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## BEFORE



Street frontage, pre-renovation



Old kitchen, pre-renovation



Old bathroom, pre-renovation



Dining area and kitchen, during renovation

## face value

Traditional 1920s cottage or sleek, sumptuous contemporary home? This renovation has created a beguiling home with the best of both

WORDS KERRIN RANNEY STYLING WENDY BANISTER  
PHOTOGRAPHY SHARVA SHRODDHY

Beyond the facade of this pretty freestanding 1920s miner's cottage, located in the Melbourne bayside suburb of Elwood, lies the unexpected: a stunning dwelling that showcases contemporary living at its best. When prospective buyer Jane spotted the dilapidated property, she immediately saw its potential. Her husband, Paul, however, had a very different response. "It was an awful-looking house," he recalls, referring to the 1970s pine kitchen, poky bedrooms and worse-for-wear bathroom.

Unfazed by the home's extensive renovation needs, Jane and Paul were further convinced by a family connection. "My brother, Brendan, and my father are both builders so I knew we'd be in good hands," says Jane. "Brendan has amazing attention to detail and an eye for style; we were happy for him to take the lead on all the finishes."

With architect Kim Francis of Benier Francis on board, the couple took a back seat. The two-bedroom property was transformed into a three-bedroom home, with a flexible open-plan layout. "There's often a lack of privacy in open-plan homes," says Jane. Architect Kim devised a clever compromise: sliding doors between the kitchen and living room. "I can be watching football in the living room while Jane and her girlfriends chat over dinner," says Paul. For large gatherings, the doors can slide away, transforming the space into an open-plan entertaining area.

The rear of the house, with its modern second-storey extension, is disguised behind the unassuming facade, which couldn't be changed due to the suburb's heritage requirements. The couple's development plans had to be resubmitted numerous times to comply with the council's guidelines, but the actual construction was a force to be reckoned with. The project went so smoothly, Paul and Jane had to break their rental lease - returning to their home three months earlier than expected! With a little family support and a talented architect, this "awful-looking house" has become an ideal home.

Complete works \$500,000

## August 2008

The renovation begins; the rear of the house is demolished and the existing sub-floors and walls of the remaining building rebuilt.

## September 2008

Construction of the new rear extension starts, with the framing soon completed.

## October 2008

The original front section of the home is reroofed.

## December 2008

Insulation is completed and the staircase installed, while a rear deck and new fence are constructed. Plastering is completed. American oak floors and cabinets are installed and tiling commences.

## February 2009

In the bathrooms, shower screens are installed and tiling completed. The electrical, plumbing and airconditioning fit-out is finalised.

## March 2009

The final touches are applied; painting is completed, and the floors are sanded and oiled.



**Lighting** A sculptural Dwell light, suspended over the table, defines the dining area and casts interesting reflections over the room. Though this light is no longer available at Dwell, Space stocks similar designs. Custom-made downlights by BCG Constructions provide task lighting over the benchtop.

**Space solutions** Using space wisely was the main criteria when designing the kitchen and living area. "Now, we have the space for people in the kitchen to have a drink while we prepare dinner, and also to have guests in the living room close by," says Paul. Sliding doors, concealed within the freestanding wall, demarcate the kitchen and living areas while the original French lithograph from Guy Mathews Vintage Industrial Furniture brings colour.

**Eat-in kitchen** Growing up with parents working in the hospitality industry, Paul rules the roost in the kitchen. "I think Jane has cooked three times in about 12 years!" he jokes. To increase valuable bench space, he requested a long island with easy access to the dining table. "I love the option of being able to have friends stand at the bench while I cook," says Paul. "If we're having a dinner party, I also don't have far to move and it makes it easy to clean." The bentwood chairs were inherited from Jane's grandparents and tie together the old and new. >

