

# Parkside paradise

Turns out the grass is greener on both sides of the road

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When you have the beauty of nature just footsteps away from your home, you want to harness that magic for yourself. That is exactly what these homeowners did after they built their contemporary grand design, with architects Allied Office, across from the iconic Centennial Park.

“The clients were seeking a design that complemented the extensive natural bushland directly across the road in Centennial Park, while also visually softening the architecture of the new build and creating an inviting garden space,” says Mark Bell, creative director at Bell Landscapes.

Entering through the home’s front gate, the lush front garden is abundant, featuring a wide assortment of native shrubs, grasses, ground covers and feature trees, all connecting to the natural landscape but also attracting native birds and wildlife from the park. Yet this space is a far cry from what it originally looked like — a barren wasteland full of sand and dry dirt.

“It was a blank canvas when we started as the existing house was completely demolished and removed. It was essentially a sandpit and being close to the beach meant it was very sandy,” says Mark. “We knew site preparation would be critical and with hundreds of plants to be installed, importing good-quality, nutrient-rich soil was a high priority.”



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MARK BELL

The various plant species chosen by Bell Landscapes provide an array of textures, heights and forms, adding interest and a softening effect to the strong, architectural build. Mounded forms mirror that of the natural bushland and add an organic, natural theme to the garden. “I love the mounded gardens in the front entry and the huge assortment of plants that offer so many lovely points of interest,” says Mark. “As the sunlight moves across the garden, it takes on a different feel depending on the time of day. The *Zoysia tennifolia* (Korean velvet grass) section, with its rippled grassy texture, also adds fun and a great point of interest.”

To continue to mirror the beauty of the parklands, more than 80 per cent of the plants on site are Australian natives, perfectly suited to the location and surrounding environment. To keep them at their optimal moisture level, all the plants are watered via a slow-drip tube irrigation system to minimise water use.

Following the crushed granite pathway that gently curves through the plantings to the back of the home, the garden becomes more structured, with a spacious lawn area and feature trees planted against the fence for future privacy. This provides a nice space for the homeowners to relax and lets the pool be the hero feature.







WE LOVE  
The way the planting palette  
complements the architecture



The front garden is echoed in the timber planter boxes lining the side fence, with an array of plants of various heights and textures planted together in a lush symbiotic collection. “We always use our planting schemes in three ways,” says Mark. “First, it must appeal to the client’s taste; second, it must complement the architecture of the building; and third, it must connect with nature and the surrounding landscape. We are big believers in using what nature has provided when it comes to borrowed landscapes and distant views that we can utilise to the project’s benefit.”

With the parklands at its front doorstep and gorgeous greenery now enveloped within its walls, this contemporary abode is spoiled for choice on where next to bathe in nature’s glory. [belllandscapes.com.au](http://belllandscapes.com.au)