

A DESIGN STORY · LYNFIELD · 2024

Designed Around Family Life.

A Lynfield full-home renovation — lived in for every week of the build.

Lynfield · 1970s family home · 180 m² · Completed 2024

FULL
HOME
2024

ADD VALUE RENOVATIONS

DESIGN-AND-BUILD · 7 MONTHS · 4 BED / 3 BATH

INDICATIVE PROJECT BUDGET RANGE

\$400,000 — \$450,000

Auckland market rates
May 2026 · GST included

WELCOME

Inside this design story.

A note from Simon Liu, Add Value Renovations

Tuan and Catherine found us online. Their Lynfield home was a place full of potential — high sloping ceilings, exposed rafters, a leafy reserve out the back — but it had stopped working for a growing family with teenagers heading toward independence.

Most renovators would have moved out for six months. Tuan and Catherine couldn't. So we split the project in two: upstairs first, then downstairs, with a sealed barrier between the two zones so the family could live in one half of the house while we rebuilt the other.

The build took seven months on site. Across that time we kept the architectural character of the home — the sloping ceiling, the rafters — while adding the warmth and insulation a modern home needs. We carved out a teen wing downstairs, opened up the kitchen, and gave Catherine the office nook she wanted, separated by a timber screen that became the home's signature piece.

These pages walk through the design thinking behind it.

Simon Liu

Director · Add Value Renovations

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A family home with character — and limits

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Catherine's office — with a view of the reserve

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Scope, process, credentials

A NOTE ON DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

"Keep what's good about the bones. Fix what's stopping them from working."

This project saved the sloping ceiling and the rafters, then quietly added the warmth, function and family-fit they were missing.

CHAPTER 01

A loved home with a growing family.



Tuan and Catherine had been in their Lynfield home for years. It was a 1970s family house with one feature most homes their age don't have — a tall sloping ceiling, with the original timber rafters still exposed across the living and kitchen. The kind of detail no builder would design today, and the kind that's almost impossible to retrofit.

But the home wasn't keeping up with the family. Their children were heading into teenage years and needed their own space. The kitchen was dark, the cabinetry tired, the laundry tucked into a corner without enough room to move. The downstairs rumpus and storage area — generous square metres — were doing almost nothing.

And the exposed rafters, beautiful as they were, came with two problems: there was no insulation up there, and there was old water damage from earlier years. Whatever we did, we had to fix what wasn't working without destroying what was.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE**Don't fight the character — work with it.**

The original architect of this house left it with one strong, irreplaceable feature: the sloping ceiling and the rafters. The brief wasn't to replace them. It was to bring everything around them — insulation, lighting, joinery, layout — up to the standard the rafters always deserved.

CHAPTER 02

Keep the rafters. Add the warmth.

How we kept a 50-year-old architectural feature — and made the house warm in winter and cool in summer.



The exposed rafters were the feature that made this house feel different from every other 1970s home in the suburb. They gave the kitchen and living a high, almost architectural ceiling — the kind that most renovations spend money trying to fake.

But they were doing nothing for the family in winter, and worse, they had taken on water at some point in the home's history. Leaving them exposed wasn't an option. Tearing them out would have stripped the home of the one thing the family loved most.

So we kept the slope, and we kept the sense of height — but we lined the ceiling underneath the rafters with a new modern surface, and we packed the cavity above with very thick insulation. The rafters are now hidden under that lining, but the volume they created is still there. The house breathes the same way it always did. It just stays warm.

"You don't always have to rip the feature out. Sometimes you wrap it up properly and let it keep working."

DESIGN PRINCIPLE**Preserve the feeling, upgrade the performance.**

Old homes often have one or two things that can't be designed in from scratch — a ceiling height, a sight line, an outlook, a window of unusual proportion. The renovation's first job is to identify what those things are, and then build everything else around protecting them.

CHAPTER 03

A renovation, lived in.

Tuan and Catherine never moved out. Here's how we built around them.

Most full-home renovations of this size send the family into rented accommodation — three to six months of inflated short-term rents on top of an already-stretched build budget. Tuan and Catherine didn't have that option, and we didn't want them to.

STAGE 01

Upstairs first.

We started with the kitchen, laundry, family bathroom and the new study nook upstairs — the heaviest scope of work. While we worked above, the family lived downstairs in the rumpus zone with a basic kitchen setup.

STAGE 02

A sealed barrier.

Before starting downstairs, we built a temporary internal barrier — sealed for dust, sound, and access. The family moved back upstairs into the rooms we'd just completed.

STAGE 03

Downstairs second.

With the family safely set up above, we tackled the new bathroom, the kitchenette and the refreshed rumpus downstairs. Seven months total on site — but the family slept in their own beds every night of it.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Stage the build to fit the family — not the other way around.

Saving the cost of rental accommodation isn't just a budget win. It means the family keeps their routines, their schools, their pets, their garden. The renovation feels like a slow upgrade of their own home rather than a season of upheaval.