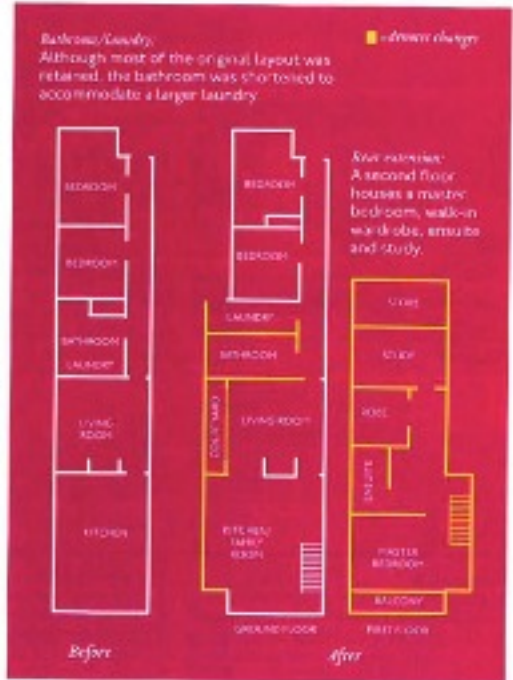


**Cabinets and island bench** Handle-free high-gloss 2-pac polyurethane cupboards in Dulux Vivid White give the kitchen a crisp, modern feel, and are a perfect foil for the thick Carrara marble benchtops. An undermounted Franke 'Plana' sink paired with a Fantini 'Cafe' mixer tap, both from Rogerseller, keep the island clear of visual clutter.

**Splashback** Using the same white Carrara marble as the benchtop for the splashback helps create a seamless feel.



**Finishing touches** A Kartell 'Louis Ghost' chair from Space and an Arco floor lamp from Dwell amp up the contemporary feel of the cosy living area.



**Light-filled living** Upping the comfort factor in the living room is a large, comfortable sofa in soft grey and a wide ottoman, both found at Dwell, punctuated by bright accessories. Originally bereft of light, the space now boasts floor-to-ceiling glass doors that open to a verdant outdoor nook. Sliding doors are hidden within a panel in the wall behind the TV unit to create separate and intimate kitchen and living zones. "We loved the flow of the house and the layout - mainly the living area as it was separate to the kitchen," says Jane. "The sliding doors in a way enabled us to have the best of both."

**Go with the flow** Sleek built-in cabinetry, in the same 2-pac polyurethane as the kitchen cupboards, helps to link the two areas visually, as does the American oak flooring, sourced from Britton Timbers. >



**Textured wall** The height of the stairwell and the light flooding in through floor-to-ceiling louvres allowed the couple to opt for an adventurous finish on the feature wall. The polished hard plaster wall with a rendered finish was a clever suggestion by BCG Constructions. "It's a great way to conceal plaster joints, as the wall is so high and wide," explains Jane. "It also breaks up a lot of the white in the room and has ended up being one of our favourite finishes in the house – it's commented on by just about everyone that comes over."

**"The textured wall HAS ENDED UP BEING ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE FINISHES IN THE HOUSE"**



**Lightwell and staircase** A second set of louvred windows floods the stairwell and upper landing with light. At the landing, there is plenty of space to accommodate a vintage Bally poster from Guy Mathews Vintage Industrial Furniture, as well as a Barcelona chair and pedestal side table, both from Dwell. "They have been fantastic in assisting us source furniture," says Jane. Feltex 'Merito' wool carpet in Tobacco from Allfloors Carpet Gallery provides softness underfoot in the bedroom, seen beyond.



**Wall tiles** The honed Chinese bluestone tiles from RMS Natural Stone & Ceramics add depth and drama to this luxe bathroom. Running the floor tiles up the both surround and far wall increases the room's spacious feel.

**Mirror mirror** A white-tiled false wall conceals the plumbing and creates a shelf for toiletries, while a mirrored cabinet above, by LT Nickson & Burke, helps to bounce light around the room.

**Bathroom fittings** A trip to Rogerseller had the couple's chic bathroom sorted. "Tonic" tapware is teamed with a spa-like 'Comfort' bath while the Catalano 'Verso 70' washbasin is paired with Profile 'Bloc' tapware. >



**Bedroom** Jane and Paul had always wanted extra storage in the downstairs bedrooms at the front of the house – the upstairs bedroom features a walk-in wardrobe – and they received an unexpected bonus during the renovation. When their builder began demolition, he discovered the bedroom had a false ceiling, meaning the wardrobe could squeeze in extra storage. “The higher ceiling also makes the room feel more spacious,” notes Jane.



