



STUDY

The dark green walls strike a moody note and allow the artwork to stand out.

For a similar paint colour try Jewel Beetle, Little Greene

COLLECTOR'S EDITION

An extensive archive of art and antiques was central to the renovation and extension of this Melbourne period property

WORDS JULIET BENNING PHOTOGRAPHY CAITLIN MILLS

SITTING ROOM

The vibrant green used on the study walls is continued here on the sofa for cohesion.

Art (oveer fire) by Chonggang Du.

Custom-made sofa upholstered in Serafina linen in Green, Marvic Textiles





DINING ROOM
Designer Sarah McPhee (pictured) decided on richly upholstered chairs to lend more of a sense of occasion to meals. Chairs custom upholstered in Turkistan fabric by Lee Jofa, available at London Fabric Company.
Artwork. Emily Pwerle

DINING ROOM
 This irreverent piece
 of art brings a joyful
 dynamism, which
 is grounded by
 antique furnishings.
Artwork, Willem de
 Kooning. Bowood
table lamp, Sophie
 Conran, is similar



A long-term view was what Anna and James Gribble had in mind when they bought their Edwardian home in a quiet suburb of Melbourne. While the house didn't fit their exact requirements, the neighbourhood and large size of the garden were too tempting to resist. 'When we bought the house we wanted a home that would see our children, Harvey, now eight, and Nora, now six, through their teenage years to the end of their schooling,' says Anna who, along with husband James, is an investor.

Central to the couple's ambitions were not only a reconfigured layout but also a more thoughtfully curated solution to displaying their large collection of artwork. 'I've always been surrounded by art and I buy it in the same way other people buy shoes. All of it is so special to us,' says Anna. Enlisting interior designer Sarah McPhee from the outset of the project helped Anna and James realise their vision.

By laying art on the floor, Sarah was able to formulate gallery walls while in other rooms the art has become a defining feature. In the sitting room an entire wall has been designated for a large seascape painting by Will Mackinnon, a sofa positioned opposite for viewing pleasure. Animating their home with colour was another of Anna's requests. 'I took a colour appreciation trip with the stylist Megan Morton to Jaipur in India. It was an amazing week and really reinforced my desire for vibrant tones in my own home,' she says. Her love of green prompted the luscious saturated tone of the walls in the study where multiple pictures jostle for attention. 'Anna also told me she had always wanted a blue and white room so that prompted the scheme in the main bedroom,' adds Sarah.

Beyond the cosmetics of the interior, the scope of the extension would improve the family's lifestyle dramatically. 'After plans had been approved by the local council, the renovation work began in April 2019 and was completed between the two Melbourne lockdowns in mid-2020,' Sarah explains.

While the original red brick frontage remained unchanged, a second level and side extension were added. The kitchen was moved towards the rear of the house where it would have access to the garden. A pool and large garage were also added. 'We completed the project just in time for the family to return home before the second lockdown, which lasted for four months, and they were thrilled to be able to enjoy it during those difficult months,' Sarah elaborates.

Sarah also had the idea to replace the old floorboards running widthways with new oak boards running from front to back. 'This gives the house a lovely new flow,' she explains. Sisal rugs are well suited to the heavy traffic of the ground floor and offer a relaxed contrast to the elegant shapes of the furniture.

A house for all seasons, while the swimming pool and garden get plenty of use in the summer, come winter a gentle cossetting character develops. 'We love to play board games or watch films in front of the fire,' says Anna. Along with its year-round appeal, perhaps Sarah's finest achievement was her ability to distil the creative and vibrant personalities of her clients within their four walls. 'When Anna and James' wider family were able to visit for the first time after lockdown they said, "this house is so you," and that for me is the best compliment I could receive,' Sarah concludes. 📧

■ Sarah McPhee Interiors, sarahmcpheerinteriors.com.au

“FROM KIDS’ PARTIES ON THE LAWN TO LARGE SIT-DOWN DINNERS IN THE DINING ROOM FOR 20, THIS HOUSE IS WELL SUITED TO ENTERTAINING”

KITCHEN

The oak units were stained to provide a tonal variation to the floor.

Source similar oak flooring at the West Sussex Antique Timber Company. Source Carrara marble work surfaces at Worktop Express. Appliances, Miele



MEET THE DESIGNER

Sarah McPhee shares her style vision and loves
MOST SUCCESSFUL PART OF PROJECT Without a doubt, how much trust Anna and James placed in me. They established what they liked, gave me their brief then let me run with it.

SECRET ADDRESS Tat London – I love its range of vintage and antique pieces.

GREATEST INDULGENCE The four-lamp ceiling light by Anna Charlesworth in the dining room. It's very understated although it makes the room.

GO-TO COLOUR Blue. It's grounding and calming. I believe every single room needs a little bit.

SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT

Changing the direction of the floorboards. Once they were laid it made a big difference to the overall flow of the house.

DESIGN HERO Ben Pentreath. I love his use of colour and pattern and the way he mixes styles and eras.

MAIN BEDROOM

Crisp white woodwork brings definition to the blue walls, while the elaborate headboard becomes a strong focus.

Headboard in Bagatelle in Bleu de Chine, Manuel Canovas. Try Farrow & Ball's Ultra Marine Blue **paint**



MAIN BATHROOM
Plain metro tiles and Carrara marble allow the original leadlight windows to impress. Source Carrara marble at Imperial Marble. Picasso Stone Resin freestanding bath. Lusso Stone, is similar

