

★ 2025 MASTER BUILDERS HOUSE OF THE YEAR — GOLD · TOP 100

# Reimagined From Within

*A Blockhouse Bay full-home renovation — without a single new square metre.*

Blockhouse Bay · Bungalow · Completed 2024



2025 MASTER BUILDERS  
HOUSE OF THE YEAR

**GOLD AWARD · TOP 100 NEW ZEALAND**

INDICATIVE PROJECT BUDGET RANGE

**\$420,000 — \$480,000**

Auckland market rates  
May 2026 · GST included

# Inside this design story.

*A note from Simon Liu, Add Value Renovations*

When Mr & Mrs Kishore first walked us through their Blockhouse Bay home, the architect's extension drawings were already on the kitchen bench. Beautiful work. Way over budget. They were ready to walk away from a house they loved.

We sat down and asked a different question. Not "how much more house do we need to build" — but "how much of the house we already own is doing nothing for us?" The answer changed everything.

These pages walk through the design thinking behind that decision — the plans before and after, the rooms we created without extending the building, and the small moves that turned an over-budget extension into a 2025 House of the Year Gold winner.

## **Simon Liu**

Director, Add Value Renovations

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## A NOTE ON DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

*The best square metre is the one you already own — and aren't using yet.*

This project added four rooms — without adding a single new wall to the building envelope.

## CHAPTER 01

# A loved home, an over-budget plan.



Mr & Mrs Kishore had two children growing into a four-bedroom future. Their Blockhouse Bay bungalow gave them three bedrooms upstairs and a jumble of seldom-used rooms downstairs — a study, a rumpus, a laundry, and a tucked-away storeroom.

They loved the home. They loved the street. They had no intention of leaving. So they did what most Auckland families do — they called an architect, who returned with handsome plans for a substantial extension across the back of the house.

The drawings were good. The number was not. Even after value-engineering, the build came in well past what the family could responsibly spend. They sat with the quote for two months, and then started thinking about selling.

That is the moment they called us. Not to build the extension — but to tell them, honestly, whether building anything was the right move at all.

**DESIGN PRINCIPLE****Don't start with drawings. Start with the brief.**

A good extension solves a real problem. Before you commission a single line on a page, name the four or five things you actually need the new space to do. Most "needs" become optional once you write them down.

## CHAPTER 02

# We looked down, not out.

*The moment the project changed direction.*

On the walk-through, something kept catching our eye. The home sits on a gentle slope, which meant the architect — clever as ever — had built it on two levels. Three bedrooms upstairs, where the family lived. And downstairs, a full second floor of generously-sized rooms that the family rarely set foot in. A study no-one studied in. A rumpus the kids had outgrown. A laundry. A storeroom. A space the size of a small townhouse — doing almost nothing.

The architect's extension would have added a new wing to the back of the upstairs floor. New foundations. New roof. New cladding. New everything. It would also have ignored the second floor entirely. The whole expensive exercise was to build, from scratch, rooms that already existed under the family's feet.

***"What if we didn't add a single square metre to the building — and still gave the family the home they needed?"***

That was the question we put to Mr & Mrs Kishore. The answer, once we sketched it on a napkin, was obvious. The downstairs floor could become a self-contained wing — two new bedrooms, two new bathrooms, retained rumpus space — without touching the building envelope. The upstairs could be reorganised, not extended. A new ensuite and walk-in wardrobe could be carved out of a spare bedroom that no-one ever used.

No new foundations. No new roof. No resource consent for an extension. Just careful reorganisation of every square metre the family already owned.

**DESIGN PRINCIPLE****Look at what the house is already giving you.**

Most Auckland homes have a room that's carrying its weight, a room that's coasting, and a room that's doing almost nothing. Find the third room before you draw the extension. The cheapest renovation is the one that uses what you've already paid for.

