



# Transparent agenda

Light, space and green outlooks are optimised in this renovation, which opened up both floors of a 1970s townhouse

**Often with home renovations it is as much about what is taken out as what is introduced.** Removing walls, for example, can transform an interior aesthetic in several ways.

When architect-designer Evelyn McNamara was asked to renovate this 1970s townhouse, the interiors were tired and dated. Small, boxy rooms interrupted the flow and volume of the downstairs level, while the upstairs also lacked connection, both between rooms and also with the public spaces downstairs, says McNamara.

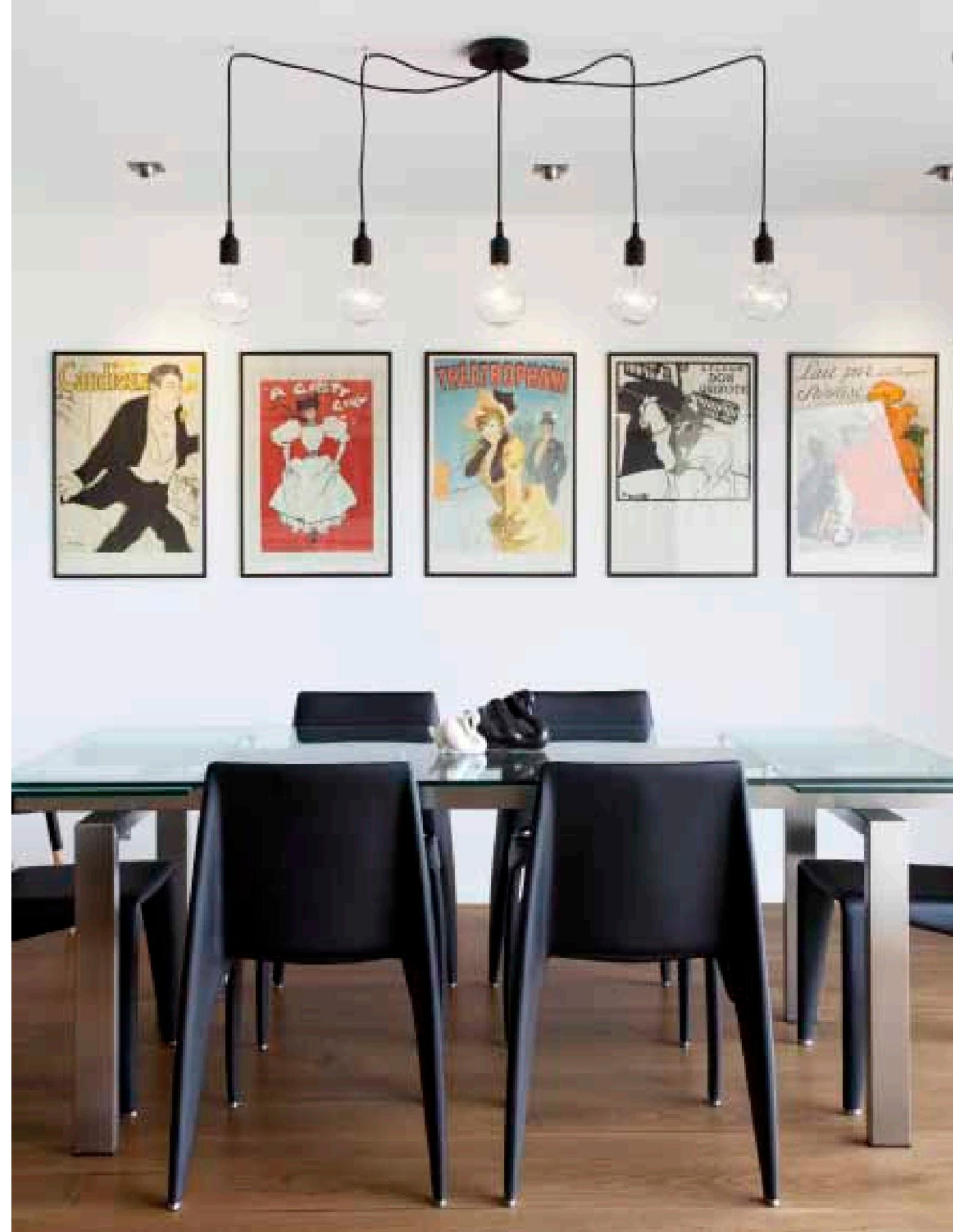
“We stripped out the apartment, removing kitchen and bathroom walls and inserting steel



