



The crowning glory

A grand Victorian home gets the right royal treatment to bring it back to life, writes **Robyn Willis**

PROJECT

Owners

A professional couple

Architect

Daniel Boddam
danielboddam.com

Builder

Liam Flood, To the Mil
tothemil.com.au

The problem

A former boarding house that needed to be converted back into a family home

Design solution

To restore the Victorian terrace to its former glory without cutting corners

How long did it take?

Nine-month building process



Liam's team created a timber deck that enjoys uninterrupted views of the skyline.

One look at this house and you realise that this was never going to be a cheap exercise. When the owners of this grand home in Newtown bought it, it was a working boarding house with protected tenants in place for three years after the sale.

But given the size of the undertaking there was no need to rush in before the owners had time to put together the team of professionals that would transform the property.

Looking local

They didn't have to look far to find a builder, however. In the past eight years Liam Flood from To the Mil says he has worked on four houses in the immediate area.

"All along this area the houses are either this size or a bit bigger," he says. "A lot of them have become boarding houses because they are so big with so many rooms."

Most of the rooms in the house came with their own kitchenettes, along with several common bathrooms and larger kitchen areas.

While the task ahead was considerable, there were some things in their favour.

"Nothing was looked after and everything was run down but the bare bones of the house were pretty rock solid," Liam says.

Architect Daniel Boddam was engaged to bring the three-storey 1880s terrace back to life. The solution was to restore the scale and quality of the original building while creating a modern addition.

"As the project developed the architecture became more flexible, allowing for both formal and informal ways of living," Daniel says.

"The existing house was refurbished while a new modern addition was set back from the main house framing a courtyard space that feeds in natural light."

For Liam, however, the original house presented the biggest challenge.

While the ground floor would be given over to a formal drawing room and music room with the kitchen looking on to the courtyard garden, the first floor would have a living area, library and guest bedroom with ensuite.



Most of the original features were still intact at the front of the house (left). The tessellated tiles were carefully buffed while the glass front door panels (bottom) just needed protection during the building process.



All the timberwork, including the skirtings and floorboards, was carefully restored. Graphic wallpapers and detailed cornices add to the Victorian Italianate style.



The top floor would be entirely given over to the main bedroom suite, complete with a spacious dressing room and ensuite.

Right the first time

The owners were committed to doing the job properly and, while there was a budget, they did not spare expense on traditional trades.

Having worked on plenty of old houses during his time in London, Liam hired a skilled team of French polishers, plasterers and craftsmen to do the job right.

Crumbling render was carefully removed from the walls, changes in floor levels were managed to keep the original floorboards and the ceiling roses were painstakingly recreated.

“There was an old ceiling rose intact in the front room and there was another that was broken,” Liam says. “The Irish plasterer we had cut one of the pieces off and made a plaster cast copy of it.”

It’s this attention to detail that drew the attention of the judges in last year’s NSW HIA Awards, with the project winning the Renovation & Addition category for projects between \$1 million and \$5 million.

It was a labour love for all involved. “Everyone tried their best to keep the cost down but the costs were always kept in front of the owners so they didn’t get a big surprise at the end,” Liam says.

Pictures Simon Woods

THE SOURCE

A renovation like this demands a team of skilled traditional trades. Here is Liam’s pick of the key craftsmen on this project.

- Master carpenter** Patrick Martin, patrick.martin@tothemil.com.au
- Irish master renderer** Connor Byrne, cbryne@outlook.com
- French polisher** Mark Howard mark.r.howard@hotmail.com
- Paint restoration and finishing** Selver Hadzic, silverhadzic@hotmail.com
- Restoration steel products** Salken Engineering, salken.com.au