

EXTERIOR Harry, a standard poodle, stands guard on the porch of this treasured 180-year-old sandstone cottage. A newly planted wisteria climbs up the balustrade, which was designed to replicate the original. The wraparound verandah is framed by magnolia and tuckeroo trees, while the garden features native viola, liriopie and zoysia grass.

SET IN *stone*

After a painstaking renovation, this 1840s sandstone cottage in Sydney's inner west is enchanting all comers once again.

STORY *Hanna Marton* | STYLING *Holly Irvine* | PHOTOGRAPHY *Tom Ferguson*

Now and then, a designer will embark on a unique project that inspires them to work just that little bit harder. Not even heritage constraints or pandemic lockdowns can quell their devotion. This rang true for architect Raymond Panetta and interior designer Amanda Garcia-Panetta when they were entrusted with renovating an 1840s Georgian cottage in Sydney's inner west.

The storied sandstone house, built by a colonial whaling captain on a sprawling and secluded pocket of land, had been

owned by some colourful characters in its 180 years. It had also endured unsympathetic alterations, such as gratuitous lean-tos, to become a quirky rabbit warren with little indoor-outdoor connection. "But its history and the environment were pretty special," says Amanda. "You don't expect to find that kind of serenity in the inner west. It was a hidden gem."

Raymond and Amanda's brief was to create a country home in the city for its newest custodians, a family of four. "This, to me, translated into warmth and texture," explains Amanda. "A home that felt comfortable, with quintessential rural

colours, like beautiful greens and deep burgundies, warm whites, travertine and, of course, the sandstone. Yet [it needed to be] refined enough for its urban setting."

Raymond had to reconcile the mish-mash floor plan and accommodate a new extension and a pool. A strict heritage listing meant original walls, floors, verandahs, and door and window cavities had to be retained. He wasn't fazed. "I guess it's a challenge, but I agree with most heritage controls anyway," he says.

The homestead was originally two buildings: a four-room cottage and a detached two-room kitchen and scullery. At some point they were linked by new ▶



KITCHEN/LIVING Line 04 pendant, Snelling Studio. Iva stools, Grazia & Co. *Double Barrel Vessel* by Stephanie Phillips (top shelf). *Navajo* by Naoko Rodgers (third shelf). *Brutales #2* by Astrid Salomon (bottom shelf). *Bastard Ceramics*. *Lotus Vase #11* by Elena Strohfeldt (concrete bench). *Wabi Sabi vessel* by Katarina Wells (on island) and *Timid Painting* by Morgan Stokes, both Curatorial+Co.

“Because it’s a freestanding home, the light coming in changes throughout the day and even the seasons.”

RAYMOND PANETTA, ARCHITECT

stone walls, creating one L-shaped home. By 2021, this cramped corner housed an eat-in kitchen and pint-sized bathroom. “That infill was terrible,” says Raymond. “Here was an opportunity to build a better connection between those two buildings.” The solution? Rip it all out and start again, with a Mid-century-style study and den leading to a parents’ retreat.

In the main cottage, the original set-up of four rooms and a traditional hallway would be reinstated, with two kids’ bedrooms, a sitting/guest room and a main bathroom.

Inspired by Maison Van Middelme-Dupont, a Belgian farmhouse transformed into a home and gallery space by architect Alvaro Siza, Raymond designed a barn-like pavilion for the new kitchen, dining and living area. Connected to the cottage via a glass corridor, this turned the L-shaped home into a U. With a cathedral ceiling and solid structure, the new extension would mimic the existing sandstone pavilion opposite. Nestled in between would be the pool and an atrium-like courtyard. At the rear of the extension, an alfresco entertaining zone would flow on to the garden. Bell Landscapes was involved from the get-go, ensuring verdant views from every angle.

With Nathan Hall of Citybuilt Developments at the helm, the house was painstakingly stripped back to its bones. Having collaborated with Nathan for 15 years, Raymond and Amanda found the build seamless. “We get along with Nathan and he understands what’s important to us,” says Raymond.

However, construction wasn’t totally hiccup free. A two-week mandated construction pause at the height of the Covid pandemic, plus supply-chain issues, literally put a spanner in the works. The builders ploughed on, wrapping up the project in an astounding 10 months.

