

## SHIMMERING SURPRISE

The Shimmering House prototypes the most details, took the most risks and produced the most striking result of all the projects Steele Associates Construction has built over the years. This building breaks all the rules and does so beautifully. The off-form concrete swimming pool projects towards the street, its glass bottom casting dappled blue light over the entry path.

This steeply sloping site had limited access on a busy blind corner, blocked by a massive fig tree, while neighbouring structures bearing upon the land added a further challenge.

Structural elements are exposed and detailed intricately to create a robust yet elegant aesthetic. Form-ply over exposed joists, face blockwork, a honed concrete cantilevered kitchen bench and chalkboard joinery in the kitchen and dining room are juxtaposed by the warm glow of gold leaf-fronted cupboard doors running the length of the rear wall.

With a fabulous open-plan layout and oversized sliding doors connecting the dining room and living room to the outdoors, this home retains a wonderful cool breeze during summer. In winter, meanwhile, the double glazing and low-E glass, combined with gas hydronic heating, turns what would normally be cold concrete into toasty warm floors that invite you to slip off your shoes and enjoy the comfort of the dining room fireplace or rest in the living room while overlooking the park.

A 24-metre-long steel truss provides rhythm to the upper corridor and cantilevers the master bedroom six metres towards the street. The living room below opens fully to park views with a column-free corner, thanks to the truss above.

The exposed vertical truss, with glass infill, transforms the lift shaft into a sculpture at the heart of this bold family home, bringing a grand scale to the building.

Bead-blasted stainless steel clads the garage door and bin store door; its sleek, subtle texture complements both the smooth off-form concrete and rough-hewn sandstone.

A striking 300-kilogram steel entry gate, swinging easily on a stainless-steel pivot, is bathed in light from the glass-panelled pool floor.

While the home's orientation is south-west, the abundance of windows on the northwest side, combined with custom-designed operable brass shutters and fans in all the bedrooms, gives absolute flexibility. Occupants

can control solar access, views, breezes and privacy, which equates to efficient heating and cooling of the home as required in any season. The efficient steel structure allows maximum opening sizes, providing natural light and ventilation in abundance.

The home was fitted with 4.2kw solar panels, which currently produce enough energy for the owners to sell the excess back to the grid.

Creative internal lining use included the use of BC-grade plywood with environmentally sound use of oil finishes rather than high-VOC finishes and sealed fibre cement sheeting in the bathroom in lieu of tiles.

External finishes were pared back with the use of unsealed bare stone finishes and straight unfinished renders in clean natural tones.

The existing pool was cleverly turned into the current 40,000-litre rainwater tank, which was built and set up at the beginning of the project. This allowed for the extensive use of rainwater on-site for the project team's use for basic amenities and site cleaning.

The rainwater tank was also used to fill the pool and now supplies water to all toilets, external taps and washing machine. All the while, the gas hydronics provide cost-effective hot water as well as heating the pool. All shower heads, toilets and tapware achieve a minimum four-star rating.

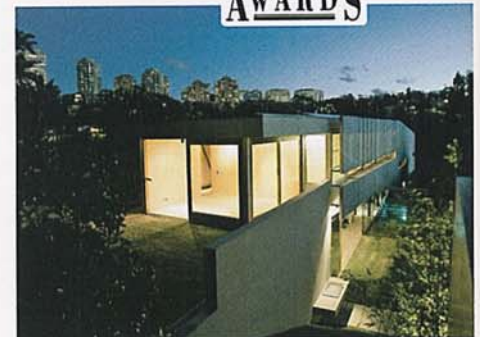
As a carbon-neutral company, Steele Associates went to great effort to reduce waste on-site and to utilise environmentally conscious products, including building the solid off-form concrete kitchen bench and pool out of Envirocrete Greenstar concrete and the use of low-E glass throughout.

Steele Associates pushed to use Greenstar concrete throughout the building and created an opportunity for the industry to explore and implement the polishing of Greenstar concrete with great success. This was well worth the challenge the project team faced as it shows the possibilities of incorporating this product easily into future products.

Demolition was completed by hand in order to ensure that the majority of the materials were recycled or reused.

On site, bricks were cleaned and reused and sandstone was reused in the façade. Existing steel, timber and tiles were reused on other project sites as well as the reuse of whitegoods to set up new project site facilities.

Stainless-steel framing and operable



mechanisms allowed Steele Associates to create a prototypical operable screen system of bronze mesh panels, which form a shimmering skin imbuing the building with refined elegance, making this a landmark building.

Steele Associates Construction has a reputation for delivering high-quality work on time and to budget for new residences, heritage restorations, major renovations, apartment complex refurbishments and commercial fitouts.

**JUDGES' COMMENTS:** This home breaks all the rules and does it with style. Off-form concrete greets you at the main entry door with a glass-bottom swimming pool above. The construction is more of an engineering feat than anything else, with huge steel trusses running the full depth of the home on both sides. The finishes generally are of an industrial nature but are carried out to a high level of detail. A wonderful entry and a worthy winner.

### STEELE ASSOCIATES CONSTRUCTION

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