**Exterior** Painted in Dulux Namadj, the rear of the house boasts strong architectural lines with repetitive shapes linking both floors, and is in stark contrast to the front of the property, which retains its heritage facade.



## Budget breakdown

### Kitchen and dining area

**Flooring:** 200mm-wide American oak timber floorboards, from \$90/sqm, Britton Timbers, brittontimbers.com.au. **Cabinetry:** High-gloss 2-pac polyurethane cupboards in Dulux Vivid White, \$30,000, LT Nickson & Burke, (03) 9439 980, lenickson@burke.com.au. **Benchtops & splashback:** White Carrera marble, from \$65/sqm, Modern Marble & Granite, (03) 9408 9330, modernmarble.com.au. **Sink:** Planer PPK10-38' sink, \$379, Franke, 800 372 653, franke.com.au. **Tapware:** Fantini 'Cafe' kitchen mixer with pull-out spray, \$689, Rogerseller, rogerseller.com.au. **Stools:** '450' stools with chrome base, \$179 each, Kendall Furniture, (03) 9569 819, kendallfurniture.com.au. **Cooktop:** KM12054G' cooktop, \$1599, H 5240 BP' oven, \$3199, both Miele, miele.com.au. **Chairs:** try 'No. 18' light oak chairs with upholstered seat pads, from \$250 each, Thonet, 1800 800 777, thonet.com.au. **Artwork:** Original French 'Bourin Quina' lithograph, \$2200, Guy Mathews Vintage Industrial Furniture, (03) 9407 5750. **Expect to pay: \$48,000 (including building and materials)**

### Bathroom

**Tiles:** Honed Chinese bluestone tiles, from \$9790/sqm, RMS Natural Stone & Ceramics, (02) 9316 9677, (03) 9388 2000, (07) 3806 0467, rmsmarble.com. BE1WP90 gloss white wall tiles, \$1495/sqm, Tile Liquidators, (03) 9681 881, tileliquidators.com.au. **Bath:** 'Duo Comfort 1800' bath, \$855, Rogerseller. **Toilet:** 'Element' toilet suite, \$730, Rogerseller. **Cabinetry:** Mirror-fronted cabinet, \$3500, LT Nickson & Burke. **Tapware:** Profilo 'Moc' basin set, \$475, Rogerseller. **Basin:** Catalano 'Verso 70' washbasin, \$140, Rogerseller. **Shower:** 'Tonic' shower mixer, \$358, 'Logic' wall outlet, from \$240, both Rogerseller. **Expect to pay: \$11,000 (including building and materials)**

### Living area

**Sofa:** Kor' 2.5 seater sofa in Warwick 'Beachcomber' fabric in Graphite, \$2700, Dwell, (03) 9376 4545. **Ottoman:** 'Kor' ottoman, \$1070, Dwell. **Floor lamp:** 'Arco' floor lamp, \$495, Dwell. **Rug:** 'Slinky' rug in Grey, \$695/190cm x 280cm, Dwell. **Chair:** Kartell 'Louis Ghost' by Philippe Starck, \$490, Space, (02) 8339 7588, (03) 9426 3030, (07) 3253 6000, spacefurniture.com.au. **Table:** 'Nexus' round table in White, \$999/545cm, Dwell. **Cabinetry:** High-gloss 2-pac polyurethane cupboards in Dulux Vivid White, \$2000, LT Nickson & Burke. **Wall paint:** Wash & Wear 'DI Advanced Low Sheen in Vivid White, \$6390/4 litres, Dulux, (3) 525, dulux.com.au. **Expect to pay: \$8500 (including building and materials)**

### Bedrooms

**Wardrobe:** Custom-made wardrobe in Dulux Vivid White, \$4000, LT Nickson & Burke. **Carpet:** Feltex 'Merito' 100% wool carpet in Tobacco, \$60/sqm, including installation, AllFloors Carpet Gallery, (03) 9572 281, allfloorscarpetgallery.com.au. **Expect to pay: \$7000 (including building and materials)**

These figures do not include the addition of the rear extension.

### Contact

**Builder:** Brendan Gonzales of BCG Constructions, call (03) 9835 6791 or 041 466 347. **Architect:** Kim Francis of Benier Francis, call (03) 9421 6023. ■

**Total (for rooms shown) \$74,500\***



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