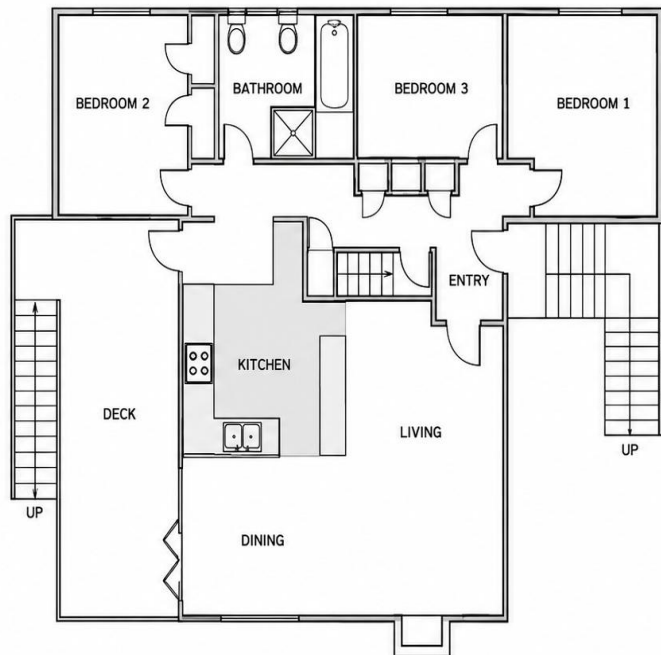
CHAPTER 03

# The plans, upstairs.

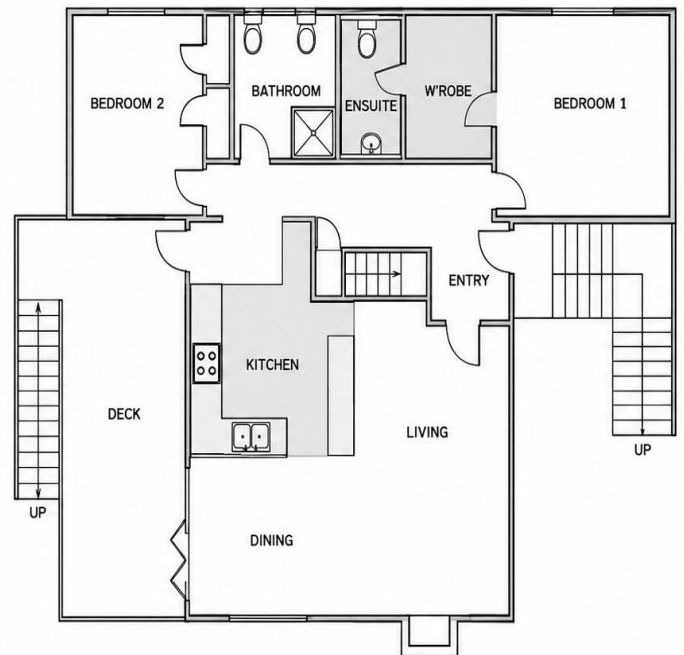
*A spare bedroom and a separate toilet became a master suite.*

**BEFORE · EXISTING FIRST FLOOR**

**AFTER · PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR**



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

## WHAT CHANGED, AND WHY

- 1 **Bathroom reworked.**  
Tighter footprint, modern fittings. Now serves Bedroom 2 and any guests using the home — the family bath has been freed from the master's morning rush.
- 2 **New ensuite for Bedroom 1.**  
The separate W.C. and a slice of old Bedroom 3 became a private ensuite. Bedroom 1 — the room that always felt like the master — now reads like one.
- 3 **New walk-in wardrobe.**  
The rest of old Bedroom 3 became storage. The kids had outgrown sharing rooms downstairs anyway. Three bedrooms upstairs became two, and the family gained the wardrobe they'd never had.
- 4 **New scullery behind the kitchen.**  
Hidden prep space, the washing machine, and the rubbish bin — all out of sight of the dining table. The old laundry downstairs disappeared; daily washing lives next to the kitchen, where it actually gets done.

