

VISION

ISSUE 40



OPEN HOUSE

Ivanhoe, Victoria

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Mulgrave, Victoria

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OPEN HOUSE

Ivanhoe, Victoria

Brick and glass reprise old-fashioned values in thoroughly modern ways with the Ivanhoe House, some 10 km north-east of Melbourne. Rather than shoe-horned windows, the architects allow daylight and breeze to feed directly into this house of tactile pleasures. Viridian glazing is instrumental in visually and physically opening the house in ways once almost unimaginable.





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PLAYHOUSE

Mulgrave, Victoria

Viridian's SpectraSeraphic™ glazing makes an unusual outing with a signature presence for a childcare facility housed within its business park offices. Five Nexus Court in Mulgrave, Melbourne, makes expansive overtures with its colourful, checkerboard façade. Visible from the nearby Monash Freeway, it's a building that signals enlightened play and work-spaces within.



CLICK TO VISIT
NEXUS COURT

OPEN HOUSE



Sliding doors and window program create a wide-reaching 'fluid' footprint. The pool as theatre heightens the cinematic experience with sparkling, framed views.



Residential design is architecture at its most intimate. At its best it should mirror the aspirations and personalities of its client, delivering a glove-like fit. Free of the corporate, commercial and institutional demands, it's the opportunity for architects to tango with one or two clients, rather than a whole committee.

PROJECT

The Makris House, Ivanhoe, Victoria

ARCHITECT

KUD Architects

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian Reflective Coated Glass
Viridian Clear Double Glazed Unit

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM

Peter & Jenny Hyatt

All simple enough on paper but challenging in practise. Almost DIY really, but real expertise is required for the virtuoso performance. The Melbourne architecture practice KUD shows how it can be done with its Ivanhoe house. Understatement and architecture aren't always synonymous, but KUD combine restraint and invention in this quiet suburban street where change has occurred slowly.

Although 'quiet' in its Federation-era streetscape, there is no doubting this is a house of its time. A simple, unified 'façade' and low, wide elevation is subdued in form despite standout, light reflecting tones and finishes. Unlike many of its tuck-pointed neighbours, cream glazed brick and feature glazing are crisply of the moment.

The feature 'reflection' window of the street-facing living room overlooks a granite garden sculpture, trees and sky. The bonus is an interior of complete day-time privacy and virtuoso example of Viridian's reflective coated glass which highlights its setting. Behind its façade, the house reveals openness and delight with swimming pool as immersive to the eye as body.



 [CLICK TO VISIT THE IVANHOE HOUSE](#)







KUD principal Billy Kavellaris describes the house as “calm and unassuming”. Vision’s Peter Hyatt spoke with Kavellaris about a house of substance and light, gravity and release.

VISION How do you hope this house will be considered?

BILLY KAVELLARIS It can be read as a conversation of mass and lightness, public and private, light and darkness. From the street the house presents in two parts with a central black void as grand entry. On the northern, or left side is a solid, rigid, rectilinear form, seemingly weighed down by its own mass. On the other, elevated from the earth is a shard of glass symbolic of light.

