

## home

1 Every vertical dimension is based on the sandstone coursing. The "blades" lies in the sandstone base and supports the outside construction — a combination of solidly and lighter curved elements.

2 Caroline Pidcock, architect.

3 The garage at the end of the driveway is more rectilinear to the street, as is the entry pavilion at the top of the stairs. Rendered brickwork was painted in Dulux "Plateau Grey" mineral acrylic.



# Bricks and stones

From red-brick to sandstone, this family home has been transformed, writes **Babette Hayes**.

MORE often than not a difficult site will inspire an architect to come up with innovative design concepts in the search of the best solution for his or her clients. Wanting to make the most of the Manly harbour views and the ocean beyond, the owners of this house carefully researched the architectural scene.

"We had been living in the old house for some three years, getting to know where the winds came from, the way the sun moved," they say. "After deciding it was time to build, we had consulted and interviewed five architects and commissioned two to come up with schematic designs, one of whom was Caroline Pidcock. We wanted her to maximise the view to the east and connect the house to the land."

The site was steep, rocky, long and narrow with views to the narrow boundary to the east. Most particularly, they wanted to be able to enjoy water views from every room in the house — therein lay the challenge. Views from every room? How could that be achieved?

"I was playing around with the different levels and trying to maximise the siting of the house to the northern exposure. That, together with the need to include sun and winds, is how the curve evolved," Pidcock says.

Originally the general focus had been on making the

most of the view from the front of the house, but she wanted to carry the views right through the building.

"The original red brick, 1940s house sat forward and down towards the street," she says. "Building the house [all of the 400 square metres including a garage] uphill and back allowed us to connect beautifully to the backyard, the rocks and bush, which now flow on from the upper bedroom stores. There was a lot of work in getting the geometry right which meant orientating most of the facade to the north."

The house has a sandstone skin," Pidcock says. "All the curves are glass or glass mosaic-clad volumes. The curve allows all the north easterly winds to be brought right through the house, and provides shade and ventilation."

To get the arc to work she had to find a point from which to draw the curve, which ended up being on the limit of the boundary. "We made it a little bit tighter than we had planned so the builders would be able to get a set-out point on the property," Pidcock says.

Seen from the street, the house presents an elegant series of geometrical, angled interlocking forms with no hint of the curved structure at the back.

Water is the first thing one sees as one arrives into the belly of the house. Framed in cobalt blue mosaic tiles, the pool runs directly off the curved glass wall of the gallery-like entry space that connects front to back. It's a pivotal visual point, separating yet connecting the formal living areas on the right looking towards the harbour, and the kitchen, eating, living, playing areas, which stretch down to the left. Straight ahead lie the pool and courtyard, with a staircase leading up to the rock shelving and bush garden.

The water is level with the paved inner courtyard, well protected from breezes, gently flowing down one side wall towards the deep, curved planter beds which step down to the garage and the guest suite at the entry level.

The other important thing, she says, was to have a big open space. "But for happy families and thermal reasons, I think it's good to be able to close off spaces. That is why we have the huge sliding doors to the stairs and formal dining [area], another one to the study off the adult sitting room, and the wide pivoting door from the formal dining [area] to the kitchen."

For cross-ventilation, there are rows of louvered windows set above the curved wall of glass doors in the



living room space with another row along the top of the upper level corridor, along the western wall upstairs, emphasising the curve and flow of the design. In addition, the three bedrooms have painted wooden louvres above the doors. The owners emphasise that the use of sandstone and natural materials was important.

"We were conscious at the time a modern home can be cold and unwelcoming. The longer we are here the more we think it's a fantastic house to live in."

The house has just won the Manly Council Design Award for 2000.

4 Pidcock played around with different levels to maximise the northern exposure.

5 The galley kitchen has a walk-in pantry at one end and large laundry at the other with an island breakfast bench in the middle. Papyrus bar stools from Design Warehouse, \$360 4144. The up-stand in birdseye maple with

white double rolled glass splashback is from Flat Glass Industries, 9824 0999. Joinery by Andrew's Custom Kitchens, 9319 3999, cabinets in Dulux "White Birch" polyurethane. Benchtops are "Bianco Capri" from Granite and Marble Works, 9690 2277.

6 The sitting room opens out to a terrace looking towards Manly.



Norman and Quaine Hudson sofa (in Royston House "Piazza") and armchairs (in Designer's Guild "Canariggio"); fabric from Eurotex, 9990 2117. Scatter cushions and white vase from Mosmania, 9969 7467. Chanel table lamp and the Pick Up chaise from Design Warehouse, \$360 4144. Square white glass Olin coffee table

from Norman and Quaine, 9212 3542. Sideboard designed by Caroline Pidcock.

7 The dining area has views along the length of the house to the courtyard and harbour. Wall in Dulux "Grape Hyacinth". Curved sliding windows from Award Architectural Aluminium, 4388 2111.

Photos: Murray Fredericks

## THE AIM

To have a view from all the rooms and we wanted the house to fit with the surroundings.

## HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?

The actual building took 15 months.

## WHAT WOULD THE OWNER DO DIFFERENTLY?

Nothing. We had a great run.

## FEATURE THE OWNERS ARE HAPPIEST WITH

The way Caroline has achieved the goals of getting views and sun to all living and bedroom areas,

the way the house connects from inside to outside on all levels, and the pool works with it all.

## INSIDER TIPS

Spend a lot of time planning it, getting it to work. Don't restrict yourself with deadlines.

## ARCHITECT

Caroline Pidcock, Caroline Pidcock Architects, 9690 3166.

## BUILDER

Sandik Constructions, 9557 7211.

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