

RENOVATOR'S NOTEBOOK

# PERFECTLY FORMED

Rearranging the layout and rebuilding the rear of this 1920s Sydney cottage has delivered a light, airy home that's not too big and not too small but just right, writes Judy Barouch.



Photography by Luc Remond.



BEFORE



AFTER

AT A GLANCE

**Who lives here** Architects Adam Hobbs and Daina Jamieson with sons Mackie, eight, and Jimmy, six.

**Renovation time** Plans were submitted to council in May 2011 and approved three months later. Building began in February 2012 and was completed in August 2012.

**Architect** Hobbs Jamieson Architecture; (02) 9948 3807 or [www.hobbsjamieson.com.au](http://www.hobbsjamieson.com.au).

**Builder** Nu-Stone Building; 0410 340 444 or [www.nu-stonebuilding.com.au](http://www.nu-stonebuilding.com.au).

**Size of home pre-renovation** 129m<sup>2</sup>

**Size of home post-renovation** 185m<sup>2</sup>

Playful colour adds high impact to the renovated 1920s cottage of architects Adam Hobbs and Daina Jamieson. When the couple first saw the then-rundown house on Sydney's Northern Beaches, they jokingly dubbed it The Spearmint Castle, in reference to its gelato-hued exterior paintwork.

While living in the dilapidated house for four years, the couple vacillated about renovating. "At one stage we thought we'd demolish it, but we ended up refurbishing the front section to retain the home's history and we only knocked off the rear lean-to," says Adam.

In its place is a modern addition with clear delineation between old and new. Where the original hallway reaches a recreated kitchen, the change is signalled by a hoop-pine veneer door that matches the new joinery. Adjacent to the kitchen is an open living/dining area and, above that, the main bedroom suite. Importantly, the layout has been turned around so that the living areas no longer face the busy street.

"We restricted the size of the addition to fit in with the furniture we like, and so that it wouldn't be overly large and soulless," says Daina. "To maintain the sense of space, the ceilings are high, consistent with the front rooms."

Even on overcast days, the house is bright and cheery. While it no longer sports a minty facade, shades of green have been incorporated in the interiors. Most fun are the round bathroom mosaics in light jade with matching grout. Then there's the pistachio kitchen splashback that complements the colour-washed timber balusters of the new staircase. "All the green gives a sense of unity," says Daina. >



**< HALLWAY**

A skylight funnels light into the hallway, where pendant lights from Fat Shack Vintage feature handsomely. At the end of the hall, a door with ventilation slots and a feature handle from Designer Doorware marks the entrance to the kitchen and the start of the new section.

**WINDOW SEAT**

A 5m-long banquette with underbench storage, built by Caruana Kitchens, runs the length of the north-east wall in the parents' suite upstairs. "It's a cosy place to sit with a cup of coffee; it gets lovely morning sun in winter," says Adam.

**BOYS' BEDROOM**

As this room is located in the original section of the house, the walls were painted in Dulux Pale Celadon in a nod to the home's history and its former incarnation as The Spearmint Castle. Trim in Antique White USA. A Schoolhouse fan from Spinifex Fans reinforces the updated traditional feel.

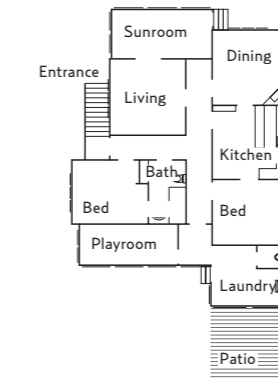
**DOWNSTAIRS BATHROOM**

"Colour brings in personality," says Daina. Penny-round mosaics from Amber Tiles in a fresh green are complemented by a hoop-pine veneer vanity consistent with the cabinetry of the kitchen and ensuite. This space was formerly part of the boys' room.

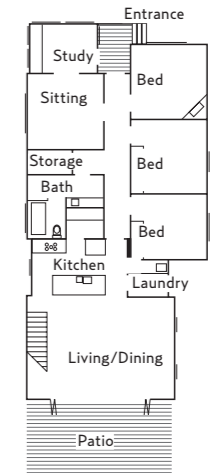
**REAR OF HOUSE**

The owners liken the bold appearance of the exterior to a slotted letterbox, or a caravan attached to the house.

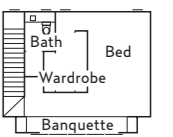
**BEFORE**



**AFTER  
GROUND FLOOR**



**FIRST FLOOR**



**'DON'T JUST LOOK AT THE COST: THINK ABOUT WHETHER THE CHANGES WILL ADD VALUE TO YOUR LIFESTYLE.'** ADAM

**ADAM & DAINA'S RENOVATION TIPS**

- ❖ Weigh up whether your renovation will improve your daily life. "Don't just look at the cost: think about whether the changes will add value to your lifestyle," says Adam.
- ❖ Obtain samples of finishes and colours in large sizes to better visualise the nuances. For instance, the warm tones of a dark grey may be heightened if placed next to other warm colours but less obvious when placed against a cooler colour.
- ❖ Test colours and finishes on site. Remember that each will be part of an overall scheme and will rarely be seen in isolation.
- ❖ If you plan to install lights or fans in the centre of a room, be sure to consider built-in furniture.
- ❖ For exclusion of traffic noise, 10mm toughened glass is better than double glazing, albeit not as good in terms of thermal performance.



For Where to Buy, see page 226.



**THE BUDGET**

Preliminaries, set-up & insurances	\$24,200	Painting	\$25,850
Surveyor	\$1320	Bricks & materials	\$27,687
Demolition & earthworks	\$39,050	Joinery	\$59,286
Plumbing & waterproofing	\$38,598	Windows	\$34,572
Electrical	\$37,700	Carpet supply & installation	\$5750
Concreting	\$21,120	Appliances & door hardware	\$10,917
Structural steel	\$3080	Wet-area fixtures & fittings	\$8560
Carpentry	\$36,300	Fencing	\$8948
Roofing	\$28,970	Landscaping	\$5940
Timber flooring	\$9240	Council & authority permits	\$2308
Tiling & paving	\$11,580	Final cleaning	\$660
Gyprock & insulation	\$26,620	Labour	\$7150
Skylights & ventilators	\$4664	Builder's margin	\$85,250
Rendering & plastering	\$9680	<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$575,000</b>