



BEFORE



Exterior, pre-renovation



Bathroom, pre-renovation



Front bedroom, pre-renovation



Living and dining rooms, pre-renovation

Old charmer

In desperate need of some TLC, this Victorian-era home needed a firm hand to restore it to its former glory

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When Gina, a serial renovator who's refurbished two houses with her husband Graham, spotted this Victorian-era home, she quickly focused on its potential. Graham, on the other hand, couldn't help but think of the possible pitfalls and spiralling costs ahead. "The house was a total wreck," he says. "It would have been easier to knock it over but the council wouldn't allow it, as it's in a conservation area."

They decided the pros outweighed the cons; the north-facing 676-square-metre block in Sydney's inner west had room for an extension and was across the road from a primary school. With three kids under seven, the couple knew this 1880-built house was a winner.

After moving in, Gina, 43, who runs her own community relations business, and Graham, 44, who works for a non-profit organisation, briefed heritage expert and architect Hannah Stone of Gordon & Stone Design, who set out to rework the site for the family's needs. Hannah reconfigured and revitalised the original floor plan and added a 100-square-metre extension with an open-plan kitchen, dining and living area.

Despite the large scale of the build, the couple was confident enough to sign just a six-month lease on a rental house. They then spent weekends sourcing period pieces, as well as new fittings, fixtures and appliances. "We were careful to use materials that preserved the feel of the old house," says Gina. They found door frames, doors, architraves and fanlights – all more than 100 years old – to be hand-stripped and sanded back.

Traipsing from showrooms to salvage stores was less of an adventure for their children, Joseph, now 10, Cleo, eight, and Jeremy, six (the couple also have a post-reno son, Dominic, one). "We started favouring any shops that provided a little kids corner," says Graham.

"We had a bit of decision fatigue at the end," Gina admits. Two years after completion, the fatigue is a distant memory and the renovation a triumph – a harmonious mix of classic and contemporary.



April 2006

The couple purchase the three-bedroom Victorian-era house with a 1950s extension, and move in three months later.

March 2007

After briefing an architect, plans are drawn up and the development application lodged.

September 2007

Development approval and a construction certificate are issued.

October 2007

The family move out of the house and sign a six-month lease for a rental property. The building team start work on the renovation.

November 2007

The foundations of the 100-sqm rear extension are laid, but constant rain sees the builders turn their initial focus to the interior of the original section.



Street appeal The renovation of this family home ended up a very public project. "As the house is directly across from the school, all the parents gave us regular reports," Graham says. To keep the authentic look of the Victorian-era house, the couple replaced the sagging concrete roof tiles with slate. "We put real slate back onto everything you can see from the street," he says. >

January 2008

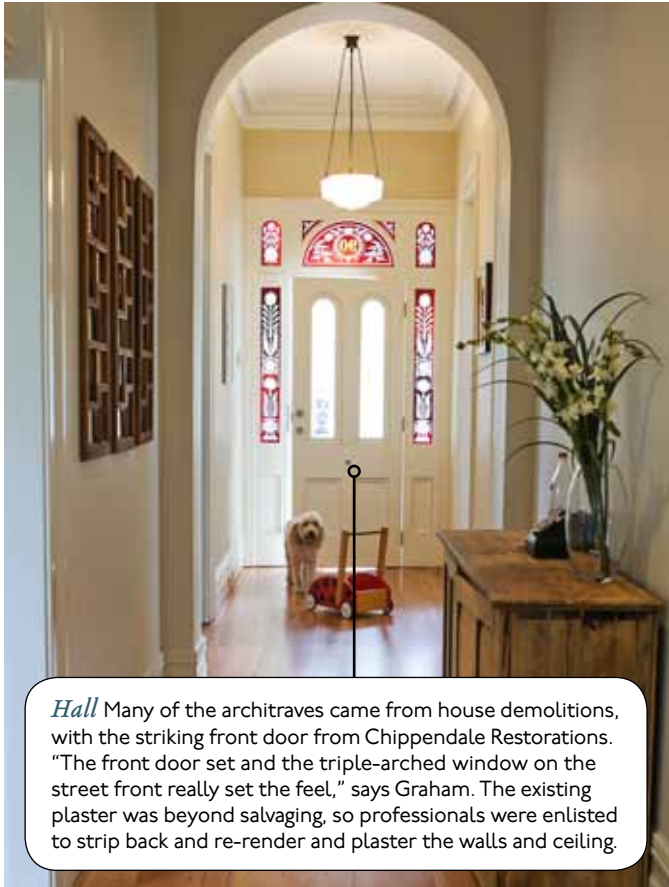
In keeping with the home's original style, a slate roof was added to the older, street-facing side of the house, with a Colorbond roof added to the new part at the rear.

