

Paints all from Resene: 1 Paris White. 2 Flax. 3 Gum Leaf. 4 West Coast. 5 Tana. 6 Green House. 7 Karaka. 8 Envy. 9 Castle Rock. 10 Clover. 11 Ravine. 12 Spanish Green. 13 Hippy Green. PAL paintbrushes \$2.09 each from Mitre 10 Mega Mt Wellington.



RENO STORIES

They've been there, done that... seasoned renovators spill the beans about what they've learned

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THIS PAGE Janet and Chris Gardner's award-winning renovation saw the house resited after the back was lopped off; Resene 'Thorndon Cream' was used inside and out in various strengths, the verandahs are Resene 'Shuttle Grey' and the roof is Colorsteel 'Grey Friars'; the garden, designed by Tina McHarg of Cambridge, will only have white flowers.



IF YOU'RE PLANNING a renovation, who better to ask for advice than someone who's been there, done that... and is happy with the result. In this special renovation guide, we talk to a variety of do-up veterans – a semi-retired couple who undertook a painstaking renovation of the heritage home on these pages; a young family who are loving the slick, functional kitchen in their newly renovated home; and a pair of room-by-room renovators with the glitziest laundry we've ever seen. All share what they've learned along the way – ideas for planning, budgets, design ideas and more.



TALK OF THE TOWN

When Chris and Janet Gardner embarked on renovating a tired old villa in a heritage part of Cambridge, they didn't count on becoming a centre of attention in the town. "It was on such a visible site that everybody who walked past had an opinion," says Chris, a semi-retired farmer.

When they'd lopped off the nasty 1960s addition (getting stuck in with crowbar and sledgehammer themselves) and had the grand 1910 home jacked up ready to move to a new position on the same site, one of the town's older residents roared up in her Morris Minor and gave Chris a piece of her mind. "She berated him for removing some of Cambridge's history – she clearly thought we were taking the villa away," says Janet.

To be honest, the idea had crossed their minds. They'd bought the villa in 2007, intending to retire there at some stage, drawn to its 1100sqm site, with a lovely old oak and Japanese maple, near a park and the tennis club where Chris plays. Subdivision and building something new was an option, but they had no clear plan and rented the home out while they pondered.

Fast-forward five years and the Gardners met builder Marcus Grayling at the house. Marcus stomped around on the old floorboards, which proved reassuringly solid, and announced: "You can't bowl this. It's beautiful!"

The couple had been coming around to Marcus' way of thinking anyway. "Homes of the Edwardian era are so gracious," says Janet. The couple had become attached to its lovely sash windows and original fretwork. >

THIS PAGE (clockwise from right) The kitchen splashback from Resene features the clock from the Musée d'Orsay in Paris; the floors throughout are matai milled by St Lukes Timber in Kumeu; all the lights are from Lighting Plus in Hamilton. Chris and Janet Gardner; the shutters were made by Santa Fe in Tauranga and painted in half-strength Resene 'Thorndon Cream' to match the architraves. The living room features one of the home's eight ceiling roses; the originals were made of tin and were in a sad state – they were too expensive to replicate so new ones were made of plaster: "Just as beautiful if not more so," says Janet.



SPECIAL FEATURE RENOVATIONS



NUTS & BOLTS

TOTAL COST OF THE RENOVATION: About \$650,000, which includes all the appliances, but not the landscaping or the curtains and shutters (which aren't cheap). (Chris)

CONTRACT TERMS: Labour-only contract, but I paid the builder a management fee to coordinate all the subcontractors. (Chris)

BUDGET MANAGEMENT: The home came in pretty well on budget. Regulations changed and we needed to put up scaffolding to put the roof on – that cost nearly \$10,000 extra. We also changed to a wider ceiling coving; the plasterer suggested it looked better with the high ceilings and wide skirting boards and he was right. That was another \$5000 or so. (Chris)

