

# On the rise

Rather than leave their inner-city neighbourhood, a sustainably minded couple with young children decided to build upwards and outwards



**LIVING AREA** Benjamin and Skye opted for bright white walls, light timbers and polished concrete. Against this backdrop is a curated selection of pieces from around the world. Muuto 'Outline' sofa in Cognac leather and Eames rocker, Living Edge. Coffee table, Normann Copenhagen. Floor lamp, Hay for Ikea. Egyptian rug in Aegean, Armadillo.  
**KITCHEN** (opposite) Nerd stools by Muuto harmonise with the custom Carrara marble island. Laurent O7 suspension lights, Lambert & Fils. Drift jute and wool rug, Armadillo.

## cheat sheet

**Who lives here** Skye Healey Ward, head of marketing at Armadillo; her partner Benjamin, who works in the music industry; their children: Sunday, seven, and Felix, four, plus cat Reuben.

**Style of home** A compact 'two-up, two-down' terrace built in the 1880s.

**🕒** Skye and Benjamin began planning the renovation in 2014, but didn't start to build until early 2017. The family moved in at the end of 2017.

**💰** It cost about \$650,000 for the renovation and interior fit-out.

HAIR & MAKE-UP: MICHELLE COX USING HOURGLASS COSMETICS (MECCA COSMETICA) AND SACHAJUAN

**KITCHEN** The couple chose environmentally friendly Eco-Core building materials for the cabinetry. Their main joinery product, White Birch Multiply, is a multi-layered panel manufactured from plantation-grown birch logs. **DINING AREA** (opposite) Simple but perfect pieces of furniture, including a dining table from e15, Eames 'DCM' chairs and a custom bench, complement the blackbutt floorboards and prevent the skinny space from feeling crowded. The Warraburnburn sculpture standing against the wall is from Maningrida (West Arnhem Land) and was sourced through Aboriginal Contemporary.



**I**n 2013, when marketing guru Skye Healey Ward and her partner Benjamin decided to start a family, they considered selling their diminutive terrace in Sydney's historic Redfern and moving into more spacious premises away from the inner city. But the pair soon concluded that such a move would seriously cramp their style.

"So much of our life was about socialising and going out to restaurants, seeing plays and gigs," says Skye. "Being in Redfern gave us easy access to all that. We didn't want to give up the lifestyle – and wanted our children to experience it, too. Also, we are quite serious about our environmental impact. We try to walk or cycle instead of driving, and can do that in Redfern." What's more, the street they lived on seemed to be populated almost exclusively by creative-industry professionals around their age. "We had found our spot," she points out.

However, the couple's 19th-century terrace was far too small for a family of four. The two-storey house, on a skinny 116-square-metre block, had just two small bedrooms and no upstairs bathroom. "It was also fairly dilapidated," says Skye. "The previous owners had renovated in the Nineties, but only superficially. It was definitely ready to be revived."

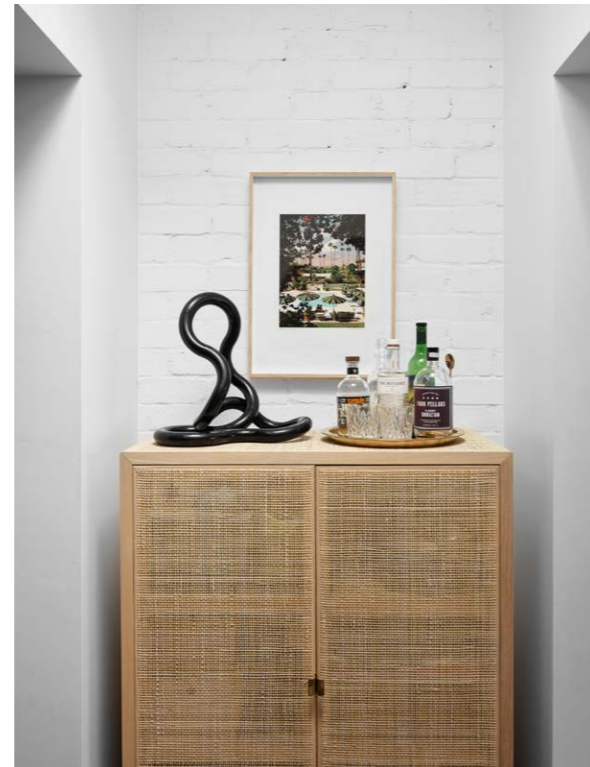
In late 2013 the couple welcomed their first child, Sunday, and realised time was of the essence. They called an architect friend, Hannah Tribe of Tribe Studios, and began plotting an ambitious renovation that would add a third storey and enlarge both the ground and first floors. Their priorities were clear. "It was about creating a robust, future-proof family home," says Skye,

"one that allowed us to remain on a small block in the heart of the city but gave us enough living space for the kids to grow."

