

# space maximiser

A much-needed renovation to a 100-year-old apartment grants this family room to grow

PHOTOGRAPHY Georgia Moxham

This inner-Sydney apartment is located within a large Edwardian apartment building from around 1911, reminiscent of the classic New York brownstone style. The property had been owned by the family for about 20 years but was in pretty poor original condition.

The interior, while in a bad state of repair, still retained many of the original features: timber picture rails, cornicing, kauri floors and large sash windows. However, most of the amenities were outdated and not working properly, hence the need for a complete overhaul.

There were murals on most walls and a collection of inherited and found furniture decorating the space. The new design had to reflect the style of the well-travelled clients, who have built a large art collection over the years.

Their brief was to fully renovate the whole apartment in a relaxed, modern style. The husband and wife had quite different requirements, which proved challenging for designer Andrew Waller of Waller Design.

The rooms of the apartment, while large, were disjointed and needed to open up to create better flow and allow for larger groups of visitors, as the clients are big on entertaining. "We reworked the floorplan, opening up some of the rooms and redirecting the corridor," says Andrew.

Dividing walls were removed between the main reception rooms: lounge, kitchen and dining room. The original kitchen entry was blocked up to create more wall space for storage. The pantry was also deleted and blocked up. The main corridor from the entry was redirected (creating a walk-in wardrobe off the master bedroom) and the new layout used the deleted pantry space.

A small vestibule off the corridor leading to the bathroom and lounge was deleted. The bathroom, which has a great spa-like feel, was extended into this space, creating more room. The new lounge entry is now off the dining room.

The bedrooms had to accommodate two children from a previous marriage as well as a

newborn. The second bedroom has a double bed and single bunk above.

In addition to reworking the rooms, a large amount of storage throughout the apartment (for clothing, possessions and a substantial book collection) had to be created, so full-height joinery was inserted where possible.

"These floor-to-ceiling joinery areas were used as a buffer between the more public and the private areas. A snug study space was created in the original verandah space," says Andrew.

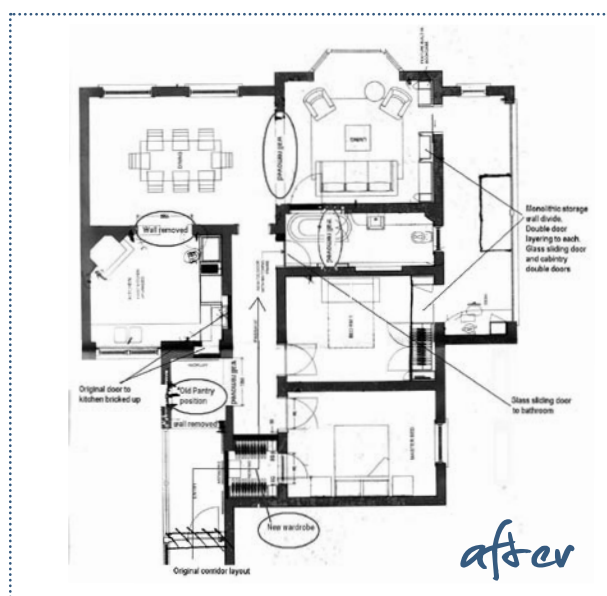
"We have deliberately structured the space with some strong cabinetry within the kitchen, bookcase walls and bathroom, and offset this against softer sculptural elements through the choice of artworks and furniture.

"The bookcase design within the main living area was derived from an earlier project and explores the threshold condition: one is able to experience the transition from the public to private space while passing through the monolithic wall from the main living area to a private reading room and office retreat within the enclosed verandah space."

Louvred shutters were built over the windows to mask their condition. The windows were painted a dark brown behind rather than stripped and stained due to their poor condition.

On display from the couple's treasured collection is a Yoruba crown from Nigeria positioned in a niche in the bathroom. "The artworks selected for the interior feature pieces commissioned from Archibald Prize winner Craig Ruddy, including a nude of our client, which sits above the lounge in the main living area," says Andrew. The new layout now allows for better flow and a new hub for entertaining.

"The finished space just feels really natural and understated. We didn't want the feeling that the design was competing with the original building. It takes on the scale of the large rooms and ceiling heights (3.25 metres) within the proportions of the design," concludes Andrew.



## project particulars

**This project was designed by**  
**WALLER DESIGN**  
 6/20 St Neot Avenue, Potts Point NSW 2011  
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**Email:** andrew@mrwaller.com  
**Web:** www.mrwaller.com

**This project was built by**  
**MATT GORDON BUILDER**  
**Tel:** 0411 334 600  
**Email:** matt@bigpond.com.au

**Flooring**  
 Kauri floors throughout in custom stain, colour by Waller Design

**Walls**  
 Dulux Whisper White (Wash & Wear finish)

**Kitchen**  
**Benchtop + splashback:** Stainless-steel bench and splashback custom made by K.G. Trading, **Tel:** 02 4862 1934  
**Joinery:** African Wenge crown cabinetry doors by K.G. Trading

**Bathroom**  
**Tap:** Gessi Oxygene Hi-Tech sink mixer from Winning Appliances

**Travertine tiles** to floor and walls (medium honed, unfilled): Domayne  
**Stainless-steel floor grate:** Stormtech

**Toilet:** Subway wall-face pan (with concealed system) slow-close pan lid  
**Bath:** Bette Starlet flair oval with surround  
**Sink:** Parisi Box sink (both Domayne)  
**Vanity:** custom made  
**Benchtop:** Caesarstone #2350 light brown  
**Joinery:** Doors 2Wenge (Fine Line) by New Age Veneer built by K.G. Trading  
**Mirrored wall-mounted cabinetry:** K.G. Trading  
**Glass bathroom (main) door:** Opaque glass custom made by K.G. Trading

**Windows + doors**  
 Original sash windows sanded and new stain (custom mix)