before

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Changing
ROOMS

A dark and dated penthouse is transformed to embrace 21st century living

When I hear the word "penthouse" what often comes to mind are images of exclusive, high-end apartments where the owners recline in the lap of luxury, sipping champagne on private balconies with multi-million-dollar views.

However, the owners of this penthouse property, which is located in the inner eastern suburbs of Sydney, found themselves in an awkward, dark and dated eyesore of an apartment dating back to the 1960s. It had poor storage, a small bathroom and kitchen, obvious traces of once-external areas and criminally poor use of an outer terrace with harbour views. The owners were in dire need of expert help to create a private domain that reflected their own aesthetic and to create an apartment befitting the notions of a modern inner-city penthouse.

Rising to the occasion, architect Christopher Polly approached this project with vigour. The aim was to bring the design and look of the property into the 21st century and transform a two-room dwelling, with an awkward and cramped living area, into completely new and custom-designed interior and exterior spaces while improving the various amenities.

Taking on the hindrance of a single common lift to access the apartment, the architect set to work creating a flexible home with spacious amenities and modern interiors with flow and

Opposite and this page
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internal spaces included
reconfiguration of walls
and the installation of a
joinery device that split the
area of the home in two.
An overhaul of the internal
joinery also provides more
storage space.

before

connection to the outer terrace that would
fully utilise the views afforded from such a
vantage point.

Initial stages of redesign were the
reconfiguration of the internal walls between
the bathroom and WC, the second bedroom,
hallway and living areas as well as the kitchen
and dining space including one of the kitchen's
walls. This wall also connects the kitchen to the
outside terrace entertainment area and the
views overlooking the harbour via a frameless
corner window and glass sliding door.

The internal redesign featured a joinery
device that split the areas of the home in two.
Running from the entrance through to the
northern terrace, it was designed as a means to
unify the wall alignments along the entire length
of the communal area, and as the threshold used
to signify the boundaries of the intimate and
public areas of the home.

Overhaul of the internal joinery also allowed
increased storage space to be implemented as
well as a series of large sliding and pivoting panels
that could either form the boundaries for the

Left
An all-white kitchen pops with colour provided by the studded rubber floor and kickplates in Manhattan Red.

before

of glazed windows and smart placement of insulation create a climate that remains comfortable, year-round. The flexibility of the new room configurations allows for a multi-faceted approach that adjusts to the owners' needs as desired.

According to Christopher, a two-fold approach to the entire redesign is what makes this renovation architecturally special. "The clear delineation of the public and private domains in the arrangement simultaneously enables particular spaces to flexibly borrow from, expand into or contract from other spaces as required to offer a variety of unique spatial configurations," he explains. "There is also a strong physical and visual connection of spaces to the terrace to enhance the amenity of, and relationships between, the living, kitchen and terrace areas that encompasses a link of borrowed light through a bedroom to an internal bathroom and overriding strategy of fully integrated lighting and storage."

These design decisions create a home with a natural rhythm in all areas of the internal space. ▣

second room or allow it to be opened to the rest of the public domain. As a secondary feature, the makeover of the internal joinery provided a means of installing and integrating a new lighting system along the walls that matched the rhythm of the new interior. This overcame the limitations set by the existing roof slab for overhead lighting solutions and the challenge of how to bring more light into the internal areas when natural lighting was unavailable.