Before

*Facing page and above: Stripped right back, wiring and all, this reinvented townhouse by architect-designer Evelyn McNamara exudes a clean, free-flowing ambience. A glass bannister optimises light and allows visual connection between floors*

*Left: Fully carpeted – even in the kitchen – the townhouse had good bones which were concealed by needless walls and poor space planning.*



**Above and facing page:** The island is in line with the dining table, and has barstools at one end – set to the side they would have interrupted the dynamic flow. Pendant lights are hung on the same axis, but different lamps in different areas bring a sense of separation. The home’s white walls provide an ideal backdrop for the owners’ vibrant art collection.

**Right:** Slider doors were replaced with frameless, glass stacker doors.

structural support beams in their place, with the load now borne mainly from the basement up for a stronger, more efficient structure.”

The reinvented, open-plan room is painted a uniform white, with new oak floors stained in a tone that suggests they might be original. The crisp, clean walls are contrasted by black island cabinetry in the new, modern corner kitchen and on a custom media cabinet in the living area. Island and dining table are set in line, leading the eye down the large room’s elongated form.

“One of the owners has spent some time in the United States and she requested a loft-like



**Architect, interior and kitchen**

**designer:** Evelyn McNamara  
NZRAB, ANZIA, Mike Roulston,  
Evelyn McNamara Architecture  
(Auckland)

**Landscape designer:** Trish Bartleet

**Builder:** Glenbuild

**Kitchen manufacturer:** Brian Harris

**Blinds:** Window Treatments

**Doors and windows:** Pacific Suite,  
Fletcher Aluminium

**Window and door hardware:**

Malta Hardware, Fletcher Aluminium

**Wall and floor tiles:** Italian Tiles

**Flooring:** Just Hardwood Floors

**Wallcoverings:** Gib wall linings

**Paints:** Resene Alabaster

**Lighting:** Tim Webber Design,  
Douglas and Bec, Simon James

**Furniture:** Matisse table,  
Tim Webber Design

**Home automation:** BM Electrical

**Outdoor furniture:**

Four Seasons Outdoor Living

