

SPECIAL
EDITION

AUSTRALIA

VOGUE **LIVING** BEFORE + AFTER

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RENOVATING CHECKLIST

- TROUBLE SPOTS TO AVOID
- TIPS FOR FUTURE TECHNOLOGY
- TIMBER MAKES A SUBTLE STATEMENT

120+
PAGES OF
RENOVATION
INSPIRATION

STRUCTURAL 10MM STEEL WINDOW BOXES DELIVER LIGHT AND VIEWS TO A CORNER ALCOVE. MISSONI CUSHIONS FROM SPENCE & LYDA TAKE THEIR CUE FROM CABINETS PAINTED IN DULUX 'WICKED'. **INSET:** THE ORIGINAL STAIRCASE, IN THE SAME LOCATION, WAS PREVIOUSLY ACCESSIBLE FROM THE REAR WALL OF THE LIVING ROOM. DETAILS, LAST PAGES.



SQUARED UP

IN SYDNEY'S LEAFY NORTH SHORE, A HOME EXTENSION WITH DRAMATIC BLACK WINDOW BOXES BRINGS UNUSED SPACES BACK TO LIFE.

PHOTOGRAPHER: PRUE RUSCOE
PRODUCER/WRITER: HELEN REDMOND





Reversing the approach to the stairs changed the entire space



OPPOSITE PAGE, FAR LEFT: THE NEW FOLDED STEEL STAIRCASE ALLOWS EASY ACCESS TO THE SECOND FLOOR. LEFT: THE FORMERLY UNUSED CORNER ALCOVE WAS OPENED TO GARDEN VIEWS AND IS NOW A PRIVATE READING RETREAT.

fashion. This was the aim rather than trying to soften the insertion. The contrast was more important than blending in."

The first thing to change was the staircase. Reversing the approach to the stairs changed the entire space. Now shopping can be dropped off in the kitchen, or the family can head straight upstairs to the bedrooms. An unused corner nook and an old blocked-off fireplace previously hid views to the greenery and gardens. But by changing the staircase, the nook became accessible and an important adjunct to the living space. The addition of a daybed makes the cosy separate corner alcove a perfect spot for reading.

The insertion of three dramatic black steel window boxes expanded the living space without extending the actual building, adding 1.2metres of extra space and allowing dwellers to enjoy the park-like quality of the surrounding trees and garden. The boxes are also the only architectural representation seen from outside, on what is a very traditional house in an established north-shore Sydney suburb.

"I actually sold the idea as a UFO that had crash-landed into the house, with part left sticking out; then shrapnel from the exploding metal being carried through into the house," says Ivanov. "The staircase is made of folded plate steel as well; it mirrors the analogy. And they bought it – which was incredible."



BEFORE



BEFORE



ABOVE: THE ORIGINAL KITCHEN WAS ENCLOSED WITH WALLS AND DOORS WHICH PREVENTED NORTHERN LIGHT FROM ENTERING THE LIVING SPACES. LEFT: THE NEW OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN IS SIMPLE AND FUNCTIONAL, BOTH THE OWNERS LOVE COOKING. IT ACTS AS A STAGE, A RAISED PLATFORM FROM WHICH ITS USERS DIRECT THEIR ACTIVITIES. TAPERED EDGES SOFTEN THE SHARPNESS OF THE KITCHEN'S CORNERS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN. BELOW: THE NEW STEEL WINDOW BOXES ALLOW VIEWS OF THE SURROUNDING TREES AND GARDEN, AND PROVIDE FOR AMPLE STORAGE UNDERNEATH.



THE OWNER OF this home on Sydney's leafy north shore, an interior designer, had seen previous work by architect Vladimir Ivanov, and understood she would not get a conventional 'add and alt' when she enlisted his help in redesigning the living spaces to better cater for the needs of her young family.