February 2008

The old lounge room is converted into a bedroom featuring an ensuite and walk-in wardrobe. The bedrooms are replastered and fitted with new floors, ceilings and wiring.

April 2008

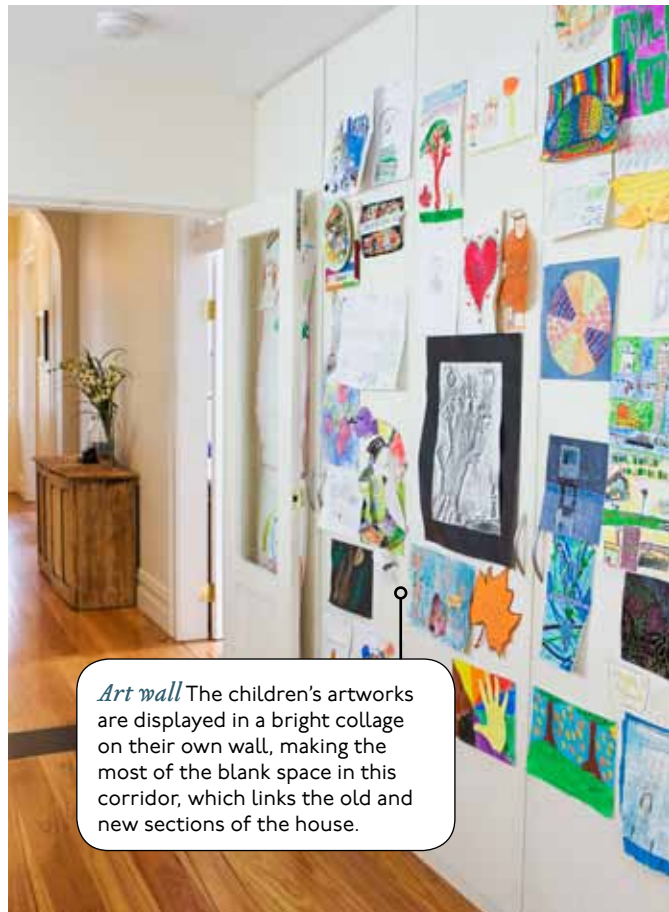
The rental agreement ends, so the family move into their newly refurbished home. They live in the old front part of the house while Graham (and friends) spend two weekends painting the back area.



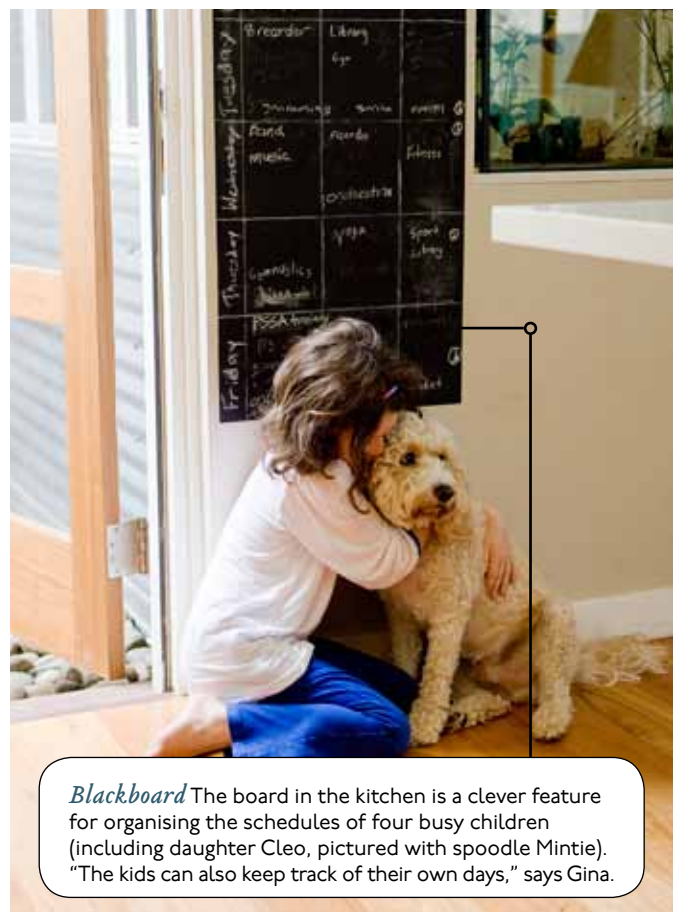
Hall Many of the architraves came from house demolitions, with the striking front door from Chippendale Restorations. "The front door set and the triple-arched window on the street front really set the feel," says Graham. The existing plaster was beyond salvaging, so professionals were enlisted to strip back and re-render and plaster the walls and ceiling.




