

Heritage meets hue in revival Fitzroy House

In Melbourne's Fitzroy, a bold renovation brings new life to a heritage worker's cottage, blending playful colour with timeless design.

Words **Jeni O'Dowd**



A bright yellow door stands out against Fitzroy House's weathered bluestone façade, hinting at what lies beyond: a vivid, contemporary transformation balancing playfulness with elegance.

Inside, colour, art and texture come together in surprising yet thoughtful ways, honouring the home's 1800s origins.

This was no ordinary renovation. The client's brief to interior architect Lee Dwyer of Leftfield Studio and designer Tamara Hannaford-Maizey of Hannaford Design, both based in Victoria, was clear: contemporary and inviting, but with playful twists and deep respect for the home's history.

"We wanted to celebrate the original 1800s bluestone," Lee says. "As the project evolved, we embraced a more natural palette, allowing the client's impressive art collection to take centre stage."

The result is a home where bold design meets quiet elegance. One standout piece is a neon sign reading "Turn me on", which casts a vivid glow down the hallway and onto the street after dark.

The home plays with unexpected materials and moments from hidden bursts of Yves Klein blue in bedroom joinery to a mirrored chrome

panelled ceiling in the moody 'Stone Room'.

"In a room entirely bluestone, we felt the need to introduce a softer element," says Dwyer. "The panels reflect like water and bring a sense of fluidity to the space."

Dwyer explains that colour and texture are used throughout the home with purpose and restraint—never overwhelming, always intentional.

For Hannaford-Maizey, the balance of old and new was never a constraint — it was an opportunity.

"It was bold and full of rich history, which made the experience exciting and enabled us to think outside the box," she says.



"The yellow door was a statement, and a little hint of what might be behind the door."

And while the home feels distinctly fresh, it's rooted in enduring design values. "It was important to us to create a space that reflected our clients, yet ensuring elements of timeless design throughout the home."

While the front of the house maintains its 19th-century presence, a previously added rear extension created the opportunity for something entirely new.


The kitchen, unusually, was left untouched. Originally designed by architect Robert Nichol and completed in 2021, it had already won

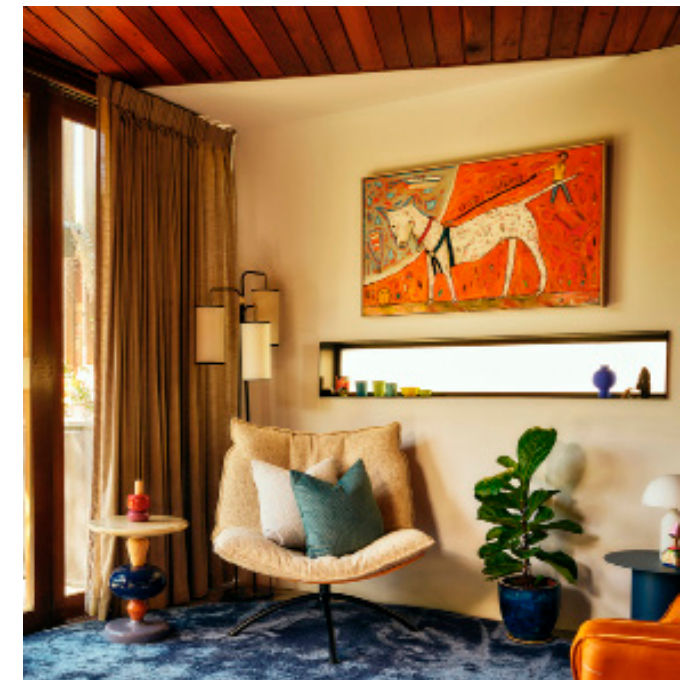
design accolades — and the decision to preserve it showed a refreshing lack of ego.

"Yes, it's a bit unusual and we went back and forth on it for awhile," says Hannaford-Maizey.

"In the end, we decided to keep it as a nod of respect. We did, however, add in our signature Patina Bronze that is featured throughout the home as a nod to our design and to connect all the spaces."

Fitzroy House isn't just a home.

It's a love letter to art, design, and the power of creative trust — where a yellow door marks the start of a journey into something entirely unexpected. 



Top left: The dining room blends period charm with bold textures.

Above: A cosy nook invites serenity, and a cheerful yellow door pops against the bluestone.

Far left: Interior architect Lee Dwyer and designer Tamara Hannaford-Maizey. Photos: Hugh Davidson.