**Kitchen cabinetry:** ????????????

**Benchtops:** PSP Stonecraft

**Splashback:** Backpainted glass

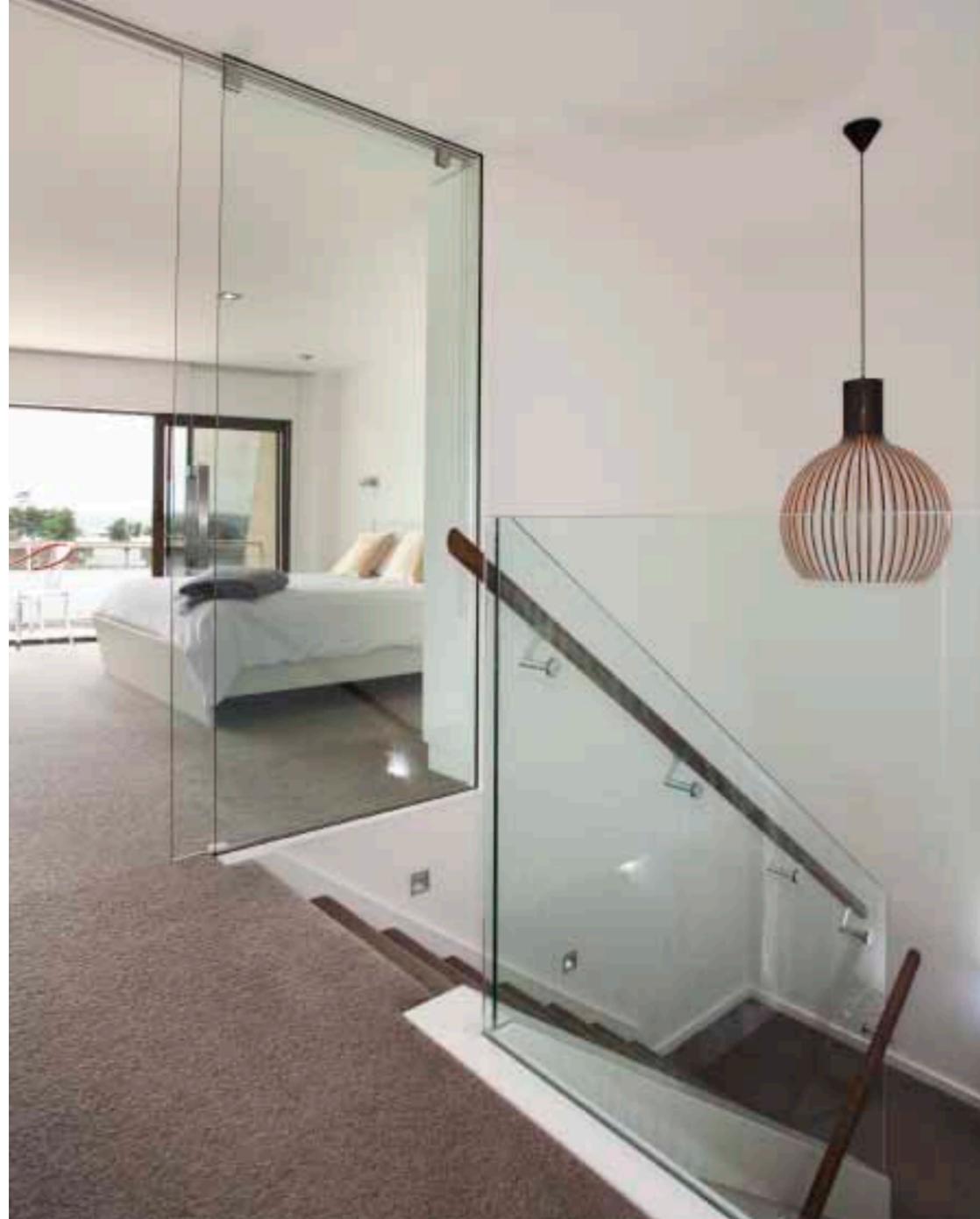
**Oven, cooktop, ventilation,**

**microwave, refrigeration,**

**dishwasher:** Fisher & Paykel

**Bathroom vanity:** ??? Brian Harris

**Taps:** Metrix, Duravit



**Above:** The master ensuite has been transformed as part of the project.

**Above right:** Glass balustrading and floor-to-ceiling glazed doors give a sense of light and space. A concealed white drape behind the glass wall can be drawn across for privacy.

**Right:** Two bedrooms were merged to create the airy new master suite.

**Story by Charles Moxham**  
**Photography by Jamie Cobel**

sense of connection to the upper floor – much like a mezzanine,” says McNamara. “To further optimise sightlines right across the downstairs volume and at the same time improve the links to the upstairs, we removed the old bannister, and designed a new, frameless glass version. The transparent guard allows peeks up to the bedroom floor and floods natural light down the previously dark, disconnected stairwell.”

Upstairs, the second bedroom now has a new door connecting it directly to the main bathroom, while two other spaces were combined to create a generous master suite. A glass wall now



fronts the master bedroom, further facilitating light penetration down the reinvented stairway.

“This design helps bring the floors together, one owner can call to another between floors, bringing an intimacy to the space.”

The townhouse looks onto a park and the architect made the most of this feature. To this end, mirror-fronted cabinetry curves round much of the master bedroom, reflecting the greenery below.

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[trendsideas.com/nz2905p000](https://trendsideas.com/nz2905p000)



**Above:** The floors upstairs are fully carpeted for a warmer, more intimate feel. Built-in cabinets are a generous width to allow for a small study niche in the corner of the bedroom. Wall-height mirrors bounce light through the space.

**Left:** While the existing external balustrades had to remain, the architect optimised the landscaping and views. Tiled surfaces on the balconies were chosen for their safe, all-weather properties.