“Nathan knew how special this house was,” recalls Amanda. “We all gave it everything, spending more time on site ▶

LIVING/DINING/KITCHEN Walls painted Dulux Lexicon Quarter. Ross Gardam ‘Noon’ armchair and Tacchini ‘Julep’ sofa, both Stylecraft. Sencillo rug, The Rug Establishment. Delphia side table, Timberlake dining table and Arch stool, all Dimitri Vargas. Bow chair, Design By Them. Gubi ‘9602’ floor lamp, Luumo Design. *Timid Painting* by Morgan Stokes and *Shell Bowl Predetermined* by Kristiina Engelin (on dining table), both Curatorial+Co. Concrete bench, Concreative. Line 04 pendant light, Spelling Studio. Benchtap and splashback in Bardiglio marble, Marable. Joinery by Styline Kitchens. Aged brass rangehood surround, AMSS Group. Rangehood, Qasair. Door hardware, Mother of Pearl & Sons. Fireplace, Escea. Wine fridge, Vintec. Oven and stovetop, Ilve. ▶

than any other project before because we loved it so much.”

Amanda pored over every detail of the interiors. In the kitchen, cabinetry painted Dulux Currency Creek and an island bench on steel legs topped with Bardiglio marble are more furniture than joinery. The aged brass rangehood is a showstopper, while oak floors anchor the space. Across the courtyard is the study/den – a Don Draper-approved grown-ups’ zone perfect for fireside chats. “That room needed to be handsome; walnut joinery was the ticket,” says Amanda.

The bathrooms are more feminine, thanks to blush tones, rustic tapware and exquisite Calacatta Viola marble. “The main bathroom is warm and fun, without being too loud. It’s a little bit restrained,” says Amanda of her favourite space. In the children’s bedrooms, Louise Jones wallpaper, inspired by the Australian bush, references the greenery outside.

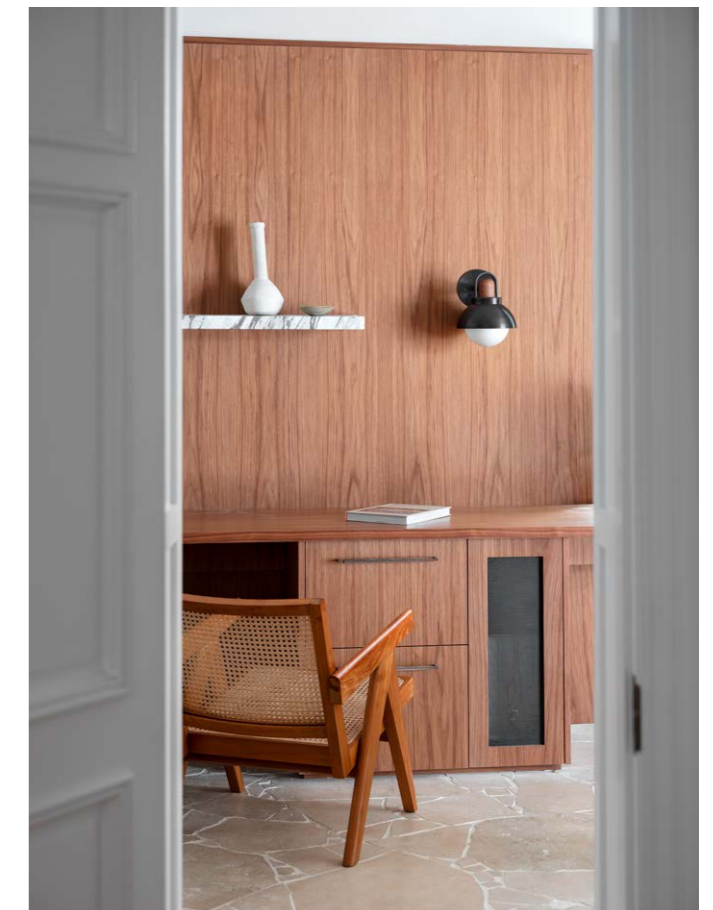
Period details, such as picture rails, fireplace mantels and ornate cornices, were reinstated throughout.

During the renovation, Raymond would often stand in the backyard, gazing at the pavilions. “The house looks as though it was always like that,” he says. “That’s what we’re most proud of.” ▶

Studio Panetta, Lilyfield, NSW; studiopanetta.com.au. Citybuilt Developments, Rozelle, NSW; 0414 794 000. Bell Landscapes, Rozelle, NSW; belllandscapes.com.au. Mr Pools, Homebush, NSW; mrpools.com.au.