Dining room Graham's most treasured piece is the Wildwood Designs table made of recycled fence palings. "It's 2.1 metres long – but after having our fourth child, there's no space at the table!" he says. For contemporary contrast, Gina chose a wavy, pleated-look Antonangeli suspension light from ECC Lighting + Furniture.



Art wall The children's artworks are displayed in a bright collage on their own wall, making the most of the blank space in this corridor, which links the old and new sections of the house.



Blackboard The board in the kitchen is a clever feature for organising the schedules of four busy children (including daughter Cleo, pictured with spoodle Mintie). "The kids can also keep track of their own days," says Gina.




Clerestory windows Sunlight floods the open-plan living area through clerestory windows and cleverly placed skylights above the kitchen. The high windows, which are electrically operated, allow cross-flow ventilation. "We don't need an airconditioner as the design of the house is self-cooling," explains Gina. Breezes flow into the kitchen and living area, while wide eaves over the north-facing windows minimise heat in summer.

Kitchen cabinets The couple opted for easy-to-clean 2-pac polyurethane handle-free cabinets with soft-closing Blum 'Blumotion' hinges, which close silently and won't slam on little fingers.

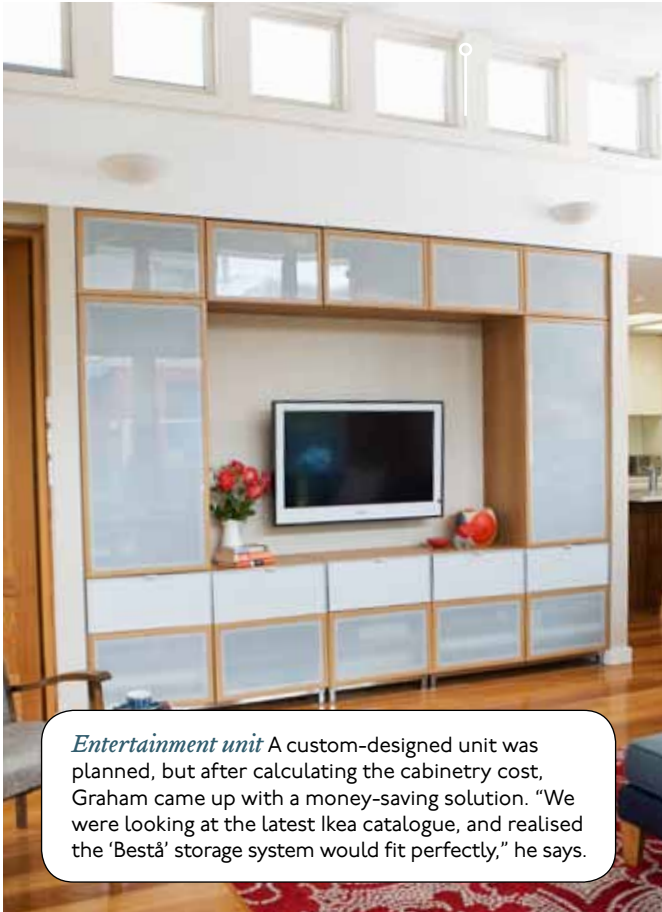
Bench A long island bench was essential for a family of six; it means Gina and Graham can cook while chatting with the children. While Gina dreamt of a more decorative panel under the CaesarStone bench, she opted for practicality. "A beautiful, light-toned panel would have matched the benchtop but I chose a timber veneer instead – the dark tones are essential when you have kids with soccer boots."

