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Life encounter

New and old proudly partner as equal but different in this turn-of-the-century house whose additional wing takes its cues from the lessons of the past.

Words **CARLI PHILIPS** Photography **AMELIA STANWIX**





This page The vintage timber desk, Cassina '523 Tabouret Mériabel' stool in walnut by Charlotte Perriand and SuperTuft 'Escape Velour' carpet in Ava soften the clean, crisp lines of the study. A painting of Trinidad, Cuba, by an unknown artist leans against custom joinery by Fiona Lynch. Pink sculpture also designed by Fiona Lynch. **Opposite page** The view from the living room frames a Folia 'Poppy' pouf by Nina Jobs from Fred International. The blackened timber bowl on the marble-clad bench is by artisan Makiko Ryujin. Custom rug from Artoz Rugs + Carpets.

The owners of this single-storey 1900s Queen Anne property in Melbourne's Kew approached interior designer Fiona Lynch with a challenge: how to partner the traditional characteristics of their home with a more contemporary, pragmatic extension.

Rather than creating a subtle shift, Fiona wanted to highlight the junction between old and new with a blackened-steel threshold. "We wanted to have two different experiences and very definite transitions into the new part," she says of the addition, which has been designed in a base of pure white and dove grey with sheer curtains and sandy coloured, flecked terrazzo flooring. "I wanted [this area] to feel light and bright ... and in the old formal part, where the bedrooms are, we wanted earthy colours with a luxurious feel to enhance the sense of mood and seclusion."

Taking inspiration from the striking stained glass in the original leadlight windows, the palette here is expressed in hues of midnight blue, tobacco and marigold. "It was a potentially divisive colour, but we loved it right away," say the owners, a couple with a young family, referring to the marigold yellow used in the master bedroom. "It elicits a different feeling to the rest of the house – a sanctum separate to the main family area." While the original cornices and skirtings have been retained, Fiona didn't want to turn back the clock entirely. "Velvet drapes would probably have been used when it was built and I loved playing on that, but in a very contemporary way," she says of the popular, rich yellow tone. Gentle juxtapositions and modern interpretations come by way of a custom-stained American oak seat built under a bay window, an Apparatus 'Neo Lantern' table lamp from Criteria atop the owners' antique bedside table and painterly classical artworks hanging by the industrial-style USM drawer unit.

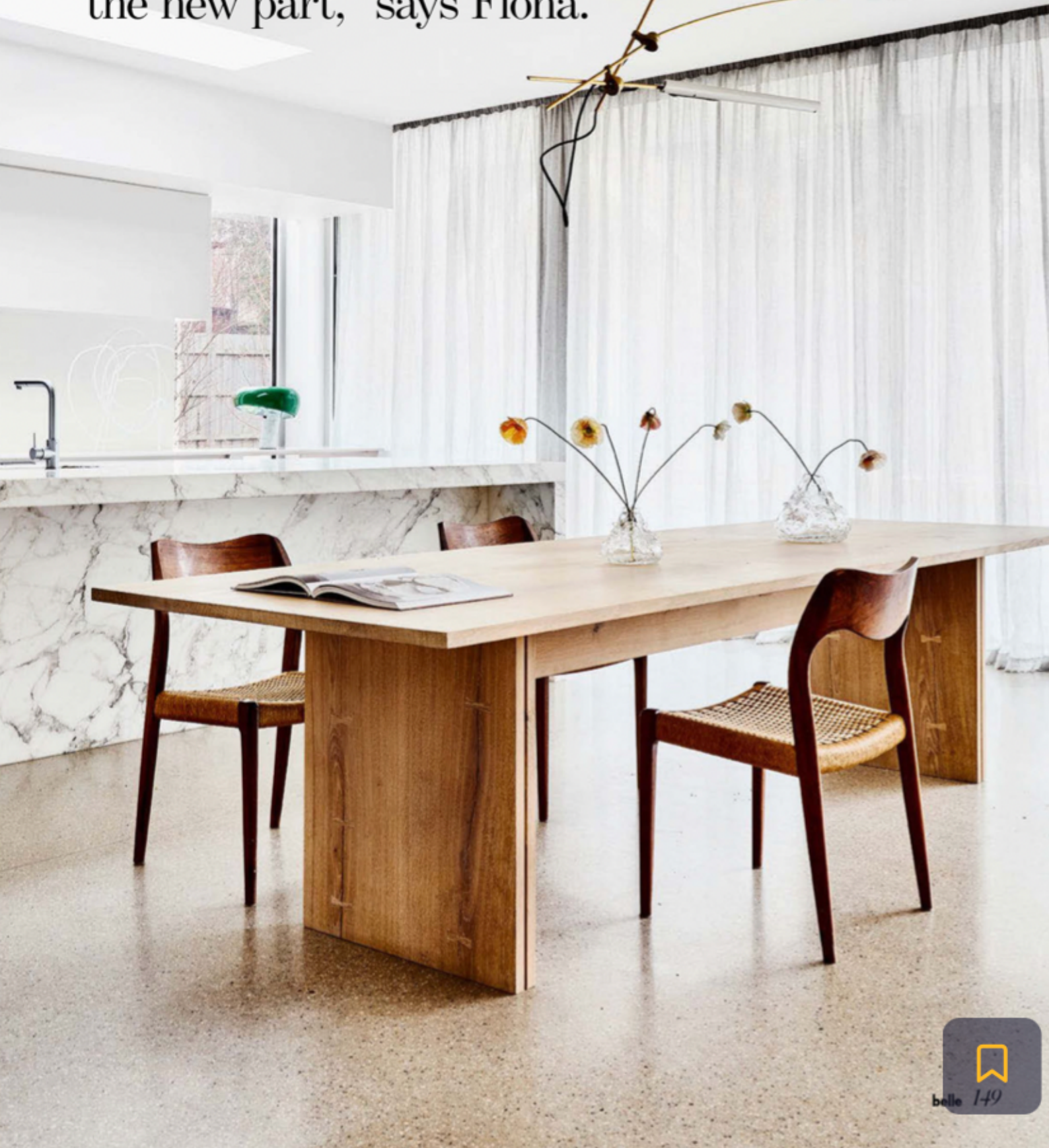
Although the period rooms were in good condition and well proportioned, the footprint was laid out in a disjointed L-shape. Before commencing renovations, the owners lived in the house for two-and-a-half years so by the end had a good sense of what they needed. "We let the day-to-day activity of our family life inform us as to the ideal flow and other essential elements," they say. This meant reorganising the existing layout with its two living spaces that were completely separate and isolated »



