

RENOVATIONS

Out of the dark: The Marshalls with children Millie and Finnegan moved out of their Fairlight home while their renovations were being done.
Pictures: Warren Clarke



Mix produces a perfect match

Classic Federation sits well with a contemporary renovation, writes Mercedes Maguire.

FROM the outside it looks typical Federation: most semi-detached homes built in the early 1900s featured a long hallway up the side, with the bedrooms and bathroom off it, and the kitchen and living areas were at the rear of a usually dark, poky property.

But when you step inside Paul and Lisa Marshall's renovated Fairlight home, the Federation feeling slips away and, instead, you have a contemporary haven.

"One of the things we loved the most about this place were the fantastic original Federation features it retained, such as the ornate pressed ceilings," says Paul, a property funds manager. "We bought the home with a renovation in mind and had to imagine what it could be, not what it was."

"It also had quite wide dimensions, which is unusual in a semi, and gave it a real sense of space. But it was dark and there were some cheaply done late 1980s-style renovations, particularly to the kitchen, which we wanted to redress."



OLD MEETS NEW

"WHAT we love most about the finished product is that from the outside it still looks like a classic Federation home, but it changes into a very contemporary place as you walk inside. It's a great blend of the old and the new."

A thorough renovation design, by northern beaches architect David Lin of Hao Design, moved the kitchen to the centre of the home in an open-plan configuration with the living area. A large void or light well over the top gives plenty of natural light.

At the rear, large bi-fold doors open out on to a yard, allowing in more light and an electronically controlled awning keeps out the elements, giving shade in summer and protection from rain.

The plan, Paul says, was to create a feeling that the outdoors worked as an extension of the house, a practical addition that could be useful extra living space for the growing family.

The original two-bedroom format was converted into three-bedrooms plus a fourth room, thanks to a second storey built into the attic roofspace.

This top level contains the main bedroom with an ensuite, walk-in robe and the study, which the Marshalls are using as a nursery for their four-month-old daughter, Millie.

Renovation jobs, particularly large scale ones such as this, are bound to have dramas and the Marshalls had heard enough horror stories from friends about what could go wrong.

But fortunately for the first-time renovators, the only hiccup was in getting the plans through Manly Council. Their original design was knocked back because of unsatisfactory floor-to-space design, a requirement councils use to control the bulk and scale of development.

ONE MORE TIME

SO it was literally back to the drawing board to refine the design and the second concept was finally approved by the fastidious council.

However, the process had delayed the renovation almost a full year. With plans in place and the demolition crew ready to gut two thirds of the property, the wise Marshalls moved out and rented while work progressed.

After six months the family, with their son Finnegan now two-and-a-half, moved back into their almost complete home.

"We didn't want to do the brave thing and live all the way through it," Paul says. "We had heard numerous disaster stories and braced ourselves for the

worst, but we were pleasantly surprised with the construction time and that it came in right on budget. In fact our architect was able to even save us money here and there, so we can't speak highly enough about the management of the whole project."

As delighted as they are with the finished product, the Marshalls are on the move again in search of a bigger home and have listed their semi for sale through Cunninghams Property at Balgowlah with an asking price of \$1.295 million.

- > **COST** \$300,000
- > **TIMEFRAME** Six months
- > **MOST EXPENSIVE**

The great glass tiles that form a feature wall in the bathroom. Paul says they are not the most expensive part of the home but considers them as "a bit of an extravagance"

> **ARCHITECT** David Lin of Hao Design, (02) 9453 1615 or www.hao.com.au

> **BUILDER** David Robinson of Distinctive Additions, 0412 678 038



Light and easy: The typical Federation hallway (top right) and the new bathroom and kitchen (above)