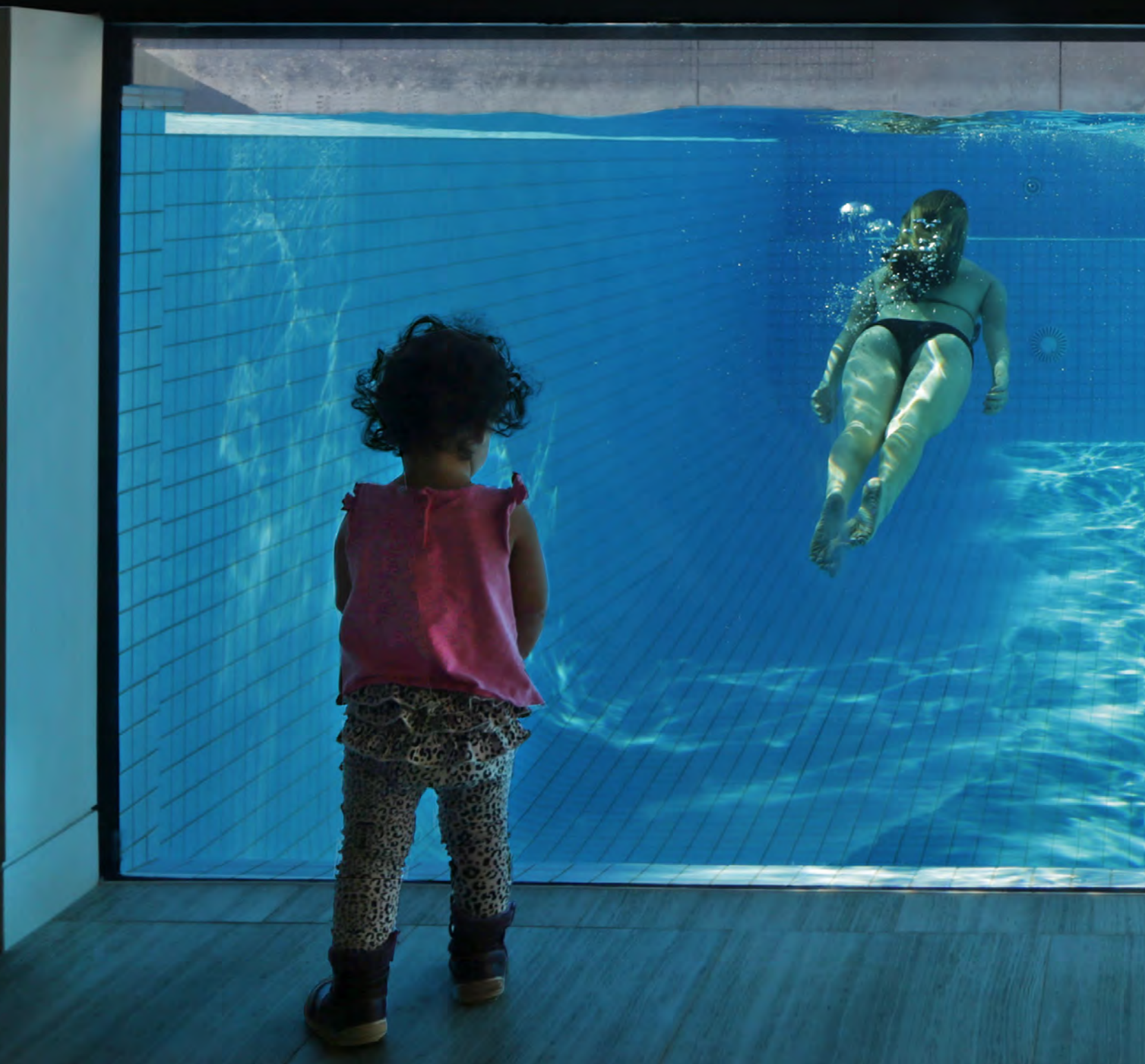
Your restrained material palette is a big part of the answer and yet it feels like a house of contrasts.

