

Iconic Design

Vibe Design Group have met the challenge of creating two individual homes that occupy the same site. Both abodes are award winning projects in their own right and display all the hallmarks of Vibe's ingenious design principles.





Kew House 1

Located in Melbourne's leafy Eastern Suburbs this carefully crafted house sits on a high profile site on the Yarra Boulevard. The home recently won Best Interior Design and Best Use of Glass in the Building Design industries converted BDAV Design Awards in 2008.

The client brief was for the development of two dwellings on one lot. The homes were required to command an individual presence within the streetscape and stand alone as a single residence both physically and aesthetically when later sub-divided. The land area available to this residence was 372m² with a 1.8m easement running the length of the western boundary. The brief called for three bedrooms and two separate living areas. Over and above standard Rescode requirements, the residence required compliance with additional design guidelines for setbacks and site coverage enforced by local council. The design response necessitated a three storey residence where the upper storeys are accommodated within the bold tapering shape. The result is a site responsive home that makes a significant statement from any angle.

The entry to the home sits behind a stunning sculptured bluestone feature. Once inside, the horizontality of the timber battened fin exaggerates the length of the main living area and pierces the ceiling to create the upper storey balustrade. Running the entire length of the mid level is the main living area which is afforded framed views over Studley Park while still opening seamlessly onto the north facing entertaining area and swimming pool. A hidden doorway within the timber horizontal feature wall reveals the ascending staircase to the master bedroom above. Accommodated on the lower level is the double garage, two bedrooms and rumpus, which doubles as a theatre room and has external access to a private terrace.

The combination of exterior finishes, sculptured entry, subtle cantilevers and awnings soften the three storey proportions to the streetscape.

Sustainability is assured with careful selection of material and components such as thermally broken aluminium windows and

5000 litre water storage enabled for grey water and pool top-up. All other exterior products have been selected for their aesthetic appeal coupled with design and maintenance longevity.

The plan includes surprise elements such as the concealed butler's pantry and the hidden entry to the upper level bedroom. A neutral colour palette is employed throughout, with varying textures and high quality finishes defining the functions of the zones, creating a boutique-like feel throughout.

Considered space planning and orientation of furniture ensure that this open plan interior is thoughtfully zoned, and allows for the creation of intimate spaces. "This is a well resolved interior which shows restraint and great attention to detail" said the judging panel at the Building Design Awards in 2008.

The project also won the Most Effective Use of Glass Award. Glass has been used in a purely decorative manner to line the walls of the entry, providing textural contrast. A simple and cleanly detailed glass roof above the entry is a feature, without being a distraction. The use of glass lends interest and gives a sense of lightness to the building.

This is a home that will outlast current design trends and will be a design icon in the area for years to come.

