

Welcome to our feature on preserving our heritage. We take a close look at restoration of one of Herne Bay's majestic old homes at 286 Jerovis Road, originally known as Papillon House, and at a celebration of Ponsonby's historic architecture. Glenys Hopkinson reports ...

Majestic old home gets new lease of life

A grand old mansion in Herne Bay from the late 19th century, originally known as Papillon House, is undergoing massive restoration to move into the 21st century.

New owners Anthea Baker-Shreeve and Simon Shreeve, of St Mary's Bay, are restoring the old boarding house at 286 Jerovis Road with meticulous detail to match its original condition.

"Essentially we want to retain the grandeur of it," Anthea Baker-Shreeve told *The Bay News*.

"Lots of recent repairs are not in keeping with its character."

Built almost exclusively of kauri, the 600 sqm two-storey house has six rooms on both the main and upper floors and open plan spaces in the basement.

Nestled in the heart of affluent Herne Bay, it has panoramic views across the harbour and city and long ago would have



Papillon House... grand old villa with good kauri bones.

had trams ending the trip from town and turning on the wide Jerovis Road in front of the house to head back to the CBD.

A huge team of architects, interior designers, engineers, planners, builders, carpenters, plumbers and electricians is working on the restoration job.

Architect Lloyd Macomber, of well-known heritage architectural firm Salmond Reed Architects, of Devonport, says the house dates back to the early 20th century but a lot of it is no longer original. "The challenges are to look at the big picture and achieve an end result that is not too dissimilar from the original."

He says the main internal stairs, fireplace surrounds and mantles are likely to be all kauri and the bay windows are original.

The main two-storey verandahs are original in form but not in materials and were probably reconstructed some 10 years ago with modern plywood floors, pine posts and beams and pine or plywood fretwork and brackets.

"The intention is to



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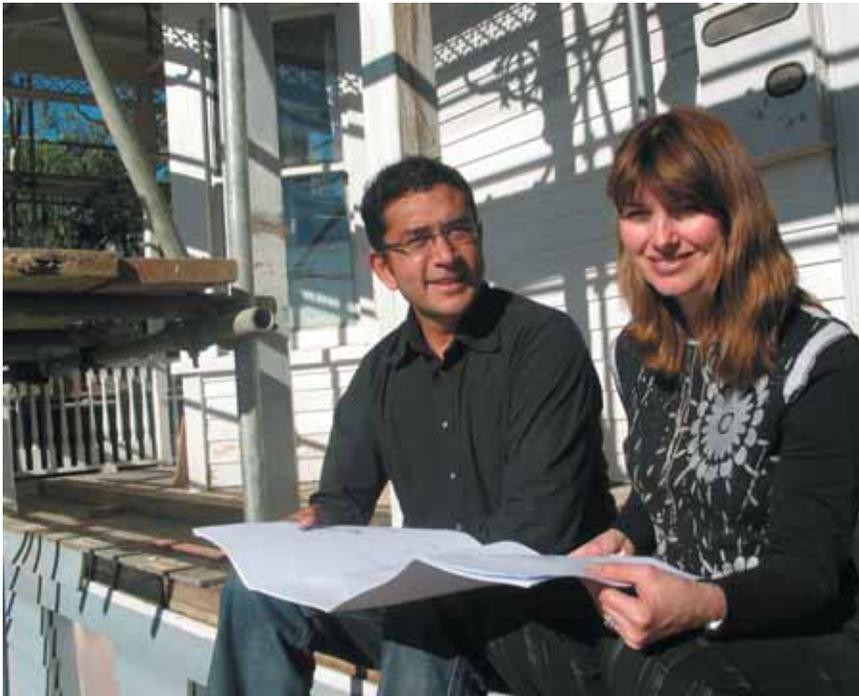
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Complete rejuvenation for Herne Bay villa



Lloyd Macomber and Anthea Baker-Shreeve inspect the plans on the front doorstep and, right, a spectacular kauri staircase.

return the verandah flooring to tongue and groove and to repair rotten or damaged timbers as necessary.

“Non-original or inappropriately-styled windows and doors are to be replaced with joinery in keeping with the original.”

Working closely with the architects is Ash Hare, owner of Insite Design & Development, of Devonport, who will have seven or eight builders full-time on the job. He has been in the industry for 24 years and has specialised in top-end renovation and additions for the past five years.

“Most older homes pose challenges because they have not been maintained and lots of areas need a lot of attention, such as getting windows working, removing rot and preventing water from entering the building. “Because it is about 100 years old nothing is square or plumb anymore.”

He says not much structural work is needed on the ground and first floors but some previous work carried out underneath in the basement needs to be pulled out.

He says flair and passion are needed for recreating early structures. “A good eye and sympathy for old homes is quite important to bring it back to a high standard but still retain its original feel and flavour.”

His site manager, Glenn Lucas, retains many skills lost to the industry, such as making balustrades or handrails. “He is a fastidious stickler and will be great for the young guys because these skills are a disappearing art,” he says. “This house is a grand old villa with good bones and is going to be superb when it is finished.”

