

A renovation on a grand scale: 222 Timor

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Luke and Nat Taylor, with their children Penny, 2, and Lewis, 4, in the yard of 222 Timor St home that they spent three years restoring to life, including this new sandstone wall built from century old blocks on the property.

By Carol Altmann

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] I [dropcap]t was a project of *Grand Designs* proportions – without the cheerful reality checks of host Kevin McLeod – but **Luke** and **Nat Taylor** have finished their transformation of a derelict Warrnambool property with stunning results.

Bluestone has followed the Taylor's progress [since they first bought the property](#) at 220-222 Timor St in 2012 and it has

been with more than a detached interest.

[box][Bluestone subscribers: click here for full set of photos.](#)[/box]

The 1850s building (the earliest surviving commercial building in the CBD) was once owned by Bill and Mildred Goodall, my grandparents, and sold to the Taylors on behalf of my mother, Jean.



Where it began: the 1850s building opposite Swinton's supermarket in Warrnambool had suffered from neglect before being bought by the Taylors in 2012.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] F
[/dropcap]or reasons that are too complex and probably too personal to explain here, the two-storey, heritage-listed building was in extremely poor condition and had been that way for many years.

Yet while the interior was a calamity, the sandstone structure

was solid and the 165-year-old building opposite Swinton's supermarket had what is often described as "good bones".



The richness of its history was also not in dispute and very little of the original structure had changed, it just needed the right people to give it a new life.

Enter the Taylors.



The rear of the property as it looked when work began. The non-heritage listed outbuildings were removed and

much of their materials reused in the home. Image supplied.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] L
[/dropcap]uke and Nat set about restoring the front of the building first, to engage a tenant (now Biba hairdressing), generate some income, and revive the shabby shopfront to its former and original glory, right down to what Heritage Victoria identified as its original paint scheme. (You [can read about the first part of the restoration here](#).)

The second chapter involved demolishing all of the non-heritage listed outbuildings (although salvaging and reusing a lot of the materials) and extending the main building to accommodate side-by-side apartments designed by local architect **Mathew Morse**: one for the Taylors, and one as short-term accommodation.

But those two paragraphs I have just written don't go even close to capturing the sheer enormity and physicality of achieving this dream.



Nobody escaped the hard work, including Nat Taylor who is seen here helping to lay concrete. Image: Supplied.

