

➤ WOOLLAHRA



PERFECT: Brenda Scofield joined her husband Laurence yesterday to celebrate at their new home. Pictures: LISA WILTSE

## First to see grabs the prize

By JESSICA MAHAR

THEY were the first people to inspect the Woollahra house.

They were the opening bidders and the auctioneer's hammer fell on their last bid.

Laurence and Brenda Scofield said they could immediately feel positive vibes from their new home, which sits at the end of a cul-de-sac and overlooks the water and Harbourview Park.

They were so eager to get their hands on the house, that McGrath Estate Agents sales agent Ben Collier said Mrs Scofield was the first person of about 250 groups shown through the property.

About 70 people gathered in the backyard to bid on the home with three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a sun terrace.

The auction started slowly with a \$2 million bid but turned aggressive with 11 registered bidders.

The Scofields had a bidding agent help them secure the property at \$3.15 million – well past the \$2.7 million reserve.

And while their agent spent their money, Mrs Scofield drank coffee in Bondi. She was too nervous to attend the auction.

"I couldn't have watched the process," she said.



ARTIST'S HOME: The Woollahra home sold well above its reserve.

"I was waiting for [Laurence] to call, thinking: 'Is this good news or bad news?'"

The couple, who collect Australian art, will divide their time between Sydney and Hong Kong, and might bring their prized piece, William Dobell's *Wangi Boy*, to their new home.

"It's a very happy house. The lady who lived here had a wide circle of friends in the artistic community," Mr Scofield said.

"It's really an artist's home."

"The house didn't even have parking, but this is a decent sized block for Woollahra," McGrath sales director James Dack said.

The house was sold by two brothers, one lives in the country and the other in the city. It had been in the family for 23 years.

Mrs Scofield felt the vibes from the moment she stepped through the front door.

"I thought it was extraordinary, it was beautiful, it was such a loving home," she said. "People said [the previous resident] was such a loving woman. It's great to finally have a garden; I haven't had one for 30 years."

With a grandchild on the way the couple might spend more time in Sydney at their new home. Their daughter will live there.