

## EPSOM

# Magic beyond the gate

A peek through the gate was all it took for one family to snap up this property, writes **Penny Lewis**

**L**auren James “power-shopped” for a house 12 years ago. She and her family were living in Marsden Ave, Balmoral, just outside the Auckland Grammar catchment. But with their hearts set on finding a family home in-zone for sons Michael and Cale, they had to move.

Lauren looked at dozens of houses, filtering ones she thought weren’t a good fit for her, husband Connan, the boys and daughter Courtenay. Then an ad in the *Herald* alerted them to 28 Maungawhau Rd, a character Arts & Crafts bungalow in double grammar zone, tucked away in a quiet street a stone’s throw from Newmarket.

The ad showed the first glimpse of the property from Maungawhau Rd, set behind a gate with an arbour.

“The entrance looked like a slightly magical, Hobbiton shot,” says Connan, who works in advertising.

Once inside, they were smitten.

“We saw it and were stuffed. We had to have it,” he says.

Designed by Canadian architect Sholto Smith, the house was built in 1923 for the Bennett family. According to associate professor Linda Tyler from the University of Auckland, Smith (1881-1936) arrived in New Zealand in 1920.

“In Auckland, his signature domestic style was a simplified form of the English Arts & Crafts house – a hunting lodge for the suburbs,” says Tyler.

The Jameses understand they are the fourth or fifth owners of the house, which is known as Camborne, according to the name painted over its threshold. Why it’s called Camborne is a mystery, but its budget is all on record. Throughout the house there are framed receipts for the construction and landscaping, which will remain with the property.

“They’re part of the provenance of the home,” says Lauren.

Fortunately, all of the owners so far have retained and maintained the features that make this home so special. Connan points to the original light fittings and William Morris wallpaper and a *Downton Abbey*-style bell.

The Jameses rejuvenated timber panelling, beams and built-in furniture soon after moving in. They also commissioned the Auckland Art Gallery to restore a painting by a student of Goldie’s, a Miss Copeland, on a panel above the fireplace in the dining room. According to the receipts, Miss Copeland was paid £10 for the work in 1923.

As beautifully intact as this home’s character is, it’s also functioned extremely well as a home for extended family. Previous owners configured a lower level to include a bedroom, rumpus room, bathroom and utility area.

There are three bedrooms on the ground floor, including the master, which has an en suite and views through leadlight lattice windows to a formal-style garden with roses, English elms, box hedging and mondo grass.

The home’s uppermost level has a further living room, complete with a hidden beer fridge, and a Juliet balcony that looks across trees to the dome of 277 shopping centre and Mt Hobson. There’s also a bathroom on this level and an under-eaves bedroom, the one all three teenagers fought for.



PHOTOS / TED BAGHURST



## 28 MAUNGAWHAU RD, EPSOM

**Size:** Land 819sq m, house 355sq m (approx).

**PRICE GUIDE:** CV \$1.87 million.

**INSPECT:** Sun 1.30-2pm or by appointment.

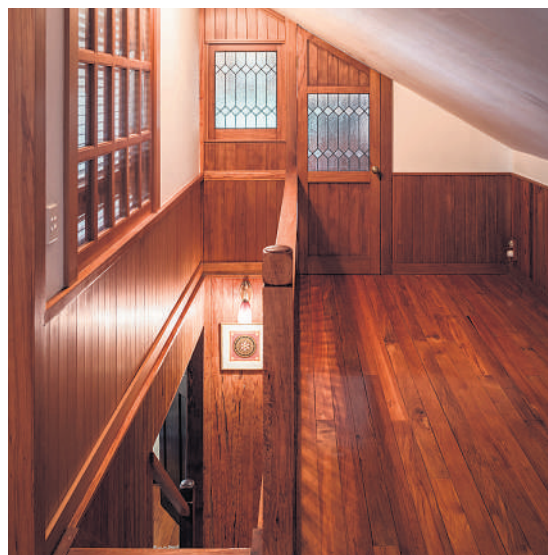
**AUCTION:** April 3 at 2pm on site.

**SCHOOLS:** Newmarket School, Auckland Normal Intermediate, double Grammar.

**CONTACT:** Linda Galbraith, 021 966 028, Harcourts.

**WEBSITE:** [harcourts.co.nz/RM160305](http://harcourts.co.nz/RM160305)

**\*OSP for seven cars.**



Especially valuable here being so close to Newmarket is Camborne’s abundance of parking.

It has dual frontage with Almorah Place, where there is a single garage and off-street parking for seven cars.

This is particularly handy for Lauren’s Pilates clients who exercise in Camborne’s beautiful living room.

But after a dozen years here and the kids all gone, Lauren and Connan are going travelling. They’ll be sailing off the coast of France in a catamaran. It’s time to say goodbye to Camborne.

“This house would be fabulous for another family or young professionals,” says Lauren.

“But only if they’re careful with the varnishing,” quips Connan.