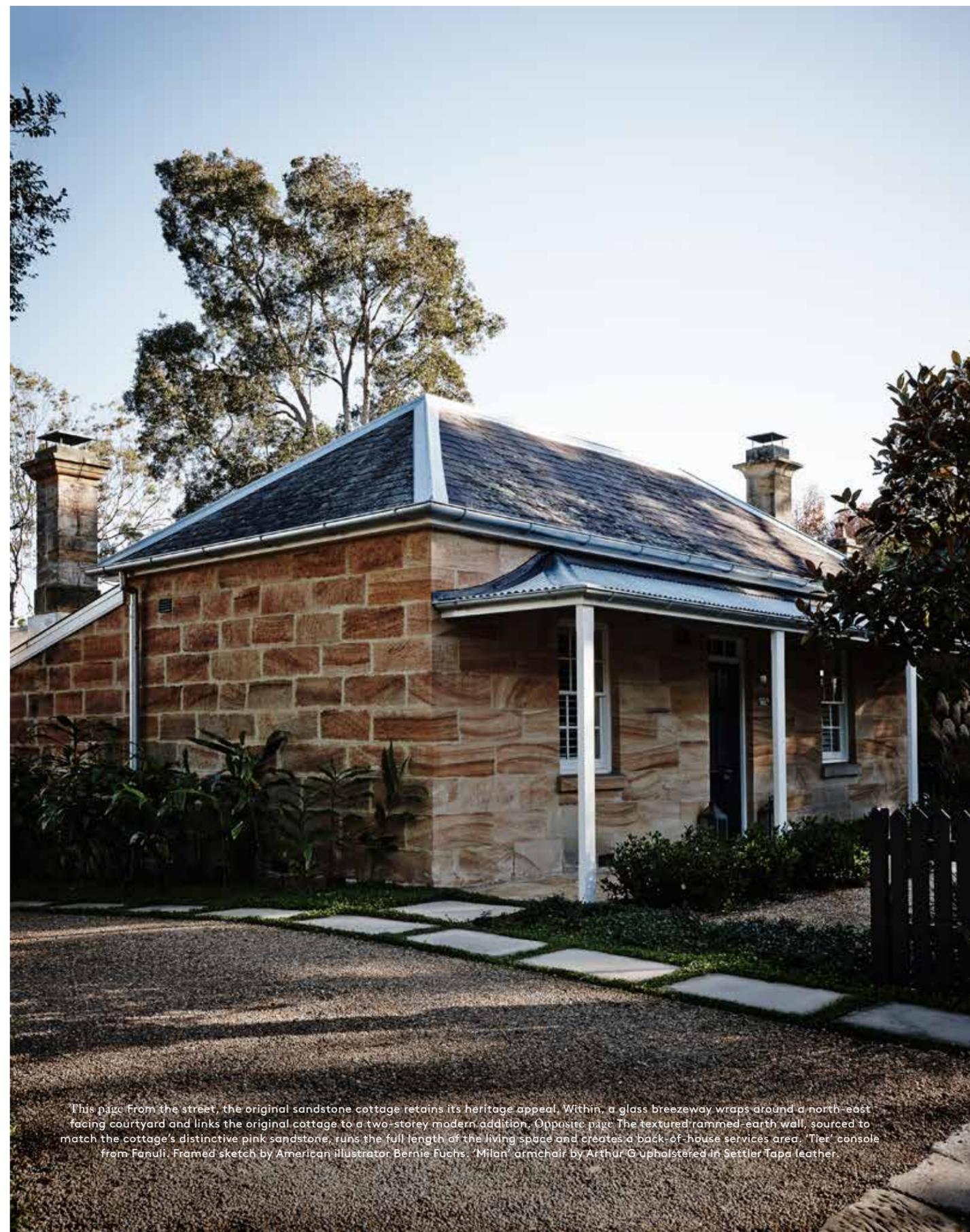


LEAP OF FAITH

Buying this historic cottage without seeing inside it didn't faze this designer, who has made it her family home.

Photographs WILL HORNER
Words JANICE JONES



This page From the street, the original sandstone cottage retains its heritage appeal. Within, a glass breezeway wraps around a north-east facing courtyard and links the original cottage to a two-storey modern addition. Opposite page The textured rammed-earth wall, sourced to match the cottage's distinctive pink sandstone, runs the full length of the living space and creates a back-of-house services area. 'Tier' console from Fanuli. Framed sketch by American illustrator Bernie Fuchs. 'Milan' armchair by Arthur G upholstered in Settler Tapa leather.



