



IN WITH THE NEW

If you love where you live but you've outgrown your home (or your abode is simply past its use-by date), you don't necessarily have to relocate – a knockdown/rebuild may be your best bet, writes Lara Bailey.

The luxurious Urbane Forster display home at 1288 Toorak Road, Camberwell – and below left, the aged home that sat on the site previously



Before

In some of Melbourne's most prestigious suburbs, the demand for knockdown/rebuild services is continually growing, and it's not hard to understand why. When you're just minutes from your children's school, the local shopping centre, public transport access and/or your workplace, it makes sense that you'd want to stay put – but if your home is not ageing well and can't keep up with your family's needs, it's only natural you'd want to replace it.

While house-hunting can be exciting, it can also be exhausting, tedious, time-consuming and above

all, stressful, and the same goes for securing a block of land for your dream home – worth it in the end, but a considerable undertaking if you're in urgent need of a new home.

This is where knockdown/rebuilding is the perfect option. It offers the best of both worlds: a gorgeous new home located in a spot you're comfortable with and accustomed to. To gain an insight into the knockdown/rebuild world and explore the benefits offered by this service, here *Melbourne Home Design + Living* speaks with Rodney Ord, sales and marketing manager for Comdain Homes.

ON THE UP

Interest in knockdown/rebuild services is growing through various Melbourne suburbs, but as Ord explains, the market demand is particularly high in expensive established suburbs "where properties are not subject to heritage controls".

"Because our [knockdown/rebuild] display home is in Camberwell, we naturally receive

enquiries there, plus in areas where we're active. Those suburbs, to name a few, are Balwyn, Kew, Ivanhoe, Surrey Hills, Black Rock, Brighton, Beaumaris, Macleod, Plenty, Doncaster, Eltham, and Northcote.

"The vast majority of our clients are knockdown/rebuild (KDRB) clients. Over the last 12 months, KDRB accounted for just over 90 per cent of our sales/builds. This figure has remained pretty constant over the last four or five years," he says.

NEW AND IMPROVED

When it comes to the benefits of KDRB, "there are many," explains Ord.

Naturally, "staying in an area that you've settled in and like" is the number-one advantage of KDRB, he says.

Additionally, it means you can avoid disruption to children as the need to change schools and sporting clubs is negated, and you can take advantage of remaining in a well-performing suburb with good capital growth potential.

If you know your house is in need of a revamp but aren't sure about the scale of commitment you're willing to explore, Ord explains there are advantages to KDRB in comparison to renovating, for example.

These include "not having to compromise on the downfalls of the existing residence, such as poor insulation; [often] poor orientation; poor street appeal; old, tired and dangerous electrical wiring; poor plumbing; poor insulation, and poor or non-existent heating and cooling".

Additionally, "KDRB is generally much cheaper per square metre compared with renovations and additions [and you can] take advantage of the wonderful array of modern building materials being offered these days".

With a fixed price for a new build and no need for the maintenance that often goes hand-in-hand with an older house, KDRB offers you the opportunity to enjoy all the benefits of a brand-new house, without the work associated with relocating.

BIG DECISIONS

If your home is in need of a cosmetic or minor enhancement rather than a significant structural one (i.e. perhaps you need an additional bedroom or an upgraded kitchen), a renovation and/or extension may be sufficient for what you're hoping to achieve.

Depending on what part of the house will be worked on, you may be able to remain in your home during renovation/extension work, but with a KDRB you will have to relocate for the duration of the build, which takes Comdain Homes about 12 months on average, explains Ord.

Also, if your home is subject to building restrictions, KDRB may not be an appropriate option.

Regarding suitability of homes subject to a heritage overlay, "they are generally a no-no if [the owners want] a total KDRB. In most instances the ... house can often be modified, but the front façade can't be touched".

In general, says Ord, the KDRB process doesn't tend to be difficult.

"As we're building a single dwelling [for KDRB projects] there aren't too many issues, as a standard building permit is all that's required, however we're finding that some councils now are placing Vegetation Protections Overlays on sites. This would trigger a planning permit with the delay and extra cost that's associated with any planning permit."

STAYING PUT

The benefits of KDRB on appropriate properties (i.e. those free of heritage controls and in need of a new build) are clear – what could be better than remaining where you live but moving into a beautiful new house? If you're unsure whether to stay where you are or consider moving, it's a good idea to look into KDRB and see if you can put your dream home on your dream block!

Images courtesy of Comdain Homes

Comdain Homes runs free monthly knockdown/luxury rebuild seminars – see www.comdainhomes.com.au for more details