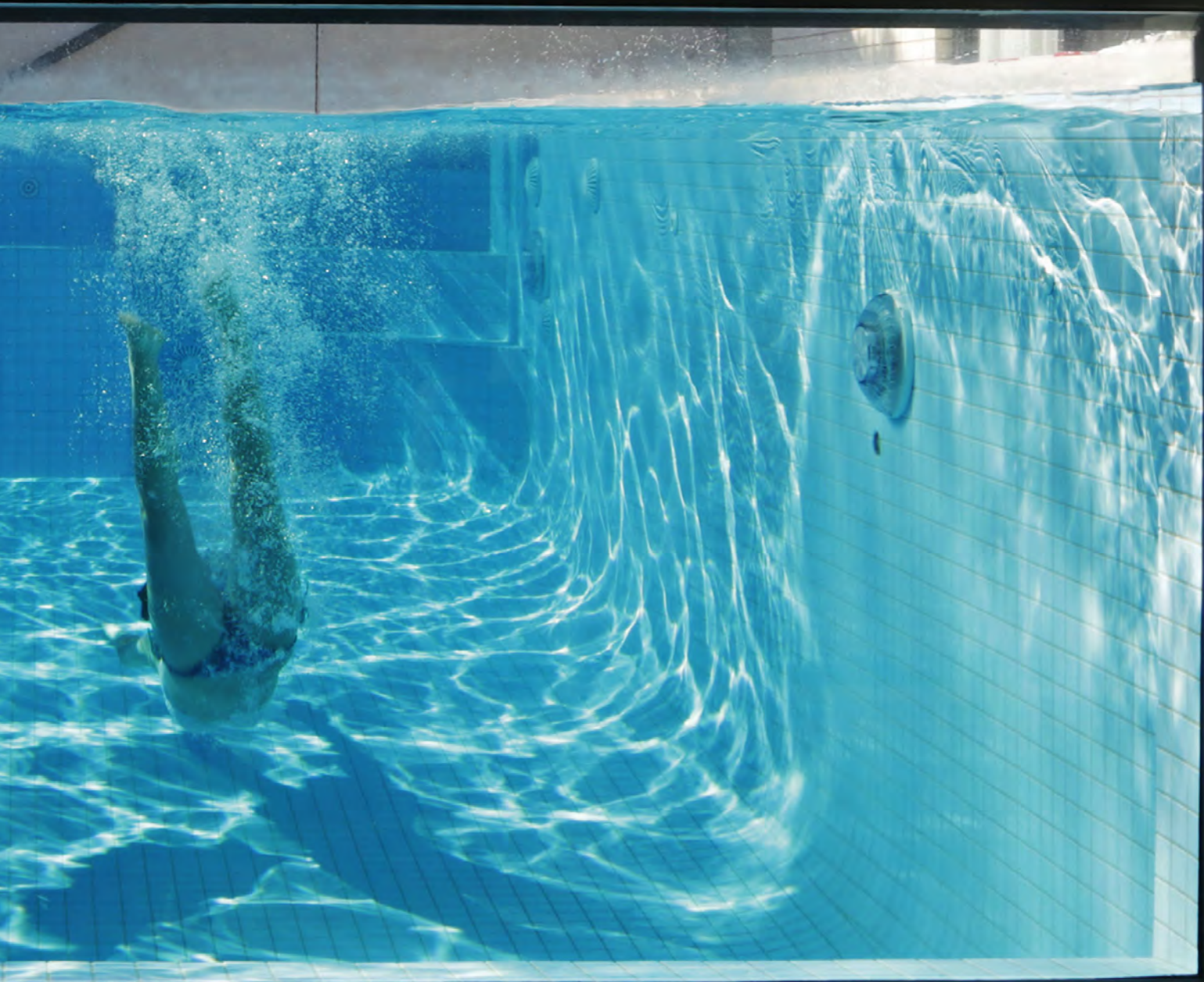
It’s a monochromatic palette of off-white versus dense black and highlighted timber. The tones are subtle but rich. It’s a perfect counterpoint somewhere between inside and out, cold and warmth, relaxed and active, open and enclosed, the experience and experiment, the old and the modern.

What appealed about these clients and this site?

This was an interesting house for us because the client had a pretty open brief. Essentially they wanted us to design them a house with a plan which they wanted to get right from the beginning. So the program and the utility of the house had to be right. But with respect to the overall narrative and design concept, they left it completely open. So it was a very interesting brief because most clients have very specific views on what they want in their house and in this case they said ‘do what you want’ which is very, very rare. And a lot of pressure as well.

A broad, north-facing eave, Viridian double-glazed units and performance glass reconcile the opportunities and thermal/solar challenges.





Social engagement and immersive qualities acquire a whole other meaning in this house of playful living.

“We also have a family relationship with the clients, so for me it was a little added pressure because we really wanted to get the house right. When somebody gives you a blank canvas with no constraints, sometimes that’s a constraint itself.”

BILLY KAVELLARIS, ARCHITECT

That level of design freedom can also be unnerving.

Very daunting. It was very daunting. We also have a family relationship with the clients, so for me it was a little added pressure because we really wanted to get the house right. When somebody gives you a blank canvas with no constraints, sometimes that’s a constraint itself.

Is its difference to most of the neighbours a positive or negative?

The house is quite contemporary and a contrast to the neighbourhood, although it does pick up elements of its materiality in a contemporary way. I’m of a view that good architecture can respond to the context in a way that has a bit of tension. Having something old and new, that tension between the two actually accentuates both properties and gives you that synergy. So the house is actually, quite eclectic in the streetscape. We thought that we could do something quite interesting.

Part of the design response was to capture that in the big glass panel which reflects the street itself.





The linear qualities of plan and space are exemplified with stacked, storage and service areas to the south and open plan flowing to the Courtyard.



A minimal material palette of quality finishes delivers a tactile, economical luxury.



In many ways this has a quite unassuming tone.

