

INSIDES

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- Tips & tricks to impress your guests
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How to create the perfect family space

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Builder Wayd's reno advice

KITCHEN "I have aspirations to become a very good cook, but I'm not there yet," says owner Fiona. "This kitchen inspires me to keep on trying. I wanted the space to cook big dinners - with a family of six to feed, that's essential."

CHEAT SHEET

Who lives here: Interior designer Fiona Bateman, 35; her husband, Henry, 39, a business manager; their kids Freya, 9; Edward, 6; George, 4; and Rupert, 7 months; plus border terrier Minnie.

Style of house: A four-bedroom two-storey Edwardian house in Sydney's Neutral Bay, which was built in 1893.

 The renovation took seven months to complete.

CLASSIC CHIC

This Edwardian beauty's period charm perfectly complements the modern lifestyle of a family of six

WORDS MELISSA FIELD STYLING MEGAN MORTON PHOTOGRAPHY ANNABELLE HICKSON



FAMILY ROOM (left) Polished concrete flooring in the extension is a practical solution with Fiona and Henry's four children. The custom-made bookcase incorporates the children's desks.
KITCHEN (below) A four-door AGA cooker now stands where the original wood-fired stove once did.



Despite loving their stylish and beautifully realised home, a two-bedroom cottage wasn't going to cut it space-wise for this family of five. Add in a desire for another child and it's definitely time to hit up the open for inspections. That's the scenario Fiona Bateman faced back in early 2013.

Already fans of Sydney's Neutral Bay neighbourhood, Fiona and her husband, Henry, were keen to upsize in the same postcode. An intrepid Fiona contacted local agents to see if there were any gems about to come onto the market. Fortuitously, one agent knew of an elderly couple who were thinking about selling their much-loved Edwardian home in which they'd raised their six children. Fiona was familiar with the beautiful period house in need of some attention. "The previous owners didn't want to go through all the hassle of an open home so we were very lucky to snare this place," she says.

Fiona, Henry and the kids moved around the corner and into their new home in December 2013. They engaged Sam Crawford Architects to draw up plans for the much-needed renovation, which Fiona was determined to keep simple. "We decided to keep the structural work to a minimum," she says. "We didn't move anything around in terms of the rooms.



DINING ROOM Beneath the pendant light from Magins sits a table from Original Finish, Thonet chairs, and a rug from Revival in Milton on NSW's South Coast. Linen gauze drapes were made up by Simple Studio, allowing light to hit the walls in Resene Foggy Grey.



STAR PERFORMER
Retaining period features, including the archway and fireplace in the dining room, not only celebrates the home's Edwardian roots but also lends instant character and a sense of history to this family home.



SITTING ROOM (opposite, right and below) An embroidered Suzani textile hangs above cushions from Walter G. Antique reupholstered French armchairs and linen-covered sofas from The Country Trader sit around the I&B Perryman rug. **HALLWAY (opposite, left)** Treasured artworks hang by the front door.

I didn't want it to be too open plan because that doesn't suit the style of the home. Ultimately, I saw this as a restoration rather than a renovation."

Respecting the home's history was critical to the Batemans, as was their desire to allow as much natural light as possible into the house. The rear extension, accommodating the family room and new kitchen, delivered with the addition of a wall of custom steel-framed windows. "I'd seen something similar in another home and loved the light-drenched effect. They're probably one of my favourite features in the house now," says Fiona. The home's light feel is also aided by its simple paint palette – Dulux White Duck is used in varying strengths to add tone throughout.

In terms of the decor, Fiona led the way. "I love old things but, just because it's a period home, I didn't want everything to be old and in keeping," she says. "My daughter has said to me 'Mum, why do you like everything to be ruined?', but I don't think that's completely fair. I like to mix the traditional with the modern."

Fiona and Henry's beloved modern artworks, including a Brett Whiteley drawing in the hallway and a vibrant collection of indigenous artworks that feature throughout the space, showcase their diverse style and personalises the rooms.

Fiona says a particular highlight during the build was when the bespoke kitchen was installed complete with an AGA cooker and statement Dunlin pendant lighting. "It was exactly how I'd imagined it," she says.