The external terrace was wholly refurbished with new seating and outdoor dining areas, including a barbecue, which of course is essential to any modern Australian outdoor
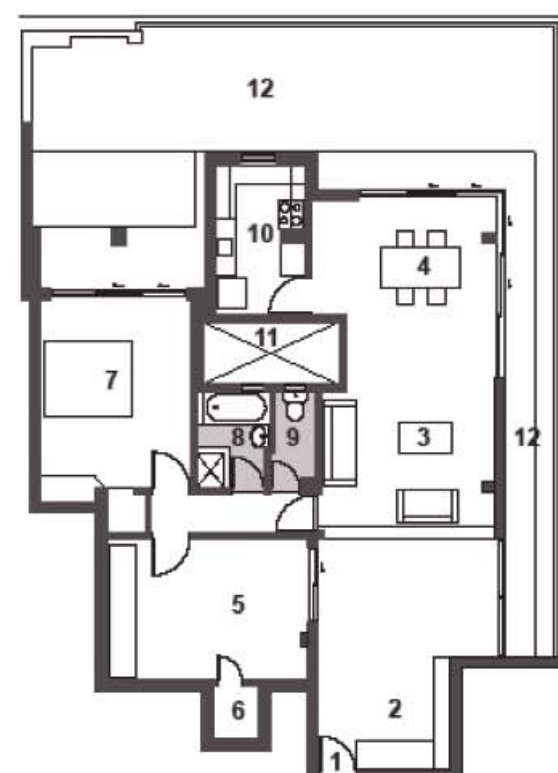
entertainment setting. A cantilevered steel-framed pergola with integrated adjustable louvres and lighting extends along the entire northern exterior. This provides protection to the exposed northern-oriented glazing and increases the function and comfort of the terrace throughout the seasons. An added design decision was the inclusion of an external mirror that reflected harbour views into the main bedroom and solved the question of how to improve the relationship between the spectacular harbour views and the intimacies of the private quarters of the home.

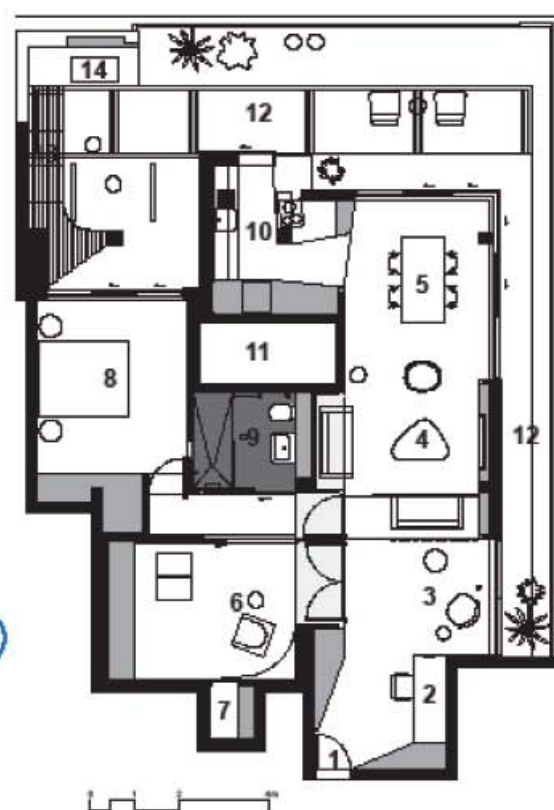The natural lighting and ventilation, use

before

Opposite and left
The compact bathroom
features a concealed cistern,
wall-hung toilet and hand
basin and mirrored walls.

Above
Built-in wardrobes feature
in the master bedroom and
an external mirror reflects
harbour views inside.

Existing floor plan

1. Entry
2. Study
3. Living
4. Dining
5. Guest room
6. Store
7. Bedroom
8. Bathroom
9. WC
10. Kitchen
11. Building service riser
12. Terrace

New floor plan

1. Entry
2. Study
3. Sitting
4. Living
5. Dining
6. Guest/Living
7. Wine store
8. Bedroom
9. Bathroom
10. Kitchen
11. Building service riser
12. Terrace
13. Bench & Storage
14. BBQ

project particulars

This project was designed by
CHRISTOPHER POLLY ARCHITECT
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This project was built by:
PAUL KING PTY LTD
Tel (02) 9558 2747
Licence number 131439C

FLOORING
Kitchen: Activa studded rubber flooring and kickplates in Manhattan Red
Dining/living/bedrooms: Hycraft Intertwine high/low-profile 100 per cent wool carpet in Sable
Entry/study: Hycraft Intertwine high/low-profile 100 per cent wool carpet in Sable; recycled blackbutt with clear natural oil finish to entry threshold
Entry vestibule: Activa studded rubber flooring and kickplates in Black
Terrace: Seamless Surfaces Quartz Carpet with open-pore finish in Charcoal