The house is quite restrained in terms of what we see with the scale and ostentatious nature of what many others are doing. I would say the house is quite modest. And it does draw cues from the modernist period of Ivanhoe. There's some really beautiful houses from the 1950s and we wanted references from those houses in more of a contemporary way. This is where you get the courtyard and how all the primary active living areas feed off that.

Charles Eames talked about the need to 'take pleasures seriously' with all design.

The house is on that tightrope of being fun and serious at the same time. It has a bit of complexity in its planning. There was quite a significant fall on the land. It is a single-storey home and we contoured the house to the topography. I suppose one of the interesting things we tried to do is look at the tension between public and private space because they can never really be completely separate.

How does this house differ from or advance those traditions laid down by the 20th century modernist icons and progress those early principles?

Interestingly enough this house does resonate from those mid-century modernist traditions. You'll find that the more successful houses from that era are still relevant today and maybe even more relevant given the type of houses and the technology we have. Something we were interested in is to design a house not to conform with trends or fashions. One of the things that happens with that sort of response is that they go out of fashion very quickly. And unlike fashion, where you can take your jacket off and put on a new one, houses don't have the ability to do that. So we were interested in trying to find a modest, yet interesting home that would last not only for this generation, but generations to come.



Unobtrusive glazing produces a big picture result merging formal and informal living areas.





Front-of-house living room and retreat exploits the virtues of Viridian reflective coated glazing for interior privacy and external bravura.

**Isn't sustainability about more than materials and energy savings?**

While the house is sustainable in terms of environment, it is also sustainable in terms of its intellectual rigour and in what the house offers the occupants and street context. The ideas are strictly derived from the site, orientation and the client. They're good driving principles for all architecture, whether it's a house or a skyscraper. If you do that, you have the vested interests of that particular site and the client at heart. And you end up with a more sustainable home.

Were there many challenges here that caused you anxiety?

Trying to build a single-story home on land that has a 1.7 metre fall from one side to the other was tough. We've managed that because we cascaded and tiered main programs in plan to follow that topography. It's one of those rare projects where things just went smoothly and wish there were more like that.

What are some of the more rewarding characteristics of glazing here?

The interesting part about this house is the way that glass interacts with the other materials. Essentially we have brick, glass and timber. They are a combination of organic and man-made materials. Glass is a very ephemeral, beautiful, shiny material, particularly in the front entry, the main entry and also in the living room. The idea is that because it's west facing, whenever the sun hits it, it's going to respond in different ways throughout the year. It's also going to have some sort of theatre in terms of how it responds to the trees and people walking past. Glass was specifically chosen for that, and to contrast and add a bit of a tension to the other materials.

There's a cinematic quality with the internal/courtyard glazing amplified by large, sliding doors and curtains that blur the boundaries of inside and out.

The theatre of the house is interesting because it has this big presence—this heroic gesture. That whole courtyard façade essentially is glass and viewed in sections so that you can view inside out and outside in, in sections. And glazing which incorporates the pool essentially looks at the house in sections so that you can see from both aspects. What that does is engage with the client's lifestyle. They love to entertain, be outdoors, have barbeques and so there is that theatre of those activities and glass essentially offers that camaraderie of that space.

Any concerns about glazing and privacy, or thermal control?

