

LIGHT TOUCH

• PRESTON LANE ARCHITECTS •

A contemporary renovation of a heritage home in Tasmania manages a delicate balance between preservation and modernization.

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Photography by [Jonathan Wherrett](#)

01 Subtle references to Victorian architectural details help tie this contemporary kitchen to its heritage setting. Artwork: Binny Talib, *The Cray*, 2009.





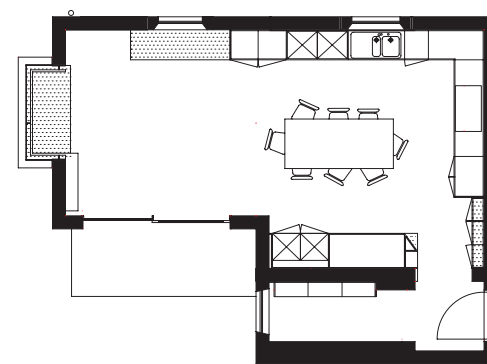
02 Heritage considerations required the building's envelope and kitchen windows to remain largely untouched. Artwork (far corner): Lidiya Milova, *In the Kitchen*, 1970.

Australia's second oldest city, Hobart, was established in 1803 and is home to many of the country's oldest Georgian and Victorian buildings, the preservation of which is jealously guarded by the Tasmanian Heritage Council. Among the pantheon of Tasmania's nineteenth-century architects, few are more highly esteemed than Henry Hunter (1832–1892), a prominent Gothic Revival architect who designed several of the city's best-known buildings, including the Hobart Town Hall and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. Hobart's period building fabric makes for great postcards, but it also presents constraints for those with an interest in producing architecture of a more contemporary bent. This is especially so when the contemporary architecture needs to be built inside the shell of the heritage fabric – a challenge that firm Preston Lane Architects came hard up against when it was commissioned to redesign a bathroom and kitchen for a nineteenth-century mansion designed by none other than Henry Hunter himself.

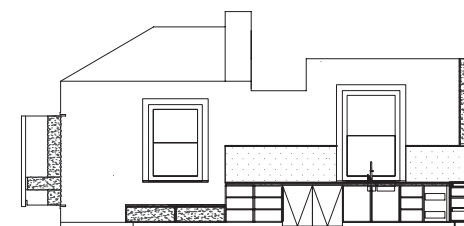
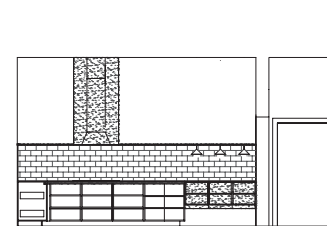
Preston Lane Architects' client was a large and lively family of seven, comprised of two parents and five children, who were deeply attached to their patrician sandstone and brick home. Not unusually, though, the family spent the bulk of their time in the kitchen, which, despite being subject to remodelling in the 1970s, was dark, cold and, sadly, disconnected from the home's rear courtyard. Preston Lane Architects' response was to design what it describes as a "light scoop." The architects stripped the kitchen back to the original shell, a process that also included removing a false ceiling, opening up the full volume of the kitchen annex. As architects Bek Verrier and Daniel Lane of Preston Lane explain, because of the precious nature of the original building, they were highly constrained in what they could do to its envelope – they would have to leave the windows (small by contemporary standards) largely as is. The exception to this was the rear, south-western elevation, which is largely invisible from the street. The practice proposed to open this side of the kitchen to the courtyard by using a



03 American oak features at "points of touch" to guide occupants through the space to the courtyard and garden at the rear.



Kitchen plan 1:150

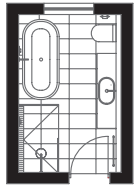


Kitchen elevations 1:150

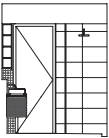
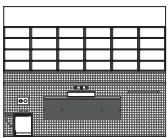
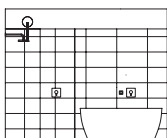
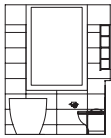
04 Timber and tile elements in both the kitchen and bathroom provide “grain” that resonates with the original building’s decorative flourishes.



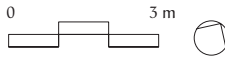
05 The kitchen’s contemporary take on a traditional bay window helps draw in light.



Bathroom plan 1:150




Bathroom elevations 1:150



contemporary version of a “bay” window – a rectangular extrusion, framed in steel to define it against the original fabric – providing a suncatcher and lounging space for the family. Combined with the fresh white finishes on the new internal elements, this solution lends the kitchen a light and airy feel.

This isn’t just another slick, clinical contemporary kitchen interior, though – the architects wanted to ensure their intervention paid due deference to the Gothic sensibilities of its host. To this end, timber and tile elements in both the kitchen and bathroom provide

a “grain” that resonates with the original building’s decorative flourishes. A timber datum in the kitchen, for example, reads as a playful reinterpretation of a picture rail. The timber elements also add warmth and serve as “guides” that lead to and through this locus of family life. The architects have carefully positioned them at what they call “points of touch.” Made from a luscious, honey-hued American oak, these elements will gradually gain patina over time and add another layer of history that tells of the lives lived within this remarkable work of Tasmanian heritage architecture. 



06 A nineteenth-century mansion, designed by Tasmania's renowned Gothic Revival architect Henry Hunter, is the setting for the new kitchen and bathroom.

Architect

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Practice profile

With offices in Hobart and Melbourne, Preston Lane Architects delivers bespoke residential and medium-sized commercial projects, with a focus on celebrating the day-to-day life of the user.

Project team

Daniel Lane, Bek Verrier

Builder

Cordwell Lane (kitchen), D Williams Builders (bathroom)

Consultants

Lighting: Casa Monde, Surrounding Australia

Kitchen products

Internal walls: Dulux paint in 'Antique White USA'

Flooring: Borg Diamante ceramic tiles

Joinery: Essastone benchtop in 'Crystal Salt'; splashback in Ivory Subway ceramic tile from G-Casa; cupboards in white gloss vinyl wrap; solid American oak timber storage and shelving

Lighting: Egg Pendant with white metal exterior and beaten copper interior; Artemide Surf Parete Halo; Nordic Tales Bright Spout (oiled)

Appliances: Siemens FlexInduction cooktop; Liebherr integrated fridge/freezer; Franke Mythos sink; AEG integrated dishwasher

Furniture: Custom bay box window seat by Preston Lane Architects, with upholstery by Caswells Upholstery and fabric by Sparkk in Noko 1050 'Silver'

Bathroom products

Internal walls: Dulux paint in 'Antique White USA'

Flooring: G-Casa white porcelain tiles

Joinery: Solid Huon pine vanity cabinet

Lighting: Tito pendant in white

Tapware and fittings: Grohe Rainshower Cosmopolitan; Axor Citterio M vanity tap and mixer from Hansgrohe

Sanitaryware: Villeroy & Boch Sunberry toilet pan; Kaldewei Classic Duo Oval bath; Fowler Regent vanity basin; Axor Citterio M bath spout from Hansgrohe