This page An Iittala vase by Alvar Aalto from David Jones sits atop a Baxter 'Matera' coffee table by Paola Navone from Criteria on a custom rug by Artaz Rugs + Carpets. Artwork by Karen Standke. Throw cushions from Abode. **Opposite page** An 'OTTO Two Arm' pendant light by David Weeks Studio is suspended above the dining area. Niels Møller '71' dining chairs from Great Dane have been paired with a custom dining table by Fiona Lynch topped with vases by Assembly Design. Floor-to-ceiling sheer curtains allow the kitchen and dining room to be flooded with natural light, illuminating the terrazzo flooring and the island bench in Arabescato Vagli marble. On the rear bench, Flos 'Snoopy' lamp from Living Edge and sculpture by Huseyin Sami.



“We wanted to have two different experiences and *very definite transitions* into the new part,” says Fiona.





« from the kitchen and the rest of the house. Previously walled off, a double-sided, cast-iron fireplace was installed between the living room and newly converted study.

A series of cobbled-together little lean-tos and former servants' quarters was causing congestion, so architect Caroline Vernon opened up the space by turning the existing study into a transitional corridor, heightening the sense of movement into the new open-plan rear kitchen, living and meals zone. To embrace the natural light, vast floor-to-ceiling windows were installed, presenting an "airy and sun-filled" environment with "carte-blanche ... to be enlivened by family life", explains Fiona.

The spatial arrangement was reoriented, keeping furniture to a minimum and the palette purposely calm except for a generous rust-pink rug from Artoz Rugs + Carpets. Arranged with simplicity in mind, fixtures are clean lined and pared back. "The kitchen's weighty island bench is offset by a fine, floating benchtop that plays on mass and scale. It is intentionally understated and pure in form," says the designer. Restrained yet effective, an angled splashback in smoked mirror reflects the adjacent dining table illuminated by a David Weeks pendant light.

Two existing ensuites were gutted and re-planned, and a powder room built off the main hallway. "We reduced details and materiality to simple, solid forms to draw focus to the core materials of marble and mosaic tiling," says Fiona. Right angles in honed Carrara marble emphasise the reductive nature of the design in the master ensuite. In the shared children's bathroom the Dulux 'Buoyant' bluish-grey paint and lightly textured mosaic wall tiles create tactility and warmth.

The owners say the 1500sqm site and its position on the slightly sloping block was a huge selling point as it provided scope for remodelling. But with clever planning and an efficient extension, the extra land wasn't actually needed. This 'bonus' backyard is now flush with a large vegetable garden and chicken coop. "We always knew that with some adjustments this house would work for us. Fiona offered the perfect coherence of colour, space and form," say the owners. | fionalynch.com.au; carolinevernon.com.au.

This page Rich marigold hues in the master bedroom speak to the beautiful stained-glass details seen in the home's bay window under which a custom American oak bench was designed to create continuity with the floorboards in the extension. Baxter 'Manila' armchair by Paola Navone from Criteria. ClassiCon 'Roattino' floor lamp by Eileen Gray from Anibou. Bed linen from Abode. Artwork by AJ Rae. Opposite page, clockwise from top left In the children's bathroom, the floor and wall tiles are from Signorino. Falper 'Quattro Zero' basin from Rogerseller with integrated cabinet and mirror from David Glass. In the guest bedroom is an artwork by Isabella O'Callaghan. Matter Made 'Discus' floor lamp by Jamie Gray from Criteria. USM side table from Anibou. In the master ensuite Flos 'Glo-Ball' mini wall lights from Euroluce hang next to a mirror from David Glass. Doug Johnston 'Two Stool' from Criteria. The floor tiles are Carrara marble.



SPEED READ

» Asked to create a distinct division between an original Queen Anne home and its newly built extension, designer Fiona Lynch highlighted the junction between old and new with a blackened-steel threshold. » The palette for the original home, which houses the bedrooms and bathrooms, was inspired by the rich hues in the leadlight windows to create a mood of seclusion and sophistication. » The new wing encompasses an open-plan kitchen, living and dining zone in an "airy and sun-filled" environment fit for contemporary family life. » Natural materials are favoured in the addition, including a sandy coloured terrazzo kitchen floor made by hand from stone, marble, tiles and timber furnishings.