



The beams above the kitchen highlight the void.

Lessons in modern history

This once tired old dame now treads a beautiful line between past and present, writes **Jennifer Veerhuis**



Two pendants sit above the double basin vanity and black Brodware taps.

While the owners' brief for this home sounded typical enough — create a more cohesive layout with plenty of living space — the project was far from average. The circa 1890s private home had evolved into a nine-room boarding house before it became separate units, each with a bathroom and kitchen.

"It is part of a row of enormous terraces," says interior designer Sarah-Jane Pyke of Arent and Pyke.

The new owners, a couple with two young children, wanted to see the grand old dwelling morph back into a family home again.

Creating connections

Interior designer Sarah-Jane Pyke of Arent and Pyke became involved with the project after a lengthy approvals process.

"Everything that they've done is within the existing envelope," she says. "When we became involved the clients wanted to start imagining how the home was going to feel materially and what it was going to look like because it had been such a long process. We wanted to bring back some of the excitement and energy to the project."

When Sarah-Jane first met the owners, they'd just had their second baby.

"It was about designing a house that has enough room for everybody to grow but still has the connection that a young family needs," she says. "A house that allows for modern living which is much more open and connected than homes were in the past."

"One of the things we loved about the home was its story and its history. You've always got the challenge of how do you retain that level of character and still bring a contemporary layer and an updated layer to it and so materiality was really important."

PROJECT

Owners

A couple with two children

Interior designer

Sarah-Jane Pyke of Arent & Pyke, arentpyke.com

Architect & builder

Alex Smith of CSA Architects, csa-arch.com.au
DonRose Building, donrose.com.au

The problem

A grand house that had been converted into nine units

Design solution

Re-arrange living spaces over three levels, with two bedrooms in the roof

How long did it take?

18 months



Bricks found on site were used as a wall in the upper living space, while (right) the original tiles were retained in the entry hall.



FEATURE DOORS BRING A CONTEMPORARY ELEGANCE TO THE MAIN BEDROOM

Finding a future

Numerous walls that had been added over the years were removed as the project progressed.

The house sits on a sloping site and now has three levels, with the kitchen, living, dining and formal living areas on the upper level, along with the master bedroom. The entry level has three bedrooms, while the basement contains a cellar, bar and lounge. Two bedrooms were added within the roof.

Sarah-Jane decided to introduce a rich colour palette to link and define the spaces.

"We used a dark hue of blue black and almost charcoal blue undertone and that was really paying homage to the era of the house," she says. "Old homes really can accept a lot of colour, particularly when you're in spaces that are restrained."

"We took that colour through the entry, up the stair and it's in the entire formal living and all the vestibule areas, on to the study and the bathroom and powder room."

"In the more contemporary area out the back, we stuck with crystal white but we brought back in that deep charcoal blue in cabinetry in the kitchen and so everywhere was responding to light."

"The front of the house has got beautiful sunlight and so we chose much softer tones for the master bedroom. Then we were offsetting that with the clients' artwork, soft furnishings that allow us to bring a bit more colour and texture."

The master suite is all about luxury. The

THE SOURCE

- Polished Concrete** Concreative, concreative.com.au
- Master bedroom curtains** Simple Studio, simplestudio.com.au
- Y Chandelier** Douglas & Bec douglasandbec.com
- Kitchen benchtop** Artedomus, artedomus.com
- Vintage Beni Ourain rug** Kulchi, kulchi.com

proportions are grand and the space includes a large wardrobe area and an elegant ensuite, adjoining the front balcony.

The kitchen is a blend of old and new.

There's a polished concrete floor, while stunning steel doors open up to the rear yard.

"In that kitchen space it was all about maximising the beautiful void with the timber beam. The benchtops have a highly detailed edge which you wouldn't find in a contemporary kitchen," Sarah-Jane says.

"The handpainted finish of the kitchen all starts to soften the palette down so you've got something that feels more at home in an older home, but can straddle those two eras."

The kitchen fireplace uses bricks found at the site while the basement level includes a sandstone wall from the original house.

Pictures Tom Ferguson



Opening to the backyard, the specially made steel doors are a nod to the past.