

Jan Henderson  
& Dianna Snape

# ARCHITECTURE

## AT THE HEART OF THE HOME

Thames  
& Hudson



# VIEW FROM THE BENCH

PROJECT

Esplanade House

LOCATION

Adelaide, South Australia

SIZE

250 m<sup>2</sup>

PRACTICE

Williams Burton Leopardi



## ESPLANADE HOUSE

**From the large open-plan living room and kitchen through to the dining room and extended outdoor living area, picture windows provide engagement with the outside...**

Adelaide is renowned for its laid-back lifestyle, proximity to the Barossa Valley with its outstanding wines and, of course, all those churches. These attractions pale, however, when the idea of living by the sea in a home like Esplanade House is on offer.

Inside, the views of the water dominate. From the large open-plan living room and kitchen through to the dining room and extended outdoor living area, picture windows provide engagement with the outside, the passing parade of people and the landscape of sand and water. The connection to the view is ever present, but how do you create a place that absolutely defines this? Well, that's easy. Include a bench seat at the kitchen picture window that becomes the touchpoint for interaction within the house, but also connects to the outside view. This is the heart of Esplanade House.

This bench seat takes pride of place opposite the kitchen's white quartz island bench and it also has views to the formal living room and dining space. It is at the centre of all activity as people pass back and forth, and is the perfect place to sit and chat as a meal is being prepared. Made of French oak and topped with a honey-coloured leather seat pad, the structure is deep and long and ideal for stretching out on with a glass of something cool in hand.

Throughout this front section of the house are French oak timber floors edged in bluestone, and American oak on ceilings, on walls between windows and grey washed on joinery. The colour palette is subdued with greys, beige and sand colours, with a touch of drama provided by swathes of smoky charcoal-tinted mirror and warm chocolate-toned cabinetry in the kitchen. The darkness of the kitchen provides warmth and a feeling of sanctuary, and the combination of tones works beautifully. It is very sophisticated and feels more like a bar at your favourite club than a kitchen.

The living area sits within a double-space void that rises to the upper level of the house, and the height adds a certain largesse to this room. As a place for entertaining, and the first space where visitors gather on entry to the house, it is impressive and

refined, with charcoal walls and a bespoke shelving unit displaying treasured objects and art.

The adjoining dining area is open with minimal furnishings – a custom-made American oak table and chairs, and a mirrored alcove cabinet for serving drinks. On either side of the cabinet are floor-to-ceiling glass doors that lead to the outside room.

The latter is a consummate space with fireplace, lounge chairs and meals table, a high counter and another smaller bench seat on the window side. This room, although technically outside, is contained and sheltered with an overhead roof and solid wall and windows that front the ocean.

The spatial flow of Esplanade House is masterful. The windows open and the glass doors slide back to allow easy movement between areas and the interior and exterior. To add softness and increase privacy from passers-by, soft-grey natural linen curtains, which billow when the doors are open, have been installed on the wall of glass. To help regulate the temperature and moderate the sun glare on hot summer days, black blackout blinds have also been installed behind the curtains.

A home is created by the people who inhabit it; however, the interior of Esplanade House is a stunning example of design to enhance lifestyle. With flow and function and attention to every detail, Esplanade House is a place in which to relax, recharge and revel in the connection to people and place.





Adjoining the living area, the dining room is open and has minimal furnishings, and features a custom-made American oak table and chairs. Within the formal sitting room, a dark colour palette provides a sense of occasion with style.



**PROJECT LEADS**

David Burton (architecture design),  
Sophia Leopardi (interior design)

**PROJECT TEAM**

David Burton, Sophia Leopardi,  
Rachel Catt, Emma Aronsten

**INTERIOR DESIGN**

Sophia Leopardi

**LANDSCAPE DESIGN**

Lee Gray Landscape Design

**BUILDER**

Desyn Homes

There is room to breathe in Esplanade House. The open-plan entertaining area fronts the ocean, providing spectacular water views and it is cosy in winter, with a fireplace and lounge chairs.

The heart or the soul of this house rests in the moments where you interact with the view: the lounge room on a stormy night watching the waves crash on the rocks while the fire warms you, the dining room on a summer evening with friends and family with the sea breeze ruffling the curtains, the barbecue chat with a gin and tonic resting on the bar overlooking the ocean in the outdoor areas.

However, it is the window seat that is at the centre of the home, becoming the ultimate heart and providing a place to talk, share a glass of wine or just watch the ever-changing sky and rolling waves of the ocean.

David Burton, architect, and Sophia Leopardi, interior designer

