



## KITCHENS IN FOCUS

## Westmere REFURBISHMENT by CAAHT Studio Architects

• AUCKLAND •

CAAHT Studio Architects rework the kitchen of an iconic, Felicity Wallace and Stephen Rendell-designed Westmere house.

Words by [Sam Eichblatt](#)  
Photography by [Patrick Reynolds](#)

Ten years ago, this Felicity Wallace and Stephen Rendell-designed house was elected Home of the Year – and it's not hard to see why. The home has barely dated and remains a Westmere icon, standing out among the bungalows and villas. However, the owners' needs have changed since then, and they wanted to freshen up the kitchen, as well as adding storage.

Enter CAAHT Studio Architects, a young practice that includes Anna Tong, who had worked with both Wallace and Rendell for a number of years and understood their sensibilities.

"We didn't look at the kitchen in isolation," she says. "It's an open-plan kitchen and living/dining area. The main idea was to get a much more open arrangement." In the old kitchen, the central island was "a big purple number" and included a plinth that obscured the view as people came up to the living level, which is upstairs. Tong put in a straight, clean island with a stainless steel bench and white lacquered oak fronts to the drawers. The side facing the dining area now has extra shelving, and a hot water cylinder formerly kept in a kitchen cupboard was relocated to add extra storage.

Given the house has such a distinctive look already, Tong wanted to keep the cabinetry neutral. She simplified it and replaced it with solid oak. Otherwise, she says, "We drew on the material palette that was there already. The timber boards, exposed concrete block and exposed timber cladding were there originally, so we wanted to draw on that."

A very deep charcoal lacquer was used in the recessed areas, like the toe kick and the back panels of the exposed shelves. The recessive background allows the owners to display their ceramics and art. "The result is quite low key," says Tong. "They didn't want an ostentatious project, so although the house is iconic it's also quite modest and relaxed." 

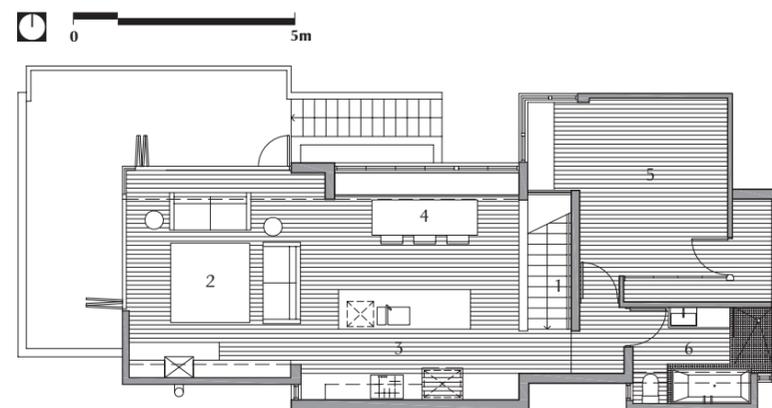
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01 The new kitchen designed by CAAHT Studio Architects sits within a Felicity Wallace and Stephen Rendell-designed Westmere icon.

02 The kitchen opens up the space to create a brighter and lighter open living arrangement.

03 The refurbishment draws on the existing material and colour palette.



**Kitchen level floor plan**

- 1 Entry from below
- 2 Living
- 3 Kitchen (renovated)
- 4 Dining
- 5 Bedroom
- 6 Bathroom (renovated)

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#### Architect

#### CAAHT Studio Architects

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#### Practice profile

CAAHT Studio Architects is a young and energetic practice focused on providing creative solutions tailored to clients' needs across residential and small commercial projects.

#### Project team

Anna Tong, Chris Holmes

#### Builder

Coldicutt Builders

#### Products

**Internal walls:** Gib®; timber boards; blockwork; Aalto paint

**Flooring:** exposed timber (existing floor refinished)

**Kitchen fittings:** Mercer Grande & Demi Quattro stainless steel sink; chrome tapware, client supplied; stainless steel benchtop; Katalog hardware; Ikea lighting; Lighting Direct

**Joinery:** Lacquer-finish MDF; oak

**Appliances:** Electrolux hob and fridge; Smeg rangehood; Westinghouse oven (existing); Asko dishwasher (existing)

**Furniture:** Ash Dining Table, Simon James Design; Tivoli chairs

#### Time schedule

**Design and planning:** 4 months

**Construction:** 2 months