

A DESIGN STORY · HILLSBOROUGH · 2026

The Bungalow They Always Wanted.

A 1930s Hillsborough bungalow, reimagined for a young family's first home — and a renovation that started before they signed the contract.

Hillsborough · 1930s bungalow · 100 m² · Completed 2026



**ADD VALUE RENOVATIONS
DESIGN-AND-BUILD · 6 MONTHS · 3 BED / 1 BATH**

INDICATIVE PROJECT BUDGET RANGE

\$200,000 — \$250,000

Auckland market rates
May 2026 · GST included

A 12-PAGE DESIGN STORY · HOW WE
THOUGHT BEFORE WE BUILT

ADDVALUERENOVATIONS.CO.NZ
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WELCOME

Inside this design story.

A note from Simon Liu, Add Value Renovations

Maddy and Karl came to us before they bought the house. They were living in a three-level townhouse with two young children, chasing the dream of single-level bungalow life. The Hillsborough listing was 1930s, just under 100 square metres, and last lived in as a rental — chopped into four small rooms that didn't quite fit anyone. But Karl had spotted something on the floor plan that made him pick up the phone.

The wall between the kitchen and the smallest "bedroom" — really an old dining room — was load-bearing, but it could come out. The window in that room could come out too, replaced with French doors onto the deck. The dead back porch could be enclosed and turned into a laundry and minibar. A new bedroom could be carved from the existing patio space. One big stunning bathroom could replace the tired old one. We met them on site, walked the house, and said yes. They signed the contract two days later.

Six months on, the bungalow is theirs. The wall is gone. The light comes through. The bathroom is the one room nobody wants to leave. Their kids splash in the freestanding bath. The whole house finally faces the garden the way it should have all along.

These pages walk through the design thinking behind it.

Simon Liu

Director · Add Value Renovations

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A NOTE ON DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

"Buy the house you can change. Then change it."

This project listened to two clients who had been living wrong for years, and asked a small bungalow to do everything their three-level townhouse used to fail at.

CHAPTER 01

A young family, ready to come down.



Maddy and Karl had been living in a three-level townhouse for years — two stories of stairs, a third for the laundry. With two young children, the daily logistics had become a permanent grind. They wanted a bungalow. Single-level living. Sun in the morning. A kitchen that opened to the garden. A bathroom big enough that bath-time wasn't a queue.

They had been hunting for the right house for months. When the Hillsborough listing came up, they walked through it: a 1930s weatherboard bungalow at just under 100 square metres, four small rooms carved out of what had once been three, last lived in as a rental. The walls had been put up in awkward places. The kitchen was cramped. The back porch was rotting. But the bones were there — the timber floors, the Rimu doors, the proportion of the rooms. And Karl had spotted something on the plan that made him pick up the phone.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

Buy the house you can change — not the one you have to settle for.

The bungalow Maddy and Karl bought wasn't the one they'd live in. It was the one a renovation could turn into the one they'd live in. The difference is in seeing what isn't there yet.

CHAPTER 02

Before they signed, they called us.



The wall Karl had spotted was between the kitchen and a small "bedroom" — only it wasn't really a bedroom. Walking through the house, you could see what it had been before the rental conversion: the dining room, opening directly off the kitchen, sharing the same outlook onto the garden. Somebody had put up a stud wall to make a fourth bedroom and squeezed an extra hundred dollars a week out of it. Now it was an awkward room next to a kitchen that was too small.

Karl asked the right question. **"If we bought this house, could we take that wall out?"** Yes — but it was load-bearing. The roof above it needed a beam. The window in what was now the bedroom could come out, too, replaced with a French door direct to the deck.

Maddy wanted a sliding door. We made the case for French doors instead. In a small house, you want every inch of the opening. A slider eats a third of the frame; French doors swing wide and give you the whole gap. On a summer afternoon, when both doors are open, you don't notice them at all. They didn't sign anything that day. They went home and thought about it. Two days later they sent the contract back.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE**Walk the house before you buy — bring the renovator with you.**

A 30-minute walkthrough can find the \$10,000 wall that makes the house \$100,000 better. We did this consult for free because that's what we'd want, if we were in their shoes.

CHAPTER 03

One wall down. The house finally breathes.



The day the wall came down, the house transformed. It used to be dark. With the wall gone — and the new beam hidden in the ceiling — the kitchen and dining and living are one room. Light enters from four directions: the kitchen window, the dining window, the French doors at the back, and the original living room windows at the front. On a clear morning the whole house glows.

The French doors do the rest. The deck off the back — barely used in the rental years — became the room everyone uses on a summer evening. The breeze comes through. The kids run in and out. Maddy doesn't have to shout from the kitchen to be heard out the back.