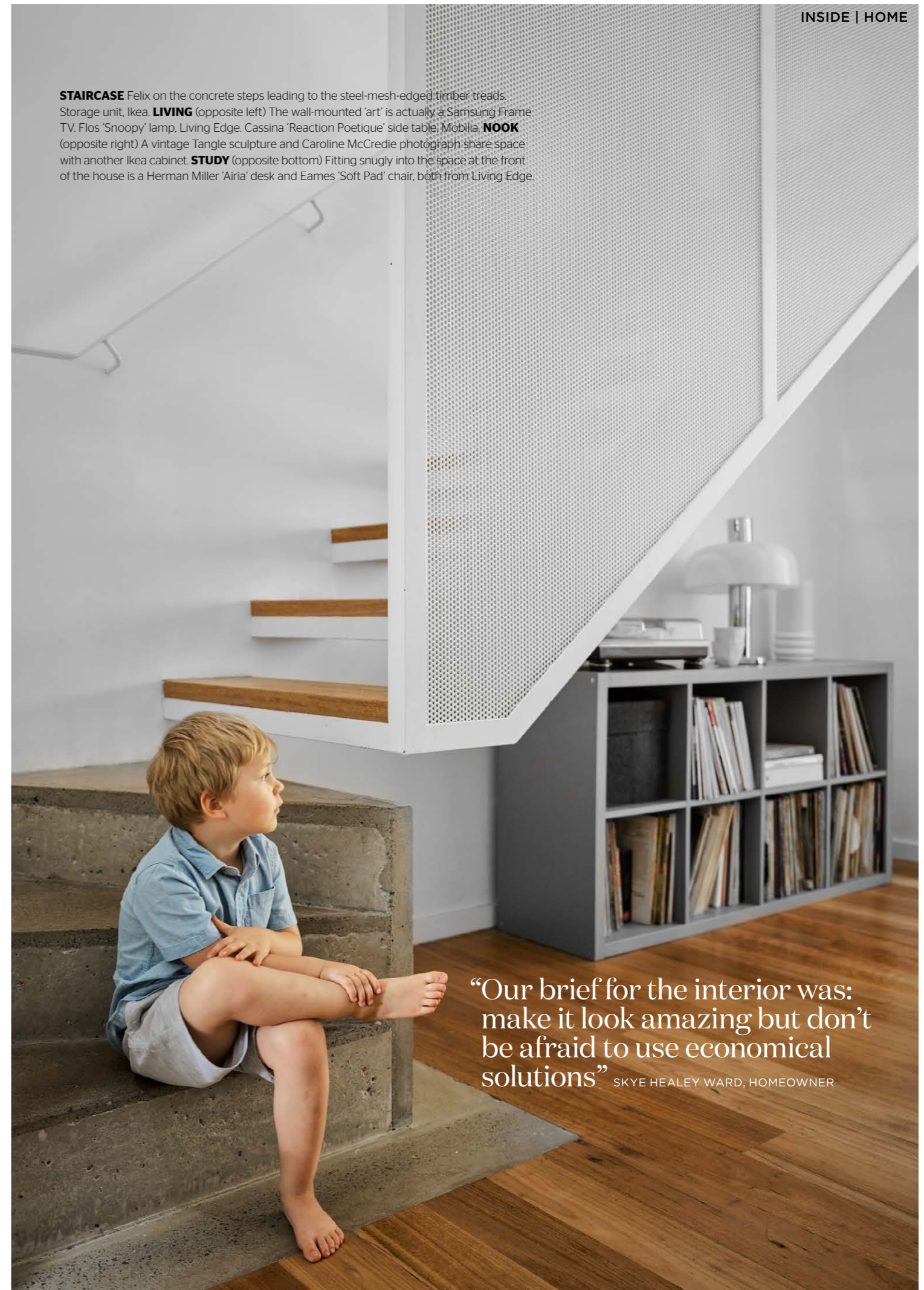
The couple happily put their trust in Hannah, who specialises in residential conversion projects. "We were very confident about working with her because we'd already spent a lot of time in spaces she had created, including her own house," says Skye. "She has a wonderful appreciation of detail and natural light, as well as an understanding of the functional requirements of a family home."

