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BUILDING CHARACTER

The renovation to the back of this stunning Adelaide character home has a Hamptons feel, with classic finishes and plenty of space for family living.

When Darren and Christine Roberts bought their historic Mitcham home more than 10 years ago, it was perfect for their young family. The home, which was built in 1905, sits on an 1850-square-metre block and boasts five bedrooms, a study and second living area in the original part of the home.

Outside, resort-style living was on offer thanks to the pool and tennis court which were added by the previous owners, who had lived in the home for 20 years. Darren and Christine upped the luxurious level by adding a new pool house in 2014.

A 1990s extension to the back of the home had served Darren and Christine well over the years, but with their children, Cody and Chloe, now in their 20s, the needs of the family had gradually changed, and the house was in need of some updating and TLC.

"It had a distressed yellow finish to the walls," Christine says. "It was good while the kids were little, and we weren't too precious about things. But over time it became a bit too daggy. We knew by last year it was time to renovate."

The couple decided to go with the team at Craig Linke to design and construct their renovation, which includes a new kitchen, lounge/dining spaces, laundry and large family bathroom.



"Darren is very good at researching, and he looked at the Craig Linke portfolio online and the jobs that they've done, and said, 'I think they're the right ones for us'," Christine says. "They were working on a lot of older homes and everything was sympathetic, it just blended nicely."

"We really wanted our renovation to be sympathetic to the age of the house. We didn't want some ultra-modern innovation that would then be just completely disjointed from the front of the house."

Darren, an obstetrician, says he enjoyed the research process of the renovation as it allowed Christine and him to be creative, but

Above Panelling to the wall in the living area gives that Hamptons feel. **Opposite page** The kitchen cabinetry, two-pack in Porter's Quarter Grey Pepper, seamlessly returns around the corner to form the bar nook. **Opening pages** The brief for the front garden was "formal English" with multiple feature areas. It was designed by Kate Whitelock from Garden Art Design and created by Craig Hannam from Piccadilly Landscapes in 2020.



feature homes

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also to see what others have done – what works and what doesn't.

"Personal tastes vary dramatically, however our brief was to create something elegant, timeless and most importantly liveable," Darren says.

"Given that virtually all builders and suppliers have a large online presence, there was a wealth of imagery and information available. I freely admit I have very little flair for design, but I do know what I like the look of and what doesn't appeal.

"The Craig Linke design team and builders were very receptive to our ideas, but

could then expand and add extra features and fine detail to aid in the visual appeal and functionality."

Managing director, Craig Linke, says his team was keen to take on this project as they always like to work on character homes.

"I particularly love that we were able to create rooms that are sensitive to the era of the home," Craig says. "The brief was to create calm and timeless spaces including a kitchen, living and dining space, bathroom and laundry that are both functional and in keeping with the circa 1905 home."

The renovation was created on the



Left The open flow of the home works well for this family who love their new kitchen, **opposite page**. The kitchen features two pack joinery in Porter's Quarter River Stone to the vast island bench, Venetian plastered rangehood, Zellige tile splashback and Kirchler Everly Olde Bronze pendant lights with clear seeded glass.

footprint of the original extension, and the only major change structurally was the addition of new windows taking in views to the backyard with the tennis court, heated pool and pool house, and doors leading to an inner courtyard featuring outdoor dining and barbecue facilities.

The contemporary new spaces now work well for this family of four, including when they are entertaining their friends and family.

"We had a U-shaped kitchen before, which was built in 1991 I think, whereas now we have the big rectangle," Christine says. "We definitely wanted two ovens, because I just had one standard one before and we always do Christmas in this house, and we needed something more practical and with

more space."

As for their style, Christine says she and Darren are "not funky, more classic". "I think the term 'Hamptons' came up a few times," she says.

There is a definite Hamptons feel to the new space with the neutral palette, limestone flooring, wood panelling detail to feature walls, vast marble island bench tops, integrated appliances and seeded glass lights over the bench. The kitchen is finished off with a stand-out Venetian plastered rangehood, adding sophisticated elegance.

The kitchen joinery seamlessly returns around a corner to a cupboard/bar nook with glass doors and back lighting. The Hamptons feel continues in the renovated family

bathroom with limestone flooring, white tiling and Brodware bronze tapware.

"Our new kitchen and living areas are so much cleaner, crisper and less cluttered," Darren says. "Items that do not need to be seen all day are discretely stored.

"The whole area is so much lighter and brighter with a warmer feel. Replacing the daggy old venetian blinds with plantation shutters now gives us a much nicer uninterrupted view to the courtyard and over the swimming pool."

Craig Linke says: "This project favours a more classic aesthetic, sensitive to the era of the home, and draws a lot of old English inspiration, but with a few contemporary touches.



Above Limestone flooring in the new extension adds that earthy feel. **Opposite page** The cabinetry in the lounge, with storage drawers, mirrors the finishes in the kitchen to create consistency across the space.

There is also now room for all of us to share space in the kitchen and dining area at the same time, whereas before we were getting into bad habits such as eating on the lounge

"I love that the final result feels warm and homely, and perfectly in keeping with the rest of the home; it's seamless. The finishing selections are timeless and elevated, but the space is also well considered and thoughtfully designed for family living."

The family was able to live in the home during the four-month renovation process, able to use the kitchen in the pool house, and the bathrooms and bedrooms at the front of the home.

"The work started on August 14 last year and we moved in on December 20, it was amazing," says Christine, citing her favourite elements of the renovation as her Zip tap in the kitchen, a fridge with ice dispenser and the back doors opening out to the courtyard

allowing for ventilation and views.

Darren says he particularly loves the marble benchtops, "knowing each piece is unique and has originally been buried in the earth for millions of years".

"The bathroom is beautiful and so much more functional now," he says. "But mostly I do love watching sport on a bloody big TV!"

"There is also now room for all of us to share space in the kitchen and dining area at the same time, whereas before we were getting into bad habits such as eating on the lounge. Having another full-size bathroom for our adult children has completely negated queuing and arguments. Will all this lead to more intelligent dinner time conversation? I very much doubt it."





Above The new family bathroom includes the freestanding bath and, **right**, a custom-made mirror with brass frame to match the tapware and wall light, which is a Mark D Sikes Signature no 1.

The renovation to the back of the home now bookends improvements that were done to the front of the property in 2020, when Darren and Christine had the front yard completely redone.

The garden design work was done by Kate Whitelock from Garden Art Design and the labour and landscaping by Craig Hannam from Picadilly Landscapes.

“Previously the front yard had a very large and ugly plum tree, a lot of red brick pavers, too much gravel and agapanthus everywhere, it was dark and just wasn’t appealing and not user friendly,” Darren says.

“The brief for the designs was for a formal English-style garden, an overdose of colour and multiple feature areas including the bronze fountain, rose garden, garden benches and lighting at night.”

So, from front to back now, this is a property that feels contemporary, functional, fun and luxurious.

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