The Batemans moved out for the duration of the reno with Fiona juggling the project, her successful design consultancy and, yes, that fourth pregnancy off site. "The fantastic builders [Buildability Constructions] just got in there and ripped into it," she says. "Our architect and builder were brilliant, and we had the DA plans approved within 60 days. The next-door neighbours were very understanding and encouraging, so we were lucky that it was a relatively smooth process."

The family have just passed their first year in the completed home and couldn't be happier. "It's everything we wanted," says Fiona. "I still sometimes pinch myself when I'm putting my key in the front door to make sure this is my home." She says the family plan on staying put for some time. "With four children, you can always do with more space, but I can't see us leaving anytime soon. It would have to be something very special to tempt us away."

For more on Sam Crauford Architects, visit samcraufordarchitects.com.au. To check out Buildability Constructions, visit buildability.com.au.

ARTWORK: (HALLWAY) LESLIE WILKINSON, GABRIELLE COLLINS, RELINDA BATEMAN, GLADYS OWEN, LAURA JONES, BRETT WHITELEY, NUDE BY ROBERT MALLERIE

TIMELINE

2013

June The home isn't on the market, however Fiona, who lives nearby with her family, proposes a sale.
August The sale for the house goes through.

2014

December The Batemans move in. "It had barely been touched and was very well loved. The home was still almost entirely in its original condition," says Fiona.

January Proof the home needs major TLC comes when the sewers burst twice before the reno. "Yes, it was as gross as it sounds," shudders Fiona.

2015

June The renovation commences and the family moves out during the work, which takes seven months to complete.

February With the renovation finished, the Batemans move back in.

FAMILY ROOM Occupying the light-filled zone is a Gueridon table from Space Furniture, timber stools from Scout House and a cane sofa from Revival. **FREYA'S BEDROOM (opposite)** The beautiful wrought-iron bed belonged to Henry when he was a child, while the hand-printed wallpaper is by celebrated British designer Marthe Armitage.



"THIS IS WHERE WE ALL SIT FOR BREAKFAST. I JUST LOVE BEING ABLE TO LOOK OUT ONTO THE COURTYARD GARDEN FROM HERE"



BRIGHT IDEA

Hand-blocked wallpaper from Marthe Armitage's 'Jungle Birds' series brings a touch of nature-inspired whimsy to Freya's room, while the tones of the delicate print match the neutral palette used in the remainder of the home.



LAUNDRY (left) This standalone area has the same benchtop, tapware and sink as the kitchen. **ENSUITE (right)** The bath is matched by a classic checkerboard tile floor. **MASTER BEDROOM (opposite)** The period archway is mirrored in the dining room, and JAB linen drapes are from Seneca.

3 GREAT FINDS

1

'Chelsea' wall light. \$698, Dunlin, dunlin.com.au

2

Perrin & Rowe **cabinet knobs**, from \$19 each, The English Tapware Company, 1300 016 181.

3

'Savdal' door. \$40, IKEA, ikea.com/au.

PAINT PALETTE

'Clean & Protect' low sheen interior **paint** in Green Bottle, \$56.90/4L, British Paints, 132 525.

'Clean & Protect' low sheen interior **paint** in Sea Shepherd, \$60.90/4L, British Paints, 132 525.

'Clean & Protect' low sheen interior **paint** in Tiger White, \$56.90/4L, British Paints, 132 525.



LESSONS LEARNT

"GO WITH A GOOD ARCHITECT"
"THEY'LL ENSURE YOU GET THE BEST DESIGN"

FIONA BATEMAN, HOMEOWNER

Best advice: "If you can hire an architect, it's well worth it. You can always buy that expensive sofa later, but you can't rectify built-in mistakes."

Design tip: "People crave open-plan living as well as tonnes of floor-to-ceiling cupboards, but I like having separate rooms and doors to differentiate the spaces. Having the bedrooms upstairs works really well for us as a family because, come the kids' bedtimes, I can ask them to go upstairs to play, go up and tuck them in, and then downstairs is for us."