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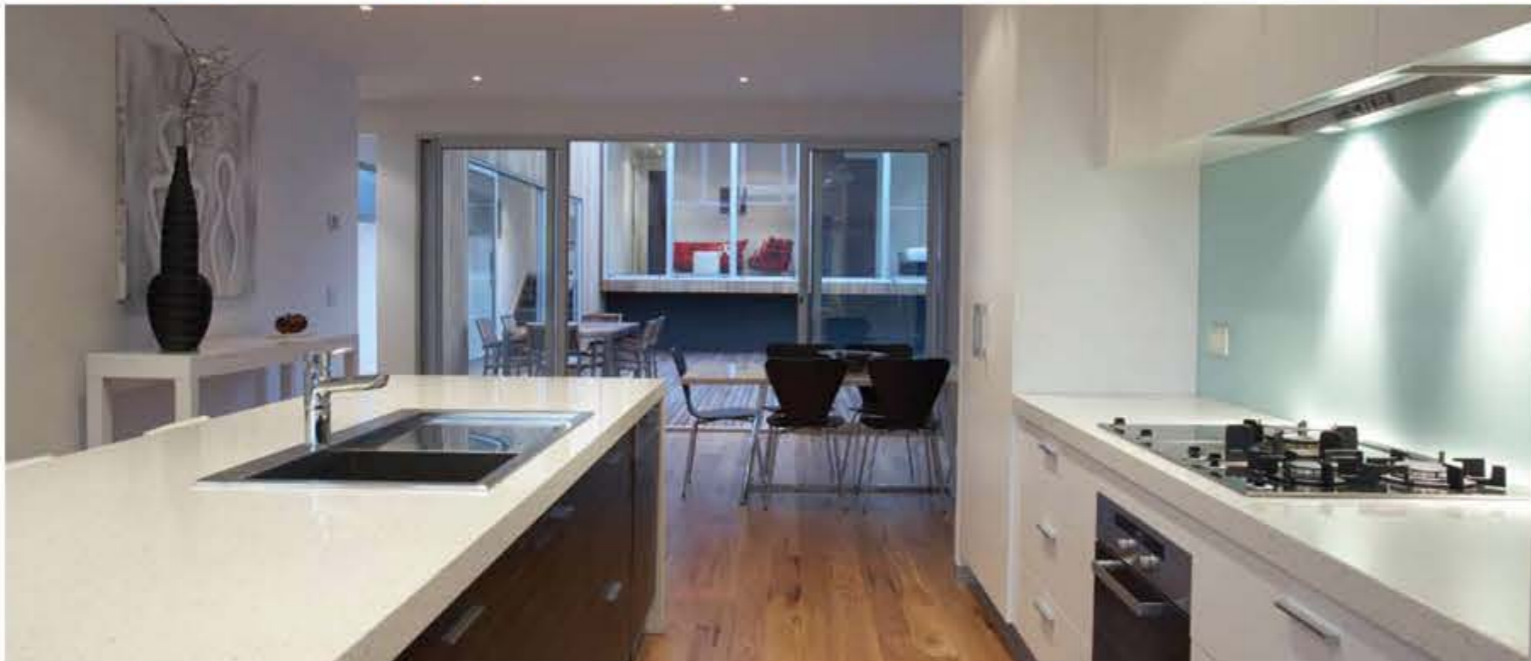
551 Burwood Road
Hawthorn VIC 3122
Telephone: 1800 188 056
www.vibedesign.com.au

Photography by Robert Hamer





Kew House 2



In contrast to the Kew House 1, the Silvertop Ash timber and copper cladding were selected for their ability to change and evolve over time. The Silvertop Ash will fade to grey and be in true harmony with the surrounding gums and natural vegetation. No other product offered such longevity, style and balance.

The judges unanimously agreed that Kew House 2 was the most outstanding entry, and awarded Design of the Year, at the 2008 BDAV Building Design Awards.

The client brief was for the development of two dwellings on a lot. The homes were required to command an individual presence within the streetscape, and stand alone as single residences both physically and aesthetically when later sub-divided.

Although both homes have been designed to be entirely individual from every aspect. Everything from the distinctive form through to interior function and livability are exclusive of each other. However the exterior facades and streetscape compliment each other with their timeless modern form and will remain appealing in years to come.

The designers have challenged the viewer to re-evaluate their expectations as to what a residence should look like. They have designed a building using simple intersecting geometries, creating powerful visual tensions that generate a striking and sculptural form. The structure is not evident, yet the presence of the dominant cantilever establishes the character of the project. Entry to the first floor is through a canyon of timber and copper, carved out from the formal geometry of the building.

The interior layout is minimal, efficient, well oriented and connected into the site contours through a series of level changes. The building wraps around a timber decked courtyard with a small swimming pool. Discretely fenced off with a transparent glass, the pool provides a splash of colour. The use of a limited palette of materials both internally and externally shows

controlled restraint and supports the essential design aesthetic. The use of Silvertop Ash timber linings as the exterior cladding is both bold and dramatic, contributing to the expression of the exterior. The building's consistent narrative of context and form, expressed through geometry and tectonic strength, functional planning and materials palette, make it worthy of the major award it received.

The project also won the category of 'Most Effective use of Timber'. The designers have made good use of a steeply sloping site with a design that is not only practical, but breathtaking. Timber has been selected and used extensively throughout, from the front façade walls to the impressive entry stairwell. The Silvertop Ash, which is used to line the majority of the dwelling, will eventually fade to grey and blend with the surrounding gums and natural vegetation. The central timber deck entertainment area and pool surround becomes a natural extension to the polished internal floorboards. Timber has provided a warm living experience, inside and out.

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