MODERN GREEN HOMES

Sanctuary

ISSUE 71

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OFF *the* PLAN

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One roof, three generations

DESIGNER
Vanessa Wegner Architect

BUILDER
MJ Minard

PROJECT TYPE
New-build dual residence

LOCATION
Epping, NSW (Wallumedegal Country)

SIZE
380m² total

WORDS
Jacinta Cleary

PHOTOGRAPHY
Tom Ferguson

On a sloping suburban block in north-west Sydney, architect Vanessa Wegner has designed a dual residence that allows three generations of one family to live together – independently, but closely connected.

The design includes a two-storey home for a young family – Claire and Allister and their kids – with an adjoining self-contained two-bedroom apartment for Allister's parents Geoffrey and Narelle along the eastern side.

"The older couple didn't want a granny flat; they wanted something more generous, with privacy and their own front door, but shared spaces too," says Vanessa. A shared entry to the building leads to an internal courtyard and two separate front doors, while a large backyard and natural swimming pool, fed by large rainwater tanks, provide communal space for the three generations to socialise.

Accessibility was a key consideration: the grandparents' home is all on one level, with wide doors, grab rails in the bathrooms and easy access to the garden via both stairs and a ramp. While not designed to be converted into two separately titled dwellings in future, the layout offers flexibility: the apartment could one day become a home base for teenagers or extended family, or rented out. "The project is very tightly designed," says Vanessa. "The bathrooms are compact, and the main bedrooms aren't large. We prioritised space in the areas that count, like the kitchens and living rooms. There's not a lot of space given to circulation."

Passive solar design, a thermally efficient concrete slab and block walls, cross ventilation through high-level



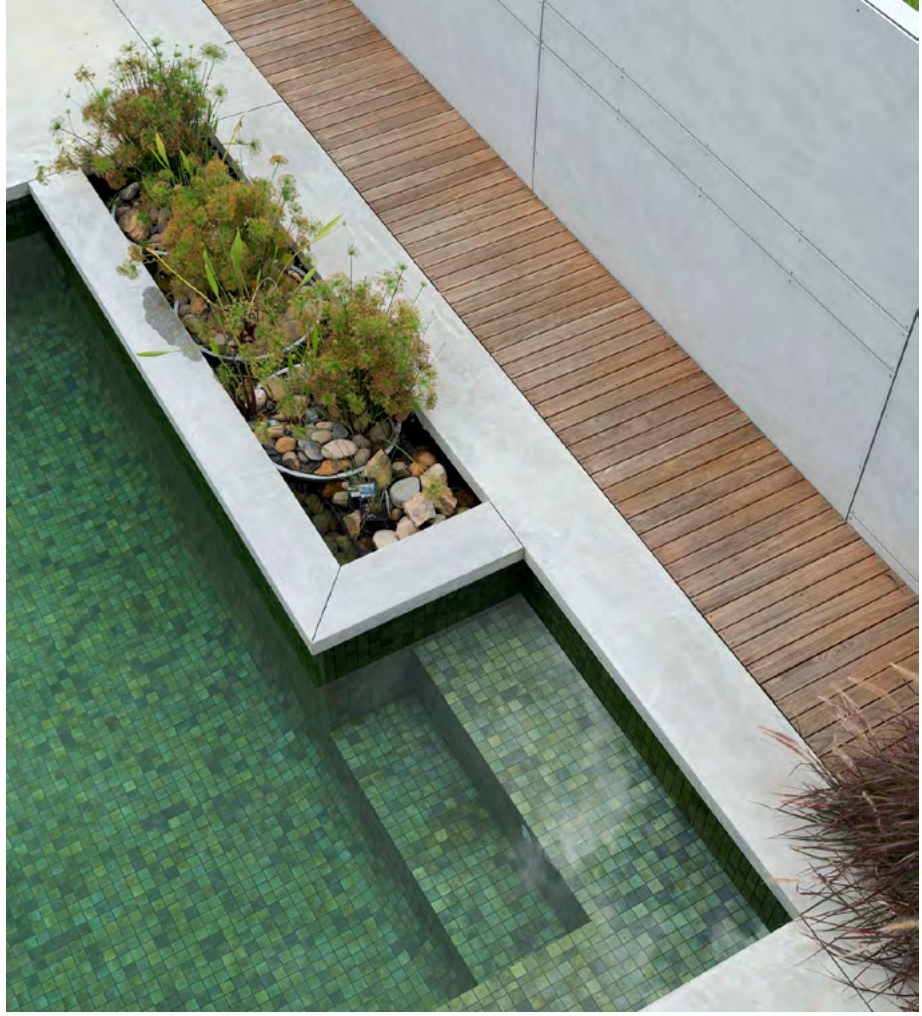
Facing page From the street, you'd never guess that this home contains two separate dwellings. **Bottom** The land slopes down to the rear, allowing Claire and Allister's living spaces to be tucked underneath their bedrooms and the grandparents' apartment, which together occupy the entry level. The three generations share the back garden. **Left** Narelle and Geoffrey's living area opens onto a private balcony with a green outlook. **Below** Downstairs, this window seat is one of Claire's favourite spots.





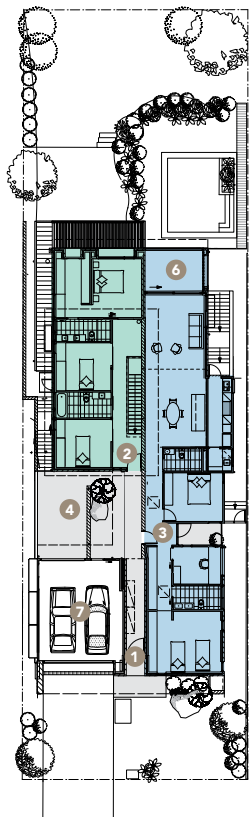
louvres, and rooftop solar with battery storage all help keep energy use low. Allister says they rarely use air conditioning, turning on ceiling fans instead.

Integrated living makes life easier for the family in many ways, including the joy of easily sharing a meal rather than driving to each other's homes for dinner. "We can help Narelle and Geoffrey with whatever they need, and they help with the kids when Claire and I go out," says Allister. "Our kids are very close with their grandparents now, as they see them just about every day. At least once a week my daughter says, 'can I go up to UmMa's to say good morning?' and we will find them sharing breakfast and drawing or colouring in something and chatting away." S

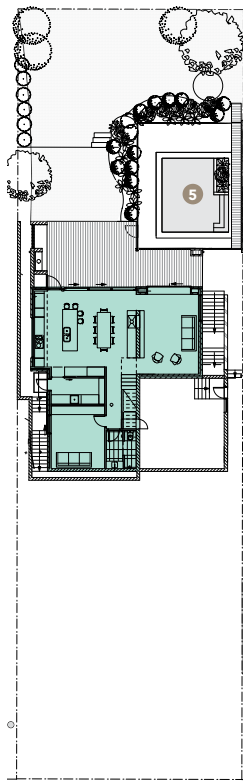


Right The family's shared swimming pool is an inviting natural one with a plant-based filtration system.

GROUND FLOOR PLAN



LOWER FLOOR PLAN





LEGEND

- Family house
- Grandparents' apartment

1. Shared entry
2. Family house entry
3. Grandparents' apartment entry
4. Shared courtyard
5. Natural swimming pool
6. Balcony
7. Garage