

KIRRIBILLI CLASSIC

Restoring and restructuring a
regency home on Sydney Harbour

Words Louise Smithers Photography Nick Watts

“We used a predominantly neutral palette with layered textures and materials to link both built details and furniture” – Andrew Waller



LEFT The angular kitchen is a home cook's (and wine lover's) dream

The early 2000s was a great time to be an Aussie. We were high on Olympic spirit, Nikki Webster was Australia's darling and double denim became a wardrobe staple.

On the other hand, the naughties weren't so great in terms of architecture and interior design. It was around this time that offensive McMansions with even more offensive interiors started popping up. We're having flashbacks of faux brick walls and behemoth kitchen set-ups better suited to a restaurant than a family home. You know the ones: forget the baby — these homes had kitchen sinks so big you could bathe cattle in them. Industrial minimalism was on-trend, but not in the edgy way we see today. Think sterile, not stylish.

Prior to its transformation by Andrew Waller Design, Kirribilli House was the victim of crimes against design prevalent at the turn of the century. The existing two-storey, semi-detached regency home was a hodgepodge of styles dominated by an unsightly and awkward interior design.

“The home had a typical 2000s renovation to the interior and rear building,” says Andrew Waller of Andrew Waller Design. “The period details had mostly been stripped.”

Early naughties features dominated, with an angular kitchen twisted about 10 degrees from the plan and floating joinery extending over a sunken lounge space. The bathrooms had a distinctive minimalist flavour with stainless-steel circular basins and miniature mosaic feature wall coverings. The property sits within

An antique fireplace was restored and placed in the new front lounge

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a conservation area, so the work on this project was exclusively internal, excluding a window upgrade at the rear and side of the property.

The brief called for a fully updated interior and reworked floor plan to maximise every inch of space and create a seamless flow. In particular, the rear open-plan space was re-zoned and placed where the old kitchen once dominated.

The clients were recently handed the “empty nest” card. Without offspring to worry about and cater to on a daily basis, they decided a luxurious master suite was a must. This meant converting the home from three bedrooms to two, the second reserved for guests. Despite having an empty nest, the couple has a full schedule and requested separate work zones. A studio in the back garden and reading space in the first-floor hallway have ensured both parties can work without disturbing each other.

Standout features include the window recess with a banquette for intimate family dining, the new chimney

centred between floating shelves (creating a focal point in the family lounge) and the relocated kitchen. A butler’s pantry with a glass door was inserted into a previously awkward area and a powder room was added under the stairs.

Rustic and distressed furnishings including an elm trestle table, while milking stools were specifically chosen to add history to the new spaces. Carrara marble benchtops and mosaic floors soften the palette. Carrara can also be found in the front lounge, where a restored antique fireplace was installed to formalise the room.

A light colour palette was adopted, forming a neutral background for the owners’ artworks and decorative pieces. White walls and joinery are offset against blackened metals — steel doors, antique copper hardware and curtain rails and aged-iron light fittings. “We used a predominantly neutral palette with layered textures and materials to link both built details and furniture,” says Andrew, who made use of indoor plants

ed’s fave

THE WINDOW RECESS WITH A BANQUETTE FOR INTIMATE FAMILY DINING



we love
THE STUDY NOOK AND
CONCEALED LAUNDRY

Subtle geometric elements
and textured cushions
infiltrate this bedroom



ABOVE 50 shades of grey
RIGHT Minimalism was key when
designing the bathrooms

to soften the scene and link it to the adjacent park on the Kirribilli foreshore.

Upholstered furnishings and rounded sculptural forms soften the lines of the structured spaces. The lights reference the material palette, with aged-iron fittings selected to relate to the new steel windows. "A subtle play on texture and pattern has been introduced to create definition," says Andrew.

From the artwork to the furniture, and all the hardware and light fittings in between, everything is carefully considered yet effortless. For example, the rust velvet pillows on the master bed link to the artwork, gilt mirror and magnolia tree outside the window. Likewise, the elm trestle table adds warmth to the otherwise neutral space, linking to the rusted metal mirror (an old window frame), which sits adjacent.

The original timber fireplace from the formal lounge now keeps the master bedroom cosy. The front rooms were painstakingly restored so the period detailing could once again shine. Unfortunately, these original details were eliminated from the area now serving as the master bedroom, leaving the task of adding these features into the space.

Bringing this old girl back to life was a labour of love, one Andrew Waller Design is proud to have accomplished.

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