

BEFORE & AFTER



King of the Cross, once again

BEFORE

The galley kitchen was completely ripped out and replaced in the exact footprint. A washing machine was added to this space and the fridge was relocated.



An inner-city apartment celebrates the future with a nod to its Art Deco past, writes Catherine Nikas-Boulos

The Macleay Regis in Potts Point has such a rich history, it's no wonder the owner of one of the two-bedroom apartments wasn't prepared to mess with the epitome of Art Deco.

The apartment, constructed in 1938, was mostly original, and while some modern upgrades were desirable, architect James Allen was called in to work within a tight design brief.

"The building is heritage listed so there wasn't a huge amount of room to move," he says.

"The owner wanted to put a washing machine in the kitchen. Traditionally, the washing machine was in the basement in a communal space.

"It has a galley kitchen and we needed to put other things in there like a rangehood, which it didn't have before."

However, the owner didn't want the inclusion of appliances to make the kitchen look modern.

"I guess the brief for me was: check your architect's ego and make it look like you've never been here," says James.

"I've had colleagues say, 'did you just replace the kitchen bench?' when in fact, we ripped out the whole kitchen and started again."

The washing machine did make it into the kitchen, under the bench, and appliances were integrated, so that you only see the cooktop and oven.

To make way for the washing



A Murphy wall bed (below) has been installed in the spare bedroom, so that room can be used as an office (above).

machine, the fridge had to move, but the question was, where to? "We didn't want to lose bench space in the kitchen which was at a premium, but we had a light-bulb moment," says James. "We worked out we could cut a hole in the wall and stick the fridge through the living room."

The back of the fridge became the backdrop for the TV cabinet and bar. "It's a hanging piece of joinery on the wall, so you could get rid of the fridge and brick it up again," says James. "It would look like nothing has happened, the skirting and cornices are untouched, it's a hole in the wall."

Further, cabinets in the kitchen look like they are in peak original condition. Cabinets from that era would have been solid timber but James opted for the modern equivalent, handpainting the MDF cupboards.

"That made a huge difference, finishing a product like it would have been finished back then," he says. "It's very old-school."

TAKE TWO

The apartment owner also wanted to upgrade the two bedrooms. He was now working from the apartment full time and was in need of a home office.

"His life changed, so that second bedroom had to be an office and, when necessary, a guest room," James says. "We put a Murphy (wall) bed in there, so it folds into the cupboard."

The main bedroom was also reworked, with joinery added behind and to the side of the bedhead, and decorated with grasscloth wallpaper.

"When this building went up, it was one of those 'Kings of the Cross' buildings," James says.

"We treated it with the respect it deserves."

Pictures: James Allen
More: jamesallen.com.au



◆
"THE BRIEF FOR ME WAS: CHECK YOUR ARCHITECT'S EGO AND MAKE IT LOOK LIKE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN HERE"
◆