DEN Top Chairs, Fehn Store. Opus side table, Dimitri Vargas. Rug, Armadillo. Floor lamp, Enlightened Living. CM590 artwork by Clementine Maconachie. Arc Dome pendant, Allied Maker. ‘Scala’ crazy paving, Eco Outdoor. Fireplace, Escea. Calacatta Viola fireplace surround, Marable. **MAIN BEDROOM** Bottom left Bed, owners’ own. Bedlinen, In The Sac. Line wall light, Snelling Studio. **STUDY** Bottom right ‘Arc Vanity’ wall light, Allied Maker. Wall clad in American walnut veneer. Calacatta Viola marble shelf. **SITTING** Opposite Sundae armchair, Design By Them. Artworks by Belinda Street (on wall) and Deirdre Fitzpatrick (on shelf). Navajo by Naoki Rodgers. Barbary rug, The Rug Establishment. Line 01 pendant, Snelling Studio. Roman blinds, Mansours. American white oak veneer, Briggs Veneers. Fireplace, Chippendale Restorations.





THE PALETTE

Dulux Pancake Mix
(child's room joinery)

Dulux Currency Creek
(kitchen joinery)

Dulux Moorland
(sitting room joinery)



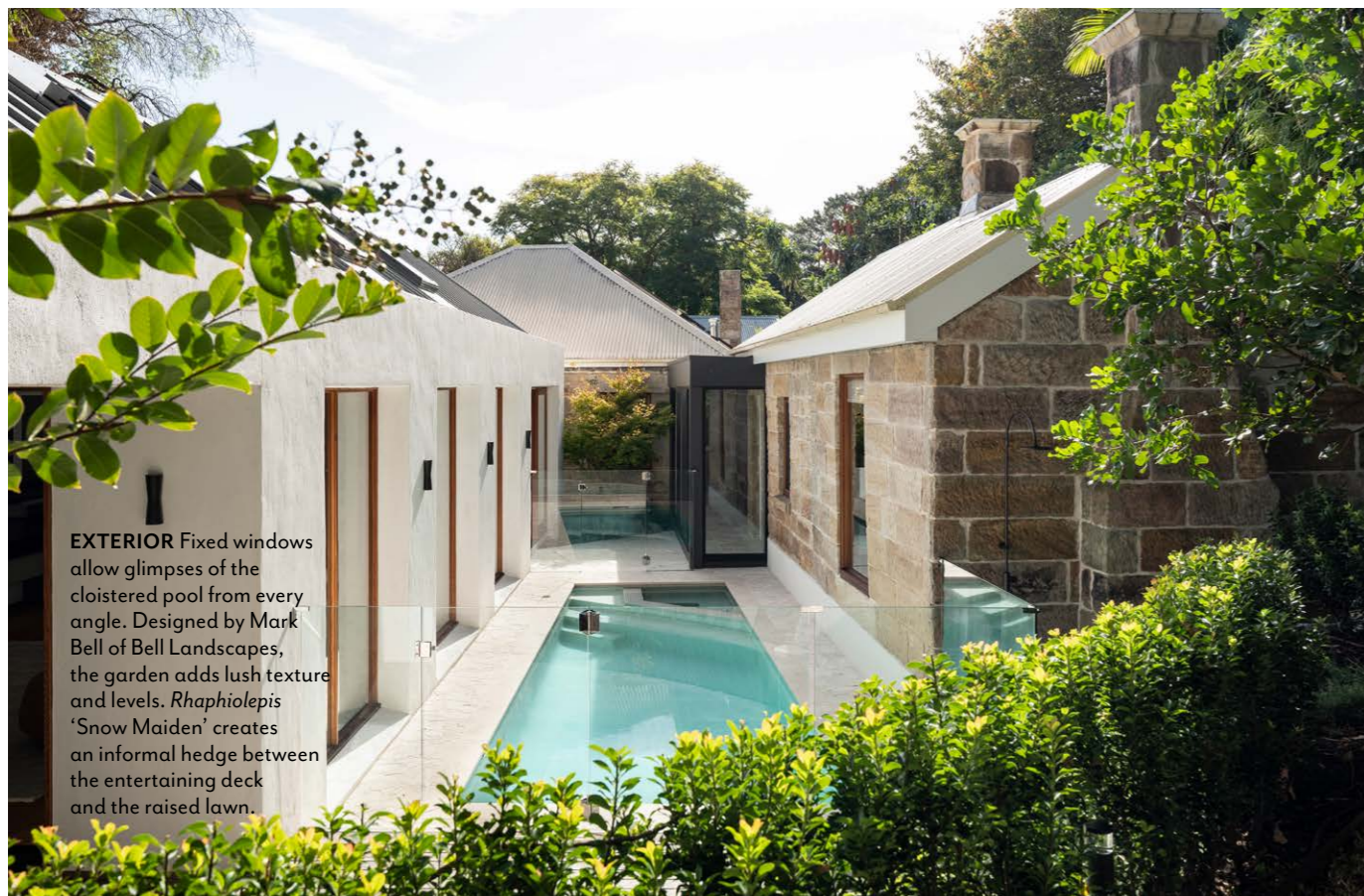
Paint colours are reproduced as accurately as printing processes allow.