CHAPTER 04

The kitchen, opened to the sky.

Melteca Spinifex panels, oak shelving and a new skylight cut into the slope of the ceiling.

BEFORE



BEFORE

Dark cabinetry, tile splashback dating from the 1990s, cramped bench space, fridge tucked under the stair.

AFTER



AFTER

Soft-green Melteca Spinifex below, oak above and on the floating shelf. A new skylight pulls daylight onto the bench all day.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

When the ceiling is the hero, the joinery should step back.

The Spinifex green is muted on purpose. The oak is warm but not loud. Both finishes were chosen so they read as a calm base — and the sloping white ceiling above stays the thing your eye goes to first.

CHAPTER 05

The screen that became the signature.

A working-from-home nook, separated from the living by vertical oak — and looking straight into the reserve.



The idea came from Catherine. She wanted a place inside the home to work — not a closed-off room, and not a desk shoved into the corner of the living. Somewhere private enough to concentrate, open enough to feel part of the house, and positioned where she could look out at the reserve through the back of the section.

We carved the nook from the end of the open-plan living and separated it with a run of vertical oak slats — wide enough to give a sense of enclosure, open enough that light passes through and the view out the back doors stays connected to the rest of the home.

The nook holds a built-in desk and a bay seat under a bifold window. When the window's open, the nook becomes an extension of the deck. When it's closed, it's a quiet office. The seat works as a reading spot for the kids in the afternoon, a coffee perch in the morning, and a place for one more guest when the family has people over.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

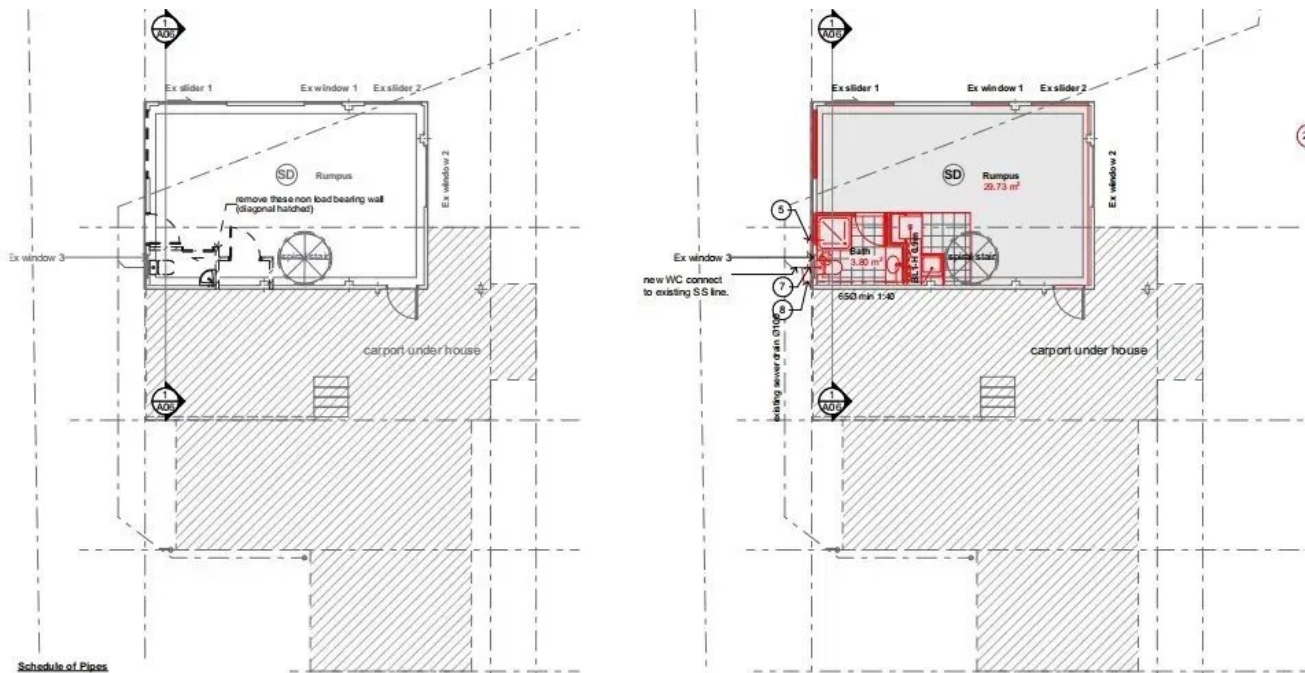
A screen does more than divide. It frames a view.

A wall would have closed the nook off and shut the reserve out of the living room. An open-plan layout would have left no privacy for anyone trying to work. The slatted screen does both jobs at once — and it gave the home a piece of joinery you remember after you've left.

CHAPTER 06

The plans, downstairs.

A rumpus and a store became a teen wing — with its own bathroom and kitchenette.



WHAT CHANGED, AND WHY

1 Rumpus, retained.

The largest downstairs room kept its footprint — the family wanted the open hangout space for the kids. We refreshed the finishes and added new joinery for the kitchenette along the side wall.

