

EXTERIOR / Owner Fiona Shakespeare with Teddy the groodle in the smart new rear extension. Full-width glass stacking doors expand the living space, making summer living a breeze. Doors from Central Coast Shopfronts. Sandstone pavers, Skheme. Timber stool, Mark Tuckey. Artwork above sofa by Kristen Lethem. Copper planter, Malcolm Antiques. FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 188.

FRESH perspective

In a Sydney home where a modern extension wraps around the 19th-century core, looking in is as rewarding as looking out.

STORY ROSE-MARIE HILLIER / STYLING ASHLEY PRATT / PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS WARNES



This is the life

The cleverly expanded house is now ideal for hosting parties and visiting children, says Fiona. "We use lighting to cosy up the place for smaller gatherings." Her favourite spot is the formal living space. "There was a lot of decision-making that went into whether it would be a guestroom or the kids' playroom. It has such a beautiful feel that it seemed a waste not to enjoy it as an adult space. Ben and I plan to use that room more and more."

First and foremost, this is a family home. Sure, it ticks all the style boxes – eye-catching architecture, carefully curated furniture, a textural white palette and modern bursts of colour – but the home of interior designer Fiona Shakespeare and her husband, Ben, is also the ultimate family-friendly zone.

Sons Jack, aged 14, and Harry, 10, were preschoolers when their parents spotted this house for sale in Sydney's inner west. It fitted the bill on so many levels: a deep, double block, potential for a pool, a quiet leafy cul-de-sac location. There was a generous lawn, garden beds and beautiful old trees, perfect for a swing. In an area dominated by cheek-by-jowl stone-and-weatherboard cottages, the solid brick construction, high ceilings and elegant proportions were major drawcards, as was the big backyard.

"It was charming and in great condition, considering it was built in the mid-1800s," says Fiona. "Structurally the house was fine, although the ceilings were sagging under the weight of dirt and coal dust."

The intention all along was to add to, and extend, the house. The family lived here for four years before engaging architects ESNH Design and builder X10d Constructions to undertake the year-long renovation. Fiona and Ben, who had a lot of input into the final design, gave the architects a strict brief. "We wanted a large kitchen/living/dining area, a new laundry, a media/playroom for the boys, an office and parents' retreat," says Fiona. "And we didn't want a copy of 'old'. We wanted it to look and feel like a giant boathouse or shed."

The rear verandah was removed and original sandstone foundations from an old shed were incorporated into the retaining wall of the new addition. The house's footprint was extended by 6m and a new upper level doubled the volume of internal space. ▶



ENTRANCE / Twin moptop robinias uphold the strict symmetry of this classic 19th-century facade.
LIVING / Patterns, colours and styles are masterfully composed. Sofa, Jardan. Coffee table, Douglas and Bec. Large rug, Jason Mowen. Flowers from Poho Flowers.
FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 188.

Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.

THE PALETTE

Dulux Vivid White
extension, formal living room

Porter's Paints Wood Smoke
hallway

Dulux China White
exterior



KITCHEN / The layout, designed by Fiona and built by Degabriele Kitchens, incorporates Corian surfaces and a Starphire glass splashback. Mixer, Brodware Industries. Stools, Interstudio. Pappelina rug, Nordic Fusion. Pendant lights, Dunlin.

HALLWAY / Fiona spruced up a vintage sideboard with a coat of paint. Artwork by Sally Anderson. Chair, Cafe Culture+Insitu.

TERRACE / Porcelain tiles from Skheme merge with concrete pavers outside.

Designer buy: Butterfly chair, from about \$559, Big BFK.

DINING / Entertaining with an alfresco vibe. Dining chairs and pendant light, Hub Furniture Lighting Living. Dinnerware, Mud Australia. Rug, Armadillo&Co. Artwork by Roger Roberts. Flowers from Poho Flowers.

FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 188. ▶

Summer retreat

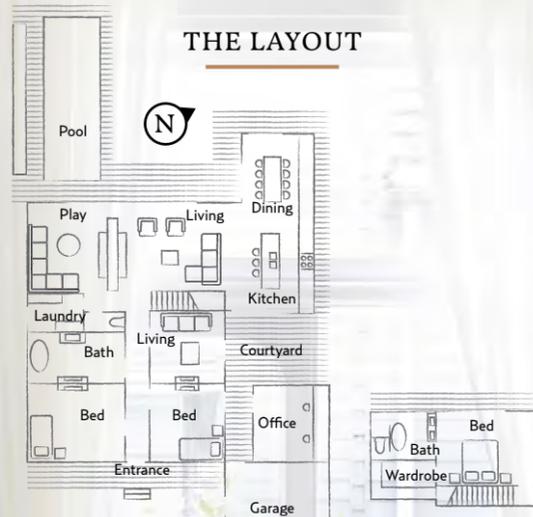
The qualities of this home encourage indoor-outdoor living and family interaction. "When the sliding doors are open, the kids can run in and out," says Fiona. The backyard offers a pool, a large lawn for play, and swings and ropes hanging from the old camphor laurel. Inside, things are equally idyllic. "Beautiful dappled light comes right into the kitchen until late in summer," says Fiona. "We love to linger there together instead of turning on the TV."

Currency conversion correct at time of printing.



Watch Fiona share how she recreates her casual style. Use the free **viewa** app and scan this page.





◀ The old, front, part of the house, with new ceilings and restored period features, has been refreshed and refurbished. Running along the hall are the boys' rooms, a formal living room and an old bedroom converted into a luxe bathroom. The end of the hall merges into a contemporary open living, kitchen and dining space, with a play/media room on the southern side. These new zones flow out to the garden and wrap around the original core to create highly liveable indoor-outdoor spaces and private courtyards. Fiona's office abuts the rebuilt garage and the new upper level accommodates the main bedroom suite.

Ben and Fiona love the airy quality of their new home. "We get really beautiful light, from every angle," says Fiona. "There is no 'bad' area; every room has a good feel."

Fiona is always on the lookout for gorgeous furnishings for clients, and her home benefits greatly from her resourcefulness. The inventory throughout includes a who's who of innovative designers and makers from Australia and overseas, with many pieces bought online. They're woven into a scheme based on Fiona's love of white, grey, blue and black hues, and given depth and texture with leather and timber furniture and plush rugs. "I want the house to feel comfortable, not austere," she says. Not to mention, deeply practical. "With a family, you can't have 'precious,'" says Fiona. "No room is out of bounds here." ▶

Shakespeare Design, Balmain, NSW; (02) 8060 5788 or shakespeare-design.com.au.

'We get really beautiful light, from every angle. There is no 'bad' area; every room has a good feel.' Fiona Shakespeare

OFFICE / Built onto the garage and opening to a side courtyard, this concrete-floored workspace is buffered from the noise of family life. Leaf wallpaper, Katie Ridder. Bentwood chairs, Doug Up On Bourke. Custom pendant light drum shades in glazed linen.

BATHROOM / A Victoria+Albert rolltop bath and Carrara marble vanity surface play up the old-world charm in this repurposed room. Custom blind in Romo Linara linen fabric.

FORMAL LIVING / This north-facing room is a favourite spot for relaxing. Sofa, Equator Homewares. Shibori cushion, Emily Ziz Style Studio. Rug, Designer Rugs. Artworks by Marcella Kaspar (above sofa) and Julie Paterson. Flowers from Poho Flowers.

Smart buy: Metropolitan coffee table, \$699, MRD Home. FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 188.

H&G HOUSES

LIVING / Full-width stacking doors from Central Coast Shopfronts and a glass fence enable uninterrupted views of the pool.

POOL / Harry (top) and Jack cool off. Custom cushions in Fab Outdoor Fabrics (left) and South Pacific Fabrics. FOR WHERE TO BUY, SEE PAGE 188. **H&G**



FEATURE PLANTS

FRONT YARD
Moptop robinias
Phalaenopsis orchids
SIDE COURTYARD
Potted herbs
Potted succulents
BACKYARD
Camphor laurel
(*Cinnamomum camphora*)

