



Natural attraction

This contemporary home connects to its tropical garden environment via an expansive rear living area and private courtyards

Sometimes ideal locations don't seem quite so perfect when it comes to actually building on them. Negotiating the idiosyncrasies of the land can be a major part of an architect's brief.

The site for this home by Hilary Scully of Architecture Smith + Scully is a case in point.

Nestled into a newly sub-divided suburban plot, the land has a flow path running through the centre of it. The house had to be raised above this to allow water to pass underneath without impediment or causing damage, says Scully.

"We achieved this with a suspended concrete garage floor slab and timber pile construction.

"However, beyond the flow path – towards the back of the home – we were able to step the floor level down. With the ceiling remaining at the same height, this achieved a higher stud for the large rear living pavilion and created a direct rear deck-to-ground connection."

Elsewhere, connections to the lush gardens were made via raised decks and boardwalks.

As this is an inner-city site with several close neighbours, the sheltered side decks provide private outdoor rooms. The clients had wanted to connect with the tropical garden and enjoy the sun from several areas in relative privacy.

Facing page: Character strengths – the exterior of this house by Architecture Smith + Scully contrasts black, banded fibre cement with rich red cedar. The garage door is detailed to not read as a door on approach.

Above and following pages: At the rear, a spacious living-kitchen-dining pavilion opens up to the tropical garden environment. In contrast to this large public space, there is an intimate lounge on the floor above.





Above: The owners wanted a dramatic yet practical kitchen. Features include jet black cabinetry, a contrasting red splashback and a wood island countertop with inset stone for a durable work surface.

Right: Bright bouquet – the wine cellar is off the central laundry. This temperature-controlled room has frosted glass panelling and is back lit to show off the wine collection in the best possible light.



In terms of layout, the home's ground floor has a guest suite and garage at the front and then pinches in at the middle via the two side courtyards. This core area has the wine cellar and laundry. The design opens up to the rear, with large sliders pulling back to connect the large living-kitchen-dining pavilion to the garden.

Upstairs, there are three bedrooms, an ensuite, main bathroom, a private lounge, and a study.

For aesthetics, the owners wanted a sharp, contemporary look. Responding to this, the house has strong, complementary cladding finishes – the cool of black fibre cement sheet with



vertical battens meets the warmth of red cedar vertical weatherboards.

"Despite its relatively modest size, at 300m², the house feels much larger. This is due to vistas through the interior and long views out to the garden and sea, framed by picture windows."

In addition, having courtyards step in on both sides maximises light flow on the interior. "The focus on natural light and multiple external views allows the owners to feel very connected to the natural world," says Scully.

In terms of interior colours, a vibrant red front door greets visitors and they see the same

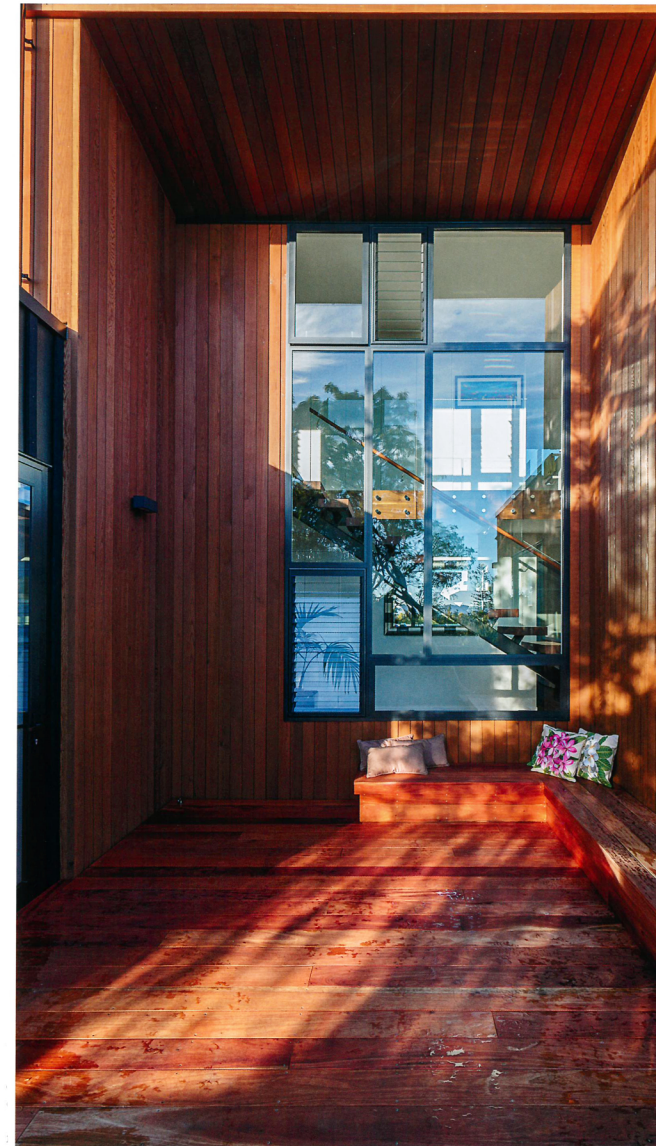
red on the kitchen splashback in the pavilion.

"Generally, the interior is in natural tones with walnut flooring and cabinetry. And there's a feature floating staircase in the same wood. This is accentuated with LED lights rebated on the underside of the treads," says Scully.

Energy efficiency was another design focus for the owners – a large gas fireplace has ducts that run beneath the floor, heating the home.

The house is future-proof, too. The ground floor guest suite is designed with extra wide openings to the entry hall and this could be used as a master bedroom further down the line.

Above: The main upstairs bathroom has a large-format porcelain tile with the look of marble. The shower and bath area take up the width of the room. The black cabinetry seen here, as with black joinery and wood surfaces through the home, complements the lush outdoor environment. The basin faucets, shower and bath hardware and glass shower stall all contribute to the crisp, modern aesthetic.



Architect: Architecture Smith + Scully; project team: Hilary Scully, Sasha Hendr Craig Jansen and Carolyn Smith

Interior designer: Kerry McComish
Landscape designers: Jane Kordina and Alan Gibson

Kitchen manufacturer: Huntly Joinery
Cladding: Red cedar vertical weatherboards from Herman Pacific; fibre cement sheet with battens

Window/joinery: Architectural & Metro Series joinery from APL Windowmakers

Main flooring: American Walnut Rustic from Vienna Woods

Tiles: Designa Tiles

Heating: Rinnai gas external infinity water heater; Escea DX 1500 fireplace with ducting; Warm-up undertile heating

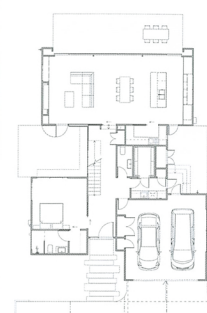
Lighting: Lighthouse North Shore

Furniture: Danske Mobler

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Story by Charles Moxham

Photography by Mark Scowen



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Facing page and left: The home's feature walnut, floating staircase is also enjoyed from the outside. LED lights under the stair treads are also used in the sheltered, private courtyard for under-bench lighting.

Above: Narrow-waisted – the ground floor plan shows how the courtyards step in at the middle of the design. These sheltered outdoor spaces connect to nature, offer shelter from the elements, and optimise natural light penetration into the interior.