THE VISION

CREATE A UNIQUE AND INNOVATIVE DWELLING DESIGN THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE ECLECTIC CHARACTER OF THE WHITE GUM VALLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD, ENHANCE THE SENSE OF PLACE AND PROVIDE A 21ST CENTURY LIVING ENVIRONMENT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF HOME OWNERS.

THE PROJECT

WGV AT WHITE GUM VALLEY IS HOME TO THE GEN Y DEMONSTRATION HOUSING PROJECT, A PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF SUSTAINABLE, FLEXIBLE AND COST EFFECTIVE DWELLINGS TO SUIT 21ST CENTURY LIVING.

As a new housing model, the project provides a practical demonstration that can easily be replicated to provide an affordable living environment for Gen Y’ers and future generations to come.

The project showcases innovative design for flexible infill housing and affordable living.

With a design strategy of ‘small and raw’ units that are well located and well-priced, the project attempts to reconceptualise what is achievable when community, sustainability and cost are prioritised equally.

The three apartments respond to the problem of the ‘missing middle’ of medium density housing, whereby housing stock in Australia (and internationally) is increasingly either low density single family homes or higher density apartments, with little choice in between.

This model also provides an excellent demonstration of a housing solution that bridges the gap between the single house and large apartment block, providing stealth density in medium density areas that integrates well with the streetscape.
THE BRIEF

In October 2013 we undertook a design competition in association with the City of Fremantle, the Institute of Architects and the Office of the Government Architect to explore innovative ideas and concept designs suited to the needs of the next generation of home buyers.

Young West Australian architects were asked to investigate the specific living requirements of ‘Gen Y’ and submit a concept design for a flexible, cost effective and sustainable dwelling.

Following a rigorous assessment process the concept for a flexible housing solution, designed by David Barr Architect, was selected. The winning design consisted of three separate one bedroom, one bathroom apartments with private outdoor living space.
As a hybrid of apartment building and freestanding house, the Gen Y Demonstration Housing Project offers a new model for multi-residential infill housing – micro-apartment buildings that blend harmoniously with their surrounding suburban context and are small enough to be located on standard sized residential blocks.

The Gen Y Demonstration Housing Project features three, single bedroom apartments within a compact two-storey footprint on a 250 square metre block.

This compares with an average Australian house size of 241 square metres. It is in this efficient use of the suburban block that the potential for increased density can be found. This increased density is not at the expense of liveability for inhabitants or neighbours – each apartment has private and communal external areas, clever storage, generous ceiling heights, and a high thermal efficiency.

Whilst small, with a single bedroom each, the apartments reflect changing Australian demographics and a future in which single person households make up the fastest growing household type.

The ‘Gen Y’ Demonstration Housing Project addresses a growing community trend by providing generous shared external and semi-external areas. Amalgamated productive gardens and gathering spaces create an external area that is shared between units and with the street.

The project suggests a deliberate blurring between outside and inside (be it outside an apartment or outside the site) and provokes social and ecological interaction with the broader WGV community.

The reduction in car parking on site shifts away from the perception that every apartment or house requires a car and focuses more on providing amenity and location to frequent transport routes.

The ‘Gen Y’ Demonstration Housing Project has been accredited with a ‘Gold Medal’ Level Life Cycle Analysis by E Tool. It meets the principles of the ‘One Planet Living’ sustainability framework. It has been designed to meet the essential requirements of the ‘Liveable Homes’ accessibility standards.

A key aspect of the project is the climate responsive layout which integrates solar passive design principles to ensure natural light and cross ventilation to each apartment and the use of sustainable materials like ‘green’ concrete using low carbon furnace slag which provides thermal mass.

The ownership structure provides a built strata for the three apartments constructed with light framed timber framing to all walls with a suspended floor and pre-finished refrigerant roof panels. The larger than normal wall studs permit excellent thermal insulation and an air gap.

Robust, prefinished and durable materials including Colorbond steel and fibre cement claddings line the external perimeter of the building, minimising ongoing maintenance requirements.

The apartments have also been designed to include a 9kW Photo Voltaic system with battery storage, a 10,000L underground rainwater harvesting tank and performance monitoring for all key services.

Landscape design incorporates recycled materials and waterwise planting with shared recycled brick planters for herbs and edible plants.
SPECIAL THANKS TO

ARCHITECT
DAVID BARR ARCHITECT

BUILDER

PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND SUPPLIERS

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