

# The Transformative Experience

of Bringing Light into a Heritage Home



**VELUX®**



**Bringing light**  
*into a heritage home*



## The back story

Many of New Zealand's cities, towns and rural areas are rich with elegant heritage homes that add much to the country's architectural history and landscapes. However these villas and bungalows were built for times that were radically different to the style of life Kiwis enjoy now. To bring them up to date, today's homeowners are implementing floor-to-roof makeovers that transform dark, compartmentalised dwellings into light-filled spaces that are in harmony with modern expectations of comfort, sunlight and flow.

The Graham family's farmhouse in Red Beach is a wonderful example of a heritage homestead makeover. Built in 1876, the house was in an extreme state of disrepair when they purchased it, with rotting weatherboards and a damp interior. They needed to solve its weathertightness issues, reconfigure spaces for modern living and make it a healthy home for family members with asthma. As an architectural designer, Paul Graham was in the perfect position to plan the transformation and bring their dreams to life.

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From the outset I could see a lot of potential for using skylights to bring light, brightness and warmth into the house.

– Paul, architectural designer and owner

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## Paul's brief to himself

Paul's brief to himself focused on the creation of extra bedrooms, an open-plan kitchen and family living area, and a separate living space for teenage daughters Katie and Sophie. He also wanted to improve the building's health status with best-practice insulation, ventilation and natural lighting. Last but not least, Paul wanted to showcase the home's idyllic forested location, which includes Kauri trees. It was a tall order; one that involved several trips back to the drawing board.

“When we first moved into the property, we noticed the dampness and lack of light. It impacted the health of our kids. Katie has asthma and Sophie was starting to show signs of respiratory problems from the living conditions”, says Paul. “The main drive with renovating was to make the home healthy. Apart from insulation, that meant opening the place up with skylights for solar warmth, sunlight and ventilation. I requested the help of a VELUX rep and we worked together on it.”



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Lighting up  
**everyday**  
life.

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“  
We were always going to have a few skylights up in the attic storage space, then during the design process we realised that adding even more skylights would allow us to turn part of the roof space into a kids’ retreat.  
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– Paul, architectural designer and owner



## Bringing the dream to life

For the home’s main living area, Paul chose to put in two banks of three skylights to create a spectacular architectural feature. The solar-powered skylights can be left open for ventilation, but have automatic rain sensors to ensure they close when the weather changes.

For the feeling of cosiness at night and to control excess heat gain during the day, the skylights are fitted with remote-controlled blinds mounted on the interior. More often than not, these blinds aren’t deployed after dark – the family enjoy the connection with the outdoors and seeing the stars twinkling above.

The Grahams’ home renovation project involved the installation of more VELUX skylights than they originally planned for. Sarah explains how this came about: “I was concerned that the kitchen would be quite dark, and the dining room too, because it’s an internal space. Adding more skylights made such a difference to these

areas. And as for upstairs, what was going to be storage with a couple of skylights for light is now a versatile living space for the kids. We made the decision to install more skylights during the construction period and I’m really, really glad we did. Having the sun streaming in on a lazy Sunday morning at home is just beautiful.”



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## In summary

For the Graham family, watching their 'grand dame' of a farmhouse transform into a light-filled, open-plan modern home was an uplifting process. Central to that transformation was the installation of 21 VELUX skylights: 6 Solar Power Opening Skylights, 7 FCM fixed skylights and 8 GGU Manual Opening Roof Windows. VELUX solar-powered blackout blinds were added to living area and bedroom skylights, for room darkening when required and increased insulation in winter.

Since the transformation, everyday home life is more comfortable and enjoyable. Sarah summarises: "It's lovely having a warm, dry, healthy home for the kids to grow up in, and I'm not so worried about them getting sick. In fact, the girls haven't been unwell at all since the renovation. And managing seasonal extremes is easier. In summertime when we're out for the day, the skylights keep the house ventilated. In winter, when things are dull, the extra light perks you up. It just makes all the difference."

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I love that this is a heritage house, but now it's warm, dry and comfortable. We can enjoy all the benefits of contemporary living.

– Sarah, interior stylist and owner

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It's lovely to come home to a home that's light, bright and welcoming, especially after a grotty day at work!

– Sarah, interior stylist and owner

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interview with the home  
owners of this property.

