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room to move

Clever storage and a floor plan shuffle ensure this home is a functional space for an active family of four

STYLING BEK SHEPPARD PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL

cheat sheet

Who lives here: Jane Cohen, a general manager in the consumer products industry; her husband Jamie Evans, an engineering academic; their son Daniel, 13; daughter Stephanie, 10; and dog Scooby.
Style of home: A three-bedroom 1920s Edwardian home, internally modernised and remapped within its existing footprint.

🕒 Jane and Jamie engaged architects Pleyzier Perkins in mid-2014. After 14 months of planning and approvals, the build took seven months.

💰 The renovation cost around \$400k.

WORDS: CARLI PHILIPS HAIR & MAKE-UP: KAREN BURTON BACK BENCHTOP IN PURE WHITE. CAESARSTONE.COM.AU

KITCHEN (these pages) The mottled glass from the original front door was sourced for the windows alongside mosaics from Academy Tiles for the splashback. Easycraft VJ (vertical joint) panels, painted in Dulux White Duck Half, combine with pale timber to create a breezy living zone. A curved edge softens the Carrara marble island benchtop from CDK Stone.





EXTERIOR (above) The home's period features were beautifully restored. **DINING AREA (opposite)** Warmth comes in the form of the generous Mark Tuckey table and chairs, and the circular table shape ensures foot traffic can move easily through the space. The Caroline Walls artwork *After Thought II* from Modern Times keeps the colour palette soft and neutral while adding movement.

Bats and balls, bikes and boards, tents and tennis racquets. Not that you'd know it, but this house has it all. Homeowners Jane Cohen and Jamie Evans credit Melbourne architects Pleysier Perkins with hiding it all away, tailoring clever storage solutions so that their compact home could remain clutter free. In all three bedrooms, drawers were installed under the beds, and wardrobes feature double pull-down racks. A vertical stacking system was created for Jane's shoes, while rails were installed to accommodate Jamie's shirts and ties. In son Daniel's room, a cupboard was made to fit his cricket bat. The family's hiking and camping equipment is tucked away in the attic, accessed by a pull-down ladder in the laundry. Initially, the couple thought they'd have to extend, but Pleysier Perkins proposed alternative ideas for how to rethink the space, and the renovation remained within the existing footprint. "Jane and Jamie made a decision not to move to a house with a bigger garden because, as busy professionals, they wouldn't have time to maintain it properly," says lead architect Berit Barton. "Plus, there were public pools and parks nearby." A German native, Berit's approach to size perfectly aligned with the project. "Being European myself, I'm used to living in apartments and thinking carefully about how space is used. It's about the quality rather than the quantity of rooms." Japanese interior designer Kanako Nakanishi, then part of the Pleysier Perkins team, introduced simple fixtures and a pared-back colour palette.

The brief was modest: make the kitchen, dining and living area more spacious, add an ensuite and introduce contemporary design elements without compromising the home's character. Wade Builders was engaged to take on the build. "The original house was beautifully done, so we just wanted to modernise it while maintaining the integrity," says Jane. Details such as the floorboards, cornices, grates, pressed-metal ceilings and skirtings were preserved and merged with new elements like archways, joinery and lining boards. "We divided the house into three zones," says Berit. "The Light and Airy' living areas, 'The Comfy' bedrooms and 'The Calm' lounge."

The open-plan rear adopts a light palette with a beachy feel. An internal wall was pushed back for a more spacious communal zone, and tall, glazed sliding doors extend into the garden. External blinds block out the sun and were a welcome alternative to curtains, which were a non-negotiable due to allergies. Carpet was also off the cards.

Although the original kitchen was bigger, it was reoriented to be more effective. Open shelving coupled with the high ceilings make the room feel lighter, says Jane. With its new textured VJ lining boards, round 'Penny' tiles and hanging copper pots, the kitchen is a modern interpretation of how it would have been back in the day, says Berit.

In contrast to the breezy back living area, the front lounge room is dark and moody. "This was originally going to be floor-to-ceiling books, but then we realised how many games and files we had, so cupboards were installed instead," says Jane. "They needed to have the exact dimensions for a violin, music stand and guitar." It was during a casual exchange with neighbours that she learned that in the 1920s, the front room was a piano showroom. It seemed fitting that it be converted into a music room. This space is shared by everyone and is used as a study, entertaining area, library and 'whisky den'.