COLOUR CHOICES: I went for various strengths of Resene 'Thorndon Cream'. It goes so nicely with natural linen and hemp. Traditional Edwardian colours are quite dark and I wanted something subtle. (Janet)

THIS HOME IS WARM BECAUSE: It's double glazed and well insulated. We've got gas underfloor heating and a gas fire. I'm never going to cut another piece of firewood! (Chris)

WE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THRILLED WITH: The way everybody worked as a team – the designer, the builder and everybody else who played a part in our project. (Janet)

Janet & Chris Gardner

THIS PAGE The Gardners' grandchildren sleep in this cosy guest bedroom when they stay over; the leadlight windows are original, but needed modification to fit the new windows, so the coloured glass section was split from the leadlight diamonds – it was rather costly, says Janet, but well worth it when the afternoon light shines through the coloured glass; the bedding is by Fairydown with Maison Voyage cushions from the Bird collection; the walls are all Resene 'Thorndon Cream' – eighth-strength above the picture rail, full-strength below; the picture rail itself is 'Triple Thorndon Cream' for more definition.

They weren't so attached, though, to the scruffy old addition at the back – a new kitchen and living area was needed to replace it. Aaron Guerin of LAD Architecture in Cambridge drew up the plans for the renovation, reconfiguring the spaces in the old house so that they flowed seamlessly into the new areas.

"It was pretty quick. After only two or three meetings he'd virtually come up with what we wanted," says Chris.

Chris, who is 70 in November, and Janet, 67, started the demolition themselves, ripping out the interior, levering up cobblestones and levelling the pergola. Builders came in to cut off the unwanted rooms, which were smashed with a digger and carted to the Gardners' farm, where they were burned in a mighty bonfire.

None of this daunted either of them, says Janet. "Chris is used to dealing with heavy machinery, using contractors, moving buildings... it's all in a day's work for a practical farmer."

Restoring the grand old home and building its new addition took much longer than the demolition, but the Gardners were in no rush. "If you have time pressure, you end up taking short cuts," says Chris. The demolition began in August 2012, Marcus Grayling and his team got under way in October and just over a year later the couple moved in.

It was lucky there was no rush, as there was a lot of authentic detail to perfect. A Cambridge woodturner undertook the massive task of making more than 400 new spindles for the exterior. "When we were nearly finished we found we were 15 short, so the builder had to go and ask him to do some more," says Janet.

The house is finished now, but the couple are still chipping away at the landscaping; it's slow progress, as locals often stop for a chat, telling Janet and Chris how much they enjoyed watching the renovation unfold. "People told us they used to drive past every week to see what had been done."

That first Christmas, an anonymous note appeared in their letterbox: "We have admired your house and garden many times. It's absolutely lovely. Merry Christmas!" >



WINNING IDEAS

His work on the Gardners' home won **Aaron Guerin**, of LAD Architecture, the 2015 Waikato regional Architectural Designers NZ award for best residential alteration and addition. Here are his thoughts on finding an architect/designer and sticking to a budget:

FINDING THE RIGHT ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER: Once you've identified someone you think you'd like to use (via word of mouth, looking at websites etc) meet them to see if you "gel". Ask them about their fee structure, their workload and time frames and discuss what you expect from each other during the design process.

BUDGET MATTERS: First of all, identify what's non-negotiable. Then, if initial quotes are too high, you can work around the less vital aspects. Your architect or designer should identify anything on your wish list that rings alarm bells cost-wise and suggest alternatives that will work within your budget. Price the plans before the building consent stage, so plans can be modified if quotes come back too high. Be very specific about fixtures and fittings, so quotes are accurate.

COMMON CAUSES OF BUDGET BLOW-OUTS: Not having a realistic budget and accurate costings at the start; not having a contingency factored in for unknowns (often when renovating you don't know what you're dealing with before linings are removed); excavation or unexpected issues with the site or excavations (we ask our clients to get an engineer's report early on) and making late changes to your plans.