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VIBRATIONS

This dramatic transformation on Chevron Island requires a double-take ...



The pencil pine located on the right of this strikingly contemporary residence is really the only clue to identifying it as the underwhelming brick-and-tile property which once occupied the same site. Although it's difficult to believe from first impressions, this was very much a renovation project, with Vibe Design Group able to retain around 70% of the original building, including the main floor slabs on both levels. Inside and out, radical changes have created a clean, spacious feel which draws in natural breezes and plenty of natural light and fulfils their original brief "to create an extremely liveable home which offers uncompromised aesthetic appeal, particularly from the street and waterfront".

One of the most challenging aspects of the project was initially deciding whether to renovate or destroy the existing double storey dwelling, which Senior Design Consultant Katie Voigt describes as "a solid structure." After much deliberation, Katie says it was decided

to renovate, partly to minimise the great expense of demolition and waste removal, and then work towards "utilising as much of the existing conditions as possible." The home was completed in just over 12 months, with Vibe's involvement extending to the specification of all interior finishes, cabinetry design, electrical detailing, lighting layouts and landscaping. The result is a very cohesive design aesthetic with Vibe achieving their goal of "a seamless transition between the exterior and interior of the home" Katie says.

As a starting point, changing the roof pitch helped create a much more commanding and attractive street presence. "The house itself was visually unattractive from both street and waterfront views and was dwarfed by the adjoining properties due to the declining angle of the roofing" says Vibe Managing Director Michael O'Sullivan. "The reversed roof pitch, tapering to a narrowed point, offers a much greater presence and height to the dwelling". Aluminium screening battens were also introduced to give the façade an illusion of depth,

"These design features are also reflected on the waterfront façade, making the home clearly identifiable from both vantage points" Michael says.

As well as a lacklustre exterior, Michael says the home had its share of issues inside, including the "dungeon-like feel" of the lower storey, due to the reduced ceiling heights and lack of natural sunlight, and the "outdated floor plan" which did not offer internal access between upper and lower storeys. In addition, "the outdoor entertaining space made poor use of the canal views and swimming pool area."

All this was addressed in the extensive interior renovation where the priority was to "maximise light, ventilation and potential views whilst maintaining privacy" Michael says. The lower storey now comprises the double garage, laundry, bathroom, bar and cellar, and entertaining area as well as two ensuite bedrooms. To create

an enhanced feeling of height and space, a light colour palette was used throughout this area.

A feature staircase now links the lower storey to the extremely spacious dining/kitchen/living area which covers the entire length of the property and enjoys a spectacular backdrop of the ever-changing vista outside. This part of the home opens directly onto the deck and has the calming atmosphere of a light-filled gallery. "Alleviating the necessity for walls or intermediate supports through its expansive length created the gallery-like feel" Katie says. "Steel columns carrying point loads were positioned within perimeter walls and transferred through to the solid walls within the lower storey. The raked ceilings converge centrally and open up to the waterfront and street facades, further exaggerating the generous expanse of the room." The improved ceiling height also accommodates glass louvres, which allow northern sunlight and invaluable cross ventilation.

The cool, clean look of the kitchen is defined by the 'Ice Snow' Caesarstone benchtops, minimalist contemporary lighting and metallic accents. Timber flooring, water views and the beautifully contrasting dark timber-grained veneer on the kitchen island joinery, softens the space and makes for an overall look to enjoy for many years. Katie explains that this treatment is typical of Vibe's approach. "The colour palettes and selected finishes for all of our projects reflect a timelessness and calmness. We opt not to use outlandish colours or finishes in the permanent fixtures which rely on current fads and quickly date."

Incorporating plenty of storage was also a priority for the design team, to ensure this well-proportioned space would stay that way. "The clean lines and open space in this home would be compromised by the introduction of clutter" says Katie. "Generous storage spaces ensure that all necessary items can be accommodated behind closed doors".

Given plenty of space on the upper floor are the master bedroom, complete with ensuite and dressing room, study, and powder room/ bathroom. The master bedroom is generously proportioned and appears even more so given the glass doors separating it from the ensuite. This glass screen allows bathing with views over the water, whilst still maintaining privacy. A shower was included in the powder room, allowing the study to double as a guest bedroom if required.

While much of the home has been kept open-plan, a variety of flooring materials help delineate the large spaces. Sleek Terrazite resin marble flooring was applied to the existing ground slab throughout the entry and entertaining area and assisted in exaggerating the lower storey ceiling height. Gorgeous spotted gum tongue and groove flooring runs for the length of the main living area, and Superior Weave 100% wool carpets in 'Oak' were chosen for comfort in the bedrooms.

As the back of the property opens up to the swimming pool and waterfront canal, glass was an easy choice to make the most of this auspicious positioning. Large glass windows, glass louvres, even transparent pool fencing ensure that nothing comes between the owners and their enviable outlook. Low-fuss glass sliding doors showcase the magnificent views and "peel back and allow entertaining to spill effortlessly onto the outdoor entertaining areas" Katie says. "A seamless transition between indoor and outdoor spaces was of utmost importance" she says.

"A boutique hotel feel with a contemporary edge" is how Michael describes the newly transformed home, adding that it's always extremely satisfying to see their hard work come to fruition. "We know that in years to come, people will still appreciate this ageless design."