

PERCHED ON A CLIFF

BRIAN MEYERSON ARCHITECTS PTY LTD

Designed by Brian Meyerson Architects, this house occupies a unique site overlooking the Pacific Ocean. While the site is breathtaking, the original late-1970's home was less impressive. "It was a project-style home. It didn't relate to the ocean. It really could have been built anywhere," says architect Brian Meyerson.

The current design was the result of a limited competition among the local architects. The brief to all four practices was to retain as much of the original home as possible, space for three cars and a lap pool. The clients also wanted the renovation to not only relate to the ocean, but also to evoke a sense of serenity and isolation, though located in a built-up area.

Instead of the house screaming for attention from the street, it is well concealed on the battleship-shaped site. Approached by a laneway, the entrance features a boardwalk-style path leading through the house to the pool and ocean in the distance. "The further you enter the house, the more the views to the ocean open up," says

Meyerson. The first floor of the house consists of garaging for three cars, a combined dining and living area overlooking the pool, an enclosed courtyard and a pavilion beyond, used for a gymnasium. On the first floor are bedrooms and a small studio. "The pavilion provides shelter to the courtyard. But it also creates privacy from a neighbouring home," says Meyerson. "In this space, you feel as though you're in a helicopter. There's an 80-metre drop to the ocean," he adds.

While some of the original walls and floors were retained in the renovation, the design reads as a completely new house. With deep eaves for sunlight protection and generous glass walls, there is little connection to the original 1970's home. A generous bank of boarded-glass windows covering the breadth of the kitchen and living areas cools the house on warmer days. Wind carries moisture from the lap pool to the open-plan spaces. As Meyerson says, "We tucked the lap pool right up against the edge of the house so the sound of water can also be appreciated from the living spaces".

