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THE DAILY NEWS PROPERTY & PLACES

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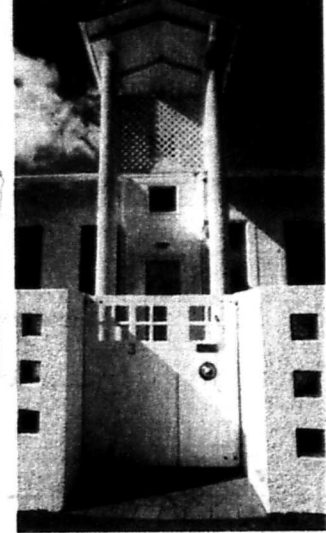
PRIVATE: Brick-capped walls lead down from the double garage to 3 Victoria Rd's decking and landscaped gardens.



BATHROOM: The intense blue was a custom mix by Wendy Boulter nine years ago but works well with today's trends.



KITCHEN: A smart design includes integrated appliances and a granite-top island bench. Huge dining area lies adjacent.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Clerestory roof is as dramatic inside as it is outside. Double glazing holds warmth in.

NP home's designer roof draws the eye

Story: MIKE SHAW
Photos: MARK TAYLOR

THE DRAMATIC renovation was completed nine years ago, but Wendy and Murray Boulter's New Plymouth home is still a magnet for passing eyes.

The clerestory roof running the length of the house, supported at the front by a pair of towering textured pillars, immediately identifies this property at 3 Victoria Rd. It was a unique and attractive design innovation then and looks just as good today.

The feature was created as part of the architectural redesign of this property but few people have been aware of the work that transformed this home inside to an equal degree. It's much more than a face-lift.

Step inside the front door, and that clerestory roof makes an even stronger statement. The ceiling rises metres above the visitor and the row of windows each side allows light to fill the hallway. And walking through the home reveals a stylish living environment.

Looks, light and location were the driving influences behind the changes that have made it a notable residence close to the city.

That very closeness attracted Wendy and Murray nine years ago. "Prior to my marriage, I lived within walking distance of Cathedral Square in Christchurch and, although I have lived in 'suburbia', I prefer the hustle and bustle of a city," Wendy explained.



That city life is not far away. The bottom of Victoria Rd is only a few minutes' stroll down Carrington St to the centre of New Plymouth. "We are within walking distance of the foreshore, library . . . everything. It's great," said Wendy.

A sale of this home will not take the couple out of reach of the city . . . they will be one address closer. A very original villa next door caught their attention and they have initiated a total period renovation there and will shortly move into that property.

Wendy and Murray found the 3 Victoria Rd property nine years ago when looking for a home with that extra close relationship with the city. "There were not the building sites in the central city, so we thought it was worth spending the money on it," she said.

The turn-of-last-century Victorian villa lacked a street presence, however, and a strong focus was placed on giving it a visual impact.

Little expense was spared in reshaping the home and property. Textured walls replaced the weatherboard exterior and aluminium joinery and subtle use of glass brought the image into the modern era. The clerestory roof topped off the development.

Double garaging was built just around the corner in Gilbert St with street-level access and a spacious studio or workshop space beneath it. Landscaped grounds link the garage and studio to the sunny deck and rear access to the house.

A walled street boundary provides a high level of

security and privacy. Glass blocks set into the wall at the front gate are a designer touch.

The interior changed with the help of Wendy's considerable interior design skills. As an independent design consultant, she has worked on many other homes and focused that experience on her own home, working with an architect to create the final harmony of space and convenience.

The taller stud height was retained for the spaciousness it provided and new services were designed and set in place.

A sophisticated high-gloss kitchen with a granite-topped island bench holds pride of place on the sunny morning side of the home. Its windows look out onto the deck built out over the rear grounds — a superb spot to relax with a coffee in the morning or glass of wine in the evening. A sunroom or second lounge, featuring terracotta tiled floors, lies adjacent to the kitchen and opens on to the deck.

A generous bathroom mixes tradition with a bold future. In the middle of the room stands a restored clawfoot porcelain and cast-iron bath. White tiles line part-way up the walls, offsetting the black-and-white chequered effect of the floor tiles.

The rest of the bathroom walls are an intense blue — the result of Wendy's own custom approach. "I mixed the paint myself," she explained, "adding purple to produce a violet blue colour."

"That was adventurous at the time, she admits. "No-one had done colour like that then."

With the current trend to increased colour in our homes, the room is up-to-the-minute in its presentation.

Wendy introduced more colour to the front bedroom, choosing an apple green for its freshness,

but opted to finish the master bedroom in a soft soothing neutral cream. A large walk-in wardrobe and en-suite bathroom completes the master suite.

One of the largest rooms in this home is the dining room . . . a feature Wendy says could well be changed into extra living space. "It's a huge dining room but it could easily be the lounge — and the lounge next door could become the third bedroom upstairs."

Upstairs? At that point, you find out that below this home is a three-bedroom self-contained flat, which on inspection proves to be almost as comfortable as the main quarters above. There's a kitchen-dining-lounge room and bathroom and laundry facilities.

While Wendy and Murray have previously rented out the lower level — it enjoys its own street access — the extra area makes this residence potentially a six-bedroom home. "There is no access at the moment but we do have plans available to create and internal access," she said.

The quality of the renovation and its unique features make 3 Victoria St a special property, says Harcourts consultant Jack Kurta, who is marketing the home for the Boulters.

"As an architecturally different home with its own unique appeal, it's created a lot of interest," he said. "It's an inner-city dwelling with images of Parnell and would suit a variety of needs."

"It's been designed for an income but would also satisfy a couple with an extended family or regular overseas visitors."

Jack is hosting an open home at 3 Victoria Rd tomorrow between 1pm and 1.45pm.

● Price: Negotiating range \$260,000-\$300,000. Marketed by Harcourts in New Plymouth.

