

Beauty at a cost - renovating a heritage listed home

Steeped in cultural and historical significance, it's understandable that there are restrictions when renovating a heritage listed home. While that's not to say that you can't make any changes, a little more legwork and creativity is often required.

Understand what you're doing

Working on a heritage listed property comes down to knowing the implications of your proposed plan. Understanding the reasons why certain things cannot be altered will not only help you to obtain development approval, but will also highlight why the building's character, architecture or landscape is worth preserving.

Determine its level of significance

Whether it lies in the external or internal features, determining where the heritage value lies will set you up for what you need for authority approval. It will also highlight where the restrictions will be imposed on your renovation works.

"You might have a beautiful old house that has a lovely front facade but that might not be the area of significance," advises the architect who specialise in adaptive reuse and heritage renovations. "It could actually be the sighting of the house, so it's important to find out."

No cutting corners

As things can get a little complicated, having a specialist team by your side will prove invaluable. A heritage consultant, experienced architect or even a town planner can assist you throughout the whole process, from the design to dealing with the council.

"You could do it yourself but if you don't meet the criteria, then you'll get rejected and have to do the whole thing again," says the architect. "Not only can it save time and money, but you end up learning a lot along the way. These heritage professionals want to see a good result for the built environment as much as anyone, so it's not about restricting development, it's about doing it sensitively and for the long-term."

Know the difference between restoration and conservation

Commonly confused, the architect explains that, "restoration is taking it back to its traditional form, whereas conservation is maintaining the status quo. Deciding what to do is a relatively

large judgement call. I think they're both worthwhile, it's just a question of what you'd like to see at the end of the day."

Bright pink is as good as cream

Considering the materials you use is imperative as you have to ensure that the property is liveable without compromising its unique character. While the architect says a new coat of paint won't affect the fabric or the long-term conservation or restoration possibilities for the project, other more structural changes are where you can come unstuck.

"If you've done something irreversible, like changing the window size because you want modern windows, then you get into trouble as there'd be no record of what it was and the heritage value is lost," the architect says.

If you would like some guidance or finance tips please contact me to discuss.

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