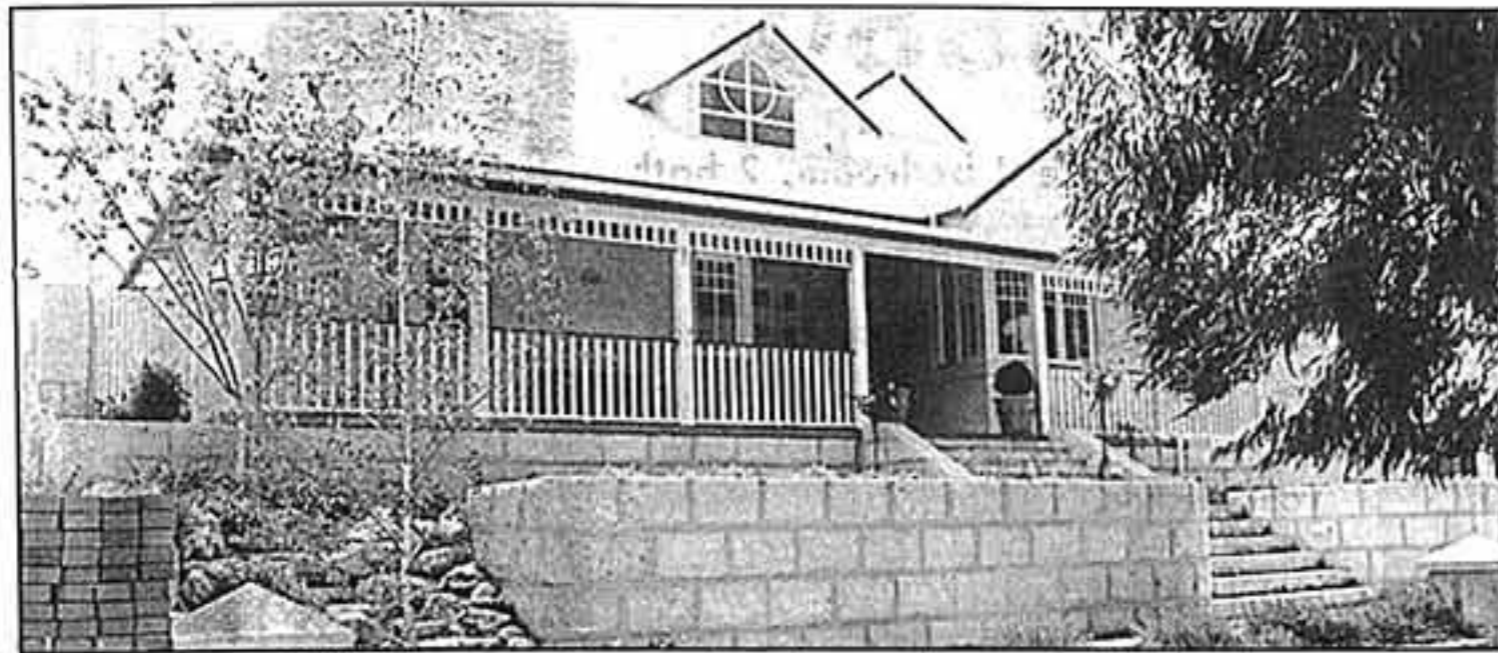
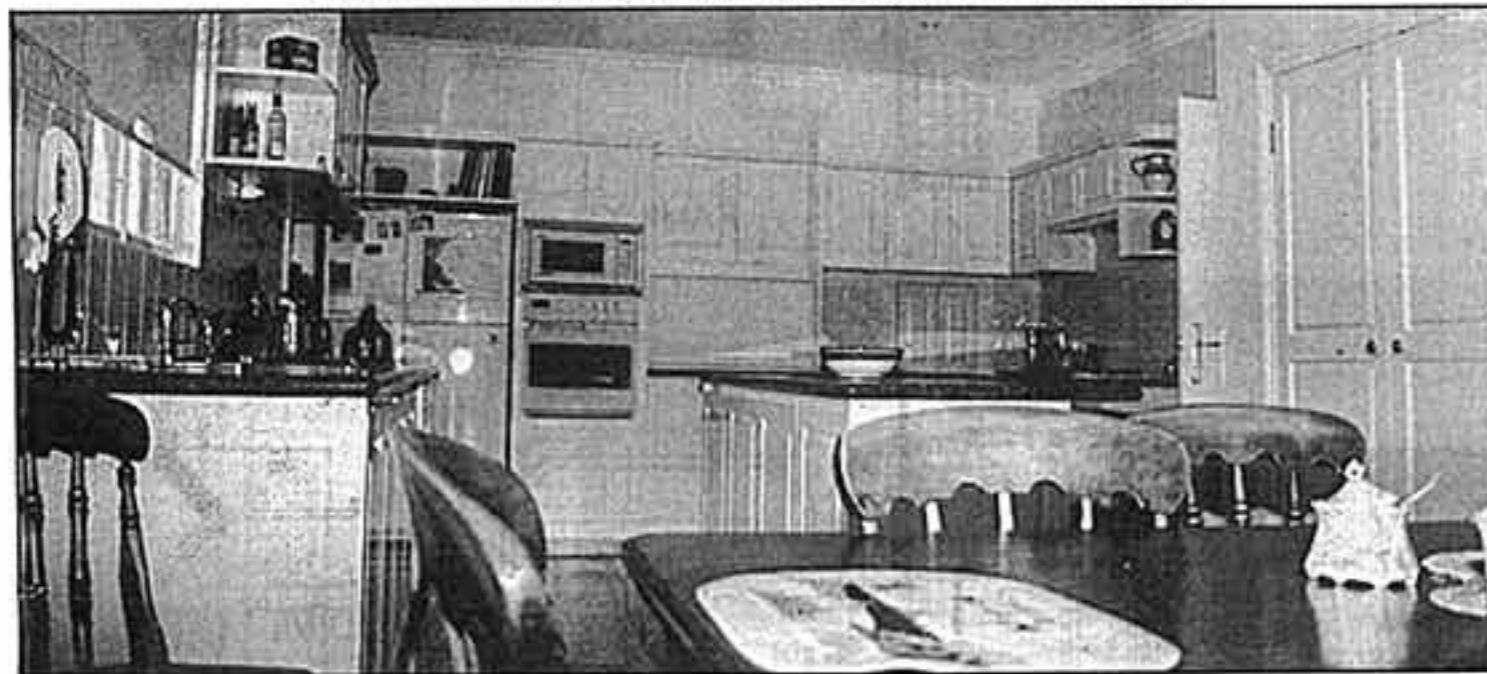