## CHAPTER 04

# The master suite, carved from a spare room.

*Ensuite, walk-in, and a parents' retreat — without moving a single exterior wall.*

Most renovations add a master suite by building outward. This one inherited it from a room the family was never going to use — Bedroom 3, a corner room awkwardly positioned between the family bathroom and Bedroom 1.

We cut the room in half. The half nearest Bedroom 1 became a walk-in wardrobe — accessed through a new doorway from the master. The half nearest the existing bathroom (and the old separate toilet, which nobody loved) became an ensuite.

The result is the kind of master suite that magazine spreads are made of — but with one important difference: not a single new square metre was added to the home to get there. The walls were already standing. The roof was already over them. The space was simply being asked to do something better with itself.

***"Quiet luxury isn't more space. It's the right space, in the right place."***

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

**Adjacency is the cheapest luxury.**

A wardrobe next to the bedroom feels expensive. A wardrobe down the hall feels like storage. The wall doesn't cost more either way — but how you arrange them changes how the room lives.

## INSIDE THE NEW MASTER SUITE

**Three rooms, one experience.****THE ENSUITE**

A full-height tiled shower, double vanity with stone benchtop, toilet behind a half-wall, and a sliding privacy door. Vented out via the soffit so morning steam doesn't reach the wardrobe.

**THE WALK-IN**

Built-in shelving and rails to both sides, a tower of drawers in the middle. Wide enough for two adults to dress at the same time without the awkward dance.

**THE BEDROOM**

Bedroom 1 stayed where it was — but now it sits at the end of the suite rather than at the start of the hallway. Quieter. More private. A proper place to wake up.

## PHOTOGRAPHY NOTE

*Master suite, ensuite and walk-in wardrobe — photographs to be added in the next edition.*



Master Bedroom

## CHAPTER 05

# The scullery — and why it changed everything.

*Where the daily life of the kitchen happens, out of sight of the table.*



*The visible kitchen: clean lines, marbled stone, integrated appliances. The mess happens behind a door, in the scullery.*

Ask any Auckland family with school-age children what they wish their kitchen had, and the answer is almost always the same: somewhere to hide the mess. A scullery is the answer that custom-built homes have known about for years and renovations rarely deliver — because they take a wall to create.

In this home, the wall was already there. The original kitchen ran along one wall of the open-plan living. Behind it sat a small, awkward service area. We pulled a new partition forward, redrew the kitchen as a peninsula, and created a fully-functioning scullery behind it.

The scullery now contains:

- A secondary sink for prep and rinsing
- The dishwasher (out of sight of the table)
- The washing machine and dryer
- Pantry shelving and bulk storage
- The rubbish and recycling system

Most striking: the laundry moved upstairs. The old downstairs laundry was redundant the day the scullery was finished.

## DESIGN PRINCIPLE

## Move the function to where you'd actually use it.

The old plan had three separate utility rooms — laundry, scullery space, storage — all on different floors. The new plan has one. Daily friction disappears, and the house feels like it was designed for the way the family actually lives.