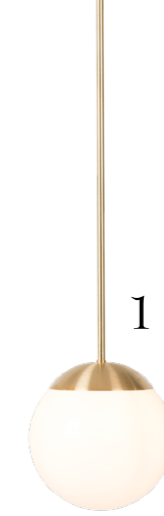
MAIN BATHROOM *This page* Moda 'Josephine' bath, ACS Designer Bathrooms. Luminosa wall tiles, Surface Gallery. Yokato tapware, Brodware. Calacatta Viola marble shelves, Marable. Senugo stool, Orient House. Towel, Oliver Thom. **MAIN ENSUITE** *Opposite, top left* Calacatta Viola vanity, Marable. Compact wall light, Snelling Studio. Shaving cabinet, Styline Kitchens. Walls, Venetian Plaster Sydney. Floor tiles, Surface Gallery. **CHILD'S BEDROOM** *Opposite, top right* Tamworth bed, The Bedroom. Bedlinen and cushions, In The Sac. Line 01 pendant, Snelling Studio. Wardrobes painted Dulux Pancake Mix; walls painted Dulux Natural White. Hardware, Mother of Pearl & Sons. Bremworth wool carpet, Carpet Court. **CHILD'S ROOM** *Opposite, bottom left* Arch stool, Dimitri Vargas. Grass Tree wallpaper in Blush, Louise Jones. Fireplace, Chippendale Restorations. Bottle (on mantle) by Kristin Burgham. Bed, bedlinen and lighting, all as before. **MAIN BATHROOM** *Opposite, bottom right* Calacatta Viola benchtop, Marable. Luminosa wall tiles, Surface Gallery. Line 2.0 wall light, Snelling Studio. Yokato tapware, Brodware. Basin, ACS Designer Bathrooms. Vase 8 by Katia Carletti (on benchtop). Door hardware, Mother of Pearl & Sons. Nail brush, Oliver Thom.

THIS IS THE LIFE

Set in a tranquil, tree-studded pocket close to the city, the house really does make it feel, for the owners, like they're escaping to the country. That said, it's often overflowing with family and friends and a rambunctious dog. As it's their forever home, the long lunches, lazy barbecues and birthday parties – plus those moments of blissful repose – are bound to continue.



EXTERIOR Fixed windows allow glimpses of the cloistered pool from every angle. Designed by Mark Bell of Bell Landscapes, the garden adds lush texture and levels. *Rhaphiolepis* 'Snow Maiden' creates an informal hedge between the entertaining deck and the raised lawn.



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THE SOURCE

Aged brass combines with Mid-century-style curves and modern surfaces for a timeless mix of old and new.



Produced by Andrea Healy.

1 Line 01 pendant light, \$1012, Snelling Studio. 2 Gubi '9602' floor lamp, from \$1960, Cult. 3 Aura Home velvet cushion (55cm) in Cashew, \$89, Myer. 4 Agape Vieques indoor/outdoor bathtub, POA, Artedomus. 5 Clementine Maconachie, CM621, Wabi Sabi Folded wall sconce, in Brass 2023, \$2200, Modern Times. 6 Dolce/Mecca brass freestanding bath mixer, \$1500, Nero. 7 Lamina table, POA, Living Edge. 8 4046 Excava mineral surface, POA, Caesarstone. 9 Nau 'Fat Tulip' armchair, POA, Cult. 10 Agra rug (3x2.4m) in Haze, \$4900, Armadillo. H&G