

NEW HOMES

The heat is off in this hillside haven

By Frank Platell

IT IS possible to have a passive solar home, harmonising with the environment, and still able to exploit an outlook with the worst possible orientation — to the west.

This has been proved with a split-level, two-storey residence exploiting an ocean view from a sloping block on the heights of Buckland Hill.

At the same time there is a good deal of excitement indoors with big spaces, in the handling of normal and reverse bay windows, and in the play on light and shade with clerestory windows to the north.

It has well-defined living areas but still with a flowing space ambience, made possible by 1.75m-high screen walls and the skilful use of the 45-degree angle. The alfresco lifestyle is catered for with an integrated side deck, finished in non-slip striated boards.

The comfortable westerly outlook has been achieved by staggering the glazing for wide bay window effects. The outlook is down over much of Gage Roads with Rottneest squatting on the horizon. Roof overhang has been carefully planned to protect the extensive glazing from summer heat.

This overhang is pronounced to the west, where the covered balcony projects about 2m to shade the minimal glazing until late in the afternoon, when the heat has largely gone out of the summer sun. In mid-December the setting sun sends a shaft of light right through the home.

A bonus with the open planning is the immediate cooling of the house with the arrival of the sea breeze. Because this sou-wester can blow at almost gale force at times, louvres regulate the air flow.

Any accumulated heat in the worst of summer can be dissipated through louvres to the high clerestory windows.

Harmony with the hillside has been achieved with the house exploiting the natural contours for the three levels, and with limestone coloured blocks, a tone complemented by the stone colour of the steep corrugated

ON DISPLAY

Mosman Park

- **Price:** Not applicable
- **Address:** Reversea View
- **Agent:** Baverstock and Associates 474 2770
- **Open:** Contact agent

roofs. An appropriate decorative touch is the mediterranean blue to the wide fascia boards that encircle the residence.

The outlook to sea is almost 180-degrees and it is shared by almost all the living spaces. The wide expanse of water reflects the mood of the day, from the storm-tossed waves of winter to the shimmering surface of a summer afternoon.

The house exploits a public pathway to the side to maximise the northern orientation for sun control. Sunlight penetrates up to 3m indoors in the depth of winter with this orientation.

Tiled floors and masonry walls soak up this winter heat and act as thermal banks, radiating the warmth back into the living spaces at night. Owners previously conditioned to wearing footwear indoors now find that they do not really need them, at any time of the year.

These owners had been alerted to the passive solar benefits in an earlier Mosman Park home which fortunately had been orientated to the north. To maximise this benefit they approached architect Garry Baverstock who, with Rob Shand, came up with the eventual design.

Their brief specified a simple concept with sculptural form, and their accommodation needs. They wanted interesting lines without a square in sight, nor a cube of indoor space.

COMPARED with their earlier semi-passive solar home, the owners have calculated their savings in energy costs as being about 30 per cent. They do not spend a cent on heating or cooling.

The fan comes out only in winter to dissipate the stored warmth right through into the bedrooms on the south side.

Mr Baverstock estimates that the energy savings could be even more significant if compared with a traditional brick and tile home the same size. Over 20 years these savings could amount to tens of thousands of dollars, money that could be spent on other priorities for the family.

He sees the Buckland Hill project as a pointer on what socially responsible and environmentally conscious people can do to significantly improve the quality of their lifestyle, and overall comfort.

The site has a limited frontage and the residence really turns its back on the street to maximise the outlook. The main entry is obvious behind the angled double garage, double doors in a wall of glazing opening to a foyer that introduces the angles and the play on light and shade.

There is a formal lounge and related study to the front and a home-manager's office nook ties in a generous kitchen. The chef gets about 6m of bench cupboards, plus another 3.5m of wall cabinets and there is a real 3m x 1.5m pantry.

The meals area for all occasions goes into a wide bay window that ties in the side deck, and the table setting can be a comfortable 12. Any overflow can be accommodated at the server-cum-snack bar that will seat four on stools, and they still have the view.

The informal living area is related to this space and also integrated with the deck.

The lowest level of the home has the main suite where a partition in the bedroom defines a studio space. Here the full-width bay window facing north is matched by one directly above the family activity room.

Off this activity room is the wide deck, an ideal retreat for watching the setting sun while sipping a gin and tonic, with that slice of lemon floating on the top.



■ ABOVE: This split-level, two-storey residence exploits an ocean view. ■ BELOW: Light and shade create excitement.