"The house just transformed. It was supposed to be dark — it wasn't anymore."

DESIGN PRINCIPLE**French doors over sliders, when the opening matters more than the slide.**

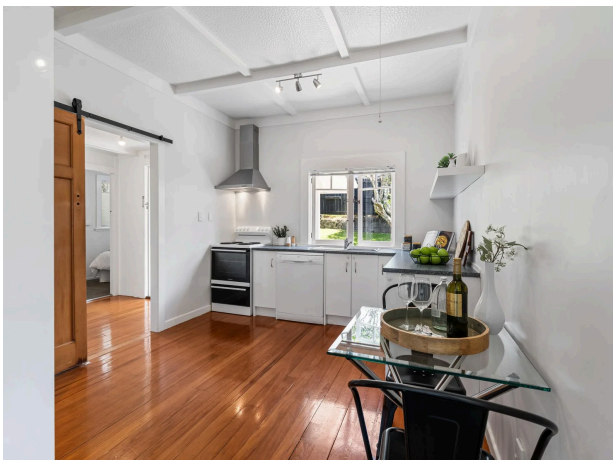
In a 100 m² house, the difference between a sliding door and a French door is the difference between a hole in the wall and an invitation to step through it. Always ask which one the room actually needs.

CHAPTER 04

Opened wide. Fitted tight.

Melteca Snowdrift cabinetry, Classic Oak feature, fluted Laminex island, Quantum Majorca Mint mosaic splashback, brushed brass throughout.

BEFORE



Cramped 1990s white cabinetry, basic appliances, no room for two people to cook at once. The fridge sat where the old dining room door used to be.

AFTER



Fluted island in Pure White stone with a Classic Oak overhang bench. Bosch oven, induction cooktop and dishwasher. Brushed gold mixer over a stainless double-bowl. Soft-close blum drawers throughout.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

In a small kitchen, every surface earns its place.

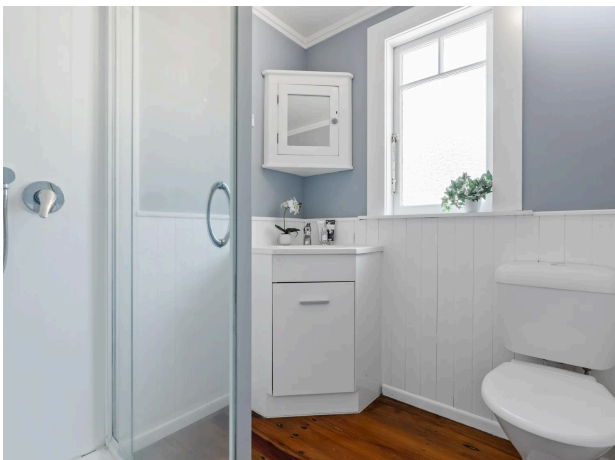
The fluted island isn't a flourish — it carries the light from the under-bench LED strip into the dining. The brass tap isn't fashion — it picks up the warmth of the original Rimu doors. The mint splashback is the only soft thing in the room. Every decision pulled double duty.

CHAPTER 05

One room. Made unforgettable.

The first big budget call was about bathrooms. Two okay ones, or one stunning one. We chose stunning.

BEFORE



Tight corner vanity, white wainscoting, a shower in one corner and the toilet shoved against the wall. Workable, but uninspiring.

AFTER



6.48 m² fully-tiled wet room in Quantum Venture Travertine Silver. Newmark 1500 freestanding bath. Walk-in shower with the whole floor as the wet area. Pettine 900 Legna timber-look vanity. SEU brushed gold tapware throughout.

The new bathroom took over the old laundry footprint and grew into part of the old porch. The window sill got tiled too, so when the kids splash, the timber underneath stays dry. Maddy puts them in the bath some afternoons and lets them play — because the floor is waterproof and the room is one big wet area, there's nowhere they can splash that isn't designed for it.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

