



The Bakery



On her way home, Robyn Rapley often walked past the old 'Lake's Bakery' building in Deagon, and daydreamed of owning it. "Then one day there was finally a For Sale sign on it and I knew we had to buy it," she says.

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Built in the 1920s, the bakery operated until the 1960s when it closed and became a motorcycle shop and then the Deagon PCYC, before remaining empty for a number of years. In inner-city suburbs commercial buildings with character and original features are coveted as residential properties, but surprisingly there was not much interest in the old Deagon bakery – in fact Robyn and her husband Steven were the only people to bid at the auction.

The appeal of this old building, full of history and character, is immediately apparent as you walk down the long, narrow hallway and into the open-plan living area at the back of the house. Original features such as the triple cavity brick walls (perhaps chosen for their

fire-proof properties in the days of open ovens), the heavy wooden sliding doors on iron hangers and the much marked concrete floor make you curious about the people who worked here and what the space was used for.

The concrete floor is battered and worn with splashes of brown, black and white marks as well as spots of bright green paint. Rather than remove the history, "We mixed up 2-pack resin and poured it over the floor," says Steven. "In some places, it's really thick to even out the pits."

Similarly, some of the bricks in the outside courtyard had been painted bright green or yellow. The chipped paint has been left and

really adds to the creative feel of the space. The external walls of the building are built right up to the boundaries, and are extended out the back to form a walled courtyard. This is where the old wood-fire ovens were originally kept (they have since been relocated to the Petrie Historical Village).

Beyond the courtyard is the compact but exceedingly neat and well-designed yard which contains a wood-fired pizza oven with its own waist-high herb garden, built-in seating and cobblestones underfoot, a raised vegetable garden, a succulent garden, a small lawn, a wooden fort playground and the old outhouse which has since been converted to a shed.

Inside, the long, narrow 210 square metre building has been turned into a three-bedroom home. (The whole block is 331 square metres). An internal hallway runs adjacent to the external pathway (both are less than 90-cm wide). "The fun thing is, everything done here has to be brought in through the small entry, including all the concrete for the yard," says Steven. Running off the hallway is the main bedroom and connecting bathroom, plus two additional bedrooms. At the end of the hallway are the garage and laundry.

This is the front of the house and so presumably was the actual shop, but as Steven has seen photos of the Lake's Bakery horse and cart, there is some discrepancy about where they must have been



stabled. However, the property used to be much bigger so perhaps there was a stable in the neighbouring yard. The sub-division also explains the bakery's external walls doubling as the boundary walls (which caused the Rapley's some rather lengthy delays in getting council approval).

The other tricky renovation problem was the lack of plumbing. As the building had never been lived in before, there was no plumbing installed except to the old outhouse. Robyn and Steven did not want to break up the old concrete floor, which they loved, so a channel was carefully cut out of the concrete so pipes could be laid. Additionally, the main room and bathroom were raised to hide the bulk of the work.

What is admirable about this home is the successful juxtaposition of old and new. Robyn and Steven have kept as many original features as possible and worked around them when adding the new. This is most apparent in the kitchen, which the couple designed themselves. "The kitchen is 7.1 metres long," says Steven, a cabinet maker and the co-owner of Kitchen Crew with Robyn, "so we got to play."





A large custom-made island bench was built from 80-year old recovered bricks found on-site, teamed with new materials such as Laminex and Essa Stone. The Laminex featured throughout the kitchen is in Licorice Linea, a muted grey/brown that blends beautifully with the soft, worn colours of the older materials.

The result is a slick, modern kitchen – fitted with all the luxuries including a built-in Baumatic espresso machine, Bosch appliances in brushed stainless steel and large soft-close drawers – that sits in complete harmony with the old building.

"We've renovated four houses," says Robyn, "and usually when we're halfway through we're ready to sell. But not with this one, this one we'll keep."