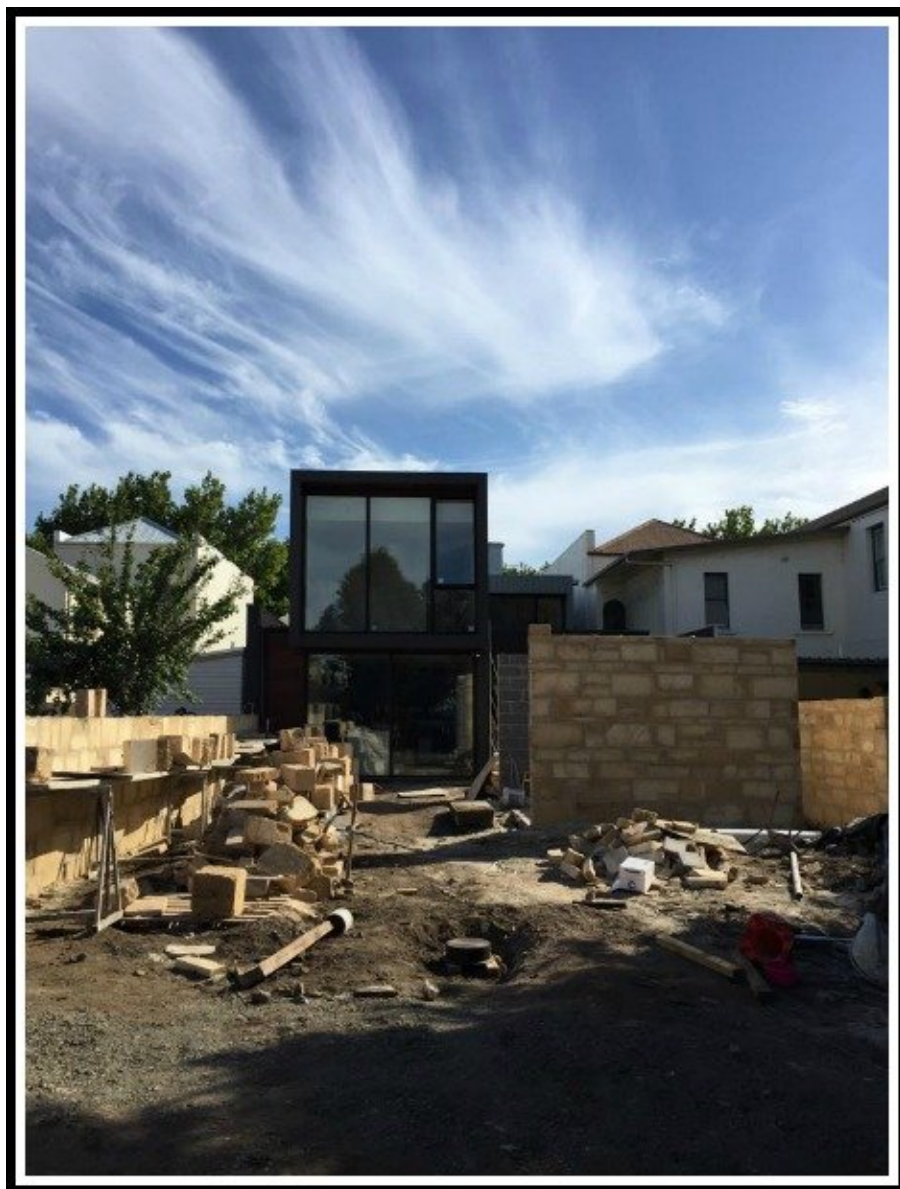
[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] I [/dropcap]t took a full three years and Luke, a lawyer by profession but I suspect a tradie at heart, spent countless hours working alongside the dozen or so professional tradies and multiple friends and family members who came and went as the project slowly progressed.

"I must admit, there were times that I cried from sheer exhaustion," Luke says.

"I pushed myself to the limit both physically and personally and I found out the limits of my capacity," he adds, and this is from a guy who competes in triathlons and Sufferfest.

There were barrow loads of debris to remove, barrow loads of

cement to pour, hundreds of nails to be pulled, huge sandstone blocks to be dismantled and stacked, floorboards to be removed, stacked and sanded ... and on, and on and on it went – and that was before the internal fit out began.



The new home designed by architect Mathew Morse starts to take shape at the rear of 222 Timor St. Image: Supplied.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] T
[/dropcap]he end result, however, is breathtaking and surely worthy of an architectural award in the future.

What was once a dark and damp space has been opened up to the light, with an open-plan interior and huge windows overlooking

the back yard.

Massive sandstone blocks have been recycled and repointed into sturdy fences ([bricklayer Barry Knowles](#), take a bow), floorboards have been refurbished, bits of tin and old paintwork left exposed, and even scraps of newspaper stuck to the original walls.

“We really love that it is a combination of the old and the new, that was very important to us,” Nat says.

The couple and their children finally moved into their new home in the week before Christmas.

When the project began, Nat and Luke had a two-year-old son, Lewis, and a baby on the way: Lewis is now 4 and Penny is two.



Back at the beginning: the Taylors (Nat is pregnant with Penny) in 2013 shortly after the renovations began. Image: Bluestone Magazine.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] E
[/dropcap]ach of them, in their own way, has been involved in

the restoration and renovation, although Lewis, for one, is glad the project is over.

“When we asked him what he wanted for Christmas, he said ‘for us all to be together’, because I had spent so, so many weekends and late nights down here,” Luke says.

There were more tears – this time of joy – when the family spent their first night in their new home, knowing the job was done.

It is a redundant question, but I still ask it: “knowing what you know now, would you have still taken it on?”

“Yes” they both nod.

“But I couldn’t do another one,” Luke adds with his crooked smile, and Nat, I have to say, looks relieved.

[box]In case you missed it, [catch up on our story](#) about the little shoe found under the floorboards during the renovation and how it led to a Warrnambool war hero.[/box]



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