



Heritage transformation

ETERNAL ELEGANCE

THIS HERITAGE COTTAGE WAS GIVEN A NEW LEASE ON LIFE WITH A RENOVATION, WHICH PAYS HOMAGE TO ITS CLASSIC APPEAL

Story KYLIE JACKES Styling SAMANTHA TORRISI Photography ESS CREATIVE

ACTUAL PAINT COLOURS MAY VARY ON APPLICATION



Character details

THE ORIGINAL HOME ALREADY FEATURED CHARMING ARCHES BUT MORE WERE ADDED TO ELEVATE THE HERITAGE AESTHETIC AND FRENCH PROVINCIAL FEEL THAT THE OWNERS WANTED. BAILEYS PLASTER INTERIORS ADDED DECORATIVE CORNICES, GENEROUS SKIRTING BOARDS AND INTRICATE MOULDINGS TO BRING BACK ORIGINAL DETAILS.

GRAND ENTRANCE Chantel and Joe's home creates a warm welcome with Preference Floors engineered 'Prestige Oak' floors, a striking pendant from Cafe Lighting & Living, a Temple & Webster artwork and a statement mirror that reflects the greenery. Their French Bulldog, Bronny, sits by the front door (opposite), which has been painted in Dulux Colorbond Monument and refreshed with hardware from Iver. >

The dream of starting a family led Sydney couple Chantel and Joe to begin their search for the perfect house in 2017, as they wanted more space than the apartment they shared. “We wanted to be on the Lower North Shore, so started looking in the area and found a heritage home we fell in love with,” recalls Chantel. The house was originally designed by renowned architect William Hardy Wilson in about 1912.

While she and Joe loved the period details, such as the Georgian-style columns, arches and fireplaces, she says the 100-year-old layout needed reworking. “All the rooms were really tiny and closed off, so our goal was to

open it up, enlarge spaces and give everything a face lift,” explains Chantel. In 2021, after the couple’s daughter, Sienna, was born, the work began. Interior designer Danielle Bonello-Dunsford, of Danielle Victoria Design Studio, re-imagined the floor plan into a family friendly three-bedroom home infused with a French provincial feel.

The result is a cherished home that skillfully blends new and old, where the couple can happily raise their family. “I got the French provincial look I’ve always dreamt of and it works so perfectly with the home’s heritage,” says Chantel. “I wanted the place to have a homely feel and it does. We couldn’t be happier.”

“The renovation has maintained the home’s classic feel but given it a freshness, which I love”

CHANTEL



LIVING AREA The focus of the living room was redirected so it opens towards the new open-plan kitchen and dining area. “The original fireplace was kept, and we designed an upholstered window seat, with ample storage hidden behind old-style panels, without affecting the original bay window,” says Danielle. Ornate touches, including high skirting boards and bronze Emac & Lawton wall sconces, were woven into the design to reflect the era of the house and add character and interest. Chantel selected the soft furnishings, which included a custom sofa and window seat, a coffee table from Renee’s House of Designs, a wingback chair from Brosa and a rug from Freedom.



On reflection

A FLOOR-TO-CEILING MIRRORED WALL IS SOMETHING CHANTEL HAD ALWAYS COVETED AND WAS A KEY INCLUSION WHEN REDESIGNING THE LIVING AREA. “I LOVE EVERYTHING ABOUT IT,” SHE ENTHUSES. “IT VISUALLY OPENS UP THE ROOM, REFLECTS LIGHT AND ADDS REAL WOW FACTOR TO THE SPACE.” >

The dream JOURNEY

WHO? Chantel and Joe, their daughter, Sienna, and French Bulldog, Bronny.

WHERE? Neutral Bay, on Sydney's Lower North Shore.

TIME FRAME? The project took about eight months, with the family moving into the home in January 2022.

THE DREAM? To create a more open-plan, spacious internal floor plan, with refreshed finishes throughout.

APPROACH: Complete renovation of a heritage home.

MUST HAVES: More storage space throughout, generous-sized bedrooms and light timber floors were essential in the redesign.

WISHLIST: "I wanted to use beautiful stone on the kitchen benchtops, have a freestanding bath and I wanted an entire mirror wall in the living area, which added wow factor," says Chantel.

WHY IS THIS YOUR DREAM HOME? "I've always loved a French provincial, classic look and being able to bring that look and feel to our first family home is really special," says Chantel.



