



HOME TOURS

September 28, 2022

## Character & Charm

Sharon Stephenson



*A sympathetic reno brings out the best in a 1920s Wellington family home.*

Some people fall in love with shiny new houses with their sleek concrete floors and minimalist aesthetic. And then there are those who go starry-eyed over the original wooden floorboards and detailed ceilings of classic Kiwi villas and bungalows.

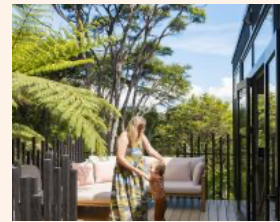
Follow us



### Trending now



**This vintage-loving couple found a Deco dream with their 1920s Napier apartment**

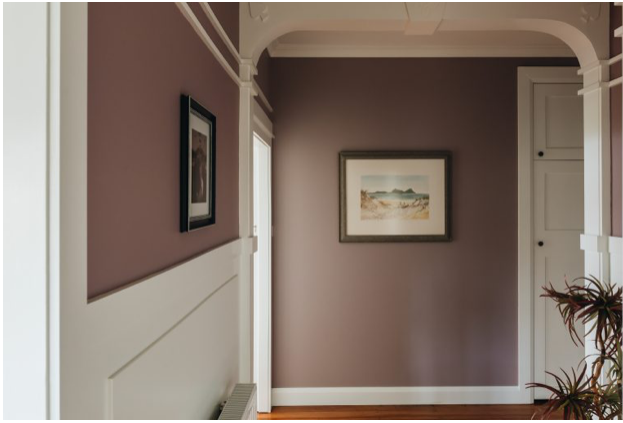


**This Waiheke home was designed to merge into its surroundings**



**Inside a colourful family home that was inspired by Palm Springs style**





Sharon Cody is firmly in the latter camp. The former banker, who last year started her own mortgage advisory business, Charter Home Loans, has always had a thing for character houses. "When I was 21, I bought my first house, which was built in the 1950s," says the born and bred Wellingtonian. "But even back then it was my dream to own something older because I love original character features and I think it's important to retain as many of those features as possible."



Sharon's husband Daniel, a treasury manager, wasn't always on board with his wife's approach. In 2011, for example, he tempted Sharon into an architecturally designed new build in Porirua. "It had sea views and was low-maintenance. But after a while I got tired of being so far from work and I also really missed living in a character home," she says.

So in 2015, the parents of young sons Max, Harvey and Ted started house-hunting. "Daniel wasn't too keen because he loved our previous house. But after two years of searching, he gave in - mainly because he didn't want to attend any more open homes!"



Meet the family who have farmed the Otematata Station for over 130 years



This compact home is packed with bold colour and style



These seasoned renovators turned a dark bungalow into their dream home

Subscribe to our newsletter

Your Name

john.doe@gmail.com

SIGN UP

What had caught Sharon's eye was this 1920s bungalow high on the Khandallah hills in Wellington's northern suburbs. Not only was it within close commuting distance of Sharon's office, but she could also see beyond the 1990s renovations. "The house had been added to and mucked around with numerous times over the years, with no sympathy for the original design. I could see how it could be restored to its former glory."

She called in architect Mona Kruse Hurnen to help them reinstate some of the character features that had been lost, such as adding arches, ceiling details and wooden panelling in the hallway. "But first the house had to be replumbed, rewired and reroofed, and double glazing had to be added throughout because it was freezing," recalls Sharon. "We lived in the house through the 10-month renovation, which wasn't easy during winter with a brand-new baby."

The first thing to go was the lean-to kitchen at the rear of the house, which had been added in the 1990s. Its sloping roof and small windows let in scant light, making the space dark and unwelcoming. Instead, the roofline was lifted slightly and the kitchen wall was pulled back to align with the rest of the house.

A wall separating the old lean-to kitchen and laundry was also removed to create more space. The oven and rangehood now occupy the spot where the former laundry stood. Removing the wall also gave the couple ample storage space. The kitchen island is topped with the same white quartz as the benchtops, while the splashback behind the sink and the stovetop feature white pressed-tin panels made by Matamata's di Rosa Cabinetry & Furniture. But while Mona suggested a white kitchen, Sharon loves colour, so she opted for pale blue cabinetry.