Floorboards After looking at recycled timber flooring, the couple went with the more economic option of new blackbutt boards. "I really like the warm tones," Gina says. "It's not the purest grade so it still has character." The boards flow throughout the house and unite the old area with the new. >

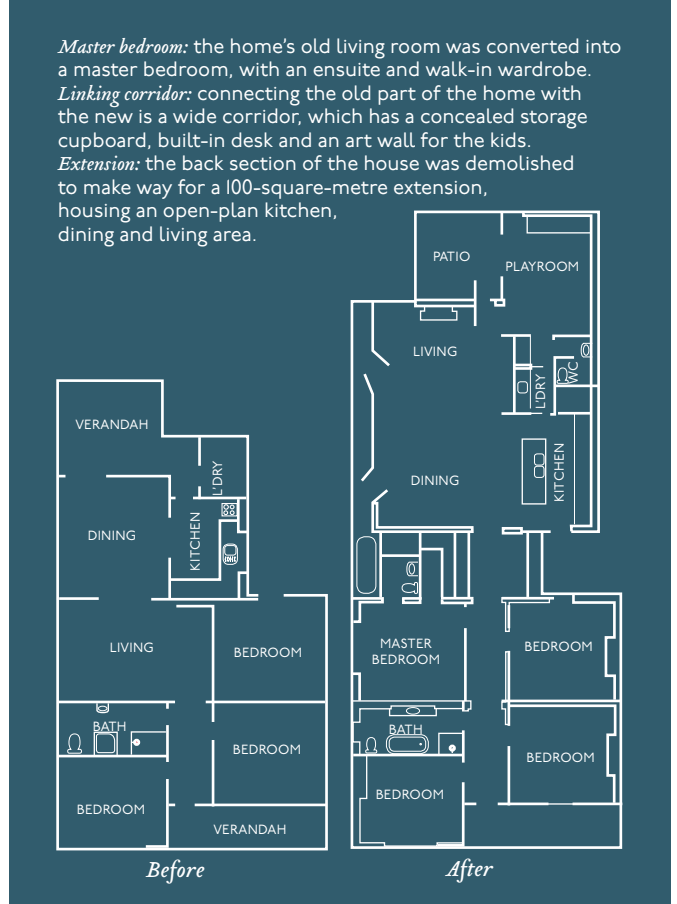


Floor-to-ceiling windows The new extension encourages an indoor/outdoor lifestyle; while the kids play cricket and bounce on the trampoline outside, their parents can watch the action from the spacious living area. The double-hung frameless windows were specified with insulating 6.38mm laminated glass.

Heating In winter, tall windows draw warming sunlight into the north-facing living area. "Even with the big open-plan design in the living area, our gas space heater from Real Flame warms the whole area with ease," says Graham. "It's only needed for about two months of the year – much less than any other house I've experienced in Sydney."



Entertainment unit A custom-designed unit was planned, but after calculating the cabinetry cost, Graham came up with a money-saving solution. "We were looking at the latest Ikea catalogue, and realised the 'Bestå' storage system would fit perfectly," he says.



Bathroom The original bathroom had last been renovated in the 1940s – "it was horrid", Graham recalls – so the couple replaced the fittings and surfaces with Victorian-era pieces, including a cast-iron bath (not shown) and wall and floor tiles from Olde English Tiles Australia. Although the Ideal Standard vessel basin from Reece is contemporary, its elliptical shape complements the traditional elements. >

Budget breakdown

Kitchen

Appliances: 519-litre refrigerator/freezer, \$2059, Fisher & Paykel, 1300 650 590, fisherpaykel.com.au. Miele three-ring induction cooktop, \$2999, gas cooktop, \$1099, 70cm oven, \$3699, rangehood, \$1099, fully integrated dishwasher, from \$1699, all Designer Homeware, (02) 9516 4511, designerhomeware.com.au. **Bench front:** Timber veneer in Santos Palisander, from \$215/sqm, Laminex, 132 136, laminex.com.au. **Benchtop:** Quartz surface in Ice Snow, from \$500/lineal metre (including installation), CaesarStone, 1300 119 119, caesarstone.com.au. **Cabinetry:** Gloss 2-pac polyurethane shadowline cupboards in Dulux White Watsonia, from \$24,500 (including benchtop), Krauss Kitchens, (02) 4271 7460, krausskitchens.com.au. **Flooring:** Blackbutt 130mm solid timber floorboards, \$69.28/sqm, Warringah Timbers, (02) 9981 3733, warringahtimbers.com. **Stools:** Second-hand stools, \$15 each, St Vincent de Paul Society, (02) 9560 8666, vinnies.org.au. **Tapware:** KWC Faucets 'Inox' multi-function sink mixer, \$1379, Cass Brothers, (02) 9569 5555, cassbrothers.com.au. **Wall paint:** Wash & Wear 101 Advanced Low Sheen in Russian Toffee, \$63.90/4 litres, Dulux, 132 525, dulux.com.au. **Expect to pay: \$70,000** (including building and materials)

