

“This home is an example of how with clever design and a subtle, experienced hand, a building can be transformed without erasing its original character.”

FACE VALUE

WORDS SUNI GOLIGHTLY PHOTOGRAPHY MARK CRANITCH

ARCHITECT DION SEMINARA BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO THIS CHARMING BUT TIRED OLD QUEENSLANDER

THERE ARE FEW BUILDINGS IN AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE more charming than the Queenslander. There is something warm and inviting about even the most run down of them, but sadly many of these old gems have suffered at the hands of unskilled renovators.

When architect Dion Seminara first encountered this home in the Brisbane suburb of Bulimba, it was in desperate need of some expert attention, having been clumsily renovated in the past. "The front of the house was very tired," he explains. "The front verandah had been enclosed, a carport had been poorly added, as had the retaining walls, and the house was on stumps with no ground floor. My clients wanted to enhance the front of the house and improve the street appeal. They also wanted to add an ensuite to the main bedroom, add a new double carport, and add a whole new ground floor with an office, an extra bedroom, a bathroom, media room and internal stairway to the first floor."

To accomplish the massive task, the front yard and under the house had to be dug-out and the house restumped, the front verandah was opened up again, the gable to the front of the house reconstructed, the whole ground floor was built and the floor on the upper level cut through to allow for the new internal stairwell. Fortunately for Seminara and his clients, they obtained building approval just before the City Plan changed, thereby avoiding a potentially costly and time-consuming development application. Both an architect and licensed builder, Seminara's design work always has a practical focus, so the usual pitfalls of turning an architect's vision into a builder's reality were avoided. "Our drawings were so detailed," Seminara explains, "that the builder was able to translate them into almost exactly what we had envisioned."

The result is truly spectacular. The front of the home is contemporary and stylish, while remaining true to its Queenslander heritage. Despite its size, the new double carport is a subtle addition and does not dominate or overpower the street appearance of the home. The new ground floor has literally doubled the size of the home and Seminara's use of simple, stylish materials and finishes has connected the old and new parts of the home seamlessly. As stylish as it is practical, this home is an example of how with clever design and a subtle, experienced hand, a building can be transformed without erasing its original character. When it comes to successful renovations, they don't get much better than this. **r&e**



Architect Dion Seminara



Before



After



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PROJECT PARTICULARS

The project was designed by
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 To take the guesswork out of the renovation
 process, Dion Seminara Architecture offers
 a low-cost Introductory Service whereby
 potential clients receive a concept report
 and building cost analysis. Check out the
 website for more information.

FLOORING Media room: hardwood
 timber on polished concrete;
 Bathroom: tiles on polished concrete;
 Bedrooms: sisal carpet.

WINDOWS Combination of timber framed
 and clear-anodised aluminium framed
 windows.

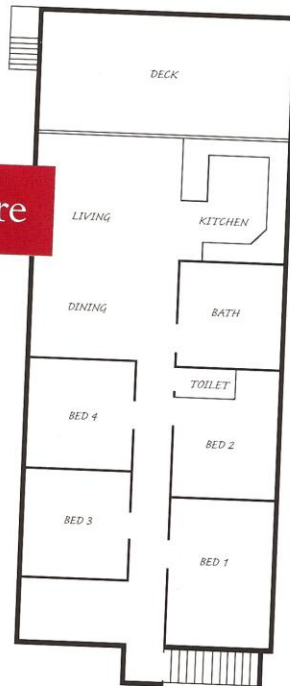
DOORS Front door: Corinthian
 'Maddison'; ground floor interior doors:
 Flushcore; first floor interior doors: Colonial.

OUTDOOR AREAS Concrete walkway
 and courtyard.

TIP

In a warm climate, louvered
 windows can be a godsend,
 they allow superior
 ventilation and are a perfect
 contemporary twist on an old
 Australian building
 institution. Clear-anodised
 aluminium frames such as the
 ones featured in this project
 are easy to maintain and are
 rust resistant. But no matter
 what gadget or special
 products you buy there is no
 getting around it: louvered
 windows are a pain in the
 neck to clean!

Before

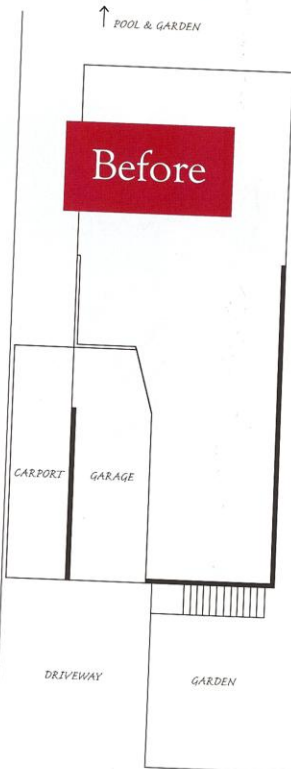


After

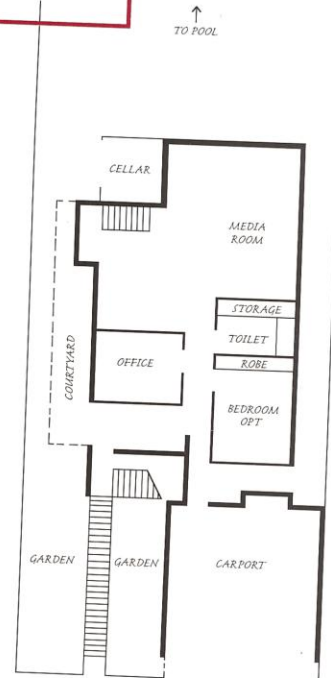


↑ POOL & GARDEN

Before



After



PROJECT



1. The new kitchen, living and dining areas open onto the shaded deck. 2. The striking front door from Corinthian sets the tone for this contemporary home. 3. The gable has been totally reconstructed and the front verandah opened up. 4. The timber finishes both inside and out give this modern house warmth. 5. The simple and stylish home office, with concrete floors and anodised aluminium framed windows, has an industrial feel. 6. The floor on the upper level was cut through to allow for this new internal stairwell. 7. The living area is open and inviting, with simple, stylish finishes. 8. The entire ground floor has been built, utilizing the space that is unused in most Queenslanders.

