

Heart of reinvention

HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS

\$450,001-\$550,000

AEA Constructions, Alexandria

From the street, this property in Alexandria still looks deceptively like an 1890s single-storey worker's cottage. Step inside and you quickly realise that only the facade remains – you've entered a bright, airy three-level house with a swimming pool.

AEA Constructions has pulled off an amazing transformation and expansion of this little terrace, says MBA judge Lloyd Austin.

When Austin visited the property and walked down the concealed steps to the new basement, he expected to confront a host of damp and ventilation problems. Instead, he found that project manager George Alexiou had created a "swimming pool in reverse".

Alexiou describes the initial steps he took before putting in the laundry, media/rumpus room and toilet: "It was basically like creating a swimming pool but to keep the subterranean water out, not in.

"I built a waterproof shell digging down 3.5 metres and less than a metre on either side to the neighbours."

While building the basement, he also had to put up 94 300-millimetre contiguous concrete piles so he wouldn't disturb the bordering

properties. To excavate the first metre, he used a machine but the remaining two metres were shovelled by hand. Four PVC pipes in the floor and a mechanical ventilation system expel air out into the backyard under the timber deck so there's no hint of dampness.

"There was no plan originally to do the basement," Alexiou says. "Only when the existing house was gutted, then the owner decided he wanted more space. Although it added substantial cost and time to the project, now there's more room where kids and adults can have separate zones."

The gas-heated pool was the other major construction challenge. It runs the entire six-metre length of the property's southern boundary. All the excavated dirt was trucked out the back lane.

The ground-floor living area, with three-metre-high ceilings, and the upper level's bedrooms and bathroom are all supported by a lightweight timber frame reinforced with architectural steel – which also supports a cantilevered awning, dramatically suspended over the back deck and pool.

Although the building is a terrace, clever passive solar design draws light and air into all levels. While the upper floor is concealed from the street, north-facing high-level louvre windows on the side (the block runs east-west), a one-metre-wide breezeway balcony on the south side and floor-to-ceiling windows at the back provide cross-ventilation.

On this top storey, four large mechanical skylights in the roof and then three opaque trafficable skylights (that you can walk on) in the floor provide a multi-level exchange of light filtering from the roof to the bedrooms to the living, dining and kitchen areas below.

"This house has a lot of my heart in it," Alexiou says.

Melinda Ham



Bright and bold ... AEA Constructions has achieved a remarkable transformation.



Of stone and wood

HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$700,001-\$1 MILLION
Hagan Built, Randwick

An eagle eye for detail and a good client relationship earned Hagan Built notice from the MBA judges.

In the division with the most entries, one room in particular embodied both these winning qualities – the main-bedroom ensuite.

“One thing that particularly stood out was the natural stonework in the ensuite, with the shower floor laid in one piece,” judge Lloyd Austin says.

“This really displayed attention to detail on the builder’s part and his precision in setting out the work.”

Hagan Built director Matt Hagan says he likes to involve the client in the building process. “It was really important that the client liked this room,” Hagan says.

“I took her out to see the marble and it blew her away. It’s good to make the client feel that they are part of the project.

“They relied on us to guide them through their decisions.”

Hagan was involved from the early design stages and says the three-bedroom-plus-study Federation home was to be a simple extension job of blending the new with the old.

But, in a flick of a page, the concept swayed and the clients wanted a modern look to contrast with the rest of their heritage home. “The inspiration was from a photo in a magazine,” Hagan says.

“It went from a cottage and then turned into something more cutting edge.”

This created challenges for the builders to achieve a minimalist look on such a small site – the solution was to maximise floor space.

The judges believe Hagan pulled this off



Seamless ... Hagan Built added a modern touch.

seamlessly. “You go from an old facade to a modern extension and it all seemed to flow,” Austin says.

What appeared effortless to some was, in fact, the result of considerable effort.

Hagan says the team worked all over the site, from front to back.

“We were coming in over the existing cottage and did not have much room to build the house,” he says.

One can only imagine how the massive slab of Bedonia stone chosen for the client’s private bathroom made it up the stairs of the new extension. Hagan says the stone had to be cut into three sheets.

The judges were also impressed at how a single-storey house on a neat piece of land had packed in so many added features, including a last-minute glass-fronted swimming pool in the tightly spaced backyard.

