



If these walls could TALK

Two soaring blade walls are the defining feature of this outstanding architect-designed home that manages to stay true to its heritage streetscape.

WORDS **MARY TAYLOR** PHOTOGRAPHS **PETER HOARE**

BY TODAY'S STANDARDS, IT'S NOT easy to get what you want in a home. You need a lot of patience to hold onto the vision until the right opportunity arises. And then you have to be ready to jump.

The owners had lived in Prospect since 1997. With two growing children, they realised they had outgrown their current home and it was time to move on. But they didn't want to move too far. "We love the neighbourhood and its proximity to the city."

They looked at all the options and decided to narrow their search to finding a suitable block for a new build, even if it meant having to knock over an existing house. "In 2004 this property came up for sale at auction, but we missed it. Then – five years later – we happened to drive down this street to discover the original house had been knocked down and the land was up for sale again. We were the only people at the auction."





The couple secured their perfect building block – a level 1150 square metres – in their desired location. Now all they had to do was build the perfect house. “An architect we knew was just about to start his own business, Glasshouse Projects, specialising in high-end residential design – so we gave him our wishlist.”

The list was short: it had to have a double driveway, good storage and large entertaining areas.

Architect Don Ianicelli designed the home to fit with the existing heritage streetscape as well as his own philosophy of designing homes that are sympathetic to their surrounds, but distinguished it with “a modern twist to give it a presence”. Perpendicular to the street, two soaring basalt-tiled walls provide a stunning entrance and give the impression the home is a pair of original single fronted cottages that have been renovated and converted to a single dwelling. As well as bungalows, the area is known for its symmetrical cottages with bull nose or concave verandahs. The front facade is a contemporary interpretation of two bull nose cottages. The blade walls create a void through the

Above: The master bedroom directly opens to the dressing room and en suite; at the end is a central courtyard. Floor to ceiling windows and mirrored cabinets above the vanity run the length of the en suite and maximise the available light, which also warms the black Pietra Grigio marble floor tiles. *Above left:* Sliding windows above the bath fully open to the walled courtyard beyond. American walnut veneer features in both the en suite and dressing room cabinetry. **Opening pages:** The basalt-tiled blade walls extend as a feature both externally and inside the home’s entrance. Highlighted by the light emitted from the glass ceiling in the entrance hall and the glass panels either side of the front door, rather than creating darkness the walls express warmth, texture, strength and an artistic quality that is also experienced in the formal study at the front of the home.

We love the living space, the ease, comfort and practicality. We love the master bedroom – it’s our retreat.