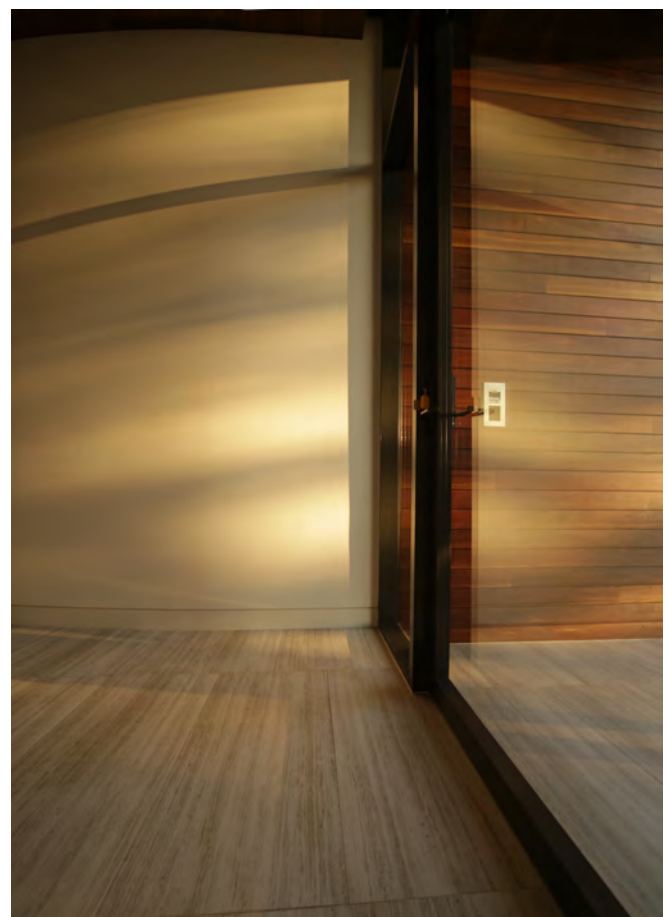
The only constraint glass offered in terms of the client's questions was really with privacy on the front façade. The front glazing is mirrored. During the day you can't see inside, but you can see outside. At night, you have an inverse effect, but we've got remote controlled blinds that can adjust the level of privacy. We were interested in interacting with the street at certain times when privacy wasn't an issue. The thermal properties and performance of the glass is excellent and so that wasn't an issue at all.

Did you engage with Viridian for glass selection and with assistance concerning energy rating requirements?

Viridian for this particular project were instrumental, particularly with the really large panel of glass at the front. It's about 450 kilos and we obviously had to comply with technical requirements for our energy ratings, but also I wanted to get the glass to be completely seamless. That was a very, very difficult task in getting one piece of glass to be sitting on essentially a cantilever. So the technical information we were able to get from Viridian was very useful so that we could implement it into our design and get the glass installed.

Are there any simple tests you apply to a finished project that helps establish a project's success?

It's an interesting question to see when a theory has actually worked in practice. One test is sustainability and the things that you put in place for environmental outcomes. Do they actually work in the finished product? Does the space work and interact in the way that you planned it to work? Are the materials weathering and behaving? These are things architects test. You don't really learn whether you're fully successful in the first couple of months. The ultimate success is measured by the clients' response and the clients were pretty overwhelmed and that was great for us.





The architect's wall sculpture depicts a schematic house in plan for light drenched entry.

What's the secret to achieving a good, or great result?

A good architect once said, "Good architecture comes from good clients." If you have a client that is not going to enable you to explore interesting and challenging ideas, then you're going to end up having sub-standard architectural responses. So when we do have a situation, and there weren't many on this particular project, where a client can't connect with that idea, it's our role to come up with innovative ways to establish how we can translate that idea and make them understand the journey of how we've come through to that idea. Now most times it actually works. Not always. In this case, pretty much everything that we wanted to come through with our design language actually did come into fruition.

Is there a feature or highlight for you?

Interestingly enough, it's probably not the obvious one. And that is the entry foyer. And the entry foyer of the home has a sculpture we designed on the wall, which is an abstraction of the floor plan that sits on the wall and, because of the westerly light, when that light hits that sculpture the shadows change and they dance around on that wall. The wall is nice and curved, but the main reason why I like that space the most is because when you enter that space, you pretty much can see the mystery of the home unfolding right before you spatially in an instant.

When you arrive at the front of the home, you see this big, heavy, three volumes addressing the street. But when you move into the house, into the foyer, I suppose that mystery unfolds instantly and you can see the secret of the house and how it works. And it gets some beautiful light through that really large entry. In a time where we live in such a rapid world where everything is go, go, go, sometimes we just want to sit in beautiful sunlight at the front of the house and just contemplate and do nothing. It's very, very rare that we can do that. But I think that space offers that actually.

Were you satisfied with the work of the window installers?

The window installers had a very challenging job. The glazing was heavy, large and seamless. And I think that they did a magnificent job in executing the brief. I was there when they were installing it. It took five men to lift the piece of glass and it had to be done with Swiss precision. They did a magnificent job.

It's a house of sounds, colour and easy movement which is a great start.

The house is designed for people to actually use. We get caught up in beautiful publications and photographing houses with one chair and a mat. People don't live that way. It's not a dentist studio. It's a house. It needs that warmth and interaction. And I think the clients use it that way, which is great.

