

RENOVATE

With hearth and soul

THE PROJECT

Owners

A couple of empty nesters who had recently downsized

Designer

Andrew Waller, Mr Waller, mrwaller.com

The problem

Downsizing to a semi-detached property with an overly complicated open-plan living space

The site

A semi-detached house at Kirribilli which is wider at the front than it is at the rear

Design solution

Re-arranging the open-plan space and losing a bedroom to create a main bedroom suite

How long did it take?

Five months



Downsizing to a more compact house doesn't mean living a small life, writes Robyn Willis

There's nothing like downsizing to help you understand what really matters to you in life.

For this couple, who were moving from a larger house in Kirribilli now that their children had left home, their needs were clear.

They wanted a comfortable home with room for their extensive book collection and a spacious main bedroom suite. They still wanted to entertain on occasion, so a workable open living kitchen and dining space was a priority.

The three-bedroom semi detached cottage they bought in the same suburb was everything they wanted in terms of size, but lacked some of the function they sought from a home.

Designer Andrew Waller had worked with the owners on previous projects and was uniquely placed to understand their needs, and their changing circumstances.

Reorganising the layout of the ground floor to better position the





HOME TOP TIP ✨
STYLE
 A simple white palette with black accents offers a clean look



OPEN
feel

kitchen was the first priority for Andrew. The dining and kitchen occupied the same area in the middle of the floorplan but Andrew swapped them over so that the kitchen was against the shared wall, which had an old

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 ◆

hearth, and the dining space had access to the window. Andrew installed a banquette under the window to provide more seating while the old hearth made the ideal location for the oven. A small space off the kitchen

became the butler’s pantry while an island bench became the centrepiece of the kitchen.

“We suggested the butler’s pantry because the kitchen is open plan and it tidies up the main kitchen area,” he says.

Upstairs, Andrew simplified the floorplan to make way for the new main bedroom suite.

“They wanted a kingsize bed but the room wasn’t big enough,” he says. “They wanted a wardrobe as well but the space was not there for that either.”

So Andrew took the unusual step to reduce the three bedrooms upstairs to two, converting one of the bedrooms into a spacious walk-in robe and ensuite.

A small ensuite at the top of the stairs was also removed in favour of a custom-built bookcase for their nonfiction collection.

Deeper bookcases were installed in the formal lounge at the front of the house on the ground floor to cater for their coffee table books.

“They have a lot of books,” he says. “We could have put books everywhere.”

Pictures: Nick Watt

The oven slots into the old hearth in the new kitchen (above) while the new dining area (right) has a built-in banquette under the window. A separate study at the rear of the property (top) also houses the well-appointed laundry.

THE SOURCE

Restored Carrara marble fireplace

Chippendale Restorations, chippendalerestorations.com.au

Timber floorboards

Tallowwood from Barrenjoey Timber, barrenjoeytimber.com.au

Kitchen stools

Lale milking stools from Inartisan, inartisan.com

Vintage window with mirror backing in dining room

From Le Forge, leforge.com.au

