



Top gear: This family's teenage son will find it hard to move out

SPACE

of home with this clever retreat full of smart storage ideas.

SAVER

Words PENNY CARROLL Photography MICHELLE WILLIAMS



Most people add an extension when they're looking for more floor space, but the owners of this large Art Deco home in Kew, Victoria, had a better plan: reclaim their unused single garage. They called on architect Alexandra Ansari and builder Alex Caple to transform the garage into a bedroom and bathroom for their teenage son and, given the space was a tight 3 by 6 metres, it was a challenging task. "Because the garage was about 750 millimetres lower than the house, it needed stairs as well," Alexandra recalls. "So it was all about maximising space really cleverly."

Given free rein by the clients, Alexandra's goal was to create a feeling of spaciousness without

sacrificing the garage's ongoing function as a storeroom. She mapped out a powder room at the house level, steps with built-in storage to the bedroom, and a combined wardrobe and shelving unit that acts as a room divider. "I think this room has more storage than your average house!" she says with a smile.

To play up the illusion of generous space, Alexandra stopped the joinery short of the ceiling and filled the gap with glass, adding LED lights above the robe to emphasise the lofty effect. The garage door was replaced with steel-framed windows that match the existing house exterior — another smart move that floods the room with natural light. And because blue is the client's favourite colour, Alexandra found a nifty way to incorporate it into the design. "As a wall colour it would have made the space feel smaller and darker," she explains, "so I thought, 'why not on the ceiling?' It's a very Art Deco touch."

The new bedroom is accessed through the laundry, so the owner decided to give it a revamp as well, allowing Alexandra to blend the new space into the home. "We used bi-fold doors to screen the laundry, so when they're closed it's like a corridor," Alexandra says. "We created more storage there as well, with overhead cupboards and hanging space, and a hall cupboard for linen." Marble and gold tapware give the utilitarian area a luxurious vibe, and are echoed in the powder room.

The conversion may have been a puzzle to begin with, but the result? Genius. "I think the interesting stuff happens when you tackle those tight and restrictive spaces," says Alexandra. "That's where creativity really comes out." See the Source Book on page 48 for details.

ABOVE The stairway entrance from the house to the converted garage with hidden storage drawers. FACING PAGE The carrara marble laundry is tucked behind bi-fold glass doors, another clever design concealed to enhance the illusion of space.



HIDDEN TALENTS

This clever conversion is packed with concealed storage solutions.

THE STAIRS Adding steps into the room took up more floor space than Alexandra wanted so she reclaimed it, designing the steps as drawer, "even if they're just used for spare blankets or DVDs," she says.

THE JOINERY Shelves, a double wardrobe and bi-fold cupboard doors that reveal more storage along the bottom of the robe maximise what would have otherwise been just a wall. Alexandra designed the wardrobe to overhang the bottom cupboards "to help the illusion of space".

THE LAUNDRY Pull back the bi-fold glass doors and you'll find a haven of storage, including overhead and under-bench cupboards and hanging space. The single door at the end of corridor hides a linen cupboard.

Source book

Architect Alexandra Ansari of Ansari Architects ansariarchitects.com.au **Builder** Caple Builders 0422 416 785 caplebuilders.com.au **Joiner** Phelan Interiors (03) 9480 5024 phelaninteriors.com.au **Bedroom feature light** Modernist light, from Mark Douglass Design 0414 540 110 markdouglassdesign.com **Ceiling fan** Urban 3-blade fan, from Lights Lights Lights (03) 9372 8541 lightslightslights.com.au **Glass for bi-fold doors** ScalaTexture Satinlite textured glass, from Viridian 1800 810 403 viridianglass.com **Hardware** Lever pulls, handles and hinges, from Pittella (03) 9818 0311 pittella.com.au **Laundry benchtop and splashback** White carrara marble, from Parthenon Marble (03) 9499 8833 parthenonmarble.com.au **Paint** Wall and joinery in Lexicon and ceiling in Ahoy, from Dulux 132 525 dulux.com.au **Sink** JohnsonSuisse 1300 717 717 johnsonsuisse.com.au **Tapware** Winslow lever wall set in Brushed Gold, from Brodware 1300 800 300 brodware.com

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The garage has been converted into a generous, light-filled double bedroom studio that is a teenager's retreat, but could also work as a granny flat or guest quarters.