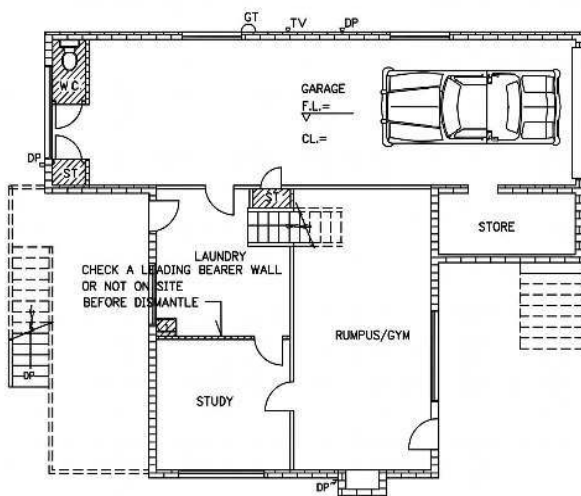
CHAPTER 06

# The plans, downstairs.

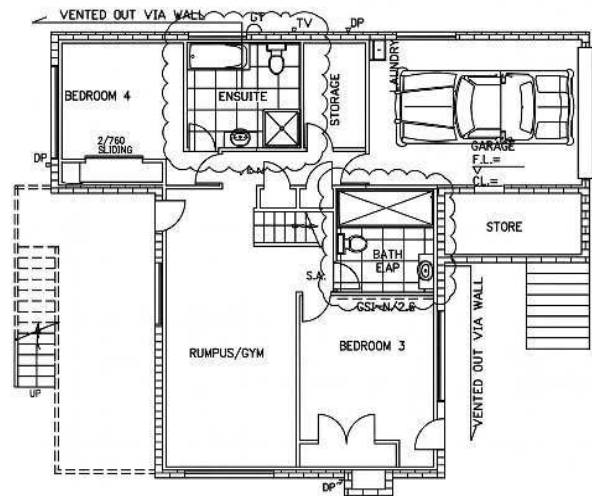
*A laundry, a study and a rumpus became two bedrooms with their own bathroom.*

**BEFORE · EXISTING GROUND FLOOR**

**AFTER · PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR**



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR FLOOR PLAN



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR FLOOR PLAN

**WHAT CHANGED, AND WHY**

- 1 Bedroom 4, with its own ensuite and walk-in.**  
The old laundry zone, plus a small downstairs bathroom and circulation, all became a self-contained guest or teenager's suite — with its own entry. Privacy that the upstairs bedrooms could never offer.
- 2 A second walk-in wardrobe.**  
A small but considered detail. Bedroom 4 reads as a master-quality room rather than a "spare" — useful when the boys are older and want their own space, or when grandparents stay for an extended visit.
- 3 New main downstairs bathroom.**  
Sits between Bedroom 3 and the new wing's circulation. Tiled fully. Vented to the outside. Serves the rumpus and any visitor using the lower floor.
- 4 Bedroom 3, from the old study.**  
The study was a holdover from another decade. It became a fourth proper bedroom — quiet, away from the family living, with its own window onto the garden.

CHAPTER 07

# A second home, under the same roof.

*Two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a rumpus — kept as one self-contained downstairs wing.*

Most of what we did downstairs was unbuilding. We took out walls that were dividing space into rooms no-one used; we kept the walls that were doing structural work. The garage stayed exactly where it was. The stairs landed on the same spot. The exterior cladding never moved.

What changed was the floor plan inside that envelope. The new layout reads almost like a small two-bedroom apartment: an entry from the stairs, two bedrooms each with their own outlook, a shared bathroom in between, and the rumpus — kept — serving as a living area for the new wing when needed.

NOW

## The two sons.

Both son moved downstairs the week the keys were handed back. Each one finally has a bedroom of their own — and a bathroom they don't have to share with their parents.

NEXT

## A family retreat.

As the family grow, the wing becomes their flat-within-a-flat. They keep their independence; the parents keep their household. A bridge, not a flashpoint.

AFTER THAT

## Multi-generational living.

A grandparent moving in. An adult child returning for a year. A short-term home-stay or rental, if the family ever needs the income. The wing is a real second home — not a guest room.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

## Build for the next twenty years, not the next two.

A family of four needs different rooms at four different stages of life. The right renovation works at every stage — not just the one the family is in today. The downstairs wing was designed to work for the kids now, the teenagers later, and the wider family after that. Same rooms, three different lives.



Downstair Bedroom



Downstairs bathroom



Second living

**CHAPTER 08**

# Inside the finished home.

*A photo-led tour of the rooms upstairs.*



**LIVING & DINING**

Open-plan living, anchored by timber floors and pulled together by the view through the new sliders.



**THE NEW KITCHEN**

Marbled stone, integrated appliances, the scullery hiding behind the wall to the right.



**DINING & DECK**

New sliders open the dining room straight onto a timber deck and pergola.



