

The West Australian NEW HOMES WEEKLY

Following the sun

By Frank Platell

IT SUGGESTED a very difficult task, to build a passive solar house on an Albany block 45 degrees off the ideal north-south orientation.

There was also a magnificent south-east outlook to exploit, over a nature foreshore to King George Sound, but part obscured by a two-storey neighbour.

The solution lay in establishing an appropriate geometry to allow the shape to take full advantage of the conflicting criteria. Not only were the geometry and technical solutions difficult but there was also the important consideration of privacy.

Architect Garry Baverstock's solution was an angled, stepped design to exploit the natural contour of the site and to gain maximum height for the residence to ensure permanence of the view. The trick lay in the juxtaposition of the spaces at the right floor level and in the right position to exploit the view's potential while maximising the passive solar benefits.

"The clients were aware of the difficulties in such a concept while enjoying the view to the full," said Mr Baverstock. "Their brief specified the importance of the outlook from the kitchen, family and dining areas."

"For that reason these spaces had to be to the front. They saw the lounge as a retreat, where they

ON DISPLAY
Albany
■ Price: On application
■ Address: Norman Place
■ Agent: Garry Baverstock, architect, ph 474 2770
■ Open: By appointment

could relax at night when there was nothing much to see at sea.

"We squared off the facade with the outdoor entertainment areas. This has simplified the aesthetics while achieving a mediterranean feel with a colonnade effect.

"The owners had been in the hospitality business and were very aware of the practicalities of the bathroom and kitchen designs. The principles of passive solar design were integrated into a bold contemporary shape to achieve glazing to 60 per cent of the northern elevation, the recommended proportion required in Albany for the best winter heat gain.

"The positioning of windows and doors to other elevations not only exploited the outlook but allowed the owners to use the cool breezes, or Albany doctor, for summer comfort."

The challenges for the architect included keeping costs under control while coming up with aesthetics appropriate to the near-beach area, for that look of belonging.



The concept has become something of a local benchmark for socially and economically responsible design.

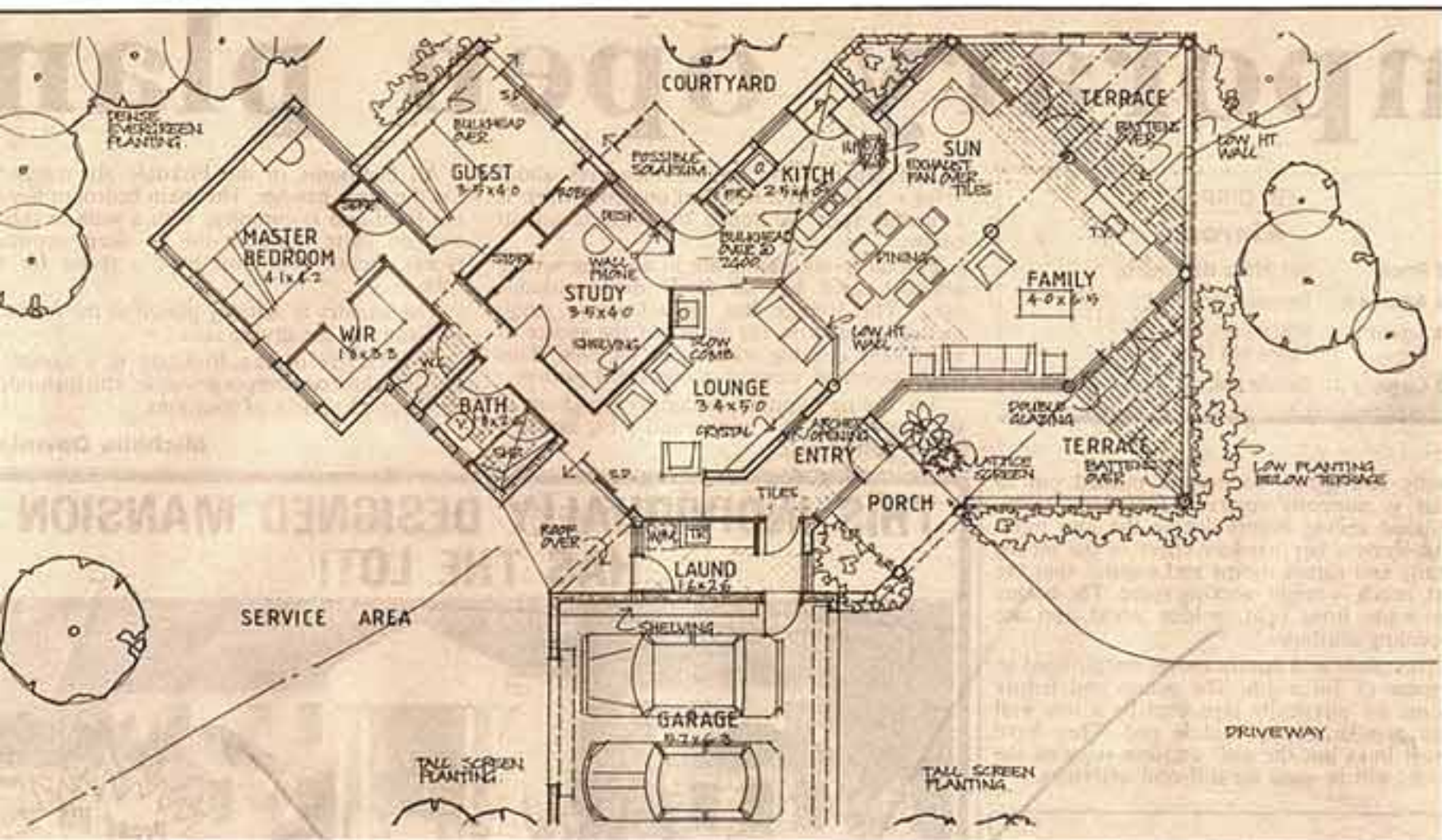
For that reason it was given the Golden Key as overall winner in the recent Albany Homes of the Year, and also took out the prize for best individual design in the \$150,001 to \$200,000 category for builder Peter Boccamazzo. It virtually scooped the pool, the first

time for a passive solar concept in a district contest.

