



Anna and Roger Dartnell returned from Melbourne to their newly built dream home in Nedlands.

First-time builders go the distance

■ Maya Anderson

Living in Melbourne during the construction of their Nedlands home was no problem for these first-time builders, who enjoyed the process and now have a house they love.

Owners Anna and Roger Dartnell and children Sophie and Tim had renovated previous homes but decided for this home to build something new.

They chose architectural firm and building company Humphrey Homes and the house was completed in July after an 18-month construction period. Mrs Dartnell said, they chose their builder after researching their options.

"We started off doing research online and looked at the HIA Award winners," she said.

"We came across Humphrey Homes, looked at a few of their previous projects and really liked the style and level of finishes."

Fans of old Melbourne terrace homes and period-style houses, the Dartnells wanted their new home to be a blend of traditional elements, with features like gables, cornicing and high ceilings, but with contemporary finishes.

Humphrey Homes managing director Dean Humphrey said every Humphrey home began with a "wish list".

"Our philosophy is to always start with everything the owners want and then work back from that," he said.

"We provided a full design service, including architectural concept, interior design, cabinet design, home automation and material selections."

Mr Humphrey said there were numerous benefits to using a company that both designed and built a home. "All communication is managed under the one roof so there is less chance of errors, delays and cost overruns; we make changes to our own plans and immediately inform our staff and suppliers, which saves time," he said.

"Being able to estimate the cost of changes as they occur means we can avoid nasty surprises with extra costs, and there is good budget control."

With the Dartnells living in Melbourne during construction, contact was by email, phone and picture message, which Mrs Dartnell said worked well — they returned home to their beautifully finished dream home.

With the 880sqm block sloping 2.5m from the road to the back of the block, Mr Humphrey said the decision was made to put the open-plan living, dining and kitchen area on the lowest floor, with bi-fold doors connecting the space to the covered alfresco area, pool and landscaped garden beyond.

The Dartnells' favourite part of the home, the open-plan kitchen, living and dining area, features travertine floors and white walls.

An abundance of northern and southern light throughout and a warm interior colour palette gives the home an inviting atmosphere.

Modern red glass feature lights draw the eye to the kitchen with white stone benchtops and splashbacks, with a timber veneer-clad structural pillar and timber veneer accents adding warmth and interest to the design.

From the island bench, parents working in the kitchen can keep an eye on children playing in the pool and on the lawn, as well as in the open-plan living and the games room next door.

CONTACT Humphrey Homes, (08) 9284 5444.



Company expands with architecture

■ Gemma Nisbet

Humphrey Designers & Builders have a new name — Humphrey Homes. The name change came as the company also became a registered architectural practice to enhance the custom design and build service it offers.

"Our company has provided a full design and building service for many years," director Dean Humphrey said.

"Now, as a registered architectural practice, we can offer an alternative to the traditional process of having to find an architect and then having to find a separate builder.

"By integrating the two processes we can give clients the peace of mind and convenience of having one point of contact from concept to completion."

Mr Humphrey said the types of homes the company would design and build would remain similar in that they would be custom-designed to suit clients' needs, lifestyle and budget and would continue to fall mainly within the \$1 million to \$4 million range. "What will change is an increase in the depth and range of architectural expertise we can provide and the level of critiquing we apply to our designs," he explained.

In-house architect Kerie Tang will also be the company's design

manager, but clients will not be restricted to using the in-house design service.

"For the initial concept stage of our designs Kerie and I work closely with a few very talented local architects and hopefully, in time, some international architects," Mr Humphrey said. "We are already in discussions with a well-known American architect who is keen to work with us."

Companies which are both architect and builder are fairly unusual in the residential building industry and Mr Humphrey said the integration would provide a number of benefits for clients.

"We are an architectural practice, having the qualifications, expertise and vision to help clients create a beautiful home, and a custom-building company that can provide practical advice during the design stage plus keep a close eye on the budget as the design is evolving, as opposed to once the design is completed, at which point it is often too late," he said.

"Being involved from the start of the design process allows a builder to understand the vision and the multitude of details involved.

"This allows us to build the home not only to the highest level of workmanship but to have a deeper understanding of how the building will 'go together' as it is being designed."