Dreamy surface
THE STAR OF THE SPACE IS THE ISLAND BENCH TOPPED IN CALACATTA ORO MARBLE FROM STYLED IN STONE, WITH A WATERFALL EDGE. "IT'S REALLY SPECIAL AND PERFECTLY COMPLEMENTS THE CREAM, WHITE AND GOLD COLOUR SCHEME WE USED," SAYS CHANTEL. THE RIPPLED WATERFALL EDGE ADDS TO ITS BESPOKE APPEAL. >



Realising the dream

Rather than live in the house prior to renovating, the couple rented it out and continued living elsewhere for the duration of the eight-month renovation. The initial plans had been drawn up by architecture firm Project Techniques and demolition had already begun when interior designer Danielle joined the project to devise space-savvy solutions, which involved a layout reshuffle. Two smaller bedrooms were merged to create

the main bedroom and the original dining room morphed into a new third bedroom. The kitchen was enlarged and shifted to a sunnier position and walls were modified to create a more open living and dining area. Previous plans for a European-style laundry were also shelved in favour of a full-sized laundry room. "The goal was to preserve the charm of the original building, yet with a modern, open-plan layout that embraced family life," Danielle explains.

KITCHEN "The original galley kitchen lacked connection to other areas, so it was relocated to the front, where it enjoys a north-east aspect, with Velux skylights and French doors to draw in natural light," says Danielle. The new kitchen's (above & opposite) splashback is handmade crackle-glazed tiles from Surface Gallery and the benchtops are Caesarstone Organic White. A Brodware 'Winslow' pull-out sink mixer in Brushed Nordic Brass and 'Palladium' pendants in Antique Brass from Emac & Lawton add a touch of luxe. 'Panagiota' stools in Off White from Temple & Webster. **DINING** The new dining zone (left) next to the kitchen is made for entertaining, with Brosa 'Espan' French provincial-style chairs and a round timber table from Renee's House of Designs. A dramatic 'Lawrence' pendant, from Cafe Lighting & Living, adds the final touch.



Dream HOMES

Cohesive flow

DULUX SNOWY MOUNTAINS QUARTER WAS USED ACROSS ALL INTERNAL WALLS AND JOINERY. THIS NEUTRAL PALETTE IS ELEVATED BY THE BRASS ACCENTS.



Best advice

The adage 'do it once and do it well' rang true for Chantel and Joe, who decided to nudge the budget a little and invest in quality finishes that would stand the test of time. "This meant we spent more on the kitchen benchtops and timber flooring than originally planned, but they made the home what it is and were worth the expense," says Chantel.

BATHROOM With clever spatial planning, the main bathroom (above) was dramatically enhanced. The new custom-made vanity, in 'Portofino' quartz from Trendstone, adds luxury, while the freestanding Victoria & Albert bath from Just Bathroomware is ideal for bathing their young daughter. **WALK-IN WARDROBE** As is the case in many older homes, the bedrooms were small and storage was minimal. The solution was to combine two bedrooms to create the generous main, with some of the additional space used for custom wall-to-wall mirrored wardrobes (above left). **KIDS' BEDROOM** Sienna's room (left) is a little girl's dream, with a bed from Brosa and a 'Pom Pom' canopy from One French Summer. The bedding is from Pottery Barn Kids, the 'Bayswater' bedside table is from Freedom and the 'Brook' table lamp in Nude Pink is from Adairs.

Lessons learnt

"We'd always intended to use an interior designer, but we only engaged Danielle after construction had begun," says Chantel. "In hindsight, we should have involved her in the design process from the very beginning. Yet, despite some time pressures, Danielle did an amazing job and brought everything together really beautifully."

Freshen up

THE DATED GREEN AND YELLOW FACADE WAS FRESHENED WITH CLASSIC WHITE ON WHITE. ANTIQUE-STYLE FEATURE LIGHTS AND POTTED TOPIARY PLANTS FROM HONEYSUCKLE GARDEN ADD GRANDEUR TO THE ENTRANCE. FOR SIMILAR LIGHTS, TRY EMAC & LAWTON.



Source book

Interior design: Danielle Victoria Design Studio, daniellevictoria.com.au.

Joinery: Exclusive Cabinetry, exclusivecabinetry.net.

Architect: Project Techniques, (02) 9716 7684.

Builder: Assett Group Services, (02) 9114 8400.

ACTUAL PAINT COLOURS MAY VARY ON APPLICATION