

6

Things to Know Before Extending your Heritage Home

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There's nothing quite like a heritage home. With a singular style, ornate design and exceptional artistry that you won't find elsewhere, it's crucial to protect and restore these beautiful residences. The state of Victoria has an abundance of heritage properties – just a glance at the city's suburbs will be enough to witness the rustic charms, art deco excellence, intricate Victorian-era craftsmanship and grand design of these heritage marvels.

But there's plenty to know before you consider a renovation, especially if you're looking to extend a heritage home. We've put together this guide to provide you with everything you need to know about building an extension or addition on a heritage home.

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What kinds of heritage homes will you find in Melbourne?

Victorian-Era

These are the oldest homes you'll find in Victoria. Built during the late 1800s, they often feature intricate stucco, multi-colour brickwork, cast iron lacing, arched timber windows and roofs made with either slate or corrugated iron.

Edwardian

Built during the Federation era, these are often in the style of English Tudor homes, which feature red brick, steep roofs, grand verandahs and intricate leadlight windows.

California Bungalow

A style that originated in the 1920s America, Californian Bungalows feature lower pitched gabled roofs, thick columns and double hung windows.

Art Deco

Curved facades, geometric lines, terracotta tiles and hipped roofs define the Art Deco style, a bold modern design that began in the 1930s.



What you need to know before extending a heritage home

1 Laws and Regulations

There can be a few hurdles when it comes to extending a heritage home. One that may arise early in the process is navigating council and state regulations. Make sure you get on top of this from the get-go by conducting research, talking to builders and consulting with your local council, who can guide you through the process of obtaining the necessary permits for the build.

Heritage law in Victoria comes under two categories – Heritage Register and Heritage Overlay. The Victorian Heritage Register protects sites of historic cultural importance, with heritage design merit and/or endangered properties that are rare in the state. Places and objects of significance to a local area come under Heritage Overlay, which is determined by local council. This is the category that most heritage homes will fall under.

While some renovation projects will not require a building permit, you will need to obtain one if you're conducting any of the following works on your heritage home:

- Subdividing land
- Demolishing or removing a building (including part of a building)
- Constructing a building (including part of a building or a fence)
- Externally altering a building
- Constructing or carrying out works
- Constructing or displaying a sign
- Externally painting an unpainted surface
- Externally painting a building if the painting constitutes an advertisement



It can take some time to obtain council approval for a project however this varies between councils. You can learn more about the process on [the Victorian Heritage Overlays web page](#).



2 Choosing A Builder

Extending a heritage home is a delicate art. In addition to adhering to council regulations, you want to make sure whoever is working on your home is both committed to retaining the heritage accents of the original structure while ensuring the extension is seamless and in-line with the home's existing design elements. With an inexperienced or ill-equipped builder, this process can go very wrong.

You need to choose a builder who knows how to navigate these regulations and has plenty of experience in extending heritage homes. The best way to do this is to seek out someone who specialises in heritage home additions and has plenty of previous experience, which you can see in their portfolio.

It's always a good idea to reach out to a previous client of the builder you're considering and double check they're equipped to take on the challenges and triumphs of extending your heritage home.



3 Set Clear Goals

A heritage home project can be radically different depending on what you hope to achieve with the extension.

Do you want to create a contrast, by retaining the original old-school charms of the existing home and adding a slick, modern extension? Or do you want to extend the home's original design highlights?

This is up to personal preference and may also come down to council regulation (some councils will require the renovation and extension does not detract or take away from the existing heritage home)



4 Understand the Cost

Any extension or renovation project can be costly, but this is especially true for heritage homes. Heritage homes require more specialists and specific materials that may come with a more expensive price tag. They will also require maintenance to keep older elements in tip top shape.

However, there are also plenty of cost benefits. Heritage homes have a high resale value in Victorian and are generally built from fine, quality materials that will last a lifetime. Some heritage homes may also be eligible for grants, which can go towards maintenance and

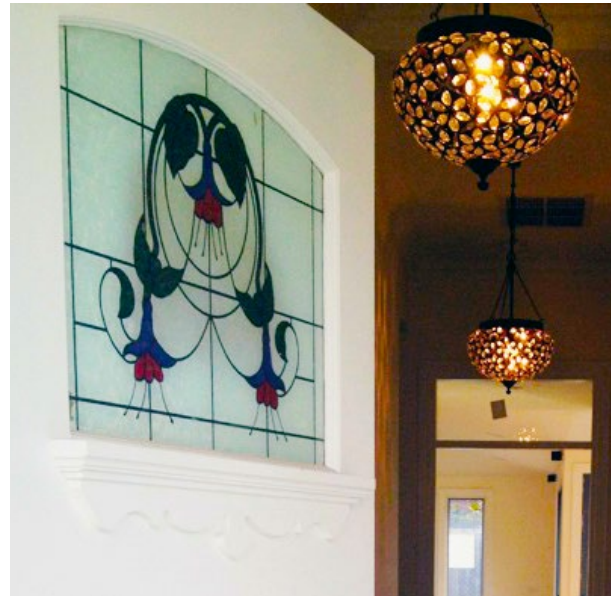


5 Be Savvy with Materials

One way to retain a singular look and feel throughout your heritage extension, is by repurposing and recycling materials. If your extension requires any sort of demolition, make sure you're considerate about what can be taken from the part of the home you're removing. Are there gorgeous old tiles that you can use as a feature in the extension? Perhaps there's delicate iron lacing, sturdy timber or lattice work that can be repurposed elsewhere?



Make sure you're highly aware of what you discard, because these original materials are rare and costly.



6 Seamless Transition

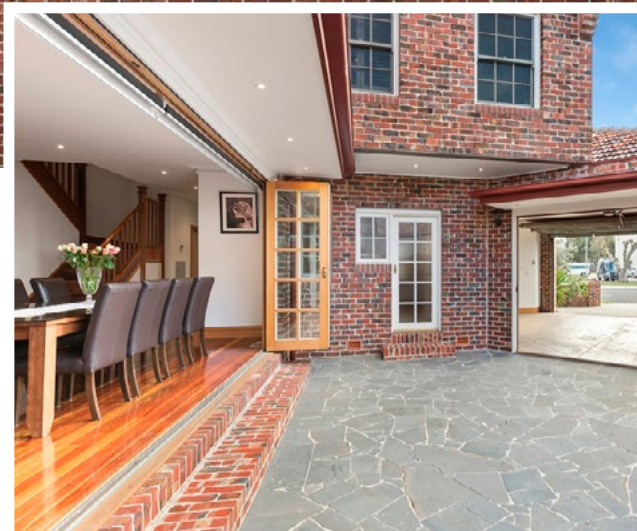
There's nothing worse than an extension that doesn't match the original part of a heritage home. It sticks out like a sore thumb and will detract from the beauty of your overall design. No one wants that. Even if your extension is more modern in style, you can still create a seamless transition between the old and the new.

This requires the work of savvy, experienced designers and builders. Ensuring the transition is aesthetically seamless can involve integrating old material and design features into the extension, ensuring the facade of the extension doesn't clash with the existing home and renovating elements of the existing home to bring them into the modern day, which may be more suited to your new extension.





With years of experience constructing innovative and stunning heritage home extensions, we can be trusted to make your heritage residence suit your modern lifestyle.



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