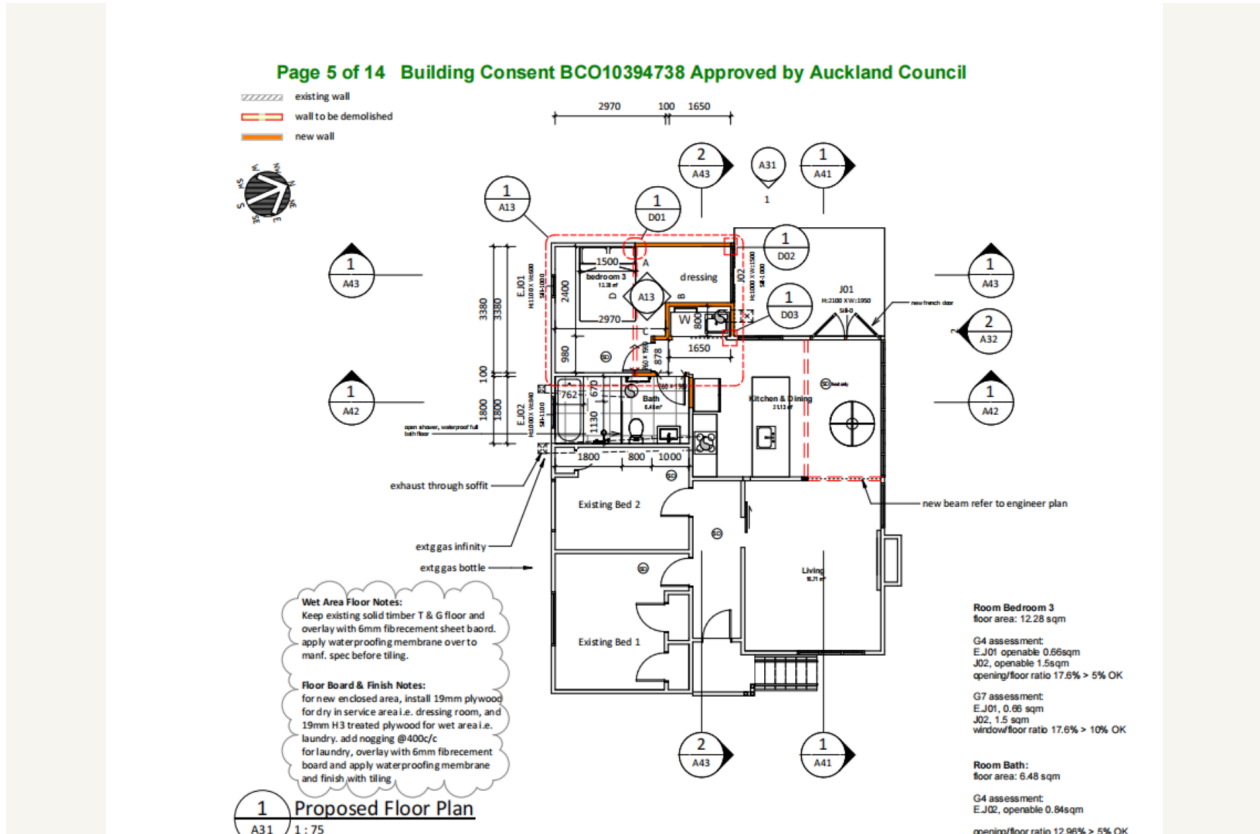
If you only get one good room, make it the room you use every day.

A second bathroom would have been used by guests three times a year. The one big bathroom is used by the whole family, every single day. The maths is the maths.

CHAPTER 06

What changed, drawn out.

Building Consent BCO10394738 · Approved by Auckland Council · April 2025



WHAT CHANGED, AND WHY

- 1 Wall removed, beam installed.**
 The load-bearing wall between the kitchen and the old fourth bedroom came out. A new structural beam took its place, hidden inside the ceiling.
- 2 French doors in place of the bedroom window.**
 The old window — when this room was still a bedroom — became full-width French doors opening onto the existing deck and the back garden.
- 3 The porch became laundry + minibar.**
 The old back porch, opposite the kitchen, was enclosed and converted. Hidden microwave behind a normal-open door, set low for the kids to reach.
- 4 New bedroom + dressing, bumped out.**
 A 12.28 m² bedroom + dressing area carved from existing patio space. Flexes between guest bedroom, office, and future master.

CHAPTER 07

Dead space, given a purpose.



Every old rental has a part nobody ever quite figured out. In this house, it was the back porch — three square metres of half-outdoor space, opposite the kitchen, used in the rental years as a place to dump shoes. The old back door from the kitchen went out into it. The existing laundry was tucked into a corner next to it, doing nothing well.

We pulled the porch into the building envelope, insulated it, and gave it two functions. The laundry was rebuilt with an Aquatica 560 mm Studio tub on one wall. Across the room, we built a small minibar: single-bowl sink, a microwave hidden behind a normal-open cupboard door (not lift-up — set low so the kids can reach it themselves), and bench space for a coffee machine. The herringbone mint splashback runs the length of the wall, matching the kitchen so the eye reads both rooms as part of the same family.

Jonna Jeong, our in-house interior designer, drew the layout. Joinery was matched to the kitchen so the two spaces read as one design, even though one is full of laundry and the other is full of breakfast.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE**Every old house has a metre nobody knows what to do with.**

The porch had been wasted for fifty years. Two weeks of carpentry turned it into one of the most-used corners of the home.