Jane and Jamie's sustainable and modern thinking meant the existing space was reorganised to suit their family, rather than simply enlarged. "We decided to focus on carefully designing storage to increase the utility of the space we had," says Jane. "This meant we didn't lose the high ceilings and garden that we love so much." **10** See more at pleysierperkins.com.au. Find the builder at wadebuilders.com.au.

LIGHTLY PALM SPRINGS' PLANTER, SIMPLE FORM, SIMPLEFORM.COM.AU



”
The original house was beautifully done, so we just wanted to modernise it while maintaining the integrity

JANE COHEN, HOMEOWNER

“



star performer

A variety of open and closed storage options ensure this home can keep the clutter of daily life hidden away while displaying favourite treasures. Jane loves to cook, so she relishes the ability to easily grab everyday cooking tools.

 timeline

2006

December Jane and Jamie purchase the house.

2014

July Pleyzier Perkins is engaged, concept design begins and the builder, Steven Wade of Wade Builders, is introduced.

2015

March Preapplication meeting with council. **September** The build begins. Pleyzier Perkins has regular site meetings with the builder to overcome issues.

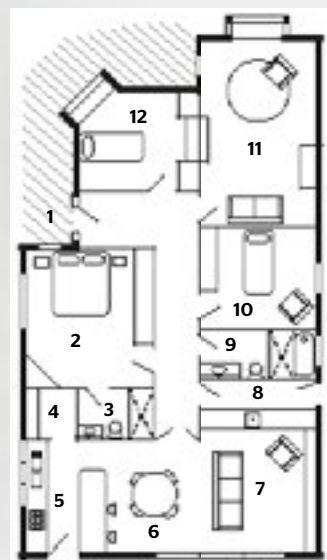
2016

March The build is completed and the family moves back in to the house.

”
In Australia, we often create homes just to put ‘stuff’ in. This house was tailor-made for this family, and they were committed to the idea of staying small
“
BERIT BARTON, ARCHITECT

LIVING AREA Sliding doors open up the living area to the garden, expanding the feeling of space. A large Jordan ‘Nook’ sofa is perfect for family movie nights, while the B&B Italia ‘Husk’ chair and stool from Space Furniture make for a favourite spot for kicking back with a book. The wall-hung TV saves space, while built-in cabinetry hides tech gear.

ARTWORK: MINERAL MATTER // PHOTOGRAPH BY BROOKE HOLM, MODERN TIMES, MODERNTIMES.COM.AU CUSHIONS (ON SOFA AND FLOOR), JARDAN, JARDAN.COM.AU, POP & SCOTT POT, FENTON&FENTON, FENTONANDFENTON.COM.AU



- 1. Entry
- 2. Master bedroom
- 3. Ensuite
- 4. Butler's pantry
- 5. Kitchen
- 6. Dining area
- 7. Living area
- 8. Laundry
- 9. Bathroom
- 10. Daniel's bedroom
- 11. Lounge room
- 12. Stephanie's bedroom



bright idea

Make the most of a period bay window while adding a modern touch with a built-in bench. Below, three drawers hide Stephanie's arts-and-crafts gear and her collection of treasures. The large seat is perfect for reading or hanging out with friends.

CUSHION (ON BENCH): CASTLEANDTHINGS.COM.AU. ARTWORK: A CERTAIN THING PAINTING BY CARLY WILLIAMS. FENTONSFENTON, FENTONANDFENTON.COM.AU. LUCIE KAAS CLOWN FIGURE (ON DESK). SIMPLE FORM, SIMPLEFORM.COM.AU

STEPHANIE'S ROOM

(opposite & above left) An avid reader, Stephanie loves her window seat. The Armadillo & Co rug, Mark Tuckey side table and cushions add colour. The slimline Hartò desk from Clickon Furniture and Another Country stool from Luke Furniture are a sweet combination. **MASTER BEDROOM (above right)** Jordan bedlinen and Made By Morgen 'Lil' side tables keep the look neutral for a peaceful space. A charming window adds character above the bed.