Painter Peter Thomas, owner of the 40-year old company Stratton & Thomas Decorators, says the 100-year-old home

has had quite a number of coats of paint in its lifetime, possibly 15, so there is a big build-up of old paint.

“It needs a fair bit of preparatory work. We’ll be washing it down, sanding, priming and smoothing down the edges. We are not trying to bring it back to look like new but rather to leave it with an aged look.”

He is a Resene man. “I think Resene is good quality paint.” Colour schemes on the exterior are white wan for windows, door frames, verandah posts, balustrades, lace-work and the picket fence and grey flotsam for the weatherboards. Feature colours will be added later to the decks and doors.

“It is nice to work on older properties,” he says. “You feel you have achieved something by restoring them and making them look bright and breezy again.”

~ P8

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Experts apply magic touch with passion

~ P7

Two designers are restoring the interior of Papillon House in Herne Bay with some passion.

Interior designers, owner Anthea Baker-Shreeve and Ange Melville, owner of ajm Interior Design in Newton for eight years and experienced nationally and internationally, aim "to be true to the building."

"We want to preserve its historic characteristics, high ceilings, sash windows and timber flooring while creating something functional for today," says Ms Melville. "We would like to design the interior in classic contemporary style, acknowledging what it is but also concerned with present-day function. The furniture will reflect a more contemporary setting with the historic architectural features as a backdrop.

"We love the sense of space, the drama of the windows and the high ceilings. But we want to warm it up, make it warm and cosy."

Main floor timber floors will be polished and upper floors carpeted. They hope to re-use existing chandeliers.



Lloyd Macomber inspects an elaborate fireplace.

Herne Bay land lots snapped up in 1898

Papillon House at 286 Jerois Road was built on two of a large number of Herne Bay lots sold by prominent pioneer William Mason, a nurseryman, in the 1890s.

Marcella Helena Gulliver, wife of valuer William Gulliver, bought lots seven and eight, a large block of two roods and 25 and six-tenths perches more or less, stretching from Jerois Road to Cox's Bridge Road, now Westend Road, on November 12, 1898.

According to Auckland City Archives records, the wooden house was named Papillon House, French for butterfly, and had a rateable value of £40.

Other early neighbours were John Edward Owen who bought lot 1 in Jerois Road, Rachel Maria Hutchison, lots 5 and

6, Elizabeth McKinlay Baxter lot 9, John Donaldson 10, William Ernest Hough lots 12 and 13 and Rachael Maria Green lot 14.

By 1912, records describe Marcella Gulliver, owner and occupier, as a widow. The government valuation was £712 and the rateable value was £50.

On December 9, 1925 she requested permission to convert the premises into four flats, a two-bedroom and one-bedroom flat

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Papillon used to be a boarding house



Papillon House... on the market in 1985.

on the ground floor and two two-bedroom flats upstairs. The work was carried out in March 1926 for £714, quite a lot of money in those days. Rents ranged from 15 shillings a week to 30 shillings.

She occupied one flat and may have died about 1935-36 when the owner was listed as executor of her estate, Howard Nelson Johnston, of NZ Insurance Company.

In 1944 the house was bought by Samuel Jowett, a wool buyer, for £2890.

Pastels popular

Pastels in pink, lilac, coral, teal and blue are popular colours for your next project, says Deborah Freeman, owner of Ponsonby Resene Colorshop on Ponsonby Road.

"Energetic spring is just around the corner and now is the time to think about colours for your next painting project.

"Bitter-sweet chocolate pushes as the dark neutral of choice and intense black is still holding its own. Whatever the season, there is a colour to emphasise your unique personality.

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Trams spark boom in Herne Bay



Trams in Jervois Road... the catalyst for opening up Herne Bay.

Herne Bay at the turn of the 20th century was a remote outer suburb of Auckland and consequently the preserve of the affluent middle-class. They owned large homes and gardens, like 286 Jervois Road, and had access to private transport or could afford expensive public transport, ferries or horse-drawn trams.

High-profile early families were the Masons of the popular Mason's Strawberry Gardens and the Fields and Morrows who lived in homesteads overlooking Cox's Bay. The Kemps, owners of Kemps Gardens on the Home Bay foreshore, modelled on London's famous Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, attracted many patrons who came from the city by boat.

A saying goes: "A freehand was given, drinks were sold, music was provided and the least said the further the better."

Jervois Road was known as Ponsonby Road until the mid-1890s.

Everything changed in 1902 when electric trams rolled out from the tramway depot, a large barn and landmark in Herne Bay on Jervois Road between Wallace and Salisbury Streets. The depot was demolished in the mid-1930s.

The first electric trams were 40ft long,

carried 100 passengers and were efficient and cheap, at a penny a section.

They were the catalyst for development of Herne Bay, which was already popular because of Shelly and Curran beaches and parkland and band rotunda at Pt Erin.

West End Lawn Tennis Club opened in 1898, churches and schools were built along with The Leys Institute in 1902 for cultural, social and sports clubs.

Victorian and Edwardian homes, shops and businesses opened up along the Jervois Road tram route to create a self-contained suburb with the added advantage of cheap transport to town for workers.

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