

BUILDING FOR POTENTIAL ON CORNER BLOCKS

A well-designed home with two street fronts offers plenty of advantages, writes **Jennifer Veerhuis**

Living on the corner has its attractions, as an increasing numbers of homeowners are beginning to realise.

Corner blocks may once have been considered less desirable because of their exposure to two streets and the extra landscaping and maintenance required, but the double frontages are now the very reason they're being seen in a whole new light.

Having a home that faces two streets offers flexibility for anyone who wants easy access to their backyard, whether that's to get to a

garage or a detached granny flat, and it's also become an attractive prospect for developers.

Two sides of the debate

Building designer Luke Van Jour from Distinct Innovations says there are a number of advantages with corner blocks.

For a start, he says you can get good cross-ventilation through your home.

"Having three sides exposed — the front, the back and the side of the house — allows you to really work on setting up your windows

in the correct location," he says. "You can move cool air in summer through the floorplan and naturally try to ventilate the home to cool it in the warmer period.

"It's highly beneficial in that regard."

He says corner blocks are also great in terms of capturing light because there one is less neighbour to worry about.

On the other hand, privacy can be an issue because of exposure to the street.

Ways to try to overcome this include using landscaping and different types of fencing.

Luke often recommends the use of external venetians for privacy, with the added advantage that these can also block the hot summer sun from getting into the house.

Safety and security

Luke says there can also be concerns about security around homes on corner blocks and while corner fencing and landscaping can help, another solution is to put up a high boundary fence on the second side, so the house is less exposed. This may need to be negotiated with council.

Sometimes the setbacks required on the second side can be more than owners anticipate, Luke says, but on the plus side a greater setback can offer homeowners enhanced privacy.

Some people with corner blocks automatically assume they can use the second frontage for a garage or other access, but that's not always the case as there can be issues with objects such as light poles, speed humps, chicanes or even pedestrian crossings. →

TAKING A TURN FOR THE BETTER

Corner block homes have gone from being seen as problem sites to sites packed with potential.

New home builder Metricon senior residential home designer Ricky D'Alesio says corner blocks were traditionally seen as hard to deal with, but there's now a move away from that.

"In new estates, corner blocks were always the last ones to sell," he says.

"But over the last few years people have become attracted to them because you get great exposure of your property.

"In recent years they've been very attractive to developers who can build two lots on those particular blocks."

Ricky says having two street frontages works well with dual occupancy situations where one home is behind the other, and it can also work with two or even three double-storey townhouses.

Ricky says people shouldn't be afraid of buying and building on corner blocks because they provide a number of benefits, including good light and one less neighbour.

"You can get access to the rear as well, so if you've got a garage at the front, you can also have a shed you can access from the secondary street," he says.

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DESIGN EDGE

For those who are hoping to renovate their corner block home, Luke strongly advises engaging an architect or building designer.

"We've had clients with a beautiful corner site but they didn't realise it had potential water views, or the development opportunity it offered," he says.

"They've spent a couple of hundred thousand on a simple extension out the back only to find that for another hundred thousand more they could have got another home down there at the back.

"They've just lost so much money."



This award-winning home by Distinct Innovations presents well from both sides of the street.