

BUSINESS

Former ice cream queen whips Remuera property into shape

18 Jun, 2017 5:00am



The home was bought by Diane Foreman last year and has been renovated to the highest standard. Photo / Graham Wall Real Estate.



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Businesswoman Diane Foreman brings a classical 1880s mansion into 21st century.

Former ice cream queen Diane Foreman has worked her magic on a 1880s mansion, giving it a top to toe renovation.

Through her property investment business Chelsea Group Ltd, Foreman bought the sprawling Remuera home for \$8.25m in May last year.

The woman who owned ice cream brand New Zealand Natural has redesigned and renovated the five bedroom home to the highest standard.



The sprawling five bedroom home sits on the northern slopes of Remuera. Photo / Graham Wall Real Estate

Foreman worked with designer James Doole on the project, which is one of many properties she has upgraded.

"Together we have done about 30 but I have been buying and improving houses since I was 18," Foreman said.

"I love taking a place someone else has had the joy of living in and making improvements."



Diane Foreman and designer James Doole took great care to retain the heritage on the late 1880s mansion. Photo / Graham Wall Real Estate

Foreman said the Arney Road property she was selling was one of her favourites.

The five bedroom, four bathroom, Georgian style home features crystal carriage chandeliers, arched windows and a wine cellar under the house - still with an original safe from the late 1880s.

"I don't drink but I can see someone sitting down at a table in the original cellar, it really is such a beautiful place."

Foreman said the heritage of the house had been retained but modern improvements such as re-wiring, re-plumbing and underfloor heating meant the house was "a joy" to live in.



Renovating homes is just one of Diane Foreman's talents. Photo / Jane Ussher.

Doole said great care had been taken to match original cornicing and architraves and Victorian style had been added to gas heating vents.

Luxury home estate agent Graham Wall, who is marketing the property, described the renovation as among the best he had seen.

"Rarely is the integrity of a classical masterpiece enhanced by moving it into the 21st century but these guys have absolutely nailed it. It is perfection."

He said there were few recent sales to compare the house to but said the renovation would put the value "at a guess" at upward of \$13m.

Wall said he remembered the grand home as a teenager in Remuera when it was owned by the Liggins family.

"We all thought it was the grandest home in Remuera, and now it looks like Ralph Lauren lives here."

The expansive 350sqm home sits on 2082 sqm of land on the elevated northern slopes of the exclusive suburb, with views over Rangitoto.

Remuera belongs to the small group of Auckland suburbs with a median price of more than \$2m. The others include the inner-city waterside suburbs of Herne Bay and St Marys Bay.

Foreman's double grammar zoned home is within walking distance of Auckland's top private schools.

There is also a fully self-contained one bedroom guesthouse on the property.

The house is for sale by negotiation.