



HAWTHORN COURTYARD HOUSE

■ A PRIVATE RETREAT
WITH MOTHER NATURE
AT ITS HEART

When Mat Elkan, designer of Courtyard House, Hawthorn, saw the site's glass panels – weighing a massive 250 kilos each – being lifted in, he had what you might call 'a moment'. "The owner didn't want to be here when the glass was being lifted in and I think I sent her a text that said, 'this is pretty awesome, you have to get down here!'"

The project was a four-year undertaking between Mat and his client. "The first time I came here I felt like I wasn't in Hawthorn. I felt like I was somewhere way outside the city, purely because of the landscape and the gum trees that were sort of scattered around the site. That was one thing

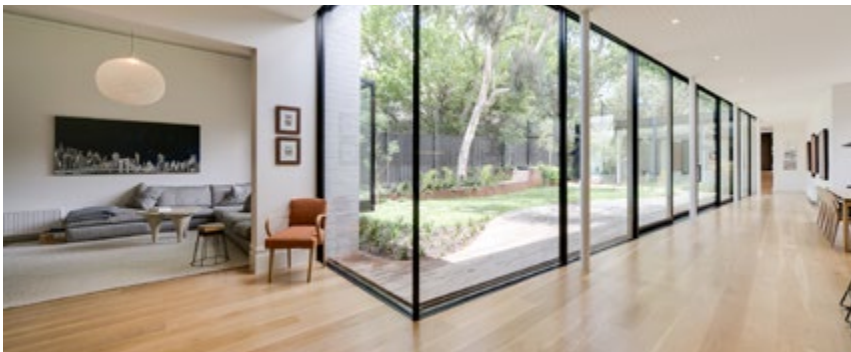
that really amazed me...I suggested that we should do something fairly minimalist that doesn't clash with the old house and just try to bring the garden inside."

The centrepiece of Mat's design is a beautifully landscaped central courtyard, overlooked by the kitchen, dining area and informal lounge area. Mat and his clients agreed on the use of massive panes of glass that maximise the views and create a seamless transition from inside to out. "The dimensions [of the glass] are around about two metres wide by 3.3 metres high and they run up past the ceiling which is three metres high."

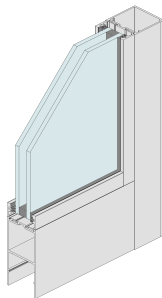
Mat enlisted the help of local fabricators, Creative Windows, at a very early stage of the project. The goal was to establish exactly how big the windows could be while retaining functionality and durability. "It's really important to have that input from people that actually work with the product to make sure that what's being designed is actually going to work and work well. I really like the AWS windows. For a commercial window system, I think they're quite well-refined and really suitable for use in a domestic application."

The result is a stunning, light-filled home that perfectly blends period architecture with contemporary form and function, and gives the owners a sense of absolute connection to the great outdoors. "If I had to describe the project to someone, the first thing I'd think of is probably that it was fun. It was just a great privilege to be involved in."

For more information & the full gallery, visit:
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Building Designer: Mat Elkan of Simatrik Design. Builder: DevlinMees Builders



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