WALLS
Kitchen: CSR plasterboard painted in Dulux Fair Bianca half-strength
Dining: Polyurethane finish to new fixed wall panels, existing walls and columns in Dulux in Fair Bianca half-strength
Living/bedrooms: Polyurethane finish to new and existing fixed wall panels in Dulux Fair Bianca half-strength
External walls: Acrylic render painted in Dulux White; Mirror in white powder-coat flush-angle frame

KITCHEN
Benchtop: DuPont Corian benchtops in Cirrus White
Splashback: Mirror
Cabinetry: Polyurethane finishes to doors, drawers and fixed panels in Dulux Fair Bianca half-strength
Appliances: Miele induction cooktop, Neff oven, Ilve integrated rangehood, Miele integrated dishwasher, Fisher & Paykel integrated refrigerator
Other: Franke sinks, Gessi sink mixer, Zip Chilltap water filter, Industrial Expression pulls to tall door panels, Blum hinges, drawer runners and Orga-Line drawer systems

JOINERY
Bedrooms/hall: Polyurethane finishes in Dulux Fair Bianca half-strength
Guest room: Dorma floor springs and top pivots; Dulux Fair Bianca half-strength on sliding door panel with Centor top track system and guide, and Madinoz flush pulls; Polyurethane finishes to all joinery; unit door and fixed panels in Dulux Fair Bianca half-strength with Industrial Expression door pulls and Blum hinges;
Outside of Guest room: Sustainable select-grade blackbutt study desk with clear, natural finish; mirror in white powder-coated flush-angle frame (to end of hall)

BATHROOM FITTINGS
Cabinetry: Mirror wall — fixed mirrors and mirror-faced door panels to overhead units, polyurethane-finished recessed shelf and wall panel
Basin: Pozzi Ginori Q3 wall basin
Walls & floor: Charcoal porcelain wall and floor tiles
Ceiling: CSR Aquachek plasterboard ceiling, Dulux painted
Fixtures: Pozzi Ginori Q3 wall-hung toilet pan; Ideal Standard Hideaway concealed cistern; Hydrotherm heated towel rail; Madinoz soap tray, toilet roll holder, brush holder and robe hooks
Taps: Hansgrohe Puro basin mixer
Shower/bath: Waterslide wall shower outlet & Hansgrohe Puro shower mixer

LIGHTING
XAL Minimal 100 fully recessed lights vertically integrated, Rovasi BSM trim-free recessed downlights, Sylvania SlimLite concealed fluorescent strip lights, Lumascape Pagoda exterior lights, integrated waterproof fluorescent battens to pergola

WINDOWS + EXTERNAL DOORS
Windows: Capral shallow pocket frames, white powder-coated finish with grey-toned fixed toughened glass; Capral shallow pocket frames, white powder-coat finish with clear fixed window to bathroom, toughened glass and 3M frosted film
Doors: Aluminium-framed sliding glass doors, White powder-coated finish; Dulux White painted exposed mild steel kitchen door frame; Centor track and guide to kitchen door from Lockwood hardware

OUTDOORS
Roof: Colorbond folded steel sheet roof edge cappings in Colorbond Surfmist, CSR Fibre Cement soffits painted in Dulux White, Mild steel-framed pergola painted in Dulux White, JWI non-retractable operable louvre systems with powder-coated white finish
Terrace: Seamless Surfaces Quartz Carpet with open-pore finish in Charcoal; low bench and recycled blackbutt boards and linings over waterproof plywood substrates to barbecue bench with clear, natural oil finish
Heating: Rheem hot water system, reverse-cycle ducted air conditioning system
Entry door: Joinery units angle towards the entry door. This gives a first impression of impressive spaciousness. The longer joinery element enables the open door to sit flush with, and nestle into, the gap provided at the commencement of this joinery unit