

Renovate

The brief

To renovate a 1940s residence, initially to cater for the installation of a lift but which then inspired a more substantial modernisation and alteration.



BUILDER
Murray Grantham (pictured)
of **Precise Constructions Pty Ltd**
9971 8192, preciseconstruction.com.au

THE SOURCE
Caesarstone benchtops
caesarstone.com.au
Cornices Bailey Interiors Architectural
Plaster, baileyinteriors.com.au
Travertine flooring Cinajus,
cinajus.com.au



Facelift revives a grand old dame

An Art Deco-era mansion is given a thoroughly modern makeover, writes **Catherine Nikas-Boulos**

It was a case of third time is the charm for this northern beaches property, which recently underwent the most significant modernisation in its 64-year history, transforming a ground floor with four separate rooms into a bright open-plan living space and adding much-needed garage space.

While remaining true to its P&O heritage, owner Tricia says the renovation started out as a simple need to install a lift but the scope to do so much more was presented to her in consultation with Murray Grantham from Precise Constructions Pty Ltd.

"We've had the house for 26 years and this is the third stab at renovations; the first was about improving the way we lived, but this was our first serious renovation," Tricia says. "This time, we needed a lift in the house... and Murray persuaded me to rip up the front of the house."

The reasoning behind this dramatic architectural change was to free up space in the garage which, in its original form, could barely contain one car.

"This house was built in a time when people had A40s, which was essentially a box on wheels. I could fit my sportscar in, but nothing bigger than that," Tricia says.

Digging deep

A new garage was built at the front of the property and also houses the new lift, which services three levels.

Murray says this required his team to excavate a metre lower than the existing footings of the building in order to achieve

the levels required to install the lift. Then the build got even more complicated.

A major alteration to the pool area was required, with a new cabana followed by a new concrete deck off the main living area and four water tanks installed underneath.

"There was a huge amount of excavation work involved. We removed 120 tonnes of rock. In order to do that we had to get a 30-tonne crane to lift a five-tonne excavator over the roof of the house and drop it into the backyard. This is complicated building," Murray says.

The kitchen and bathrooms were modernised with the installation of travertine tiles and Caesarstone benchtops throughout.

Murray says Tricia was hands-on throughout the renovations and was instrumental in piecing together the finishes for the home. "She would come to us with a picture from a magazine and ask us to create that image, which is what we've done with the rear concrete deck with planter boxes.

"She loved building and that was so refreshing. A lot of people don't have any clue at all about what is required and the effort involved."

Protecting the integrity of original features, such as the original bricks, handmade in 1942, was paramount to Tricia.

"There was a round window in the bathroom that Murray asked if he should replace and I said, 'absolutely not', Tricia says. "My hat goes off to Murray – he did a fantastic job, but the fabric of building he had to work with could not have been better." ►

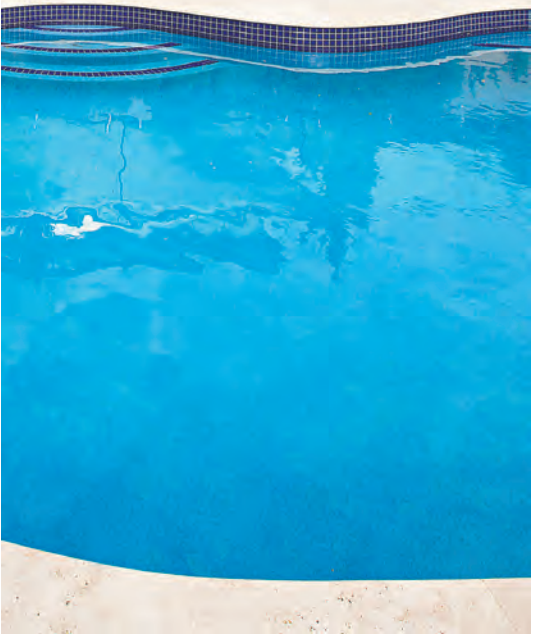


The pool area was redesigned for a cabana and concrete deck with subterranean water tanks.



Contemporary open living

The ground floor was made up of four separate rooms that were opened to create a modern kitchen, dining and living area. The walls were knocked out and replaced with structural beams to allow for the creation of one open-plan space.



The ground level (above) was gutted to create modern, open-plan living areas and a deck off the lounge room; Rosina Grantham (below) shows off the lift that inspired the renovation.



RENOVATE



► Close encounters

Tricia, who says she has a “morbid fascination with dirt and excavation” having worked in the industry for many years in the UK, visited the work site every day.

A nearby rental property gave her the opportunity to visit for as little as five minutes to check on progress.

“I would stay for five minutes, or half a day, which was the case when a bulldozer was being craned over the house,” Tricia says.

The process took 12 months and Tricia says despite delays and a cost blow-out on the council-required water retention pits, the building process was without major bother.

“The only argument I had with Murray was about the cornices. I chose something very 1920s and he said it wouldn’t work,” Tricia says. “We ended up with the ones he chose and he was dead right.”

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Pictures John Fotiadis



A traditional feature of 1940s homes, the sun room, was knocked out to open up the main bedroom space behind it.



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