The owners' brief was for a retirement home, also one where they could look after guests in some style. Hence the guest's accommodation, and a study that can accommodate an overnight visitor, or two.

■ Built on passive solar principles, this home in Albany was designed to exploit magnificent views.

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Passive solar success

■ From page one

THE home has been built of clay bricks which have been rendered off white and has a light coloured corrugated metal roof with insulation at the recommended level for Albany.

Pergolas have the specially designed louvres at a 35-degree angle, to full exploit the winter heat while keeping the windows in shade in summer.

The owners have already reported significant energy savings over the winter months, better than 50 per cent compared with a similar-sized, conventional home in the area.

The plan is like three related diamonds to get the desirable north-south orientation. This has been exploited with a series of courtyards, allowing for the alfresco lifestyle for much of the year.

Dining, family and sun areas have been grouped at the front in a relatively open zone overlooked from the kitchen. All have the magnificent view to Middleton Bay.

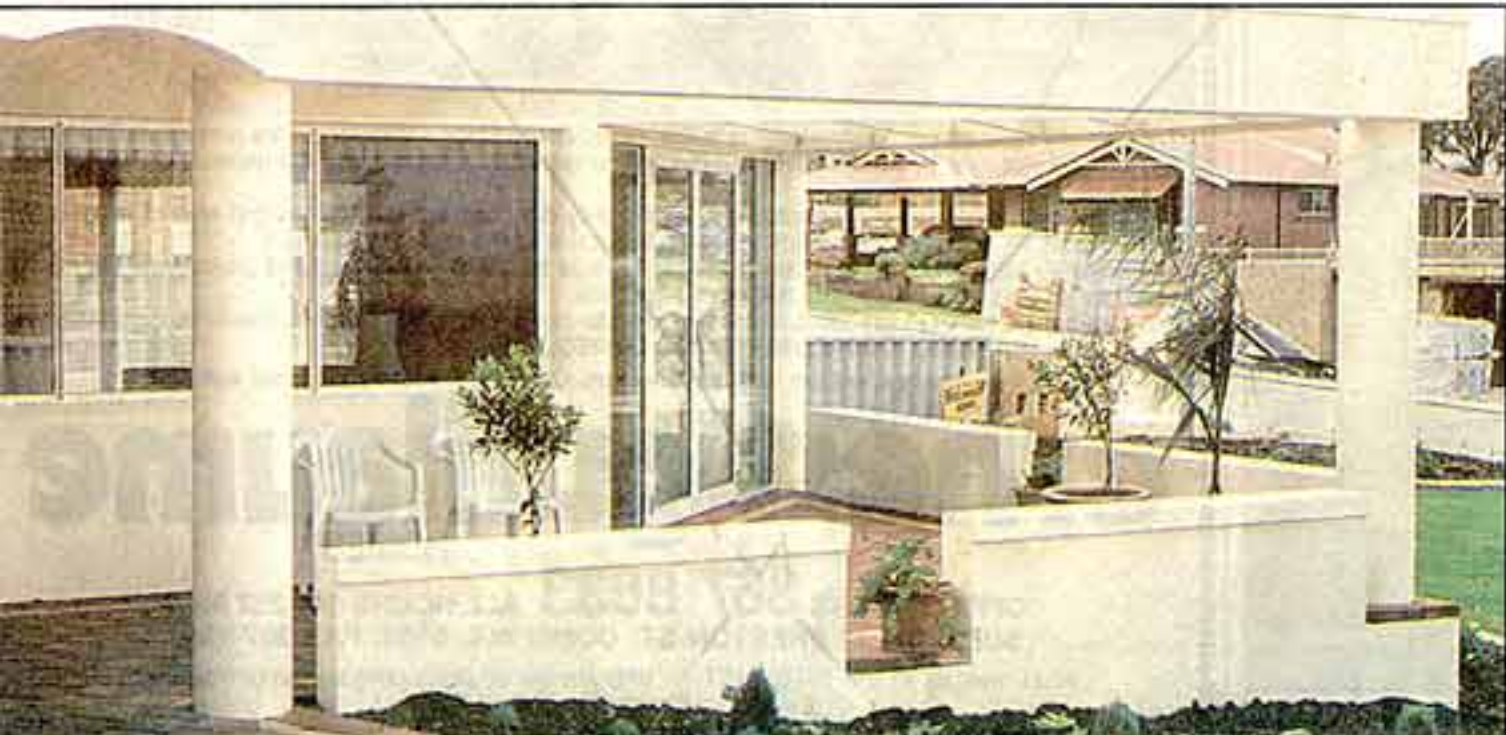
The lounge has been created like an alcove off the family zone, where the busy chef still has control over the comings and goings of active grandchildren at play indoors. Sleeping areas and the utilitarian study are to the rear.

The owners specified only the one bathroom, but taken up-market. A solarium off the kitchen provides supplementary winter heat as well as a conservatory outlook.

The double garage is a drive-through design to get a caravan or boat-trailer into the secure rear garden area.

It has been set well back from the street to make the minimum intrusion to the facade and its pergola character.

The house is not open for inspection but can be seen by appointment with architect Garry Baverstock in Perth.



■ ABOVE: The floor plan shows the architect's distinctive, angled, stepped design.

■ LEFT: The facade is squared off with entertainment areas.

Frank Platell