



Anyone for tennis?

With its all-weather tennis court, elevated swimming pool and alfresco dining areas, this home is well equipped for entertaining

Large properties, once a common sight in many city suburbs, have gradually diminished as infill housing has become a preferred option for many landowners and developers.

This trend makes the property featured on these pages all the more unique. With its all-weather tennis court, sweeping lawns and elevated swimming pool, the home was designed for relaxed living and easy entertaining.

Architect Allan Shanahan says creating a good flow to all the outdoor areas

was essential. The family room opens directly onto a covered terrace, which provides an alfresco dining area. Sliding cedar doors on two sides provide shelter from the wind when necessary.

As the house was built on the high part of the site to maximise views, Shanahan says there was a need to step the landscaping down to the tennis court on the lowest level. A large, open terrace provides an intermediary area between the house and the tennis court. It is also on the same level as the elevated swimming pool.

Facing page, top: Swathes of green grass, which incorporate a croquet lawn, border the driveway to this new home.

Facing page, lower: Designed for easy entertaining, the home incorporates a covered patio and an open terrace, which features aggregate sand-shell pavers. A pergola underplanted with bay trees and box hedging screens the area from the driveway.

Above: Steps lead down from the mid-level terrace to the tennis court. The swimming pool beside the steps was elevated to bring it near to the house.



"We wanted to keep a close connection between the indoor and outdoor living areas and the pool, hence the elevation," says Shanahan. "The pool could have ended up some distance from the house. As it is, the owners don't have to pack a hamper to go for a swim."

The pool terrace is separated from the driveway by a pergola and a raised garden, which features bay trees and box hedging. Landscape architect Carl Pickens also placed twin olive trees at the front of the terrace.

"The silvery underside of the leaves is a good contrast to the green. In addition, the trees maintain a good form but the foliage is not so heavy that you can't glimpse the view beyond," he says.

Pickens says other requirements for the landscaping plan included expansive areas of grass and the provision of a croquet lawn next to the driveway at the front of the house.

A gently sloping grass bank on one side of the tennis court is reminiscent of the landscaping surrounding some of

New Zealand's grand historic homes. The bank provides a perfect place to sit and watch a tennis match, says Pickens.

Another sloping lawn beyond the tennis court features a mix of native and exotic plants. To resolve a problem with a damp area at the back of this lawn, Pickens created two bands of native flax plants in contrasting colours. While waiting for the more sculptural plants to take shape in this area, scattered wildflower seeds provided seasonal colour, he says.

"Colour and water are important

elements of the landscape. We added a weir to the side of the swimming pool, which features grey river pebbles. The roundness of the pebbles is contrasted by the striking, green sharpness of astelia leaves. A crushed sandstone path also enhances the natural look."

Colourful canna lilies are a feature of another pool in a courtyard on the other side of the house. This water feature was designed to be seen from several rooms, including the master ensuite, which opens directly onto the courtyard. Here,

water is circulated from a small pool to a long, narrow pond. Small blue pebbles in the pond mirror the colour of the tiles in the bathroom. As well as the lush green of the canna lilies, the garden features an edging of the shade-loving native fern *Blechnum penna-marina*.

A row of hebes beyond the wall gives structure to the top of the wall and helps provide privacy.

"A solid, evergreen backdrop ensures there is interesting foliage in the garden at all times of the year," says Pickens.

Facing page and top right: Although the architect describes the elevated pool as a feat of engineering, its connection with the outdoor living areas is vital.

Top left: The outdoor terrace is positioned for sun as well as the view.

Above left and right: Landscape architect Carl Pickens says two serene water gardens were influenced by the style of the Moghul gardens in southern Spain, where water helps relieve the oppressive heat. In this landscape, river pebbles form the walls of the weir (left). A courtyard on the other side of the house has a full-length water feature.



Above: Cedar louvered doors on tracks allow the covered terrace to be fully opened to the outdoors or screened from any prevailing wind.

Right: Extensive outdoor lighting means the tennis court and pool can be used at night.

Architect: Allan Shanahan, Shanahan Architects (Auckland)
Landscape architect: Carl Pickens, Carl Pickens Landscape Architect
Engineer: MSC Consulting Group
Main contractor: BD Builders
Paving: Terra Pave from Italian Stone
Pool: BM Starnes
Tennis court: Action Sports
Sliding doors: Cedar from Whenuapai Joinery
Water features: Carl Pickens Landscape Architect
Umbrella: Trade Winds

Photography by Kallan MacLeod

