

MT EDEN

Determination pays off

Renovated property has the personal touch, discovers **Sandra Goodwin**

Trying to get Phil Curtis to admit his renovation of his family's Mt Eden villa is extraordinary is near impossible. The closest you'll get from the rather humble joiner, who is full of praise for wife Carol's mothering of kids Emily (12), Matilda (10) and Henry (8), is the admission he's "very determined".

Fortunately, a few choice facts about the house they bought in two flats a decade ago speak for themselves. Daily for two years Phil dug and carted away a trailer-load of soil to level the once sloping backyard.

The rear extension's floorboards integrate seamlessly with originals because he bashed and filed copious nails into square-headed for mat, staining round each one to mimic aging effects.

He searched extensively to source timber, much of it to match the 1907 villa's original kauri. Sources included a relative's re-sited villa and a neighbour's renovation. He even took his portable mill to a tree for removal from the Cambridge Soccer Club.

Phil stripped and painted every weatherboard, made every ceiling batten and toiled making items such as doors and elaborate inbuilt wardrobes.

He says: "We knew it was going to be a huge job. And maybe it was even a bigger job than we thought."

Research associate Carol was heavily pregnant with Matilda when they were searching for their first house a decade ago. They initially rejected this place split into flats in the 60s as too big a project.

But they struggled to find another do-up they could afford and thought this had good bones and character. Plus they recognised its handiness to town and to Balmoral School, accessed by a pathway off their street.

Their 10-year, just-completed labour of love was largely tackled room by room, culminating in the rear living extension.

Phil says: "It was important to me that the level of detailing in the front of the house carried on throughout the extension. I really hope people appreciate that."

Lower ceilings, which used to confine dimensions inside, have been removed so now



most ceilings within the re-plumbed, re-wired, re-gibbed insulated home are a lofty 3.1m high. The four bedrooms include the master with en suite opening on to the private side of the wrap-around rear deck. The extensive inbuilt wardrobing Phil built even harbours pull-out drawers.

There's a neat built-in kauri desk alongside the entertainers' kitchen - both Phil-built, naturally - which includes Caesarstone benches and a big island, faced on one side with mosaic-like stepped



kauri blocks. Two big internal sliding doors incorporating dimpled Flemish glass can shut off the living area from within the sun-drenched rear kitchen-dining-living extension.

French doors flow out to decks and the now-level fenced backyard where the kids roam with cat Mouser and blue heeler Bowle.

The separate single garage Phil built has side french doors and is fully lined and insulated for sleep-out readiness.


**21 ST ALBANS AVE,
MT EDEN**

SIZE (more or less):
Land 528sq m, house
163sq m plus garage.

PRICE GUIDE: \$1.9
million-plus.

AUCTION: 3:30pm
August 29 (unless sold
prior).

INSPECT: Sat/Sun
2-2:30pm.

SCHOOLS: Balmoral
School, MAGS, AGGS.

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ON THE WEB:

bayleys.co.nz/1630171

*Covered parking for 1
plus 4 OSP.