2 New bathroom, in place of the old store.

A like-for-like bathroom refresh would have needed minimal paperwork. A new bathroom in a space that wasn't a bathroom before triggers building consent. We took the consent route — properly drawn, properly signed off, no shortcuts.

3 Kitchenette in the rumpus.

A small sink and counter to make a coffee, fill a water bottle, or pour a glass of milk — without the teens running upstairs every time. Plumbing was extended off the existing sewer line at the carport edge.

4 Designed for family — not a rental.

Council can be wary of downstairs additions that look like a second dwelling. We designed this as one home for one family, with no separate entrance, no kitchen, no laundry — just a teen wing under the same roof.

CHAPTER 07

A teen wing today. A guest wing tomorrow.

One downstairs zone, designed to grow with the family.



NOW

For the kids.

A rumpus the teens can take over. Their own bathroom, so the morning rush upstairs stays manageable. A kitchenette so they're not running up the stairs every time they want a drink.

NEXT

For guests.

When family visit from overseas, the wing becomes a comfortable stay-over zone — bathroom, lounge, kitchenette, all in one place. Parents stay private upstairs.

LATER

For grandparents.

The same wing reads as a self-contained zone for an elderly parent. Single-level access to bathroom and kitchenette — comfortable for an ageing family member.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Build for the next twenty years, not the next two.

A family of four needs different rooms at different stages of life. The right renovation works at every stage — not just the one the family is in today. The teen wing was designed to flex through three.

CHAPTER 08

Inside the finished home.

A photo-led tour of the rooms.



THE KITCHEN

Open-plan kitchen with the new skylight overhead, AEG induction and oven, Spinifex green panels and oak shelving.



THE STUDY NOOK

The signature oak screen, bay window seat, and bifold window opening onto the deck. A workspace and a reading spot.



THE FAMILY BATHROOM

Corner bath, timber-look oak vanity, mosaic feature wall in soft greens — a warmer answer to the white-tile bathroom that was there before.



THE LAUNDRY

Mosaic splashback running floor to ceiling, soft-green joinery, a sink that finally has room around it.

WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT · THE FINISH STANDARD

JOINERY

Melteca Spinifex panels + classic oak feature panels

BENCHTOPS

Engineered stone, white speckled finish

APPLIANCES

AEG induction, AEG oven, AEG canopy rangehood

BATHROOM TILE

Quantum Venture Travertine + Ming Green mosaic feature

CEILING

New lined slope · thick insulation above · skylight

HEATING

Insulation upgrade + heat pump heating

CHAPTER 09

A home that lives outside, too.

A new deck, a reserve outlook, and a family that keeps chickens.



The original deck off the back of the house had reached the end of its life. We pulled it off and replaced it with a new timber deck — sized properly for outdoor dining, with a clear sight line out to the reserve at the back of the section.

The new bifold window in Catherine's study nook opens straight onto the deck. The dining doors out of the living open onto the same space. On a warm evening the family can spill from kitchen to deck to garden without ever stepping over a threshold.

The garden was already loved. Tuan and Catherine keep chickens at the back, and a small flower garden runs along the fence. None of that needed our help — what the renovation needed to do was make sure the house finally faced that garden the way it should have all along.

The deck does that. So does the office nook. So does the new kitchen window above the sink. Every room that could be turned toward the reserve, was.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

The best part of the section should be visible from every room you spend time in.

If the family loves the garden, the chickens and the trees, the renovation isn't finished until the house faces them. Every window we touched on the back of the home was reframed, repositioned, or replaced to take that outlook in.

CHAPTER 10

How we did it.

Scope, process, and the credentials behind the build.

THE SCOPE

What we built, in plain English.

01 New Kitchen + Skylight

Melteca Spinifex joinery, oak feature panels, stone benchtops, AEG appliance suite, and a new skylight cut into the sloping ceiling.

02 Ceiling + Insulation

New lined ceiling over the original rafters with thick insulation behind — warm in winter, cool in summer, character preserved.

03

Study Nook + Oak Screen

Vertical oak slat screen, built-in desk, bay seat under a new bifold window opening onto the deck.

04 Teen Wing Downstairs

New bathroom and kitchenette in the rumpus zone — fully consented, designed for the family to grow into.

05 Bathroom + Laundry

Upstairs bathroom and laundry rebuilt with timber-look vanity, mosaic feature tile, and the new sink layout the laundry needed.

06 New Deck

Old membrane deck removed and replaced with a new timber deck connecting the living, dining and study nook to the reserve outlook.

HOW WE WORK · FIVE STEPS, SAME PROCESS EVERY JOB

01

BUDGET

02

PLAN

03

QS REPORT

04

CONSENT

05

BUILD

YOU'RE COVERED

- Registered Master Builders since 1891
- Licensed Building Practitioners (LBP)
- 10-Year Master Build Guarantee
- 2025 House of the Year Gold + Top 100



KEEP READING · NO SALES PITCH

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