

01 Tallowood and off-form concrete are used throughout the home, as seen in the kitchen's cantilevered bench.

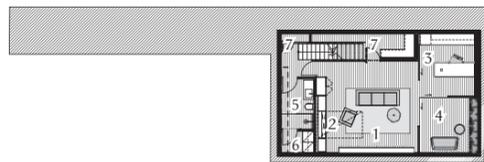
# BUILDER'S FINESSE

• SCHULBERG DEMKIW ARCHITECTS •

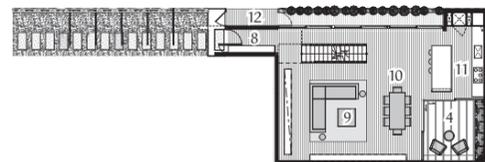
When a builder, in concert with an architect, turns their hand to crafting their own home, the result is a light-filled house that is sculptural and refined.

Words by Lara Brown  
Photography by Derek Swalwell

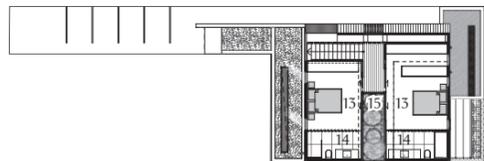




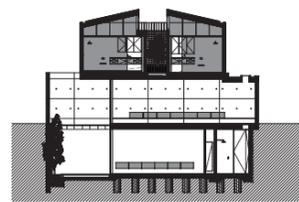
Basement 1:400



Ground floor 1:400

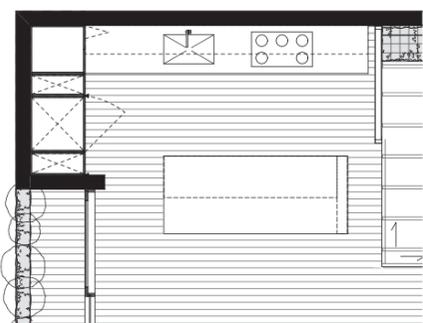


First floor 1:400

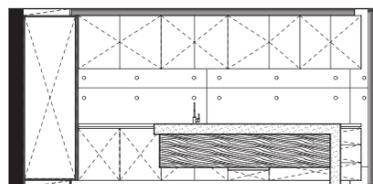
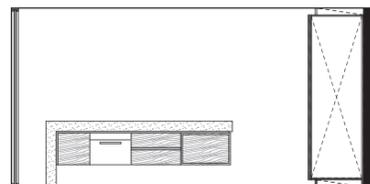
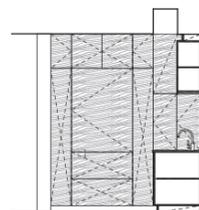
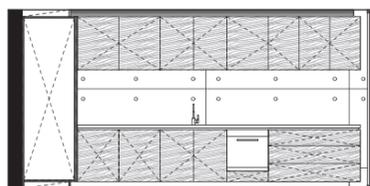


Section 1:400

- 1 Home theatre
- 2 Fold-down bed
- 3 Study
- 4 Courtyard
- 5 Bathroom
- 6 Laundry
- 7 Storeroom
- 8 Entry
- 9 Living
- 10 Dining
- 11 Kitchen
- 12 Service area
- 13 Bedroom
- 14 Ensuite
- 15 Light well



Kitchen plan 1:100



Kitchen elevations 1:100

This new freestanding house in Melbourne's Elwood is the result of a builder – in collaboration with an architect – applying their talent to constructing their own home. Knowing this, it's not surprising (albeit still impressive) that the residence reads as one cohesive piece of joinery, in a warm, voluminous environment made from rich materials.

"He's on the money," says Ray Demkiw, project architect and co-director at Schulberg Demkiw Architects, about his client, Wes Alfredson. Ray had worked previously with Wes through Wes's building company, Frank, and he credits him as a builder who always delivers excellent work. This dedication to quality coupled

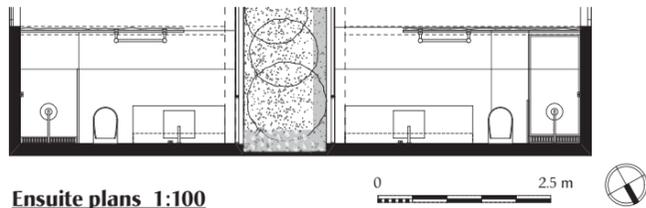
with carefully considered material intersections is rampant in the home, particularly in its kitchen and bathrooms.

Off-form concrete serves as the home's backdrop, uniting the spaces within. In the kitchen, it is used for the splashback, the wall and a custom, cantilevered bench. The concrete was formed and poured on site and the result is a functional, sculptural showpiece. Timber adds warmth through hoop pine ceilings, rough-sawn oak cupboards and recycled tallowwood floors. A custom stainless steel benchtop against the kitchen's back wall houses the sink and stovetop, with cupboards above and below.

