

HOME STYLE

JOHANNA
LEGGATT

Staying true to form

A brick-veneer, post-war home gets a modern makeover sympathetic to its retro charms



JOANNE Kantzipas and husband Kirk were determined to renovate their Ivanhoe East home in a tasteful fashion that made way for the new without removing all traces of the old.

In particular, they were keen to keep the charming traditional facade of their triple-fronted, post-war, brick-veneer home.

“We didn’t even consider rendering the exterior of the home. We like the way it looks,” Ms Kantzipas said.

“The house hadn’t been touched, which is what we loved about it.”

The couple bought the double-storey home in 2011 and set about renovating it in 2018 before moving back in, just in time for Christmas.

“We tried to make it modern inside, while maintaining the integrity of the home,” Ms Kantzipas explained. “We didn’t want to just turn it into a modern box.”

PAST AND PRESENT

With the help of Pleysier Perkins Architects, the couple has updated the home for themselves and their two teenage boys with wholesale but respectful renovation.

“The family asked for a thoughtful and modern intervention to inject the house with another lease of life,” Pleysier Perkins Architects studio director Berit Barton said.

“They were also keen to work with the existing features, such as the uniquely textured handmade bricks, the ornamental wrought-iron railings and some Art Deco-inspired interior elements.”

On the upper level, the three bedrooms were kept, but the old kitchen was demolished to make way for a new

main bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe and ensuite.

Ms Barton said a parents’ retreat was also created. “It was not a must, but it was a bonus, and we achieved it by adding a second lounge that connects to the new master bedroom via a new roof deck,” she said.

KNOCK ON WOOD

The roof deck was created out of an existing balcony, which was updated with timber flooring and is destined to become a lush roof garden for Mr Kantzipas to exercise his green thumb.

A large, modern timber pivot door was added to the front of the home. In fact, timber has been used liberally throughout.

We love the warmth and feel that the natural timber provides to the house,” Ms Kantzipas said.

“It blends really well with the other stone surfaces while maintaining a natural aesthetic, which we were going for.”

Occasional splashes of colour provide colourful focal points, such as the main bedroom’s blue carpet, which was the brainchild of Pleysier Perkins interior designer Georgie Marks and has proved an unexpected delight.

“She managed to convince us to go with it,” Ms Kantzipas said. “Everything different that she recommended we went with and we love.”

WHOLE NEW LOOK

Originally, the lower level consisted of a rumpus room and a small room that was not quite a study and not quite a bedroom. But this level has been significantly altered.

“We changed the floorplan a lot because it wasn’t very



Photos: Michael Kai

workable,” Ms Kantzipas explained.

This level was extended and now has a study, laundry, third bathroom and spectacular open-plan kitchen, meals and living area that is bathed in sunlight from a large skylight and flows to an outdoor terrace and garden.

Curved walls and shapes are a real feature of the home, in a nod to the Art Deco style that remained popular post-war.

The ensuite has a curved shower, and the balustrade’s eye-catching partition curves like a slide. Most spectacularly, though, a curved timber wall adds drama to the new open-plan living hub.

Ms Kantzipas said behind the wall was the butler’s pantry, “a very good-sized workable area”.

“It has plenty of cupboard space, a double sink and a dishwasher. It’s a great place to get messy.”

LIKE A CHARM

Original features can be spotted here and there in the home.

An Art Deco-style fireplace in the upper-level living



room has been kept, the hearth painted black to tie in with the home’s dark palette. And two of the original exterior lights add charm to the facade.

“Even though they are not working, we’ve kept them because they were part of the original house,” Ms Kantzipas said.

The back garden has also been overhauled. A gorgeous old maple tree was retained, and crazy paving and landscaped beds added. A lap pool now graces one side of the garden.

“We wanted the lap pool to be as long as possible so that we could get the full benefit of the deep block,” Ms Kantzipas explained. “The trees will grow up around it and it will be like an oasis of green, and when you’re swimming, you’ll be surrounded by foliage.”

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Postscript

WITH JOANNE KANTZIPAS

What first attracted you to the home?

The style of the home and the big rooms. Plus, all that potential.



The room you love the most?

I love my bedroom because I relax and read there and I love the tones and textures. It feels like my space.

Best renovation decision?

To maintain as much of the original house as possible.

Favourite piece of furniture?

I love my bed. It was custom designed and made. We have also bought a new Tempur mattress, which is very different but grows on you.

Best party you’ve had here?

My husband’s 50th birthday. There was a DJ, everyone was outside and the lighting was fabulous.

Favourite kitchen appliance?

I would say the ovens – in particular, the steam oven. People think they’re just there to steam, but they do so much more.

Best time of day in your home?

Around midday, when the sun comes over the skylight and lets a lot of light into our south-facing home. I often turn my plants around to make sure they get enough light.

Next purchase for the home?

More artwork to add some colour and to ensure the home does not look bland.

What does home mean to you?

It means being comfortable and growing with the family over the years as we move through different stages of our lives.