

Home Renovations

Home Addition Case Study - Lane Cove

After 25 years in the building industry, Colm B..... is more convinced than ever that two things determine a good project – quality and attention to detail.

For the qualified furniture designer and manufacturer who now owns a specialist demolition and asbestos removal company that numbers among its clients Westfield, LendLease, AMPCapital, Wormald, Watpac, John Holland and Boulderstone, there can be no compromise on these two things.

Colm has seen almost every aspect of the commercial building industry. Not long after migrating to Australia from Ireland he was a site foreman for AbiGroup's Superdome Olympics site project and subsequently he worked for a range of medium sized builders.

No stranger to housing projects, he and his family have transformed a Balmain derelict, and been through a second storey addition to their second home in Drummoyne.

The Balmain project he did himself, employing sub-contractors as needed, while for Drummoyne he engaged a builder whose finish and workmanship left much to be desired to Colm's critical eye.

With a view to providing growing space for two young children, Colm in 2005 bought a Huxley project home in Lane Cove that had remained unchanged since being built 20 years previously.

On a 660m² block, the house had very much been at the cheaper end of the scale when new. Although it was a four-bedroom home with separate living and dining areas plus a family room and ensuite to the main bedroom, the bedrooms were too small to accommodate furniture other than a bed, and quality was lacking in everything from timber to doors.

Determined to do this home right, Colm engaged an architect and in 2010 was all but ready to sign contracts with a builder when his own employer at the time went into receivership. Twelve months later Colm had established his own business and was ready to start again, only to be told the builder was retiring.

"Luckily for us, our contact there said he was going to work for Cape Cod and offered to have our plans re-quoted," Colm said.

Colm knew the name, but took the time to inspect a number of Cape Cod Australia projects before agreeing. His confidence grew the moment Cape Cod recommended improvements to the plans to achieve efficiencies.

The plans called for a first floor addition of a living room, master bedroom with walk-in robe, another bedroom, a bathroom and a balcony.



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Downstairs the former family room was to be transformed to a dining area and two of the side by side bedrooms would become a single, larger bedroom.

Colm and his family determined to remain in the house during the build, living in the back of the home downstairs behind a temporary wall.

He admits that initially he was cautious, particularly given his bad experience with the Drummoyne project, and would wander the site after the builders had gone, inspecting their work.

"At Drummoyne there were just so many things that annoyed me afterwards, examples of poor workmanship and lack of attention to detail that I would have to look at every day. Given my background, with me it's all about detail and finish," Colm said.

"But there's nothing like that here, nothing.



We've been really happy.

"I was more than happy, not only with their excellence by comparison, but with the fact I was able to converse practically with the builder during the project," he said.

Colm said that the transformation of the former, cheap project home has been so dramatic that visitors have walked right past it and not recognized it. We get compliments from everyone that sees it and the neighbours cannot believe how quickly it happened once work started."

He said that people who know his background and his furniture maker's eye for detail and finish are always impressed when he tells them he would have not hesitation using Cape Cod again and recommending the company to his friends.

"I am that pleased," he said.