



Designed for Family Living

Story Marilyn Collins Images Peter Proctor.

After longingly daydreaming of being the owners of one of Lambton's finest examples of historic Federation residences, twelve years ago Darren and Belinda became the proud owners. >



Darren said "The owner at the time wanted the home to become a real family home filled with the sound of children playing, which was quite ominous as this is what it certainly has become."

The couple at that time only had one son, to be shortly followed in quick succession by four siblings to make five. More recently over the last three years the family has permanently grown to a total of eight children as Darren and Belinda, who are foster parents, have now three siblings to care for aged from a newborn to three-years-old.

Since commencing fostering they have had more than sixteen young babies pass through their doors to be given love and tender care. The family of eight children now range in age from their eldest son of 18 years to a one-month-old infant.

The history of the house named "Cartrefle", a welsh word meaning abode, has always interested the couple.

The residence was built by a New Lambton builder in 1919, named William Knight, for the wealthy Payne family, who had numerous business holdings. The Payne's spinster daughter Alma lived completely alone in the home all her life till her passing. Photos show that the tram used to travel back and forth on the road outside on its way to Wallsend and Newcastle.

After its purchase, the couple organised for plans to be drawn for future extensions over the years. The laundry and garage were the first to be completed, then the property

fenced, stunning gardens established and a swimming pool installed.

Initially, the couple were going to include three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs; however they decided instead to extend the living space to create a generous-size family and dining room, kitchen and an entertaining-style verandah across rear of the building and side street entrance.

Morpeth-based, award-winning family building company Proctor Building Solutions were contracted to undertake a sympathetic extension to their historic Federation-style home, listed as a significant home in the Lambton area.

Construction was undertaken whilst the then-family of seven children lived at the residence, commencing October 2013, and finishing March 2014. "I remember having Christmas 2013 with the family all here cooking on my black Smeg Victorian cooker, which was installed on Christmas Eve, standing on bare floorboards," said Belinda, who was once a professional chef.

Builder Ken Proctor worked on the property every day, supervising every stage of the build as well as working on site, which was so appreciated by them, as it made decision making so quick and easy if problems arose.

Every effort was made by Proctor Building Solutions to cause as little disruption or disturbance to the young family whilst maintaining a safe, clean and tidy site throughout the build, ensuring that the family could lead their normal lives with minimal disruption to their daily activities. >



One of the difficulties associated with this was the limited site area available to undertake works and the fact that several children were of such a young age and existing in such close proximity to the work area.

The extension was well planned and every effort made to replicate and maintain authenticity, leaving as little evidence as possible that an extension had been added to this iconic home.

The extension was of carefully sourced cavity brick construction on bearers and joists. Apparently, when the home was originally built the bricks came from possibly all of the four Lambton brickworks operating at that time, due to the size of the double-brick residence. Fortunately, they were able to colour match the brick perfectly to blend so seamlessly.

The roof is a combination of metal Colorbond and welsh slate, which was harder to source and match to the existing structure. However, a Sydney firm was successful in achieving a perfect colour match.

In Australia, due to our extreme weather conditions in summer and winter, slate has a lifetime of around 100 years, however in Britain and the UK the lifetime is possibly 300 years.

Internally, the extension replicates the architectural era with stunning 12-foot ceilings, decorative cornices, ceiling

panels, and ceiling roses synonymous with the charming Federation homes of the time, blending seamlessly with the existing home.

White setting was used on internal walls to match the existing internal finish in the home.

Heritage-style electrical light switches, powerpoints and picture rails were installed to complete the look and add to the authenticity of the extension.

Part of the project included demolition works and modifications to the existing kitchen, enlarging it and opening the room up to the new family room, creating an open-plan feel in what was previously a relatively closed-in area.

The heritage feel of the area has been unaffected by opening up the original kitchen due to the installation of an intricate timber 'sunrise-style' arch above the opening between the two rooms.

Lathams Kitchens' design perfectly matched the 1900's era, yet with the convenience of modern-day facilities. 40-millimetre New York White Granite was installed on all the benchtops, all walls lined with matching granite splashbacks, and the benchtop of the central island fitted with decorative feature end columns in timber.

The kitchen cupboards have Shaker-style doors in Alabaster Satin finish, and there is a glass-fronted feature cupboard with led downlights. >



To add to the Federation look, a capping mould was fitted to the top of the wall cupboards, with a custom-made mantel around the under-mount range hood. Taking pride of place is a shiny Smeg Black Victorian Cooker and to add the finishing touches, black wire-weaved handles with matching knobs were fitted.

Lathams Kitchens also constructed the display cabinetry installed to the family room, matching the design of the kitchen fittings, which compliments the living areas superbly, creating a sense of flow throughout the area. A gas fireplace has been installed in the wall unit in the family room, providing a cosy place to settle in the winter.

Hanging over this space is a sparkling chandelier with two equally stunning chandeliers installed over the 12-seater dining table.

"The roof structure and framing were complex, and required careful consideration to ensure adequate drainage of water from different sections of the roof," said Daniel Proctor.

"The external verandah is flanked by timber bay windows inserted at the top with coloured glass to match those existing throughout the residence. Frosted glass is in two rows below the top coloured row.

"The glass was sought with great difficulty due to the rarity of its kind, and being the last remaining pieces of its kind."

Purpose-made flyscreens were sourced and installed to match the design of the windows, ensuring functionality whilst still remaining discreet and in keeping with the external appearance of the existing external area of the home.

Large sliding stacker timber doors were installed to the extension allowing generous amounts of light and an open, flowing functionality and modern-day convenience to the extension as they opened to the back verandah.

Decorative timber joinery and handrails were installed on the verandah to match the existing home, and T&G hardwood flooring was installed to the external verandahs to match the existing residence. Stunning, timber-lined eaves completed the verandah area.

Overall, the extension provides the family with a real heart for the home where they can congregate together as one to play, entertain and create a pleasant meal time at evenings.

The residence is surrounded by beautiful established gardens – banks of orange clivias are at their best, with the prunus having just displayed their colourful blooms, while the roses and crepe myrtles are waiting their time to shine.

With eight children under their roof, Belinda and Darren are thinking "the only way now is up" to accommodate everyone and to gain another bathroom. A home with eight children and their two parents needs more than one bathroom!

Having already undergone a major extension while living in the home, it is assured this will be much easier. "We have so much room upstairs under the roof line that you can actually stand upright," said Darren.

Meanwhile, everyone seems to be absolutely thrilled with the final outcome, especially with their Builder Proctor Building Solutions, who did a masterfully professional and seamless task of blending the two eras of 1919 and 2014.

Both the owners agreed that even all the tradesmen on the project enjoyed using their skills in recreating an era when everything had to be so precise. For example, each delicate and ornate plaster rose appointed around the entire high ceiling took 40 minutes each to erect and there were a countless number required to complete the task.

There is no doubt that the original owner would be most pleased with the final outcome.

There's no doubting that this classic residence will provide a loving and relaxed, child friendly environment for the entire family to enjoy for years to come and perhaps even the next generation. 