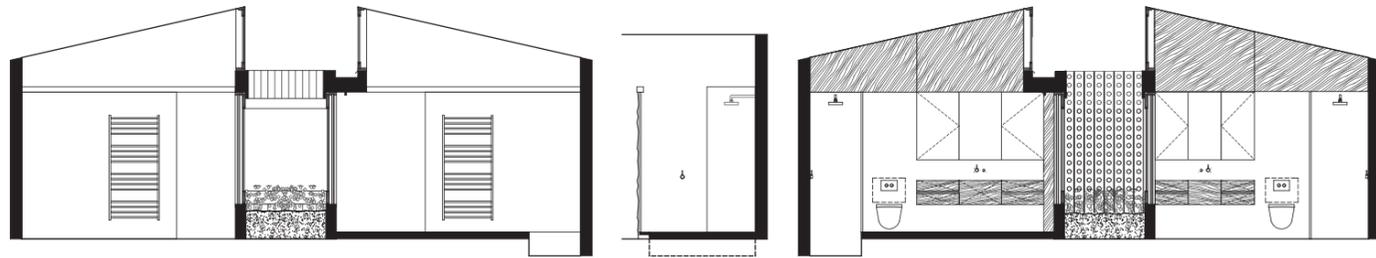
The kitchen is next to an internal courtyard, the extent of the



02 Off-form concrete walls extend from the kitchen to the courtyard, visually linking the spaces.



Ensuite plans 1:100



Ensuite elevations 1:100



Bathroom plan 1:100

Bathroom elevations 1:100

property's backyard, and large sliding glass doors open onto the space. "The client was nuts about getting light in," Ray says. The long, narrow skylight above the kitchen's task area increases daylighting and creates an interesting play of patterns throughout the day.

The two ensuites on the first floor are similar to one another, except that the main bedroom's ensuite has a bath and the other has a shower. Each is semi-concealed from its bedroom by a glass panels and a sheer curtain, and each borders an internal rooftop courtyard that is lush with bamboo and viewed through large windows and sliding glass doors. Keeping the bathrooms partially exposed adds to

the sense of volume in the bedrooms. Large sand-coloured tiles for flooring and walls paired with timber cupboards and ceiling panels continue the minimal palette.

Flexibility was also in the client's brief, so the basement was designed in a way that allows it to be used as a guest suite, a permanent third bedroom or a home theatre. Ray explains that the use of cement-covered, battened concrete walls and tallowwood flooring for the basement's powder room was largely driven by the desire to provide an extra layer against water penetration. The cement-covered walls are rendered to soften the room and a light well brings daylight into the sunken space. 

03 Semi-concealing the ensuites keeps the bedrooms feeling voluminous.





**04** Materials for the basement-level bathroom were chosen largely for their ability to protect against water penetration.

**05** Recycled tallowwood features throughout the house, chosen for its warmth, which contrasts with the cool concrete.

**06** Light entering through the kitchen's long, narrow skylight creates patterns across the timber.

**Architect**  
**Schulberg Demkiw Architects**

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**Practice profile**  
A practice with an interest in contemporary living spaces offering a fully inclusive architecture and interior design service.

**Project team**  
Ray Demkiw, Wes Alfredson

**Builder**  
Frank Pty Ltd

**Consultants**  
**Joiner:** Distinct Joinery  
**Interior decorator:** Pomp

**Kitchen products**

**Internal walls:** Off-form concrete walls; hoop pine plywood ceilings

**Flooring:** Recycled tallowwood flooring and decking from Ironwood Taree

**Joinery:** Rough-sawn timber veneer, including recessed finger grips and handles, in 'Sawn Oak' from George Fethers and Co

**Sinks and tapware:** Custom-made stainless steel benchtop with integrated sink; Astra Walker Icon mixer in 'Matt Black'

**Appliances:** Miele induction cooktop, oven, rangehood, integrated dishwasher, microwave and fridge

**Windows and doors:** Custom-designed and constructed from tallowwood stained with Quantum Quantec half-strength 'Smoke Haze'; Pittella door hardware in 'Black Opaque'

**Furniture:** Erik Buch bar stools from Great Dane

**Bathroom products**

**Internal walls:** Maximum tiles in 'Venus'; hoop pine plywood wall and ceiling lining; rendered walls (basement only)

**Flooring:** Maximum tiles in 'Venus'; recycled tallowwood

**Joinery:** Corian benchtop in 'Bisque' with integrated basin; rough-sawn timber veneer in 'Sawn Oak' from George Fethers and Co

**Tapware and fittings:** Astra Walker Icon range

**Sanitaryware:** Axa Uno wall-hung toilet pan

**Windows and doors:** Custom-designed and constructed from tallowwood stained with Quantum Quantec half-strength 'Smoke Haze'