

The West Australian

New Homes

In harmony with the sun

IT WAS a magnificent outlook from the Port Mandurah block, taking in a broad sweep of the canals with its active birdlife and boat movements.

The water reflected the mood of the day as flocks of pelicans and cormorants competed with dolphins for the school of mullet swimming through.

The shimmering waterway in the afternoon sea breeze had a clear aqua tone, indicating that it was clean enough for a swim. A launch was rocking gently at a jetty in the foreground, only a short walk away across a landscaped promenade, and ready for an outing.

But there was a major problem for the owners who wanted a big home exploiting passive solar principles for year-round living comfort. The outlook was to the west with the associated difficulty of combating the hot afternoon sun.

Architect Garry Baverstock was approached by the retired couple for a solution. The answer was a compromise between the architect's broad principles and the owners' wish for wide windows to maximise the outlook.

It has all been made to work well, with extensive solar pergolas keeping the summer sun off the glass until late afternoon, while the winter warmth penetrates well indoors. Also the main floor steps down towards the canals to provide an efficient sun shield that minimises glare from the sky at this time of the year.

For the owners there was a bonus in the way the design trapped the sea breeze so effectively, unfailingly and economically to cool the whole house in summer.

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It is only a short walk from the shaded patio to the promenade and jetty, where a launch is ready for a cruise.

New Homes Liftout

Making light of sun's rays

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IT MADE air conditioning unnecessary, ensuring a big saving in capital costs and running expenses.

There were refinements as the owners progressed with the work, especially when the architect found that tinted glazing had been installed in wide windows to the west for the outlook. Because this upset the comfort calculations for winter heating, a skylight had to be added to the main living spaces, and this also has solar screening from the summer heat.

The two-storey residence has an imposing street elevation and the living spaces have been effectively integrated with the pergola walk to the canals and a promenade at the



Sunlight is just starting to filter through solar pergolas as autumn begins.

water's edge. The property has 25m of private water frontage.

The brief was for a Mediterranean-style residence, one with a human scale that did not look like a warehouse or an office block. It had to be a foil for the owners' character furniture, and be able to take contemporary pieces.

While the canal views were paramount for the owners, the wife also wanted an outlook to a landscaped front garden and across street lawns to the estuary park and its well established trees. This can be appreciated from the big kitchen and the much-used breakfast bar that can comfortably seat up to six.

Because of the garden requirements a decision was made to build two storeys and put the guests' self-contained accommodation upstairs. The owners have their main spaces downstairs, integrated with the canal forecourt, and they have only a few steps to contend with as they move about between main spaces on different levels.

A double garage and a carport meet a covenant requirement of space for three cars. These blend into the street elevation which makes a bold play on cylindrical columns, reminiscent of a colonnade, while the portico has a flush gable with a pelican leadlight featured above its apex.

Focal point of the lofty foyer is a free-standing stairway with a clear finish to the nyatoh, where the semi-circular return has been beautifully moulded. Open treads and balustrading give it all such a light, warm look.

A gallery ties in a protected patio area, also the master suite.

From the big kitchen with its extensive bench and wall cupboards, the chef's view is fore and aft. It is the same from the big breakfast bar and convenient here is an alternative entry to the home, a door that makes it easy to get into the front gardens.

The solar home is not open for inspection but can be seen by appointment with the architect, Mr Baverstock.

Frank Platell



The sea breeze effectively ventilates the solar home in hot weather.



The residence faces the canals but still has an imposing street elevation.