On the ground floor, Hannah suggested replacing the existing skinny kitchen and bathroom with an open-plan kitchen and living area that spanned the entire width of the block. Above this kitchen/living space, a new bedroom would be added, allowing one of the original bedrooms on the first floor to become a bathroom. The new third storey would consist of the main bedroom and ensuite.

With much of their total budget now assigned to demolition and construction, Skye and Benjamin probed Hannah for advice about cost-effective interior design. "Working with an architect gave us what felt like a cheat sheet in that regard," says Skye. "Our brief for the interior was: make it look amazing, but don't be afraid to use economical design solutions." They thought Hannah's suggestions were pretty ingenious. "In the kitchen, for example, she suggested not using handles on the cupboards and drawers. Instead, there are fingerholes to open them. This is totally in keeping with the aesthetic of the house and was a significant cost saving."



**STAIRCASE** Felix on the concrete steps leading to the steel-mesh-edged timber treads. Storage unit, Ikea. **LIVING** (opposite left) The wall-mounted 'art' is actually a Samsung Frame TV. Flos 'Snoopy' lamp, Living Edge. Cassina 'Reaction Poetique' side table, Mobilia. **NOOK** (opposite right) A vintage Tangle sculpture and Caroline McCredie photograph share space with another Ikea cabinet. **STUDY** (opposite bottom) Fitting snugly into the space at the front of the house is a Herman Miller 'Airia' desk and Eames 'Soft Pad' chair, both from Living Edge.




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The couple had another advantage when it came to designing and furnishing the interior: Skye works for luxury-rug company Armadillo, and previously held roles at furniture emporiums Space, Poliform and Living Edge. Drawing on that knowledge, she collaborated with Tribe Studio to devise a scheme aligned with Japanese and Scandinavian aesthetics.

They quickly settled on a polished cement floor slab for the downstairs extension. “It looks amazing, but is also very robust,” says Skye. “That floor can accommodate a group of 10 kids and 10 adults, then be wiped down and look as good as new.” Elsewhere, they replaced floorboards and carpet with deep-blond blackbutt boards and a variety of Fair Trade rugs from Armadillo.

Throughout the home, neutral tones and wood grains promote a sense of calm, while marble in the kitchen and bathrooms adds glamour. Pink accents at the entrance and in the main bathroom are a playful touch. “The pink tiles work like rose-coloured glasses,” says Skye, “because you look younger and firmer in pink light! And we let Sunday choose the colour of the front door, which was a lot of fun and involved many paint samples.”

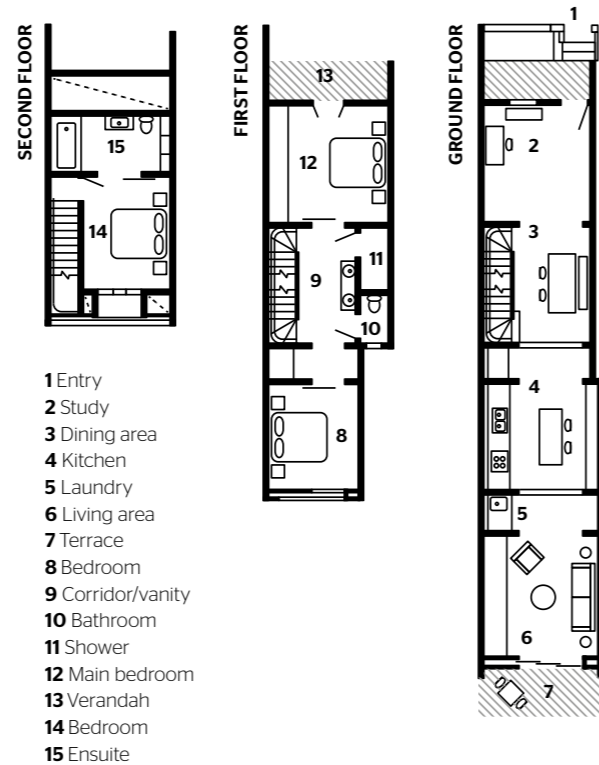
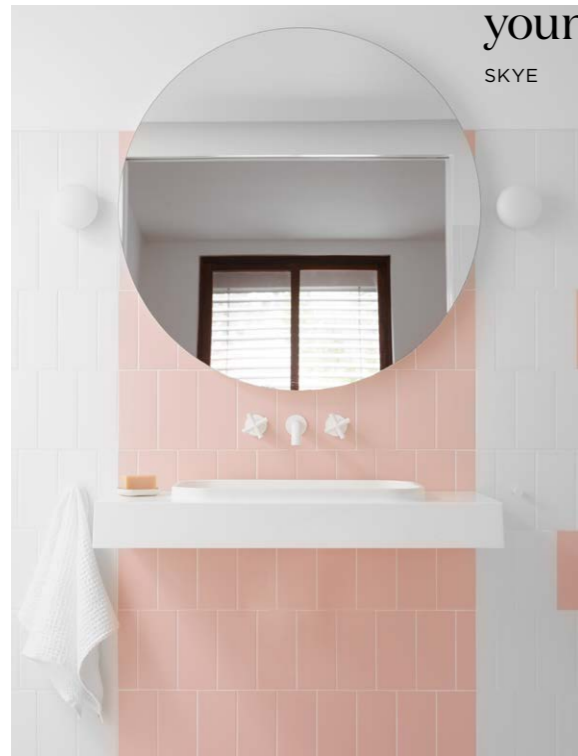
When the work was complete, Skye and Benjamin returned to Redfern with Sunday and newborn Felix in tow, thrilled to discover many of their neighbours had kids now, too. “Together, we’ve created this network of young Redfern families,” she says. “On our street alone, there are eight children around the same age. You literally just plop your child out the front door and one of the local parents will take them to school for you!” 