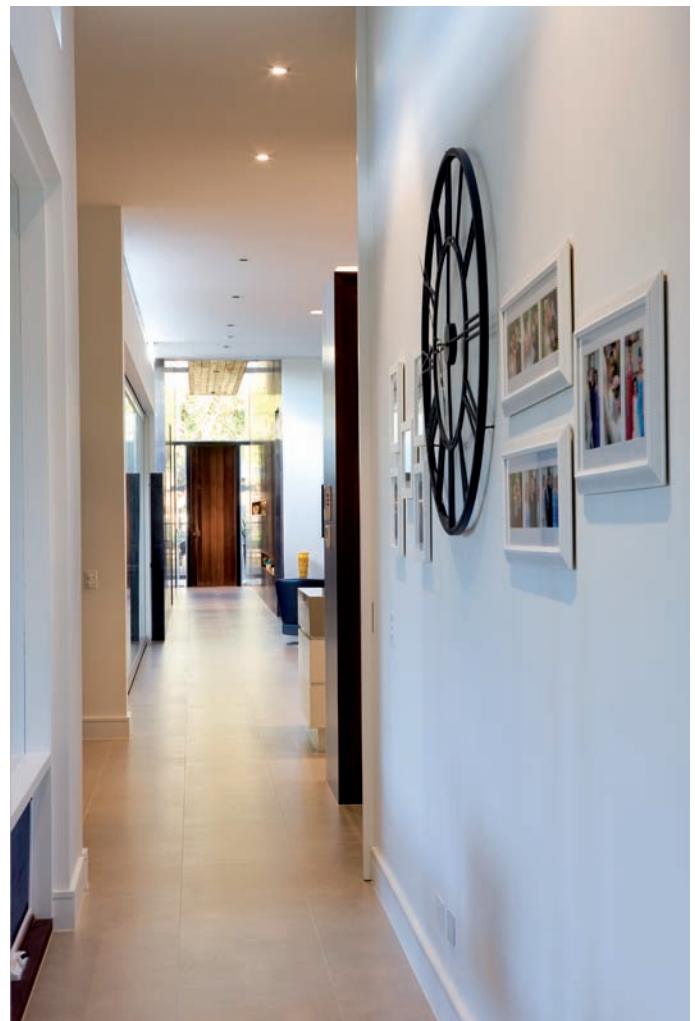


Above: The basalt-tiled wall is also a feature of the master bedroom. Two pendant lights illuminate the minimalist decor which is juxtaposed by a single vintage chair luxuriously upholstered with deep-buttoned charcoal grey velvet. Right: Despite the home's very long and narrow footprint, there is a view of the outdoors from every room.

symmetry of the verandahs and draw you in to the entrance and the heart of the home.

The blade walls also extend through the front of the house, creating a hallway to the central family and entertaining areas. A western red cedar box suspended between the two walls beneath a glass ceiling not only reinforces the natural pull of the entrance, but also provides housing for practical elements such as box guttering, airconditioning and wiring. It also gives the home a unique space in which to arrive because of the combination of the warmth and texture of the materials and the abundance of light.

The owners wanted to create a substantial home that had some reference to the area, but the challenge for the architect was to make it work within a very long and narrow block which faces east-west. He came up with a concept to allow the extremely long footprint of the home to be divided into separate areas while still capturing as much of the northern sun as possible. The body of the home extends across to both the property's side boundaries and almost runs its full length, with a compact garden at the rear. The actual dwelling is made up of a series of "pavilions" which adjoin two central courtyards. The courtyards also allow a sense of transparency though the length



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Above: A large panel of glass bi-fold doors separate the family room and kitchen from the undercover outdoor barbecue area, but can also be opened up to create an extra-large and versatile entertaining space. *Below:* A piece of Statuario marble creates a dramatic backdrop for a pair of cylindrical stainless steel rangehoods. The built-in breakfast bar to one side of the island bench provides a convenient space for children's meals and homework.



of the house, providing an opportunity to connect with the back garden from many areas of the house.


The parents' suite is located to one side of the home at the front, with the laundry and storage areas adjoining the double garage on the other. Central to the home is the extremely large and versatile indoor/outdoor family and entertaining area. "We love cooking and entertaining," the owners say. "Recently we cleared out all the furniture and held a sit-down function here for 50 people, but generally we can seat 20 inside and another 10 in the undercover courtyard."

Design features such as the fully opening bi-fold doors, the butler's kitchen concealed behind the entertaining area and the sliding doors to close off each section of the house allow for flexibility between easy entertaining and the practicalities of everyday family life. The kitchen features double cylindrical stainless steel rangehoods set against the Statuario marble splashback and the breakfast bar off to one side for children's meals and homework while the parents are at the sink or the cooktop. All the



appliances are concealed behind cupboards and the coffee machine, the steam oven, the wine fridge and an extra sink and fridge are all located in the butler's kitchen. "It works really well for us."

To the rear of the house are the children's bedrooms and a guest suite. "We've got our space and they've got their space," say the owners. "We're thinking 30 years ahead in case the kids are still living with us as adults. There's also a guest area if our parents come to live with us."

It's almost 18 months since the home was finished and the owners moved in. "We love the living space, the ease, comfort and practicality. We love the master bedroom – it's our retreat. And the entrance has got so much character; it's like an ever changing piece of artwork throughout the seasons. It's a happy marriage of liveability and looks." 

Above: Motorised clerestory windows allow light and fresh air in where picture windows could not be used. Overhead, recessed spaces allow downlighting to disappear and eliminate the need for pendant lights which create unwanted clutter. With the glass bi-fold doors closed, the family room becomes a more intimate space.

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