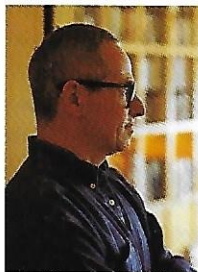


Deception by design: in a 1920s apartment contemporary devices are cannily concealed behind multi-purpose panelled walls.

Our client's reaction to the first design was 'It's over designed!,' says designer George Freedman. So it was back to the drawing board for George and the project architect, Tim Allison. "It was a complicated job," Freedman claims, "but in the event, by paring it down we ended up with a solution much closer to the client's requirements."

Overall, it involved converting two small apartments into one large apartment.

"The demolition of the walls had uncovered irregular ceilings," says Freedman, and "there were too many doors for just one room." The client wanted the renovated living room to "appear as if it had always been there". Freedman and Allison's solution



was based on deception – on disguising many of the elements. The pair used a device (gridded white birch partitions on

opposite sides of the room) which suggests timber panelling elsewhere in the 1920s Art Deco building but which also alludes to both traditional Japanese and Jacobean joinery (as in wainscot wall linings).

In essence the grid allowed the designers to unify a number of disparate elements

which could, if expressed individually, have cluttered the room. The grid wall is multi-purpose. Look, for instance, for the door into the guest bathroom (beside the bookcase,

pictured right.) Remarkably, a 16-person dining table is concealed in the timber panelling behind the Corbusier chaise (below).

Each panel in the room serves a particular function consistent with the client's manner. "The room was done for a man who was incredibly meticulous,"



Freedman says. "He was quite happy to make life difficult for himself if he wanted to do things in a particular way."

Outside, a spectacular view of Sydney Harbour with all its activities and moods beckons. But this single room has a special quality all of its own. □

MICHAEL DICKINSON

When designer George Freedman (top) planned the living room with its manifold timber panels (right and above right), "I was interested in the idea of grids," he says. Recessed lighting in the bookcase lends definition and gives the panelling a 3-D quality. The slender side table (above) is by Sydney furniture maker Philip Strickland.





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