

Heritage cottage garden honours its roots

By Julia Levitt

A charming cottage in Sydney's coastal suburb of Randwick, underwent the renaissance it deserved after Hugh Main from Spirit Level was engaged to revive the front garden. Nestled among a row of sandstone cottages not far from the beach, the property is heritage listed, dating back to the 1800's.



The original sandstone path makes for a pleasant and relaxing stroll through the garden to the front porch

Taking inspiration from the materials and with a nod to its heritage, Hugh used only original sandstone resulting in a seamless transition. It's almost impossible to decipher where the original pauses and the renovation carries on. A restrained material palette allowed the sandstone its rightful hero moment, while not competing with the home's original facade. When asked what the highlights of designing this garden were, Hugh replied "This was a really fun project for a great client who really enjoyed being part of the design process and has taken on the care of the garden."

Whilst integration of materials was important, a subtle plant palette was also part of the brief. "The plant selection was



Contrasting foliage with helichrysum, euphorbia, salvia and frangipani



Hugh Main created garden beds to soften the sandstone upon entry, whilst still maintaining a sense of arrival

to create harmony, not to stand out - it's a blurry palette of silver, green, white and a little bit of purple" advised Hugh.

The existing Bangalow Palm and introduced Frangipani anchor the garden, providing shade, height and fragrance. Euphorbia, lavender & helichrysum fill the space with contrasting hues of green and foliage, while salvias provide a splash of colour. Dichondra innocently wanders its way through the garden, a welcome substitute for lawn and erigeron follows closely behind, spilling over the path to greet you. All carefully chosen to suit the harsh coastal conditions.

With all jobs come challenges - "There was a shady corner that was a bit challenging to get right, so we had a couple of goes at planting that out, but



A dry stack bench is tucked away neatly in the garden. Shaded by the frangipani, it makes for an irresistible resting seat in the garden

this garden settled in very quickly. By growing plants that love a sandy soil, we haven't had any problems" said Hugh.

Through careful consideration, this garden has honoured its roots and restored the sandstone cottage to its former character and charm.

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Dichondra is an excellent substitute for lawn in a small area



The soft colours compliment and harmonize with the sandstone walls



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