

Royal

Renovating an historic home is not for the faint-hearted, but the design lead on this Federation Queen Anne project offered a solid plan for success.

treatment

These pages A new entrance befits the majesty of the 1898 home. Once dominated by a semi-circular driveway, the front garden has been returned to lawn and the portico repainted in part with Dulux Monument.

Words SARAH WORMWELL Photography JEN WILDING + RIDHWAAN MOOLA



After purchasing a Federation Queen Anne home in 2021, the owners were gifted design tome *Hare + Klein Interior* by an intuitive friend, who felt the firm's oeuvre would resonate. The book's images spoke volumes to the new buyers – a couple with a young son – who recognised Meryl Hare's boundless talent for bringing “succinct, sensible calm” to grand proportions.

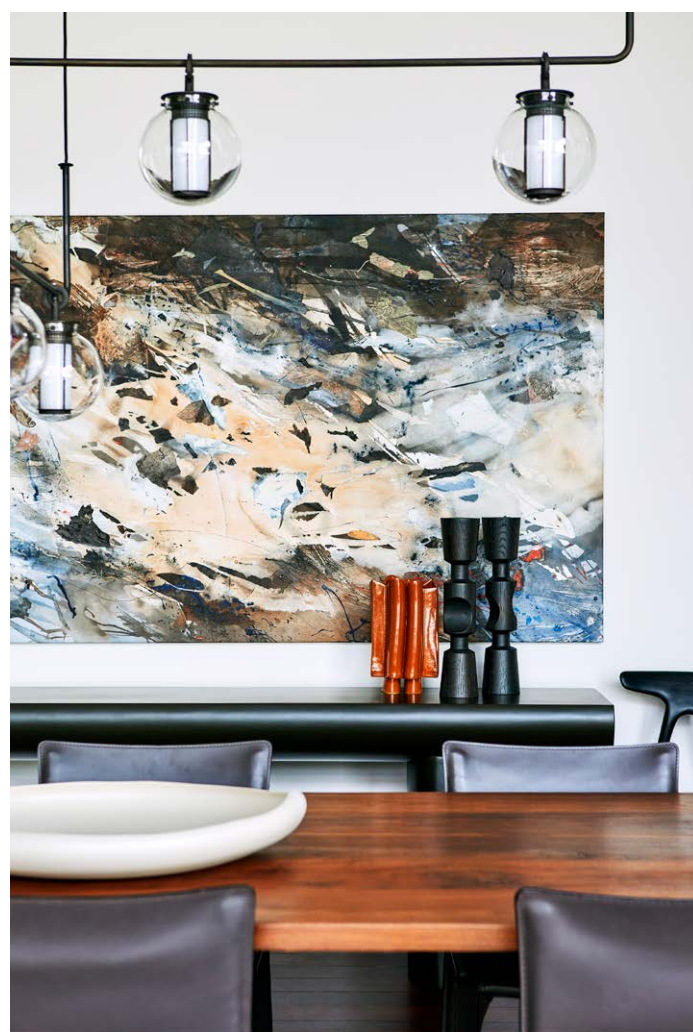
As the owners explain it, their pull to the Perth property had been two-fold: firstly, a rare chance to become custodians of history (the home was designed by Sir Joseph John Talbot Hobbs, a leading architect of the late 19th and early 20th centuries) and, secondly, an abundance of garden space, which, if harnessed correctly, would create a longed-for indoor/outdoor lifestyle.

They assembled a ‘dream team’ for the job: Hare + Klein on the interior design; architect Dimmity Walker of Spaceagency to marry heritage restitution with contemporary living; and landscape architect Robert Finnie, whom they had worked with previously, to remodel the garden.

Though once an exemplar of heritage architecture, the house had received a significant brutalist renovation in more recent years, with the previous owners adding gallery-like rooms and stripping away original features. Dimmity's initial approach was more archaeological than architectural – she viewed the house as a ‘ruin’ to be uncovered. Subtraction became her starting point and careful excavation allowed her to remove the rear addition, returning it to landscape to create a cloistered alfresco area. “Traditionally, Federation homes were quite separate to their garden; dissolving the additional structure presented a rare opportunity to intimately connect the home to the outdoors,” she explains. »



This space is lovingly referred to as the ‘London Room’. The original bay window, cornices and architraves are heroed against textured Rossetti Fabrics ‘Nanking’ wallpaper. Roman blinds in Lizzo ‘Litica’ by Window Studio. ‘Mobile Chandelier 9’ by Michael Anastassiades. Minotti ‘Seymour’ sofa and chaise from Dedece. MD House ‘Opera’ chair in Black Velvet from Fanuli. Custom cushions by Hare + Klein. ‘Artistry’ coffee tables with Carrara tops from Zuster. ClassiCon ‘Bell’ side table from Anibou. ‘Eric’ accent table near window from Arteriors. Wooden bowl, clients’ own. ‘Ombre’ silk rug from Tibet Sydney. On the mantel, the son’s artwork sits alongside a work by Arthur Boyd. Sculpture from Jardan.



