

Words JUDY PASCOE Photography FELIX FOREST

These pages The original facade as designed by Harry Seidler in 1957 was restored and a new extension added that links the house with the garage. Landscaping by Dangar Barin Smith.

THE TEST OF TIME



Respect was at the heart of the reinvention of delivered contemporary living spaces without

this Harry Seidler-designed 1950s house that has compromising the integrity of the original design.



These pages, from left The entrance was returned to its original design and colour scheme with charcoal-grey render punctuated with crisp white and a buttermilk-yellow front door. The living space looks onto the new pool and has the vibe of an urban oasis. Custom credenza by Porter & Maple. Florence Knoll 'Relaxed' sofa and armchairs from De De Ce. India Mahdavi 'Bishop' stool from Studio ALM. Noguchi coffee table from Living Edge. La Manufacture Cogolin rug from Studio ALM. Sheer pinch-pleat curtains from Simple Studio. Artworks have been collected by the owner over time.

There's more than a hint of Palm Springs about this single-storey house in Sydney's eastern suburbs. With its low profile and white breeze-block facade attended by swaying palm trees it is a modernist dream. Designed by Harry Seidler in 1957 the current owner bought it in 2015 with the intention of preserving and rejuvenating the characterful property.

She consulted heritage project manager Dean Bialek of Former Glory Inc. and he in turn approached Jonathan Richards, director of architecture and design firm Richards Stanisich.

When Jonathan first inspected the house, it was to find that scarcely any original features remained internally. "The interiors had been modified over time," he says. "We could get a good sense of the original but some mediocre renovations over the past 50 years had made an impact." But, spurred on by the client's absolute passion for all things mid-century modern, Jonathan was able to cleverly reinstate the mood and aspects of the period while reimagining the house for present-day living.

"The house is a reflection of our design style, the client's personality and the legacy of Seidler's architecture," he says. "It shows genuine respect to the original but also successfully creates a contemporary, personalised home for the owner."

The typical 50s house was definitely more compact than the living requirements that are generally sought today so the first step was to stretch out the house across the block and reconfigure the floor plan. While the client was keen to add another floor, Jonathan convinced her that its elegant, low proportions and the sustainable benefits of a modest-sized home were worth maintaining. The owner also desired a pool, a new garden and a pottery studio that connects the house and garage.

Mindful of working with an iconic house, Richards Stanisich carefully considered the appropriate way to renovate it. >

This page The crazy-paved extension houses the sunken pottery studio and features an integrated fireplace. The full-height walnut hallway connects the old and new parts of the house. Eames lounge chair from Living Edge. 'Bolzano' crazy paving from Eco Outdoor. Real Flame Double Vision fireplace. American walnut veneer from Briggs Veneers. Opposite page, from top Thonet 'S32' chairs from Anibou. Florence Knoll dining table from De De Ce. Flos 'Arco' lamp from Euro luce. Tallowwood basket-weave parquetetry flooring from Precision Flooring. Artworks, owner's collection. The powder room is lined in a joyful wallpaper, Brunschwig & Fils 'Kanchou' in Verdigris. J.T. Kalmar wall sconce. Client's own mirror.



« “Our concept was to collaborate with the original design rather than create a solution that was juxtaposed against it,” says Jonathan. “So we retained the key interior planning principles that had given it such a rational modern layout. There was very little left of the interior finishes but one in particular that was extremely important was the basket-weave parquetetry flooring which we extended so it now runs right through the house.”

Seamlessly incorporating the original structure with the new extension that comprises an expanded master suite and pottery studio was achieved by creating a single timber wall that acts as a spine, connecting all parts, facilitating circulation and unifying the materials palette.

Fundamentals included maximising natural light and establishing free-flowing spaces. To infuse the interiors with daylight, glass blocks that have the added benefit of affording privacy especially in bathrooms were freely employed. “The innovation was in the way we applied materials and interior detailing throughout,” says Jonathan. “The materials that we selected referenced the joyful use of colour and grain of the modernist period.”

Rooms are distinguished by colour and pattern, to wit the master ensuite and robe where Jonathan was able to incorporate a glamorous leopard-print rug that had belonged to the client's grandmother, setting up a magnificent counterbalance with walnut veneer, terrazzo and pink ceramic tiles. Similarly, in the powder room, guests are treated to a display of lavishly »





These pages, clockwise from top left Tallowood basket-weave parquet flooring from Precision Flooring has been used throughout matching with the original. Green terrazzo kitchen island benchtop from Terrazzo Australian Marble. American walnut veneer from Briggs Veneers. Lacanche 'Chagny' front cooker. Poul Henningsen 'PH5' pendant light from Cult. The playful use of colour in the outdoor area is complemented by Dangar Barin Smith's landscape design. Knoll '1966' outdoor table by Richard Schultz from De De Ce. Sub-Zero fridges are integrated behind the kitchen's walnut joinery. A functioning wall telephone offers low-tech charm. Abet Laminati 830 laminate in Rosa Crazy Horse in the phone nook.

« blossoming wallpaper that references the era's fondness for such patterns.

The landscape design was a crucial part of the rejuvenation, especially as views to the garden are visible from most rooms. The house occupies the site with a relaxed ease, and the plantings of hardy species such as *agave*, *dracaena*, *sansevieria*, *yucca* and *kentia* palms selected by Dangar Barin Smith do not vie for attention but rather provide a sense of form and solidity.

An essential part of the process was the review of the design by Harry Seidler & Associates as well as Penelope Seidler. Because the house was not heritage listed the opportunity was there to add another level or demolish and

rebuild. But the sustainable aspect of this project is worth noting, as the scope of construction was minimised and the addition of excessive space was avoided. "By scrutinising the brief we were able to create a home that the client loves but also keep the planning, construction and budget tight," explains Jonathan.

"The design carefully tackles the issue of how to respond to a house with legacy," he says. "We were intent on an intelligent outcome that sits seamlessly with Seidler's building but also one that we have ownership of. It's a respectful rebuild without compromising contemporary design." richardsstanisich.com.au; formergloryinc.com; dangarbarinsmith.com.au

SPEED READ

» A c1957 modernist house in Sydney's eastern suburbs designed by Harry Seidler has been given a contemporary makeover that is completely respectful of the original architecture. » Jonathan Richards, director of architecture and design firm Richards Stanisich, project manager Dean Bialek of Former Glory Inc. and William Dangar of creative landscape practice Dangar Barin Smith collaborated on the significant update.

» While the essence of the Seidler building has been preserved, the floor plan has been reconfigured and the house extended in its single-storey form to include a new master suite, a pottery studio and a pool. » Using a consistent materials palette and 'joyful' flourishes that reference the era the designers have breathed new life into the property, creating a contemporary living space in the shell of a modernist structure.



This page The use of walnut veneer throughout the expanded master bedroom suite creates a sense of continuity with the rest of the house. Moroso 'Redondo' sofa in pink velvet with matching cushion (on bed) from Hub. Knoll glass coffee table. Opposite page, clockwise from top left A wall of glass blocks provides privacy in the master ensuite and also admits abundant natural light. The Water Monopoly 'Rockwell' bath and tapware from The English Tapware Company, Swisspearl 'Spindel' planter pot from Robert Plumb. The cactus and palm tree garden forms shadow silhouettes on the breeze-block exterior. 'Musk' pink tiles from Surface Gallery. The leopard-print rug belonged to the client's grandmother. India Mahdavi 'Bishop' stool from Studio ALM.



"THE MATERIALS THAT WE SELECTED REFERENCED THE JOYFUL USE OF COLOUR AND GRAIN OF THE MODERNIST PERIOD."