**BEDROOM 2 — UPSTAIRS**

Refreshed finishes, built-in wardrobe, north-facing light through an existing window.

**WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT · THE FINISH STANDARD**

**FLOORING**

Solid hardwood timber, sanded + finished

**APPLIANCES**

Integrated, induction cooktop, gas hob

**JOINERY**

Custom white painted cabinetry

**LIGHTING**

LED downlights + feature pendants

**BENCH / SPLASH**

Marbled stone with waterfall edge

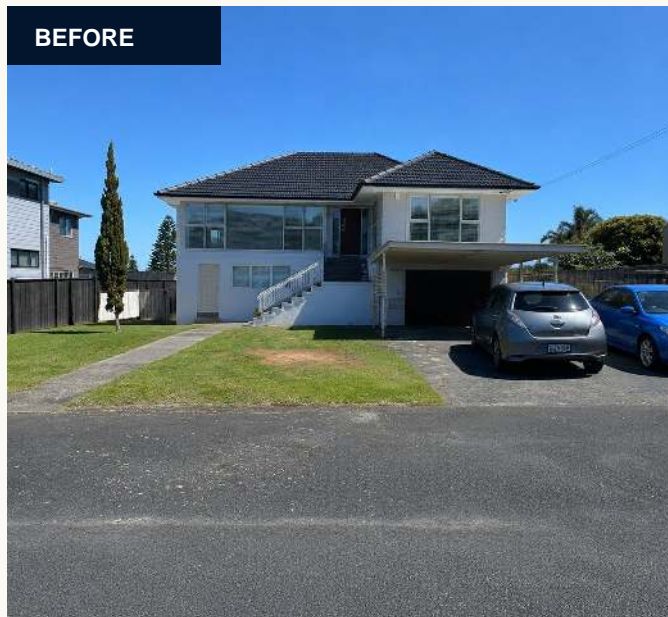
**HEATING**

Heat pumps + insulation upgrade

CHAPTER 09

# The street-side story.

*How the house presents itself to the neighbourhood now.*



BEFORE

**Before**

Dated tile roof, open carport with car always visible from the street, no privacy between front lawn and footpath.



AFTER

**After**

New cladding, a horizontal aluminium gate and fence, modernised carport screen — the same envelope, reading like a new home.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

**The cheapest renovation move is a new fence.**

Cladding, a gate, a paint colour. None of these are structural work — but together they reset how the home reads from the street. The renovation isn't finished until the neighbourhood sees that it's finished.

WHAT CHANGED, OUTSIDE

- **Painting**  
Full exterior repaint in a contemporary palette. elevations.
- **Carport**  
Modernised carport with new screen and roofline tidied.
- **Gate & fence**  
A new aluminium privacy fence and pedestrian gate.
- **Landscaping**  
Front garden re-laid, new driveway and lawn edges.

CHAPTER 10

# How we did it.

*Scope, process, and the credentials behind the build.*

THE SCOPE

## What we built, in plain English.

### 01 New Kitchen + Scullery

Open-plan kitchen with marbled stone benchtops, butler-style scullery behind.

### 02 Master Suite Upstairs

New ensuite and walk-in wardrobe carved from former Bedroom 3.

### 03 New Downstairs Wing

Two new bedrooms, new bathroom, retained rumpus — entirely within existing floor area.

### 04 Walk-in Wardrobes

Two — one for each master bedroom. Built-in joinery throughout.

### 05 Services Upgrade

Full rewire, new hot water system, complete insulation upgrade.

### 06 Exterior Transformation

New cladding, gate, fence, repaint, joinery and landscaping.

HOW WE WORK · FIVE STEPS, SAME PROCESS EVERY JOB

01

**BUDGET**

02

**NEW PLAN**

03

**COST LOCKED**

04

**CONSENT**

05

**BUILD**

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- 10-Year Master Build Guarantee
- 2025 House of the Year Gold + Top 100



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