These pages Different angles of the kitchen/dining space, which flows through from the London Room. A Rilio marble splashback doubles as art while the curved exhaust, finished with stucco wax in Porter's Paints Cashmere half, adds a sculptural element. Westmore Flinders rangehood by Qasair. Joinery in Evener 'Spicewood'. Island bench in Dekton 'Aeris'. 'MF' dining table in solid American walnut by Remington Matters. 'Agra' rug in Thistle from Armadillo. Karakter 'Console' table and Mater stools from Cult. Sculpture on console table from Jordan. Candlesticks, clients' own. 'Bai Chandelier' pendant light over dining table by Parachilna. Thin-profile black steel doors made by Envisage Steel Creations. Artwork above console table by Judith White.



This page Pops of colour enliven the family room. 'Tufty-Time' sofa and floor lamp, client's own. Cushions by Hare + Klein. 'Memphis' coffee table from Jordan. 'Lato' side table from Cult. Custom 'Third Eye' abash rug, throw, baskets and an artwork by Marise Maas, all from Apartment 91. **Opposite page (from left)** Unimpeded views of the pool bring the outdoors into the entry. The moat garden renders a fence unnecessary, while the pool's locked entrance gate is hidden behind a cement wall built by the previous owners. 'Bjorn' round sofas from James Said. Main coffee table, clients' own. Cassina 'Poétique' table from Mobilia. 'Landscape' rug from the Hare + Klein collection with Designer Rugs. // The staircase and its detailed fretwork sits comfortably with the new contemporary furnishings.

« Meanwhile, Meryl was tasked with an overall aesthetic refreshment to meet the needs of the family. The owners prepared a “brief of sticky notes” littered throughout the pages of her book. “We loved the idea of living in a house of stories and adding our own, but we didn’t know how to do it,” they say. “We absolutely trusted Meryl with the challenge.”

According to the designer, resuscitating an historic home means there must always be an intentional link to history for any change to fit with the past. Meryl began with the ground floor’s living and dining areas, which did not need reconfiguration – just better connection. The decorative verandah became a design guidepost in the process. Meryl replicated the verandah’s arch motif in myriad thin-profile, steel-framed windows to create the semblance of open plan, while retaining the ability to enclose each room for optimal heating and cooling.

Stripping back the floors from Japanese black to their original wandoo timber (a native West Australian eucalypt) became the foundation for the interior palette, and a new syntax of colour and texture was introduced to add warmth and unify the whole. Lofty dimensions throughout were given more human scale by reinstating the cornices and skirting and layering with furniture and fabrics. The home’s grandest space – the living room with its ceiling rose – is the most evocative of the period. Lovingly

referred to as the ‘London Room’ for its English styling, the scheme features textured wallpaper and mood lighting.

Research shows that the original floating staircase was purportedly the first of its kind in Western Australia. Its detailed fretwork was treated gently and painted black, against the lighter walls. The greatest structural change occurred on the upper level, where a series of smaller rooms were reconfigured as three generous bedrooms and a study. The main bedroom suite was reoriented to capture a water view and an ensuite was added.

Meanwhile, a refurbished tween retreat was designed to be expanded and contracted as needed, via a pleated paper divider of industrial strength. The striking rust-hued divider is emblematic of Hare + Klein’s meticulously considered approach to client needs. “We mentioned that our son’s room sometimes felt too big for him,” say the owners, “but we wanted to retain the space for his impending teenage years. The solution was impeccable.”

For projects like this one, Meryl says the greatest reward comes from earning a client’s trust and then delivering on it. “Once this renovation was complete, I received the most heartfelt note from the client explaining that she had never owned a home like it, and now fully understands the transformational power of good design.” It doesn’t get better than that. **h**

