

BY JANE EYLES-BENNETT

# Design principle proof in the pudding

Interior designer **Jane Eyles-Bennett** walks you through some amazing and profitable property transformations; the principles of which can be universally applied



**S**ome properties just have the 'X' factor, don't they? Whether designed by an architect or interior designer, or by someone who just has a 'knack' for it, a property with the right 'look' is most likely sold or rented faster and for a higher dollar amount than other comparable properties in the area.

Using the design principles detailed in the May issue of the *NZ Property Magazine* and the step-by-step process for working through a renovation project in the April issue, the foundation to creating your own property renovation with the X factor is firmly in place.

To reinforce these concepts, the following case study considers the work undertaken on a property renovation recently completed in Glenfield, Auckland.

## Property exterior

Consider the exterior of this property (above) as it looked before the renovation. It has a 'flat' appearance because the entire house, including the window frames, is painted in the same colour. By leaving the window frames white and painting the body of the house another colour, depth, and therefore interest, is created. If the main part of the exterior was in good condition, and a suitable colour, then painting only the window frames and sills as an alternative would achieve just as much depth and interest for a fraction of the cost.

The house also 'floats', because it isn't anchored in any way. Notice that the base of the house and the deck were painted a darker colour during the renovation. This gives a 'weighted' quality

to the house, serves as an anchor, and gives the property a sense of stability and reassurance. Another way to achieve an 'anchor' is by adding plants along the base of the house – either in the ground or in removable pots. Consider now the fact that the pre-renovation exterior was 'off-balance' from the street view. The deck on the left side of the house gives weight to that side of the house. If the deck were to remain the same, a solution to balancing it out might be to add some reasonably large potted plants at the end of the right hand wing. The renovation of the deck, however, included an extension along the right wing of the house. This visually balances the house from the road front and makes it pleasing to the eye.





### Dining area

Cohesion is the design principle that is used primarily throughout the interior of the house. The walls are all painted the same colour – with lighter versions of it through the darker areas such as the hallway. Using the same colours (or versions of the same colours) throughout a house creates order and it is therefore a pleasing environment to be in. It's fine to use different colours for, say, the bedrooms or bathrooms, but try not to use more than two or three colours in the entire interior. Cohesion is also created here with the continuous use of the same flooring throughout the house. When selecting flooring products for your own renovation, make sure all the common areas (such as lounge, hallways, dining room) have the same floor covering to create this cohesion. The one rule to follow is: use the same colour and specification of each product of flooring you choose to install in the house. For instance, if you have tiles in one bathroom, then make sure you use the same tiles in any other bathroom. Carpet type and colour should be the same wherever you decide to install it throughout the house. That is, never

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use more than one type of carpet/vinyl/tiles in one property. (Tip: use darker colours on the floor and lighter colours on the walls to create a sense of depth and stability to a space).

All doors, door/window frames, architraves and scotias help establish the 'repetition' design element by all being painted white. Repetition in interior design assists with the 'consistency' factor, which in turn creates a feeling of sureness and stability about the property. Consider what elements you will repeat with your renovation. Will it be the colour of the doors, the style of the general lighting, the window treatments (curtains or blinds) or perhaps just the door hardware?

### Lounge area

The design principle, 'emphasis', is created at this property with the use of furniture. Because it was a property purchased with the sole function of renovating to sell, I have purposely designed a 'blank canvas'. Without furniture this property has depth (from the use of different colours on the floors, doors, windows and walls) but not any emphasis. Feature walls are not fashionable any more, so unless you particularly like them and it is for your own home (not an investment property), then steer well away from them. Even a subtle feature wall looks out of place. This property was 'dressed' for sale (a highly recommended investment) and was sold in only a matter of weeks, because the furniture created focal points in the various rooms and ultimately an 'established' feel to the property. Consider this yourself when thinking of selling property that is currently unfurnished, as the additional profit you'll make will almost without question far outweigh the cost of the furniture hire.

Taking into consideration all costs, the father and son team who developed this property walked away with approximately \$150,000 net. They listened to their designer (mostly!), stuck to their budgets and watched their timeframes – and they have been well rewarded for their efforts. ▲

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