When the couple bought the house, the adjacent dining room was divided in two – a small dining room and an even smaller sunroom. By removing a wall, they've created an open, airy dining area that is now the heart of this home. Sharon liked the original lead light window in the main bedroom so much that she had a local glass company recreate the design for the upper windows in the kitchen and dining space.

She also added a built-in desk in one corner of the dining room for the kids to do their homework and for when she's working from home. A built-in window seat provides not just a place to perch but also much-needed storage.

The formal living room at the front of the house is further evidence of Sharon's love of colour, from the floral curtains to the Resene Spanish Green walls.

In the hallway, she opted for a light purple shade. The original mātai floorboards were too red-toned for her liking, so she called in her brother, a floor polisher, to sand them down to a paler hue. "The builders managed to find almost the same recycled floorboards for the kitchen and dining space."

Further down the hallway, the family bathroom was once a separate toilet and bathroom, but removing a wall turned it into a generous space that's now home to a stylish black cast-iron bath and black and white Italian porcelain floor tiles. The wooden vanity was handcrafted by a joiner from Upper Hutt and the vintage-looking pendant lights came from Lighting Plus.

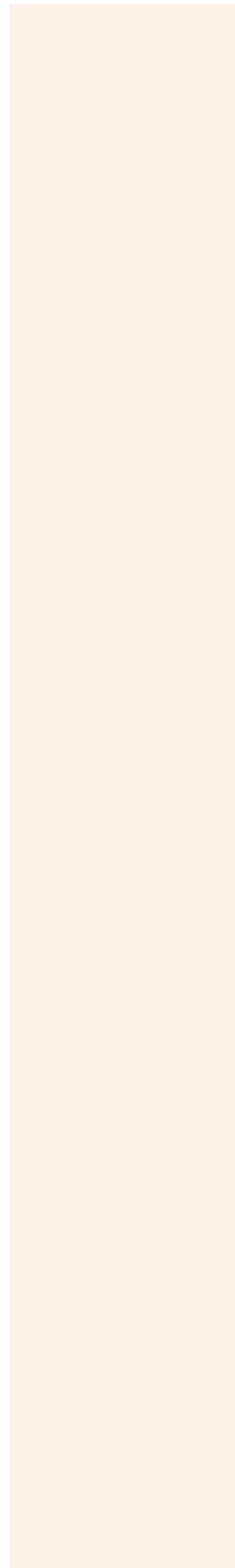


The three boys' bedrooms managed to escape the demolition process, although Sharon did paint, recarpet and add new curtains, as well as fitted wardrobes that replaced the former freestanding ones.

In the main bedroom, space was carved off the second living room, a dedicated children's room, to create an en-suite bathroom. Here, Sharon added a window and a feature wall of lantern-shaped tiles, and hung wooden cabinets from Early Settler that she added bevelled mirrors to.



Now that the couple are happy with the interior, they're turning their attention to the exterior. This summer, they're hoping to have the sloping back section landscaped into more useable zones, as well as rebuilding the deck and rejigging the front lawn to provide easier access for their vehicles. "This is definitely our forever home. It will grow and adapt with us as our family grows."



### Sharon's tips

- Mix and match high-end fixtures and fittings with low-cost ones – you can still achieve a luxury look. • Use colour to highlight character features and create warmth.
- If you are looking to replace character fixtures or fittings, buy recycled where you can. Craftsman doors are much, much cheaper second-hand!
- Small details can create a more authentic restoration. Use cut-down recycled timber floorboards as an edging where the carpet meets timber flooring, instead of metal carpet bars.
- Renos can cost a lot. Place value on the love and enjoyment you will get from the home.
- There will be times of stress – be proud you are restoring a piece of history for its next chapter.



# Haven

[About](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Advertise](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms & Conditions](#)



COPYRIGHT 2022 SCHOOL ROAD PUBLISHING, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.