

Glazed, triple-sliding cavity doors open between the living and external garden and the meals/kitchen and outdoor entertaining areas.

for work,  
rest and play

A modern home design allows this young Melbourne family to spend more precious time together



The design brief from these clients was to demolish their existing house and design a new one that, although modern and stylish, would still function well as a home for a young family.

The existing house was solid brick and semi-detached from the house next door — demolition was executed without damage to the neighbouring house. This was an extremely difficult and worrying process as the neighbours were occupying the house.

The original design for the new house's layout was an early morning (still in bed) idea that was scribbled on paper and shown to the owners that day. They loved the concept and worked on it with architecture practice Metroworks Architects, which evolved the design into what it is today.

The owners had planned to work from home in order to encourage an ongoing connection with their young children. As such, they needed a good space to work from that was not too removed from the children's play areas.

This was achieved by locating the study near the living area while creating flexibility in the use of the space by replacing the wall above the built-in desk with multi-folding interior shutters. These allow a visual connection between spaces when the internal shutters are open and privacy to the study when closed.

The family wanted to create a sense of discovery throughout the house despite the open-plan nature of the design. This was achieved at the entry through the use of a low, cantilevered roof leading to a large, pivoting front door. Inside, the stepped floor levels respond directly to the downward slope towards the back of the site, but along with the coffered ceilings define spaces without the use of walls. The first floor is quite separate from the ground floor — primarily due to the location of the stairs towards the front of the house — so maintains privacy.

Michael Hill of Neumode Design & Construction was inspired by a desire to admit as much natural light to the house as possible without being too obvious. Hence highlight windows and high ceilings are used extensively throughout both levels of the house.

The project was also inspired by the clients. "As a young couple with two small children, they were very open to new ideas and excited about the project as a whole," Michael said.

Site orientation was difficult, with north to the front and the long boundaries facing east and west. Despite this challenge, the design has achieved a five- to six-star energy rating through clever use of materials and other design elements, such as the cantilevered first floor, which shades and shelters the large doors below.

The site also provided its own share of inspiration. The slope down to the back of the site was challenging, but also presented an opportunity. It was important that the house maintained its presence without seeming to disappear down the slope. A layered building form was employed to address this challenge and, as a bonus, allowed the use of highlight

glazing throughout the house.

Michael considers many different aspects of the home as his favourite, such as the cantilevered roof over the entry and the large timber-veneered, pivot-entry door. "Together these elements create a stunning and well-defined entrance to the house," Michael says.

Another favourite design element is the glazed, triple-sliding cavity doors between both the living and external garden and the meals/kitchen and outdoor entertaining areas. Walls were specially designed to be thicker to allow the doors to disappear completely into the wall cavity. When open, there is a seamless connection between indoor and outdoor spaces. When closed and with the large amount of glass, they still admit plenty of natural light and expansive views to the garden and pool.

The master bedroom suite for the parents — located at the front of the house — works very well in the home. Contemporary window styles to the north, combined with some unexpected highlight glazing via a raised ceiling line above, send abundant natural light and ventilation into the space. The bedroom also has direct access to and views of the back garden and pool via a semi-private courtyard to the south. A large walk-in robe space is concealed behind the bed and the modern ensuite off to one side is removed from the bedroom space, but remains easily accessible.

Structurally, portal steel frames were used in the home's construction due to the minimal nature of the internal walls. This allowed the creation of large, open living areas.

In the living area, there is level walk-through access from the indoor living area to the outdoor entertaining area, thus creating a seamless indoor-outdoor transition. High ceilings, windows and doors offer an abundance of natural light.

The ground-level floors are fully tiled with in-slab hydronic heating for maximum comfort.

A C-BUS automated lighting system was installed throughout the home while a highlight of the entry is the feature pendant, which enhances the double-storey space.

The family now has the ideal outdoor space to relax in and enjoy — their outdoor entertainment area includes a built-in gas barbecue, wood-fired pizza oven, sink, an in-ground swimming pool with solar heating and a built-in cleaning system that the whole family can enjoy and stone water feature. The area is tiled with Italian tiles to match the interior floor tiles.

"Despite the design challenges, the final project has come together superbly. What may otherwise have been seen as difficulties — the site slope, orientation and adjoining house etc — have instead been turned into design opportunities," Michael says.

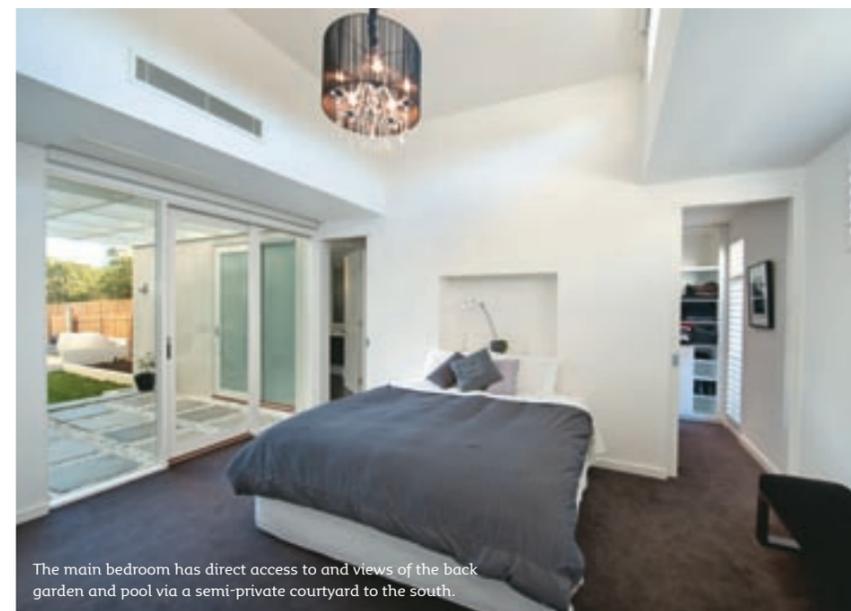
The project was designed by: **Metroworks Architects Pty Ltd** First floor, 141 Victoria Avenue Albert Park Vic 3206 Tel: 03 9690 9661 Email: info@metroworks.com.au Website: www.metroworks.com.au The project was built by: **Neumode Design & Construction Pty Ltd** 60 High Street Glen Iris Vic 3146 Tel: 03 9885 2600 Email: michael@neumode.com.au Website: www.neumode.com.au



The ground-level floors are fully tiled with in-slab hydronic heating for maximum comfort, such as in the living and dining areas.



In the kitchen, one finds 80mm mitred quartz stone benchtops, a Starfire glass splashback and Brindal oak pre-finished veneer on all joinery. Above A 'layered' building form was employed to address the challenge of the site slope.



The main bedroom has direct access to and views of the back garden and pool via a semi-private courtyard to the south.



It was important to maintain a site presence for the house from the street, without it appearing to 'disappear' down the slope.