Susie Cameron

AND THE WINNERS ARE

TRADITIONAL OR GEOMETRIC CONCRETE POOLS UP TO \$50,000, Jade Pools, West Pennant Hills
TRADITIONAL OR GEOMETRIC CONCRETE POOLS \$50,001-\$100,000, National Construction (NSW) Group
TRADITIONAL OR GEOMETRIC CONCRETE POOLS \$100,001+, Alvaro Bros Builders
FREEFORM OR NATURAL CONCRETE POOLS \$50,001-\$100,000, Sunrise Pools, Newport
FREEFORM OR NATURAL CONCRETE POOLS \$100,001+, Splish Splash Pools, Dural
FIBERGLASS POOLS, OPEN, The Compass Pools Sales Centre
SPAS/PORTABLE SPAS/HOT TUBS, OPEN, Splish Splash Pools, Dural
RENOVATIONS, OPEN, Sunrise Pools, St Ives
WATER FEATURES, OPEN, Jade Pools, Glenhaven
LAP POOLS, OPEN, Splish Splash Pools, Castle Hill
MERIT EXHIBITION/PROJECT HOMES UP TO \$200,000
 AV.Jennings, Macquarie 240 Bingar; Masterton Homes, Inspiration
EXHIBITION/PROJECT HOMES UP TO \$200,000 Coral Homes, Stradbroke 251
EXHIBITION/PROJECT HOMES \$200,001-\$250,000
 AV.Jennings, Atrium 285, Capri facade
EXHIBITION/PROJECT HOMES \$250,001-\$300,000
 Cosmopolitan Living, Madison 42
EXHIBITION/PROJECT HOMES \$300,001-\$350,000 Buildcraft Constructions, The Sterling
EXHIBITION/PROJECT HOMES \$350,001+ Horizon Homes, Q46
DESIGN & CONSTRUCT – HOUSE UP TO \$500,000 Marple Constructions
DESIGN & CONSTRUCT – HOUSE \$500,001-\$1 MILLION Sammut Developments
DESIGN & CONSTRUCT – HOUSE \$1 MILLION-\$2 MILLION Raymond Vincent Homes
DESIGN & CONSTRUCT – HOUSE \$2 MILLION+ Tecton Group
CONTRACT HOUSES UP TO \$500,000 Living Green Designer Homes, Kosciusko
CONTRACT HOUSES \$500,001 – \$650,000 C.T Edmed Construction
CONTRACT HOUSES \$650,001 – \$800,000 Buildcraft Constructions
CONTRACT HOUSES \$800,001 – \$1 MILLION Cre8ive Building Projects, Walter Bards Design
CONTRACT HOUSES \$1 MILLION – \$1.5 MILLION GNC Quality
CONTRACT HOUSES \$1.5 MILLION – \$2 MILLION Capital Construction & Refurbishing
CONTRACT HOUSES \$2 MILLION-\$2.5 MILLION C & E Critcharis Constructions
JOINT CONTRACT HOUSES \$2.5 MILLION-\$3 MILLION Northern Building
JOINT CONTRACT HOUSES \$2.5 MILLION-\$3 MILLION CBS Refurbishment
CONTRACT HOUSES \$3 MILLION – \$4 MILLION Alvaro Bros Builders
CONTRACT HOUSES \$4 MILLION+ Coddington Constructions
TOWNHOUSES OR VILLAS/DUAL OCCUPANCY UP TO \$250,000 Astoria Projects
TOWNHOUSES OR VILLAS/DUAL OCCUPANCY \$250,001-\$400,000 Create Projects, Meda Residences
TOWNHOUSES OR VILLAS/DUAL OCCUPANCY \$400,001-\$600,000 Waldock Construction Group
TOWNHOUSES OR VILLAS/DUAL OCCUPANCY \$600,001+ Trinium Group
HOME UNITS UP TO \$300,000 Zaarour Sleiman, Mondrian

HOME UNITS \$300,001-\$500,000 Platinum Projects (Aust), The White House
HOME UNITS \$500,001-\$700,000 Camarda & Cantrill
HOME UNITS \$700,001-\$1 MILLION Constructive
JOINT HOME UNITS \$1 MILLION+ Parkview Constructions, Tama House
JOINT HOME UNITS \$1 MILLION+ SX Projects LP, Connoisseur Apartments
HOME UNIT RENOVATION, OPEN, Agiacon Grid, The Toaster
MERIT HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS UP TO \$150,000 Attic & Roof Conversions
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS UP TO \$150,000 Kerran Builders
MERIT HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$150,001-\$250,000 Lovesway Constructions
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$150,001-\$250,000 Albac Constructions
MERIT HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$250,001-\$350,000 Northern Building
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$250,001-\$350,000 Micrah Projects, Aldenes House
MERIT HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$450,001-\$550,000 Roof Space Converters
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$450,001-\$550,000 AEA Constructions
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$550,001-\$700,000 Denbuild
MERIT HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$700,001-\$1 MILLION J Motherway Constructions, Stewart House
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$700,001-\$1 MILLION Hagan Built
MERIT HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$1 MILLION-\$1.5 MILLION Mardini Constructions
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$1 MILLION-\$1.5 MILLION Profile Property Group
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$1.5 MILLION-\$2 MILLION Buildscene
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$2 MILLION-\$2.5 MILLION Capital Construction & Refurbishing
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$2.5 MILLION-\$3 MILLION Yuncken Construction Group
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$3 MILLION-\$4 MILLION GNC Quality
MERIT HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$4 MILLION+ Sandik Constructions
HOUSE ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS/RENOVATIONS \$4 MILLION+ Alvaro Bros Builders
RESTORATION, OPEN, Pacific Plus Constructions
INTEGRATED HOUSING, OPEN, Blue Label Construction, Alloura
LIFESTYLE LIVING OVER 55+ OPEN PRICE CATEGORY Waldock Construction Group, Kantarra
MERIT AGED CARE BUILDINGS, OPEN, Northside Constructions
AGED CARE BUILDINGS, OPEN, Ware Building
ENERGY EFFICIENCY – HOUSING, OPEN, Scott Hawkins Homes
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT – HOUSING, OPEN, Alvaro Bros Builders
BEST USE OF TIMBER, Northern Building
BEST USE OF RECYCLED TIMBER, C plus C Design Construct
BEST USE OF BRICKS, Ware Building

YOUNG BUILDER OF THE YEAR 2009 Sean Coddington, Coddington Constructions
MASTER BUILDER OF THE YEAR GNC Quality