## New Homes

## Using the sun to advantage



ABOVE: The stepped front garden enhances the appeal of the facade.  
BELOW: The big kitchen accommodates a casual meals setting.



**F**EDERATION houses evolved at the time of Australia's first centenary in 1888 when the country was looking for its own identity in residential architecture.

They proved to be cool homes with their protective skillion verandas, high ceilings and big thermal mass of masonry, and so appropriate for our hot weather.

But their Achilles' heel was an absence of winter comfort, also a lack of natural lighting to the main spaces.

They tended to be dark indoors even in the middle of a sunny winter's day.

So it proved to be quite a challenge when architect Garry Baverstock was asked for a passive solar concept in this Australiana style.

The owner was an environmentalist with a philosophical commitment to saving energy and reducing the greenhouse gases, his interests extending to climate sensible homes.

The federation facade proved highly appropriate for his elevated site in the St Johns Wood estate at Mt Claremont.

Its westerly orientation meant contending with the full blast of summer's hot afternoon sun.

The challenge has been met with small windows and wide veranda in the yesteryear style providing adequate afternoon shade to the whole house.

When the cool afternoon south-westerlies arrive these windows can be opened to cross ventilate the whole house into the evening.

The site was primarily chosen for its good side elevation to the north-east, for collecting the morning sunshine and to achieve a high level of privacy for outdoor living.

A conservatory positioned to the north has solar pergolas with angled louvres to regulate the sunshine, excluding it in summer, but allowing full penetration in winter.

Heat gains in the conservatory in winter are drawn indoors to partly compensate for the off-north orientation.

It is only in extended periods of extreme weather that gas heaters are used at night or the small air-conditioning unit is turned on.

The brief to the architect from the owners incorporated ideas from other homes that had been memorable.

At the same time, the creative visualisation technique was exploited to give the occupants a chance to assess and fulfil their dreams.

The home is two-storey but the overall effect with the steep corrugated roof is of attic like spaces upstairs.

As a result it is not overbearing on neighbours and fits well into the street scene, as though it has been there for more than 100 years.

The wide veranda has the appropriate spaced boarding and the recessed main entry is obvious with the leadlights.

The space seems to explode with entry, the lofty vaulted ceiling reaching to a height of about 7m.

This foyer introduces the warm and beautiful bluegum boarding which extends through so much of the home.

This has a clear finish to highlight the honey tones of the grain and it is secured to a plywood base on concrete so that there is no boom underfoot when walking about in leather shoes.

Double doors off the foyer are flung open for access to the formal sitting and dining areas, rather grand spaces with the ceiling at a high 3.3m and walls an obvious foil for the tallest antiques.