The original single-storey building had been altered during the 1980s by an enthusiastic home builder with no thought given to how the addition of a second floor would impact on the floor below. The result left no connection between the spaces, with access to the second floor via a contorted staircase that turned the wrong way – you had to walk through to the rear of the living room to an unused corner to access the stairs.

The ground floor was partitioned to be functional, but the

spaces were used ineffectively. Kitchen, laundry and bathroom were located along the northern wall, preventing the north light from entering the space. The owners wanted to rework the public areas – kitchen, living, dining and bathroom – within the existing shell as the budget didn't allow for an extension of the building.

The solution was to gut the whole living space and work within that footprint. "I couldn't fight the existing house," says Ivanov. "We weren't able to rework the second floor and therefore better connect it to the ground floor, and a 'blending in' was not going to work with the existing building, so I took the opposite approach.

"We wanted to represent what was going on inside, on the outside as well," he continues, "to insert elements into the fabric of the existing building, punching things in and out in a brutal

"I ACTUALLY SOLD THE IDEA AS A UFO THAT HAD CRASH-LANDED INTO THE HOUSE, WITH PART LEFT STICKING OUT"

BELOW: REPLACING THE OLD KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY WALL ON THE NORTHERN FAÇADE, THE NEW EXTERIOR IS CLAD SIMPLY IN FIBRO CEMENT PANELS WITH EXPRESSED BATONS PAINTED TO MATCH THE COLOUR OF THE STEEL BOXES. **BOTTOM:** THE BATHROOM STAYED IN ITS ORIGINAL SPACE, BUT WAS COMPLETELY REFURBISHED.



BEFORE

The basic colour palette is monochromatic but with a single colour note. The steelwork is painted in industrial paint ("the same as used on the Harbour Bridge") to protect it from rust, "It's an honest material, a feature in itself," says Ivanov. A concrete plinth along the underside of the stairwell supports the new stairs, its footing extended to become a shelf and a daybed.

Timber floorboards and the timber veneer of the staircase add warmth, counteracting the stark steel. The choice of colour accent was a natural one, looking through the windows to a virtuoso of different greens. "Initially I pitched an in-your-face fluoro green, which they had a little problem with," says Ivanov. "Dulux 'Wicked' is from the same page, but they can live with it." **VL**



BEFORE

1 entry 2 kitchen 3 dining 4 living 5 bathroom 6 bedroom



AFTER

1 entry 2 kitchen 3 dining 4 living 5 bathroom 6 bedroom

ground floor (upper floor not shown)

- A steel frame of windows completely changed the room, and the stairs were reoriented to make passage easier.
- The new kitchen took over space that previously belonged to the old kitchen and a second bathroom.
- The two bathrooms on the ground floor were rationalised into one refurbished bathroom with a bath and shower.



THREE STEEL WINDOW BOXES, **ABOVE**, WERE CRANED INTO POSITION. THEY EXPAND THE SPACE BY 1.2METRES WITHOUT ACTUALLY ENLARGING THE BUILDING'S FOOTPRINT. THE PROTRUDING METAL BOXES, **BELOW RIGHT**, BOLDLY DECLARES THE NEW WORK IN THE STRUCTURE, **BELOW LEFT**, DETAILS, LAST PAGES.



BEFORE

B+A

Aim of the renovation A replan to make a big space that was underused into a big space that is used.

The solution To "smash a UFO" into the house. We inserted a steel box into the home to expand the space without actually increasing the building's footprint.

How long did it take? Six months to design and document, and then 10 months to build.

Which aspects of the renovation are you happiest with? The steel boxes. My clients were so brave, understanding that a window can be more than a window. There's a huge cost difference between a nice set of conventional louvres and these steel boxes, which were craned in.

Any tips for those doing a similar project? Be brave. Architecture is one step past function.

Materials used Off-form concrete, 10mm steel plate, Corian benchtops, polyurethane finishes, blackbutt floors and blackbutt timber veneers.

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