Living and dining area

Dining table: Recycled Australian hardwood dining table, from \$1000, Wildwood Designs, (02) 9817 6999, wildwood designs.com.au. **Entertainment unit:** try 'Bestå' TV/storage combination, \$1235, Ikea, ikea.com.au. **Fireplace:** 'Captiva 900' glass-fronted gas space heater, from \$5075 (plus installation, from \$500), Real Flame, (03) 8706 2000, realflame.com.au. **Light:** Antonangeli 'Formosa' pendant by Aldo Cibic, \$1259, ECC Lighting + Furniture, (02) 9380 7922, ecc.com.au. **Rug:** 'Tokyo Lotus' 1.83m x 2.75m rug, \$2490, Rugs Carpet & Design, (02) 9519 8555, rc-d.com.au. **Sofa:** try Moran 'Elwood' sofa, from \$5299, Myer, 1800 811 611, myer.com.au. **Expect to pay: \$60,000** (including building and materials)

Main bathroom

Basin: Ideal Standard 'Tonic' vessel basin, \$324, Reece, 1800 032 566, reece.com.au. **Floor tiles:** 'Brighton' porcelain tile pattern, \$240/sqm, 'Balmain' porcelain tile border, \$44/lineal metre, both Olde English Tiles Australia, (02) 9519 4333, oldeenglishtiles.com.au. **Shower:** try Grohe 'Rainshower Modern' showerhead, \$1220, Methven 'Minimalist' shower mixer, \$299, both Cass Brothers. **Towel rails:** Amox 'London' double towel rails in chrome, \$230/600mm, \$264/900mm, both Gieffe Interior Environments, (02) 9716 3333, gieffe.com.au. **Vanity unit:** Tasmanian oak vanity unit with marble top, from \$2100, Krauss Kitchens. **Wall tiles:** 200mm x 100mm porcelain tiles in White, \$33/sqm, Olde English Tiles Australia. **Expect to pay: \$50,000** (including building and materials)

Hallway

Ceiling features: Cornices, from \$8.50/sqm, 550mm ceiling rose, from \$61.90, 950mm ceiling rose, from \$116.90, all Unique Plaster, (02) 9550 5440, uniqueplaster.com.au. **Door:** Restored period front door and architraves, from \$7900, Chippendale Restorations, (02) 9810 6066, chippendalerestorations.com.au. **Door glass:** Etched glass panels, from \$2000 (including installation), Paul Storm, (02) 9419 7354, paulstorm.com.au. **Plastering:** Ceiling and archway, from \$6500 (including labour and materials), RDK Ornate Interiors, 0416 088 681. **Expect to pay: \$40,000** (including building and materials)

Exterior


Exterior walls: 'GranolImpact' decorative membrane with Dulux Hog Bristle tint, from \$205/15 litres, Granosite, 132 101, granosite.com.au. **Fence paint:** Weathershield Semi Gloss Acrylic in Oolong, \$92.86/4 litres, Dulux. **Roof tiles:** Canadian Glendyne slate, from \$240/sqm (including installation), Westwood Roofing, (02) 9349 7201, westwoodroofing.com.au. Fretted barge board and verandah roof, \$200/sqm (including installation), Concord Carpentry, (02) 9743 3625, concord-carpentry.com. **Water tank:** try Waterpoint Classic Colorbond 10,000-litre water tank in Ironstone, \$2190, BlueScope Water, 1800 654 774, bluescopewater.com. **Expect to pay: \$100,000** (including building and materials)

These figures do not include renovations to the bedrooms.

Contacts

Architect: Hannah Stone of Gordon & Stone Design, call (02) 9212 3344.

Designer: Jean Shipton of Shipton Interiors, call (02) 9713 8464.

Builder: Concord Carpentry, call (02) 9743 3625 or visit concord-carpentry.com. 

Complete works \$320,000*

