

now and then

Currie Hall

Professors, they would say unjustly and completely without foundation, once had a reputation for being absent-minded. But Currie Hall, the University of WA residential college on Stirling Highway, appears to attest to the foresight of one such academic.

At least that was the assessment of the late Professor Fred Alexander as penned in his monumental history of the university, *Campus at Crawley*, published in 1963. While the author, whose scholarship is commemorated in the naming of the State Library in Perth, did not assert that events during World War II – during which time Professor Sir George Currie was vice-chancellor – were entirely responsible for establishment of the institution, he did suggest they went some distance towards helping the cause.

It began with the US Air Force choosing, or being allocated, Crawley Bay as a base for their long-range Catalina flying boats when the war came close to WA in 1942. The Americans, needing accommodation for staff maintaining and flying these aircraft, asked for St George's College but the request was refused.

This must have been something of a shock. Anecdotes at the time suggest that such requests were often acceded to by a nation grateful for the intervention of a powerful ally in its time of need. Instead the university approved construction of buildings on nearby land as bachelor officers' quarters. Fred Alexander comments: "The understanding was that the university would get the buildings 'at a nominal cost after the war' and there is good reason for believing that the architect, a good friend of Dr Currie, kept ultimate university occupation in mind when he designed the temporary buildings." In August 1945, with the war teetering to an end, Dr Currie asked the Army Minister to set aside the officers' quarters for use of the university when peace returned.

He obviously used the idea of at least some of the occupants being ex-servicemen returning to or beginning university under the Commonwealth's rehabilitation scheme. The request was granted and students moved in with fees commensurate with the standard of accommodation offered – from £2 and 7 shillings and sixpence a week in 1946, rising by increments to £5 in 1960. One problem facing the administration was profitable use of the facility during the long summer vacation. An early expedient was block booking of 140 beds for the Adult Education summer school.

The building was also put into the hands of a travel agency which catered for interstate and country visitors who, it was said, "appreciated the cheap rates and put up with the novelty of community bathing". In time, Currie Hall merged into the ethos of other university halls of residence with real or imagined divisions between freshers and those of longer tenure.

The newcomers were given rules that insisted they buy the Currie Hall Residents Club president a beer "due to the high honour of drinking at the same pub as him". Currie Hall had come a long way from being bachelor officers' quarters for the US Air Force.

FRANK DUNN

Picture courtesy of Battye Library, reference number 378.196CL1



No expense spared

49 Boronia Cres,
City Beach

Price: \$4.65 million

Features: 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, home theatre, temperature-controlled pool, outdoor shower, Italian porcelain tiles, american white oak floors, airconditioning, alfresco area with wood-fired pizza oven, perimeter security system, double garage, on 850sq m

Agent: Gordon Davies, Gordon Davies Real Estate, 9480 9385



This City Beach palace blends contemporary and 18th century European influences to stunning effect. By **BETH RIVERS**

When you look through the wrought-iron front gate, the exterior of this City Beach home certainly implies modern splendour.

So when you step through the cedar double doors to find a blend of contemporary and 18th century European influences, the awe is heightened. Here is a French-style palace hidden within.

Both from Italian families, owners Mark and Luciana Salomone have put significant thought into every detail of the house, creating a comfortable and luxurious atmosphere for their three young daughters, Ariane, Jorja and Ella.

Mark owns an Italian tile company with his brother, so not surprisingly he has used attractive tumbled marble for a unique water feature in the foyer of the home.

The bathrooms also feature floor-to-ceiling Italian porcelain and the pool is lined with glazed mosaic tiles.

Luciana's background is in teaching but she says she found her niche in home design and decorating after sourcing the home's French antique furniture and ornaments from various Perth stores.

The couple have spared no expense in creating this exquisite residence.

In the formal lounge and dining room, there are american white oak floors, raw silk curtains and a Jetmaster fireplace.

"We wanted to mix contemporary with tradition," Luciana says.

"I love entertaining so having a dinner party in there is quite amazing."

A study opposite the living area has also

made use of raw silk curtains to frame a view of the front manicured garden.

By far the most impressive aspect of the property is the theatre room next to the study.

This home theatre resembles La Premiere cinema's surroundings.

"Mark is passionate about his movies," Luciana explains.

"He loves to sit back and relax when he's away from work and he can certainly relax in there."

"He didn't cut corners when he designed it."

With integrated cupboards hiding the theatre equipment and mini-bar, step-lighting, tinted door windows, seven leather recliners with cupholders and footrests, a felt back wall and *Lord of the Rings* posters from England, the room lends itself to a quiet night in or Grand Final gatherings.

From an open-plan family room, kitchen and sunken cocktail bar lounge area, bifold doors open to an undercover alfresco area.

Here is a fully equipped kitchen with granite benchtops, built-in barbecue and Italian wood-fired pizza oven.

Batu timber decking from Indonesia has been used around the glassed-in pool and a pavilion, making it easy to keep a watchful eye on the children while they are having fun in the water.

On the second floor is the "parents' retreat". The master bedroom features a Juliet balcony, his-and-hers walk-in robes and a vast ensuite with marble sinks.

There is also a sitting room with two further

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ocean-facing balconies, an attic or play area and a guest room and third bathroom.

The children's bedrooms are downstairs, off the family and cocktail bar lounge area.

"The column near the cocktail lounge uses Bisazza mosaics, which are the best you can get in the world," Luciana says.

She says the property has a top security system.

"It's like Fort Knox," she says. "We live in a very quiet location and are not bothered by anyone. We're just a hop across to the beach

so we've certainly embraced the whole beach scene.

"The place has so much to offer a family. It's very open and spacious if you want to entertain or there are plenty of spaces if you want to go and hide for some time out.

"Why are we moving? That's the million-dollar question. We love the house and everything it has to offer.

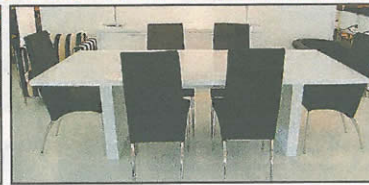
"Mark and I are very proud of what we've done and we would probably like to do it again."

1. The master bedroom.
2. The cocktail bar lounge.
3. The Italian wood-fired pizza oven.
4. The formal lounge.
5. The family room.
6. The pool pavilion.
7. The kitchen.
8. The unique tumbled marble water feature.
9. The La Premiere-style cinema.
10. The upstairs parents' retreat.

Pictures: Richard Polden

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