PROJECT

The Makris House
Ivanhoe, Melbourne

ARCHITECTS

KUD Architects –
Billy Kavellaris, John Kachami

GLAZIER

Master Windows and Doors

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian Reflective Coated Glass
Viridian Clear Double Glazed Unit

TEXT & IMAGES

Peter & Jenny Hyatt

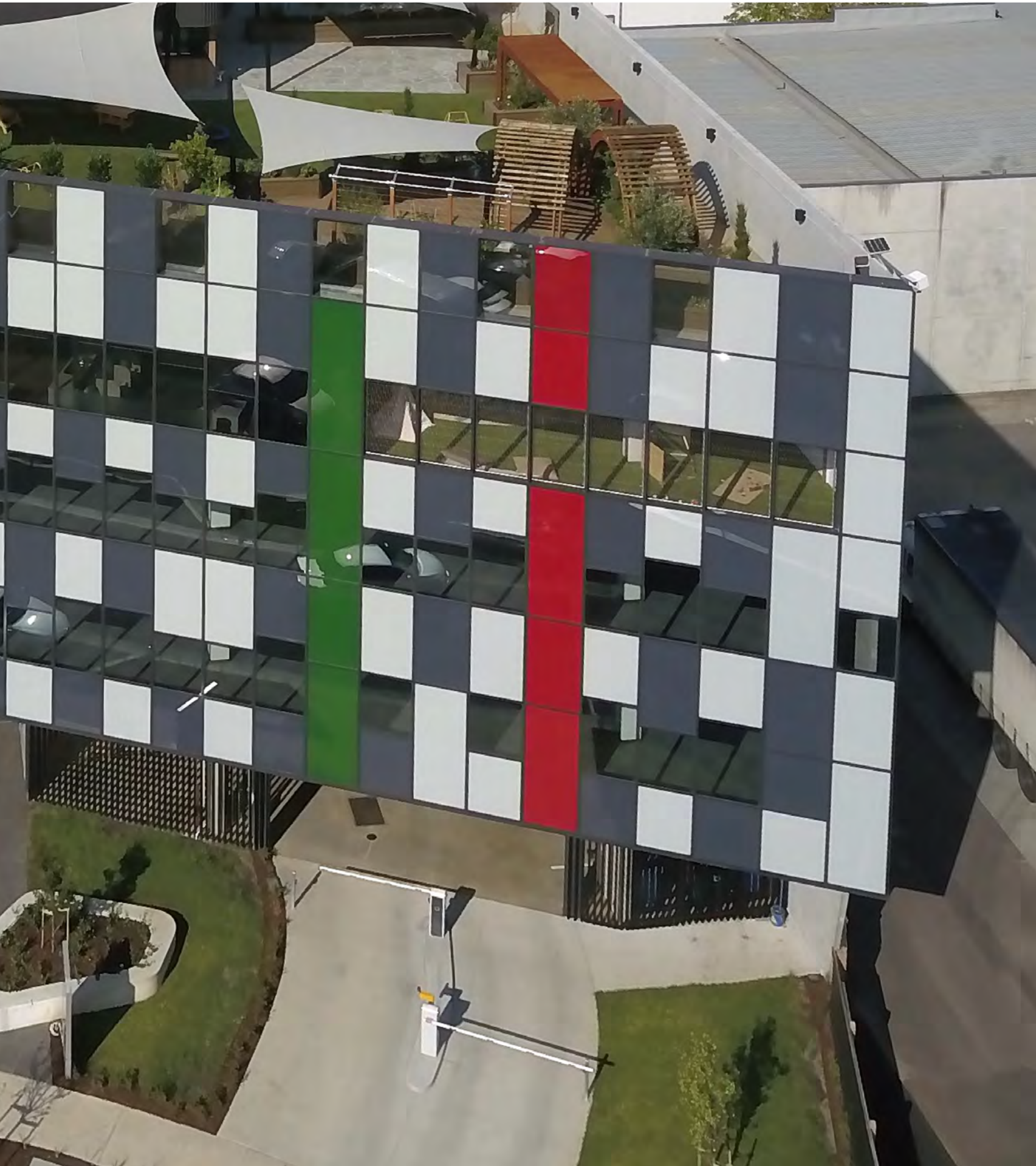


“In a time where we live in such a rapid world where everything is go, go, go, sometimes we just want to sit in beautiful sunlight at the front of the house and just contemplate and do nothing.”