Tribe Studio Architects is at [tribestudio.com.au](http://tribestudio.com.au) or [@tribestudio](https://www.instagram.com/tribestudio)



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SKYE



**MAIN BEDROOM** Next to the Icon By Design bed is a Ypperlig side table by Hay for Ikea. Caravaggio wall lamp, Fritz Hansen. Andorra rug, Armadillo. **BATHROOM** (opposite left) This double-basin vanity is in the corridor on the first floor, just outside the shower zone. Like the island bench in the kitchen, it's Carrara marble with White Birch Multiply from Eco-Core. **ENSUITE** (opposite right and bottom) At the top of the house is this cute pink and white bathroom. System Interni tiles in Rosa (pink) and Ghiaccio (white), Ceramica Vogue.

LESSONS LEARNT

“Marble damages easily but it’s still worth using”  
SKYE HEALEY WARD, HOMEOWNER

“If you are going to use marble in the kitchen, say goodbye to a ‘perfect’ aesthetic. Marble gets scratched, it gets stained, and lemon juice will mark it. But that’s part of the inherent beauty of a natural material such as marble: you leave your imprints on it.”





**HALLWAY** (left) Locating the vanity in the hallway allows one family member to shower while the others use the basins and mirrors. "Hannah had so many brilliant ideas to save space without making the floor plan feel like a game of Tetris," says Skye. **GARDEN** (opposite) Endicott crazy paving from Eco Outdoor and a Volley table setting from Tait give the petite backyard a European feel.



**GREAT FINDS**

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE** Eklant canisters, \$6.99 each, Ikea. Linen queen flat sheet in Dove Grey, \$195, In Bed. Ficus Elastica rubber plant in Ecopot, \$155, Natures Colours. Crosley 'Cruiser' deluxe turntable in Mint, \$159, Rokit. Egyptian rug in Thyme (2.4m x 3m), \$4200, Armadillo. *Abbey Road* album, \$64.95, and *Heroes* album, \$42.99, JB Hi-Fi. FS Objects large standing bowl in Sage, \$160, In Bed. Flos 'Snoopy' table lamp, from \$1880, Euroluce. Caledonia rattan sideboard, \$999, Brosa. Muuto 'Outline' three-seater leather sofa in Cognac, \$9795, Living Edge. Inax tiles in Thermo Milky, POA, Artedomus. Infiniti Cross Assembly taps in White, \$239, and wall-mounted spout, \$64, ABI Interiors. Eames 'Wire' chair with Mode Blush Bikini fabric, \$2230, Living Edge.

ADDITIONAL PRODUCT SOURCING: KATE HASSETT



**GREEN ASPECTS**

- + Recycled materials** Skye and Benjamin sourced salvaged timber floorboards and re-used all the bricks from the demolished sections of the house.
- + Climate control** The architect incorporated passive heating/cooling principles, cross-ventilation and operable skylights.
- + Green products** Skye selected low-VOC paints and installed solar panels during the build.