hareklein.com.au; spaceagency.com.au; robertfinniedesign.com

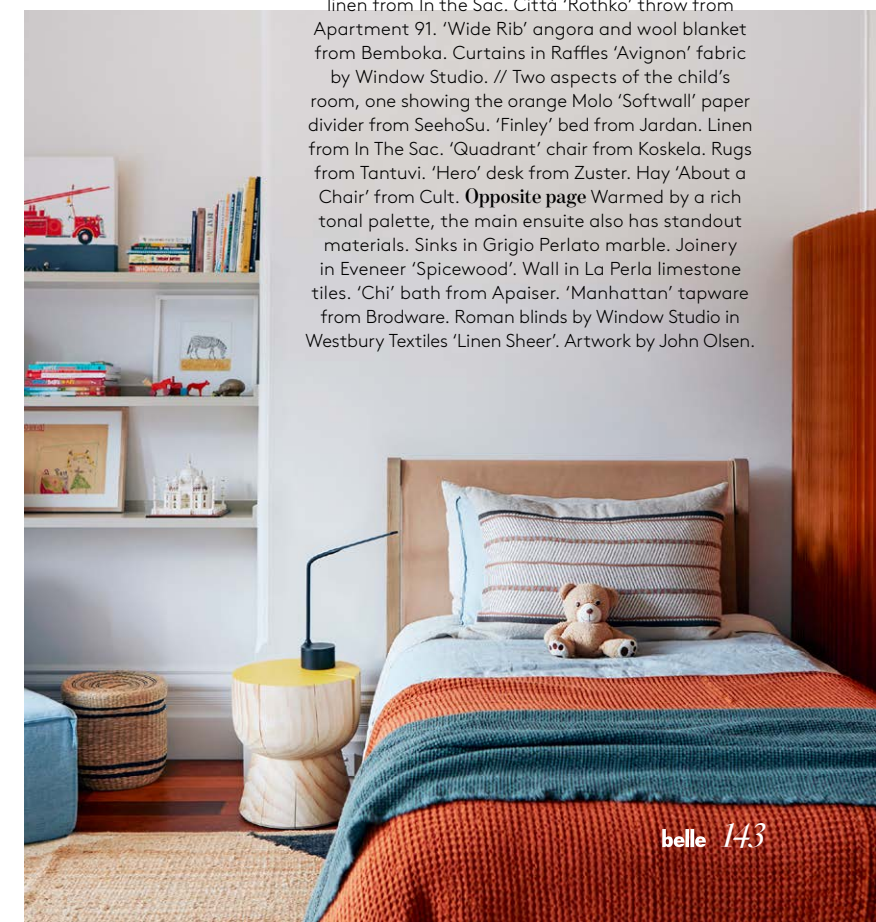


SPEED READ

» An historical Perth home needed to be sensitively restored in a way that blended heritage with contemporary living. » Originally drawn to the property's past and gardens, the new owners enlisted the help of interior designers Hare + Klein, architect Dimmity Walker and landscape architect Robert Finnie. » Dimmity carefully stripped back a brutalist addition and connected the home to the outdoors, while Meryl refreshed the interiors, tastefully enmeshing old and new. » Steel-framed windows, restored wandoo floors and cocoon-like furnishings have enhanced the home's charm. A new syntax of colour and texture have added warmth and unified the whole. » Delighted with the transformation, the owners now fully appreciate the power of great design.



This page (from top) The original windows and mouldings were retained in the north-facing main bedroom. Walls in Porter's Paints Cashmere half. 'Oriental Storm' flooring from Sisal Flooring. Flexform 'Alison' lounge chair from Fanuli. Bed linen from In the Sac. Città 'Rothko' throw from Apartment 91. 'Wide Rib' angora and wool blanket from Bemboka. Curtains in Raffles 'Avignon' fabric by Window Studio. // Two aspects of the child's room, one showing the orange Molo 'Softwall' paper divider from SeehoSu. 'Finley' bed from Jordan. Linen from In The Sac. 'Quadrant' chair from Koskela. Rugs from Tantuvi. 'Hero' desk from Zuster. Hay 'About a Chair' from Cult. **Opposite page** Warmed by a rich tonal palette, the main ensuite also has standout materials. Sinks in Grigio Perlato marble. Joinery in Eveneer 'Spicewood'. Wall in La Perla limestone tiles. 'Chi' bath from Apaier. 'Manhattan' tapware from Brodware. Roman blinds by Window Studio in Westbury Textiles 'Linen Sheer'. Artwork by John Olsen.





This page A previous addition was removed to create a much-used outdoor room. 'Malmo' outdoor sofas and 'Verona' concrete coffee table from Coco Republic. Opposite page Recycled jarrah 'Big Bugga' outdoor table by Join Furniture. 'Seam' stacking chairs in Banksia Leaf from Tait.



SIGNATURE STYLE
KEY PIECES



1 'Eddy' table lamp by Normann CPH, \$1500, Apartment 91 by Hare + Klein. 2 Baxter 'Isamu' table, POA, Space. 3 Steel door, POA, Steel Window Design. 4 De La Espada 'Laurel' side table, \$6520, Winnings. 5 'MOVE F' panel in Engineered Wenge, POA, Cabinetti Panels.