BILLY KAVELLARIS, ARCHITECT



PLAYHOUSE



 [CLICK TO VISIT NEXUS COURT](#)



Business park developments rarely win plaudits for their aesthetics or design credentials, but Nexus Park, in Melbourne's Mulgrave, is among the exceptions.

PROJECT

5 Nexus Court, Mulgrave, Victoria

ARCHITECT

Katz Architecture

PRINCIPLE GLAZING

Viridian Evantage™ Grey Double Glazed Unit
Viridian SpectraSeraphic™ in APO Grey,
Deep Ocean, Mistletoe and
custom Hot Lips Red

TEXT, IMAGES & FILM

Peter & Jenny Hyatt

Among its fleet of low-rise, high-achievers, 5 Nexus Court offers intrigue and delight.

Two standout features deserve praise – the first is the staggered, abstract façade, the second, an exemplar in how to convert rooftops into works of functional beauty rather than lazy utility.

Occupying a tight triangular site, 5 Nexus Court makes much from little, by extracting every ounce from limited opportunities. Its heroic frontage more than compensates for its restricted 'rear'. Katz Architecture has done some fine juggling to provide a childcare facility not as gesture, but pivotal to project.

With upper tenancy levels exceeding maximum lettable area, a recessed lower level articulates and enables the bulk of the building to 'float'.

A top-level roof deck introduces valuable outdoor space, satisfying the requirements of the new Platypus Junction, an early learning centre and kindergarten located on level three of the development. It also provides a unique cap to signify the special social function.

Since its opening 5 Nexus Court has become a social hub of the park. Its mixed-use development over 3,500 sq.m. includes two levels of commercial office space, gymnasium, a pre-school centre for 96 children, outdoor rooftop deck play-space, car parking and retail.

Paul Katz of Katz Architecture discusses a dynamic glass façade and building bristling with flexibility:

VISION What are the main reasons behind such a bespoke façade?

PAUL KATZ By saving on the two solid façades on boundaries we had the opportunity to really take full advantage of the remaining façade and so we used a very good material. It gave a great, strong presence. This building has an articulated façade that floats above the ground, has a sense of fun with the colour, stripes and animation.

What other aspects of the development resonate with the occupants and passersby?

It's meant to be a playful façade. The first tenant is pre-school centre and while primarily an office building, it can contain other social functions used by the estate. We wanted to provide a playful nature to the building, something a bit different to a normal commercial building. Its articulated façade floats above the ground and has a sense of fun with the colour and the undulations... The way the glass façade is detached from the core masonry elements, means that it floats and gives a very articulated result.





The tight, triangulated site is redeemed by a lively façade, and playful rooftop – both reminders of more common overlooked possibilities.





MAX CLEARANCE 2.4 m



“Viridian tend to be involved with most of our projects. Glass is always an important element. We immediately discussed how we could incorporate different colours to really help create a special identity and finish.”

PAUL KATZ, ARCHITECT



Did you meet any client resistance when you proposed this alternative to the more conventional façade system? They eventually embraced the idea of doing something different. The commercial realities in terms of what people expect in a commercial building also tempered the result. And so we might have had an even more undulating façade and undulating glass lines in terms of sill heights and head heights of windows. They became a bit more standardized in the sense of corporate reality.

Above:

Viridian Double Glazed Units provide generous rooftop views.

Left:

Rather than crowded by the usual spaghetti of rooftop services, Katz has condensed these to the south edge and allowed the landscape/ play area by Botanical Traditions to bloom.

Was the building considered specifically with the pre-school centre facility in mind as the anchor tenant? The building was always considered as a primary social building for the estate – not only a pre-school centre, but also gymnasiums, pharmacies and other community services. It's a smaller footprint than a typical commercial building and so it was always focused on the more social functions. Once a business estate reaches a certain size, it lends itself to other social functions.

Have you incurred any greater costs in striving for difference?

Well we certainly tried to detail it architecturally in a way that's unique and so whilst it's using all the standard corporate technologies in terms of precast and glaze façades, curtain wall systems, it's the way they're articulated and integrated that gives it an improved sense of being, if you like without any cost penalties. So, for instance, the way the glass façade's detached from the core masonry elements means it floats and gives it a very articulated response.

Was the rooftop always considered a crowning feature, or an idea you helped to shape?