Focal point here is the open fireplace with the marble surround and matching gilt mirror.

The elegance is repeated in the master suite with its big bedroom, walk-through wardrobes and generous, luxury bathroom, where the 3m-wide vanity cupboard has twin basins.

A wide flight of stairs, again in bluegum, leads up to the attic office, a big space with internal windows.

Being directly over the big kitchen and family eating area promotes conversations upstairs-downstairs with busy parents.

This kitchen is enormous by today's standards with about 9m of bench cupboards, including an island unit, and all with polished granite slabs on top.

It relates to a ventilation courtyard to the south, also to the laundry which is more of a utility space.

What would have been an old drawing room is now a big family room, furnished with the equivalent of old club armchairs, in leather of course.



The broad front veranda shades the main entrance and offers a shady spot for relaxation in summer.

The 3.3m-height of the ceiling is emphasised by the perimeter picture rails just above window level.

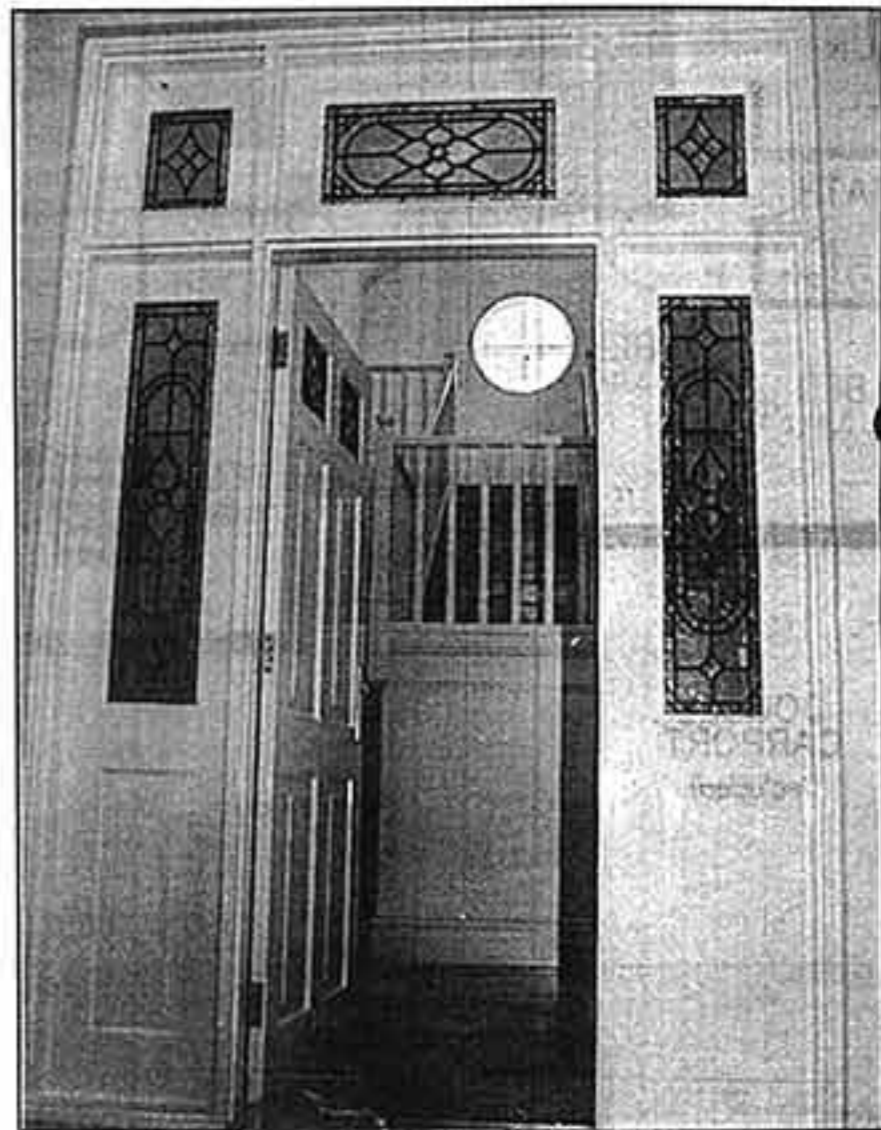
There is a games room to the rear and this in turn gives access to children's bedrooms, all double size.

Their bathroom is about as big as the bedrooms and is finished in the federation style with the half-bonded tiling and dado strips.

An undercroft garage easily takes two cars with space to walk round them.

The house can be seen only by appointment with the architect, Garry Baverstock.

**Frank Platell**



The main entrance leads into a vaulted foyer.