

# Exchanging new for old

The rundown rear of a home has been replaced with a modern two-storey addition, writes **Jennifer Veerhuis**

## FACT FILE

### THE BRIEF

To design and build a modern addition for an existing Manly dwelling, estimated to be at least 100 years old

### THE BUILDER

John Covich,  
Covcon Group

### THE ARCHITECT

Xu Kha, Scope Architects

**R**enovating this Manly house presented unique challenges, with the front needing restoration while maintaining the integrity of the original architecture.

The project, which took out the award for Renovations and Additions under \$800,000 in the 2011 NSW HIA Awards, took 10 months to complete.

Builder John Covich explains how the transformation took place.

**What was the major challenge with this project?**

The design challenge for this project was to attach the rear extension, substantial in its size, to the existing dwelling, without having an impact on the front elevation from the street. The front couldn't be

changed due to council constraints and the rear had to be hidden as much as possible, so that's why the roofline was kept at the same height as the existing house.

**Were there any unexpected discoveries along the way?**

Due to the age of the existing dwelling we found construction methods that we had not seen before, such as the wall studs being morticed into both the floor bearers and into the top plates. A lime plaster was applied over a pressed metal lathe on both the walls/ceilings with decorative cornices, for which we had special moulds made up to match.

We also found unusually long lengths of timber, such as the existing oregon ceiling joists, which were up to 10m in

length and perfectly straight. That is unheard of these days.

**What was the house like before?**

The rear had additions over the years and they were very poorly done. The original front part of the house, which we kept, was still in very good condition. The add-ons at the back had been done terribly and were basically falling over. It was just little tiny rooms, here, there and everywhere. It leaked like crazy at the back.

**What is the house made of?**

It's all timber clad. There's old cladding at the front and new cladding, Ecoply, has been used at the back.

All the old paint had to be burnt off and repainted again and all the old boards were



**A** The facade has been restored to retain its yesteryear charm **B** The ultra-modern kitchen with island bench space **C** The view of the home from the backyard is unrecognisable from its previous incarnation **D** The open-plan design is spacious and inviting and the perfect family space