CHAPTER 08

Inside the finished home.

A photo-led tour of the rooms.



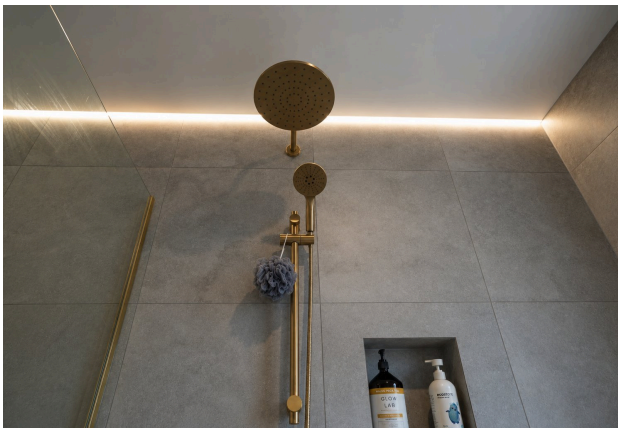
THE ISLAND

Fluted Laminex Demi-round 40 in Pure White stone, with the under-bench LED strip lighting the dining at night.



THE FLOOR DRAIN

A brass-edged square drain set into the Venture Travertine — a small piece of joinery that ties the whole bathroom together.



THE SHOWER SET

SEU brushed gold two-function shower set against Venture Travertine. Brass-trimmed floor transition into the wet area.



THE PANTRY

Soft-close pull-out drawers with blum innotech runners. Oak-veneer rangehood, induction cooktop.

WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT · THE FINISH STANDARD

JOINERY

Melteca Snowdrift Satin + Classic Oak Organic feature panels

BENCHTOPS

Pure White engineered stone, Classic Oak overhang

APPLIANCES

Bosch oven, induction cooktop, dishwasher · Sirius rangehood

BATHROOM TILE

Quantum Venture Travertine Silver, 600×600 matt

KITCHEN SPLASHBACK

Quantum Majorca Mint mosaic, 100×100

TAPWARE

SEU brushed gold throughout · Archant brushed brass handles

CHAPTER 09

What the old house gave us, we kept.



A 1930s bungalow has things you can't design in. The proportions of the doors. The pattern of the timber. The honest weight of solid native wood. None of it gets specified into a modern home from scratch — it has to survive into the modern home from the original one.

The **Rimu doors** were the obvious save. They had been hung in 1930-something, painted over how many times, but the wood underneath was sound. **Wayne**, our professional painter, stripped them back, sanded them, restored the grain, and brought them back to varnish. The same doors that the original family walked through still close behind Maddy and Karl when they go to bed.

The timber floors were the same job at a larger scale. Hardwood, scratched and dulled by decades of tenant feet, was sanded back, stained, and re-coated. The same boards. The same grain. A new finish on top. The new kitchen is modern. The new bathroom is modern. But the doors you walk through and the floors under your feet are the same ones the original owners walked across.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

**Keep what's worth keeping. Restore what's worth restoring.
Build everything else around it.**

A renovation that erases the original character is a knock-down-and-rebuild with extra steps. The point is to make the old house love you back.

CHAPTER 10

How we did it.

Scope, process, and the credentials behind the build.

01

Wall + Beam

Engineered removal of the load-bearing wall between kitchen and old fourth bedroom. New beam concealed in the ceiling.

02

French Doors

Old dining room window replaced with full-width French doors. Threshold aligned to the existing deck.

03

New Kitchen

Melteca Snowdrift + Classic Oak joinery, Pure White stone, fluted island, Bosch appliance suite, Sirius rangehood.

04

New Bathroom

6.48 m² fully-tiled wet room. Venture Travertine, freestanding bath, walk-in shower, SEU brushed gold throughout.

05

Porch Conversion

Old porch enclosed and converted to laundry zone + minibar with hidden microwave. Designed by Jonna Jeong.

06

New Bedroom + Dressing

12.28 m² bedroom carved from existing patio space — flexes as office / guest / future master.

HOW WE WORK · FIVE STEPS, SAME PROCESS EVERY JOB

01	02	03	04	05
BUDGET	PLAN	QS REPORT	CONSENT	BUILD

MADDY & KARL'S VERDICT

"If we did this again, we wouldn't renovate any other way."

YOU'RE COVERED

- Registered Master Builders since 1891
- Licensed Building Practitioners (LBP)
- 10-Year Master Build Guarantee
- 2025 House of the Year Gold + Top 100

KEEP READING · NO SALES PITCH

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Everything you need to plan your own renovation — without a sales call — in one free library on our website.

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