



Images Natalie Grant

Lakeside Living

A Lake Macquarie home undergoes a sympathetic renovation
that is totally in tune with the surrounding environment.

In today's variable property market the question affecting every homeowner looking to upgrade is, to renovate, to pull down and re-build or sell and upgrade?

This conundrum is compounded when a small, fifty-year-old cottage with historic value and charm is positioned in one of Lake Macquarie's most prestigious and unique locations.

Accredited Building Designer, Melanie Symington, was given this challenge when the current owners called on the experienced local to design a renovation and extension to the property yet preserve the home's unique charm and maximise its tranquil, waterfront location.

The house's origins trace back to early 1905, when it was the first home built in Frying Pan Bay at Summerland Point.

The owners, Richard and Ngaire Fisk, issued the challenge of increasing the living area, adding a master suite, double garage, outdoor entertainment area and a boatshed.

This was to be achieved while maintaining the cottage's personality, the feeling of "living on the water", retaining privacy, and keeping the costs under the price of a knock-down and rebuild project.

"Melanie's company, Seaside Homes, accepted the challenge and she was enthusiastic about producing something unique to compliment the magnificent location," said Richard.





"She quickly identified the key components of the existing cottage that needed to be retained, yet was met with the challenge to maintain privacy on a waterfront location with two-storey properties adjoining."

"My original concept drawings expanded the living area and retained the beautiful, ornate ceilings," said Melanie.

"Outside living and entertainment areas were important to Richard and Ngaire with their lifestyle, so four unique areas with protection from all winds and weather was the next priority. >

"Additionally, they requested that a large waterfront lawn, which flows to the lake and jetty, remain a feature of the property. Another requirement was for a boat ramp with easy access to a boatshed, both of which must not invade the lawn and entertainment areas."

The owners were thrilled with the original concept designs and worked closely with Melanie to also maximise the garden areas, before commissioning her to proceed with the final plans.

"Melanie impressed us because she had a real feeling for the ambiance of Frying Pan Bay and was creative in ensuring our living areas maximised the magnificent views and provided a real feeling of being on the water," said Richard.

"We felt that while we would have some challenges before reaching the final outcome, Melanie had provided everything we wanted to maximise both outside and inside living and entertainment for us and the many guests we invite to the lake," confirmed Ngaire.

Another positive aspect of renovating a property like this is the ability to reduce its impact on the environment. This has lead many people to look for ways to avoid demolition and the associated waste of building materials, which often have very high embodied energy levels. Where possible, utilising the existing structure is a very sensible option.

A feature of the renovated home is its new "green" credentials. The home was opened to the north-east to allow cooling summer breezes to flow through all the rooms and act as a natural air conditioner. The extension was constructed on a tiled concrete slab to increase the thermal mass of the home and significant insulation was incorporated in the new construction to further moderate the internal temperature.

One of the owner's favourite aspects of the renovation was the incorporation of multiple outdoor living spaces. As beautiful as a lakefront site can be, it also brings the residents closer to temperamental weather conditions.





The decision to renovate and extend the home has provided the perfect lifestyle, with the added financial benefit of substantially increasing its capital value.

The final design enabled the owners to always have access to a suitably protected outdoor area.

A north-facing winter terrace provides an alternative to the existing west-facing waterfront deck. An east-facing patio connects to the rear and landscaped gardens are the perfect spot for morning coffee.

Finally, a covered breezeway between the house and the boatshed, provides a further alternative for outdoor entertaining, whilst protecting the diners from the southerly winds.

For this project, the key aesthetic requirement was to maximise the tranquillity and privacy of the lakeside setting. This provided extra challenges, as the property was subject to significant site constraints.

“Overlooking” issues from the properties further up slope were addressed by screening the living areas with the bedroom wing and extending the roofline over the bedroom windows.

The approach to the site was very steep and a three-metre-high landscaped retaining wall restricted the layout and required the inclusion of an on-site turning circle.

The result of the combined input from designer and clients was the home’s transformation into an elegant lakeside residence, whilst maintaining an appropriate “weekender” scale.

The living spaces flow into one another and on to the outdoor rooms, embracing the idyllic setting and creating a haven for the owners and their guests. >



The owners initially considered the option of knocking down the home and constructing a new residence on the site, which would have easily doubled their construction budget.

The decision to renovate and extend the home has provided the perfect lifestyle, with the added financial benefit of substantially increasing its capital value.

The renovations also met an important client requirement of continued accessibility, allowing them to still enjoy the lakeside lifestyle during construction. The key commitment in a building project of this style is to obtain the right advice.

"A detailed Design Brief is always the starting point for any project like this," said Melanie.

"Once you have a clear understanding of the client's desired outcome, you can assess the existing dwelling to determine the extent of the project. This involves looking at the current floor plan, the architectural style of the dwelling and its structural integrity."

"From there, a detailed site analysis is prepared, to look at the position and orientation of the dwelling on the site, restrictive site conditions, and view potential, surrounding dwellings, privacy issues and the like.

"Investigations into external restrictions to any proposed development on the site, such as Mine Subsidence regulations, Flood Prone Land issues or Bushfire Risk requirements, are also undertaken at this time.

"Preliminary drawings of the proposed renovations and additions to the residence are then prepared for consideration by the client, working closely with the clients at this stage to ensure that any requested amendments to the design are incorporated before preparation of the final plans is undertaken. >





"As the development approval process can involve quite a crew of consultants, we co-ordinate their input and preparation of the Council Applications in-house.

Once you have approved the design, it is often just a case of signing the forms."

The custom-designed nature of this renovation was paramount in achieving the owners' vision of an "easy living" home, specifically suited to their lifestyle.

This is a clear example of a beautiful home, combining economic restraint, environmental sensitivity and clever design in a magnificent location.

The project has been entered in the Building Designers Association's, State Design Awards by Seaside Homes, in the category of "Alterations and Additions under \$200,000".



Ph 02 4976 3413



Melanie Symington
Accredited Building Designer

Seaside Homes
design



Designers of Enduringly
Beautiful Homes

www.seasidehomesdesign.com.au
enquiry@seasidehomesdesign.com.au