larger windows and doors have created a sense of generosity and openness. Chris Bligh was the architect behind the alterations and additions.

"The only new roof area is the carport and the deck, everything else is under the original roof," Chris says. "We wanted to see past the 'ugliness' and look at the potential of the modest footprint and think about how it could be reconfigured in a cost-effective way."

The reconfiguration starts with a new paved entry, garden wall and carport built from orange and "frost" white bricks. These elements set the tone for the new additions and reference the citrus hues used in the original colour scheme.

"The front door was smaller (than the new) and (beyond it) there was a long corridor and a warren of rooms," Chris says.

"All the bedrooms were at the north end and the kitchen was in the middle. The kitchen was closed off."

Recognising that the cluster of bedrooms took up the best, north-eastern aspect, three bedrooms were moved elsewhere in the plan to make way for a combined living-dining room and kitchen. The kitchen remains in the same place with surrounding walls removed to visually connect to adjacent living spaces. Large sliding doors on both sides of the space promote outdoor access and good air flow.

A covered timber deck was built next to the eastern wall of the living-dining room to merge indoor-outdoor spaces. To create a sense of enclosure to the eastern edge of the outdoor room, a timber screen includes shelves and vertical battens, adding visual interest.

"The screen is designed to deal with the pragmatics of eastern, morning sun and privacy from neighbours," Chris says. "The screen also picks up on the idea of the '50s sunroom with its pot plant shelf."

The covered space opens to the north, with a timber bench seat on the northern edge being a place for gathering and a mini-stadium for watching pool activities. "We played with the height of the fixed seat so we didn't have to have balustrades and we designed it so you can sit both ways," Chris says.

The original sitting room at the front of the house has been refurbished to return the fireplace to good working order and introduce more natural light, via two new doorways. Original, mid-century shelves are complemented by new joinery.

"We have just done a few things to make certain areas more special," Chris says. "The living room, for example, wasn't that pleasant really. It didn't have much natural light because it was closed off from the sunroom. We opened it up."

The kitchen was modified to let in light and show the ceiling structure. The whitewashed ply joinery is offset by an ink-black ceiling.

"In the kitchen we exposed the original ceiling joists and rafters to give it a break from the homogeneity of the linear plan," Chris says. "We gave it a vertical punched opening and skylight to illuminate a dark box."

Part of a brick wall was removed for a larger opening and sliding window. This ensures northern light floods the interior.

"There was a tendency for these (mid-century) houses to be a bit mean in terms of floor area," Chris says. "We wanted to give it more of a sense of generosity."

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BEAUTY TO BEHOLD ... A sense of space. PHOTOGRAPHS - Scott Burrows.

