

Historic cottage's new lease of life

By Margo Berryman

The recent restoration and conversion of one of Queenstown's oldest buildings into boutique accommodation has brought new life to the historic Hicks Cottage near the Old Shotover bridge.



The 150-year-old category 3 listed heritage cottage on Old School Road was built by Thomas Hicks in the mid-1870s and local builder John Hudson, recognising its potential, bought the property in 2019 and has spent the last two years completing the project.

"I wanted to restore and retain some history of the area. I first built my own house and then started to work on the cottage — that's when the idea of creating visitor accommodation and sharing the history came about."

Robyn Miller of Origin Consultants prepared a heritage impact assessment and identified the most significant features of the small derelict building as the original timber shingles on the roof and the river stone chimney.

"Robyn ascertained there was a lean to on the original cottage which was probably used for storage and suggested we reinstate it which allowed us to include a bedroom and bathroom as part of the modernisation," says John.



The charming property reflects the building's historical importance and original timber in the interior has been used, the wooden roof shingles have been exposed and chimney restored with local river stones.

"They used to cut trees down and float them down the river from Glenorchy to the mill by the Shotover Bridge and we were lucky that our neighbour gifted some of this timber for the walls," says John. "The chimney was on too much of a lean to save so we laid a new foundation and then stone mason Mike Proctor recreated the exact 1870s pattern which is stunning"

The restored historic cottage provides first class accommodation for visitors. A couples only sanctuary, the 51 square metre house comes complete with modern amenities, luxe furnishings and fittings styled by Wānaka interior designer Verity Lawrence.

"Everything you need for a relaxing stay is here with a peaceful, outdoor setting alongside the Queenstown biking and walking trail. We launched on Airbnb late last year and have had some incredible reviews already," says John. "Guests love the cottage finish and its privacy — it's a great spot to reconnect with the history and beauty of Queenstown of old."



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