

HERALD Homes

Saturday, April 30, 2016

Weekend



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MT EDEN

Step into my arbour

Take a blank canvas, add an eye for tradition and you reach maximum flair and function, writes **Graham Hepburn**

Knocking the out the back of a villa and extending it is a common practice, for good reason. As Simon Allen says of their renovation: "It changes the way you live. It brings in more light, connects you with the outdoors and you end up spending more time cooking and entertaining."

"Villas are so forgiving – this is the second one I have done and they can be a blank canvas for whatever you want to do."

When he and wife Kelli-Jo Walker bought this circa 1916 transitional villa more than six years ago, it had been renovated but the couple could see potential to improve it further.

Simon, who used to work in property management, says the home had great street appeal and as well as extending it at the rear, they could see the basement could be enhanced.

"It just needed a bit more love and for us to manipulate it a bit," says Kelli-Jo.

The street appeal that initially attracted the couple includes an arbour gate, picket fence and brick path to the front veranda, which has a privacy screen at one end that Simon made to mimic the fretwork.

Along traditional lines, the home has three bedrooms and a bathroom arranged along the hallway, which has a stairway to the basement.

Space was borrowed to create an en suite for the master bedroom at the front of the house, and the main bathroom was modernised, but still features a clawfoot bath. The other bedroom at the front of the house has a window seat and attic access to a huge storage space.

Simon and Kelli-Jo reversed the direction of the staircase in the hallway so you weren't looking down it as you entered the home. They also added a cavity slider so this part of the house could be closed off from the open plan living area.

Kelli-Jo says: "With the open plan layout I can cook or put the laundry on and still keep an eye on the kids whether they are in the bath, the living room or in the back yard."

Simon says: "With three young boys, functionality was important to us."

Kelli-Jo says a lot of thought went into the layout of the kitchen so it worked for cooking and entertaining. The large Caesarstone top is ideal for food preparation and has enough circulation space so people can gather around without getting in the way.

"Because Simon is an avid fisherman, when he catches some fish we have a huge cook-up and invite friends and family over and the kitchen works really well for that," says Kelli-Jo. "This space has been entertainment central for us."

When they extended the home, they used rimu demolition timber from Christchurch for the flooring to get a good match with the existing floors, which Simon believes are a mix of rimu and kauri.

A heat pump and heat-transfer system keep the home toasty, and there is also a built-in sound system.

A set of stacking sliders 6m wide, rolls back to open the house to a deck built around existing trees and steps down to the lawn. Rather than remove the trees, the couple made them a feature with uplighting.

Simon's uncle was involved in the building work and as a parting gift he built the boys a playhouse in the backyard.

Downstairs, the couple created a home theatre with projector, and adjoining that is an office.

Also on this level is a true man cave, right down to walls of volcanic rock. Simon has developed this space for storage – especially for his fishing rods and



PHOTOS / TED BAGHURST



3 **2** **0+**

18 PINE ST, MT EDEN
SIZE: Land 581sq m, house 173sq m.
PRICE GUIDE: Above \$1.6 million.
AUCTION: May 17.
INSPECT: Sat/Sun noon-12.30pm.
SCHOOL ZONES: Balmoral Primary and Intermediate, Mt Albert Grammar School, Auckland Girls' Grammar School.
CONTACT: Andre Coppell, 021 300 794, and Cheryl Crane, 021 444 149, Bayleys.
ON THE WEB: bayleys.co.nz/1700280
 * 4 off-street parking



tools – and as a games room with pool table and dart board. There is potential for further development here, although Simon has enjoyed the rough-and-ready nature of the space, which can be opened up with a roller door to the driveway.

Simon has sold out of his family property business, so the couple is looking for a complete change – trying out country living in Clevedon with plans to build a home if they and the boys enjoy the lifestyle.