From day one we did anticipate childcare on the top facility and the easiest way to get their requirement for open space was to have a rooftop deck. The initial solution actually incorporated decks on the lower levels as well, so I had some deck space at their active level together with some enclosed space on the roof deck level, but it was part of the feature.

So where are all the non-services that are just tucked away?

They're tucked away on top of the building, but in a plant room as knuckle at the top of the building. It's a deep, tucked away footprint.

How challenging was it to marry this kind of unusual faced coat-of-arms with an unusual and conspicuous tenant such as a pre-school centre.

Well that's where a simple response was required and part of that was in response to the adjacent building we also designed, which has an abstract façade. We wanted to continue that articulated façade and introduce colour because most of the estate buildings are black and white.

How did your choice of Viridian's SpectraSeraphic™ range come about?

Viridian tend to be involved with most of our projects. Glass is always an important element. We immediately discussed how we could incorporate different colours to really help create a special identity and finish. We also had to consider glass in terms of energy efficiency requirements and type of framing system to complement the glass. We use spandrel glass on lots of buildings but in terms of the scale and range of colours required, this is the first time we have used their SpectraSeraphic™ range.

It's the first time you have used this type of glazing on a building façade?

Well, in this sort of way, it is. We certainly use spandrel glass on lots of buildings. But in terms of the style and the range of colours, this is the first time we've really used Viridian's range. We looked at about 25 different options, probably. That final colour combination happens to relate to the owners' corporate colour scheme. Salter properties are red and green, and they preferred that and it saves putting a sign on the building.



Right:

A birds-eye view reveals the fully utilised rooftop as opportunity won while the SpectraSeraphic™ signals an office tower of real difference.



“The building was always considered as a primary social building for the estate – not only a pre-school centre, but also gymnasiums, pharmacies and other community services.”

PAUL KATZ, ARCHITECT



“From day one we anticipated a pre-school centre on top of the facility. Most childcare is typically on the ground and so it is unusual to have it up in the air, which brings another element to the design and how to make them safe.”

PAUL KATZ, ARCHITECT







Is this a one-off experience or have you previously worked with Viridian?

We utilize Viridian on most of our projects. They assist us with energy rating calculations, with glass options and how to resolve those important components in building. So pretty much every building, we're talking to Viridian.

How else does glass contribute to the project's success?

It gives us a really high quality façade, particularly when we look at the neighbouring buildings and the types of façades they have, this is actually a pretty high spec façade and we're using one curtain wall system, one material that stays pristine and clean and is easily maintained. I think it adds great value for the long-term.

What about feedback?

Very positive and well received. People have picked up on where the colour combination comes from. It gives it that sense of flavour, which you can even see from the freeway when you drive past and you get a very strong presence of the Salta brand. We've been delighted with the result and by incorporating the façade we streamlined the construction process, so we'd certainly use it again. We're particularly delighted with this façade that we have been able to create. It really makes a contribution to the unity and aesthetic of the business estate.

Classrooms are daylight and place connected.

Is this the first childcare facility you've been involved in?

No, we've done a number of them. Most facilities are typically on the ground and so it's unusual to have them held up in the air. That brings a whole other element to the design and—how to make them safe. So that was the bigger challenge here of how to make sure parents felt their kids are in a safe environment. I think we succeeded with the way we detailed the façades and the screens to do just that.

Were there any problems or challenges with the job you didn't fully expect?

We anticipated most issues. An exact finish was required and tolerances between levels had to be quite accurate to line the glass up in that way. That certainly required finessing in the final construction sequence and was well worth it. We ended up with a beautiful façade that floats above the ground and is elevated with a very strong presence.

PROJECT

5 Nexus Court, Mulgrave, Victoria

ARCHITECT

Katz Architecture – Paul Katz

INTERIOR DESIGN AND FIT-OUT

Perkins Architects

ROOFTOP DESIGN

Botanical Traditions

CLIENT

Salta Properties

BUILDER

Figurehead Constructions

GLAZIER

South West Aluminium Pty Ltd

PRINCIPAL GLAZING

Viridian Evantage™ Grey Double Glazed Unit
Viridian SpectraSeraphic™ in APO Grey,
Deep Ocean, Mistletoe and custom Hot Lips Red

PROJECT COST

\$7 million

TEXT & IMAGES

Peter & Jenny Hyatt





The colour scheme signals the corporate colours of owner/builder Salta Constructions.

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