“It’s about ‘how well and how genuine’ not ‘how new and how big’”

BERIT BARTON, ARCHITECT



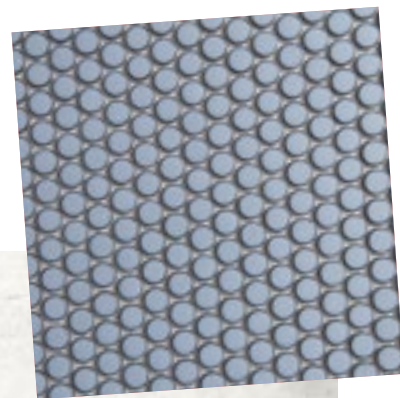
LESSONS LEARNT

“My husband says we should have bought a bigger TV, and I would have liked a smaller one! Aside from that, we wouldn’t change a thing”

JANE COHEN, HOMEOWNER

Biggest challenge: “Finding time to work with Pleysier Perkins while managing our busy jobs and a young family! However, it was amazing how quickly they understood our needs and style, so the process was very simple. The most important ingredient to success is a great fit between the owner and the architect.”

Best surprise: “How much more we got from the same floor space through clever design and thoughtful planning. Even with our bikes, cricket sets, bowling machines, paddleboards, violins, guitars, pianos, camping gear and hiking equipment - and everything else we accumulate with an active young family - we all fit!”



material mix

'Penny' glazed round tiles, \$82.50/sqm, Academy Tiles, academytiles.com.au. 'Bianco Carrara' marble, from \$275/sqm, CDK Stone, cdkstone.com.au.



BATHROOM Cool grey and white tiles result in a sleek look in the family bathroom. The Kin 'Connect' stool provides a link to the timber accents throughout the rest of the home. **GARDEN (opposite)** Tait 'Tidal' chairs surround a spacious 'Duo' table from Weylandts. The pergola's geometric design provides privacy and shade while supporting creeping vines.

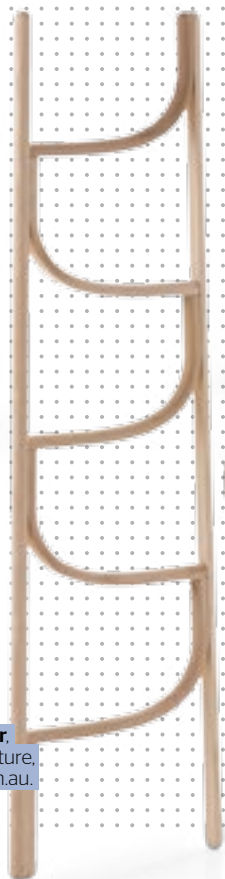
5 GREAT FINDS

NATURAL GRAIN The organic beauty of timber brings warmth and elegance to a period space



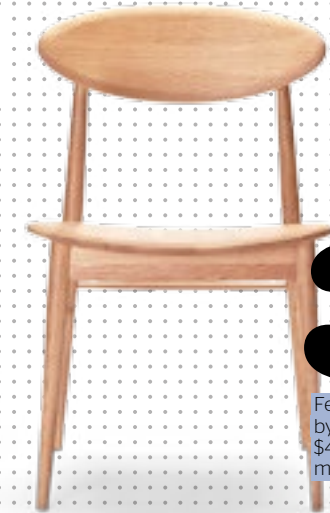
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'Lil' bedside table, \$1265, Made By Morgen, madebymorgen.com.



2

Gebrüder Thonet Vienna '160' ladder, \$1230, Space Furniture, spacefurniture.com.au.



3

Feelgood '170' chair by Takahashi Asako, \$440, Mark Tuckey, marktuckey.com.au.



4

'Tripod' table, \$5950, Mark Tuckey, marktuckey.com.au.



5

'Hector' floor lamp, \$2225, Jordan, jordan.com.au.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: NATALIE JOHNSON, TOWELS, LOOMTOWELS.COM; TABLEWARE (ON TABLE), TOP3 BY DESIGN, TOP3.COM.AU; MARIMEKKO, MARIMEKKO.COM



“The outdoor space is such a pleasure, especially as the garden matures and the teak tabletop turns grey. Everyone flows in and out of the house”

”

JANE COHEN, HOMEOWNER