From the day she spotted it in the 1990s just around the corner from her home, interior designer Andrea Killen loved this cottage in Hunters Hill. Built in 1861 it was one of the first residences constructed in the distinctive pink sandstone quarried in the area.

She was so smitten with the cottage that she scribbled a note to put in the letterbox saying, 'If you ever sell this cottage, please sell it to me'. There was no response. Fast forward 15 years and Andrea and husband Hugh and their two children were about to return to Sydney from the US after years of living overseas. Preparing for the move, Andrea went online to search for properties they could buy and was astounded to see the cottage she loved had just been posted for sale as a deceased estate.

The couple pounced on the chance to purchase the largely untouched property. "We called architect John Rose, of Tanner Kibble Denton Architects, who was recommended to us. We had six weeks from when the cottage was listed until it went to auction," says Andrea. Briefing John on their wishlist, they asked him to go to the open home and come up with a design to accommodate the family of four. Successful in purchasing the property from afar and, delighted with the architect's concept for their new home, they gave him the go-ahead.

"We arrived back from the States as the DA was going through council and rented a place around the corner for the duration of the build. From the moment they broke ground, I was on site every day and involved with everything to do with the internal side of things," says Andrea, who has her own interior design business, AK Designs.

The project reinstated the original verandah and the cottage's interiors were restored to serve as the entry hall and a cosy sitting room with a fireplace the family enjoys in winter. A glass breezeway with an internal courtyard links the cottage with the new living spaces, formed with the rammed earth wall carefully matched to the sandstone, and a covered deck behind. Above is the cedar-clad bedroom wing and at the rear is a garden, swimming pool and cabana for their teenaged children.

Hunters Hill Council was particular about retaining the look of the street frontage so the black box for the upper-storey bedroom wing is set back and gives the impression of something subtle and modern without overshadowing the streetscape.

"With the traditional cottage at the front I wanted the back to be contemporary in its practicality but not in its look. I really wanted a lived-in space and that it be a home not a house. We loved that earthy, warm Colorado ranch style and all those layered textures," says Andrea. Apart from the custom dining chairs, the bar stools and the ottoman in the winter sitting room, much of the furniture has been in the family for years.

In the sleek kitchen stands one of Andrea's favourite pieces. "I'm not the cook; my husband is the chef at home," she says. "But a must for me was the deep-green marble benchtop – something I've tried to suggest with clients but no one was brave enough to do it. Green is one of my favourite colours and is littered throughout the house. I was delighted with how it turned out with the white joinery, oak floors and simple subway tiles."

"Everything that we wanted is included," says Andrea of her 155-year-old cottage in which the traditional links harmoniously with the contemporary to create an ultra-comfortable home. "And everything inside is a reflection of where we've been and who we are as a family." ■

For more go to tkda.com.au; akdesigns.com.au.



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This page The upper storey bedroom wing is set back from the traditional street frontage. Opposite page top In the 'winter' living room, 'Modern Metropolis' club chair by Ralph Lauren. Ottoman by Original Finish in Andrew Martin 'Mendoza' fabric. Below Original Eames chair and stool. Side table by Zaffero. 'Haiku' fan from Big Ass fans.

SPEED READ

» An Australian couple living in the US but planning to return to Sydney bought an historic sandstone cottage without having seen inside. » The couple, one of whom is interior designer Andrea Killen, enlisted architect John Rose to create a design to renovate the cottage and build a respectful extension to accommodate the family of four. » The original cottage interiors were restored and refreshed and a new ground floor living, dining and entertaining space and an upper bedroom wing were constructed. » Materials for the new structure included a rammed earth wall in harmony with the original pink-coloured Hunters Hill sandstone. Interiors are in a warm and earthy Colorado style.



This page The family uses the outdoor dining area on the covered deck all year round. In the new living room Arthur G 'Milan' armchairs in Settler Tapa leather. Opposite page Courtyard table setting from Parterre. In the main bedroom, parquetry bed from And So To Bed, London, and bedlinen from Cologne & Cotton, London. Artwork by Michaye Boulter. Miunn 'La Palma' bar stools from ECC Lighting+Furniture. Island benchtop in 'Guatemala Verde' marble from Nefko Marble. Armand 'Riviera' pendant lights from Arteriors. Artwork by Michaye Boulter.