Sea, sand – and style

A gracious art deco home is saved from the wrecking ball to become a local treasure, writes Robyn Willis

This is not what you would expect to find in a house across the road from the beach. But then, this house has defied expectations at almost every turn.

Interior designer Stewart Horton says houses like this in Bar Beach, an inner suburb of Newcastle, are becoming an endangered species.

"This house was one of the first built in the area and it was quite well known," Stewart says.

"A lot of the heritage houses around here are being bulldozed but the owners wanted to bring this house back to create something special."

Earlier renovations of the house in the '70s and '90s had left few of its 1920s features intact. But Stewart took his cues where he could find them.

"The panelling in the hallway was still there and we used that as inspiration for the rest of the house," Stewart says.

Indeed, panelling and parquetry flooring have been used extensively in the living and

THE PROJECT

Owners
A couple with three children and Jack, the cavoodle

Interior designer
Stewart Horton, Horton & Co, hortonandco.com.au

The brief
To restore a grand old 1920s home and extend it for modern family living

The site
A prominent site in Newcastle across the road from the beach

Design solution
Taking their cues from the remaining wall panelling, the house has embraced the glamour of its art deco past while still acknowledging its coastal locale

How long did it take?
18 months

dining spaces. Stewart says it serves more than one purpose.

"The panelling brings texture, otherwise it's all white-on-white," he says. "Its practical purpose is to protect the walls from scratches but where the walls and

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ceilings are high and the rooms are really big, it breaks down the spaces. Once you have panelling, it doesn't need too much more decoration."

The owners were on board with the finishes from the start, even if it meant taking a little longer.

"One of the owners was very particular and detail focused — he is the reason why this project is so perfect," Stewart says. "He wanted the details to be right."

Although it is across the road from the beach, the house is also close to the city. Stewart opted for a subtle connection to the coastal locale while focusing on modern art deco style for the finishes.

"The house being across the road from the beach was a big consideration but the suburb is right next to the city so it's marrying those coastal and urban elements," he says.

"The colours reflect the coastal location with teal and blue and there's rattan in some of the furniture — that's how we made it feel coastal without resorting to putting sea shells all over the house."

Council were also happy to give the proposal a green light.

"Heritage buildings are being knocked down all over Newcastle so any effort to save them they are generally fine with," he says.

Pictures: Maree Homer

Parquetry flooring was painstakingly installed throughout the ground floor, including in the new kitchen.

THE SOURCE

Living room rug Jute woven seagrass rug from Dash & Albert, dashandalbert.com.au
Kitchen stools Bentwood barstool in walnut stain from Huset, huset.com.au
Dining chairs Melrose dining chairs stained to ebony from Casa Mia, casa-mia.com.au
Desk lamp Black metal desk lamp with Empire shade from Bloomingdales Lighting, bloomingdales.com.au

golden era

AS WITH ANY STORAGE SOLUTION JOINERY IS KEY AND YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR

Good lighting, a beautiful chair and an oval mirror complete this space in Clarendon Homes' Sherwood 43.

Just add dressing

The walk-in robe has become an everyday luxury, writes Robyn Willis

This walk-through robe by Greg Natale is packed with storage.

It used to be said that the kitchen sold homes but these days the walk-in robe must be giving it a run for its money.

Now considered a standard inclusion in most display home master suites, it has evolved from a an oversized hanging space to a fully realised dressing station.

SPACE WALK

The luxury of a walk-in robe is partly about having the space to hang and store your clothes while still being able to reach them easily.

Access to good natural light, while still maintaining a sense of privacy, will not only keep your clothes free from mould but also allow you to get a clear view of yourself in the full length mirror once you've dressed.

Just as with kitchens, for a real sense of luxury, it's hard to go past an island storage unit with drawers for T-shirts and woollens below and space for jewellery display on top.

INVESTMENT DRESSING

As with any storage solution, joinery is key and you get what you pay for. When you consider how much you'll be hanging and how often the drawers will be opened, it's worth investing in a durable, quality solution that caters to your needs.

More: clarendon.com.au; gregnatale.com; hortonandco.com.au

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

- Do an inventory of your wardrobe to work out how many rails you need for dresses and separates.
- Consider your daily routine to work out the best layout for your dressing space.
- Add a little luxury like a velvet chair to create some magic.

The ensuite is just steps away in this dressing room by Horton & Co.

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