

# “WE LIKED WHAT THEY HAD”

## Finding the right builder gets results, writes LIZ McLACHLAN

**B**righton East couple Maurice and Fiona Efron had known exactly what they wanted for a long time – a contemporary home, custom-built for their family, backing onto Landcox Park.

In the 1990s, the Efrons owned a house in the street they now live in and had fallen in love with the idea of having a house backing on to the park. Fast forward to 2011 and the Efrons were ready to build a family home but had been unable to find the right property in the park’s tightly held surrounds.

Thanks to planning, persistence and a lucky meeting, they’re now living in a new architect-designed house with a private rear gate into the four hectares of historic parkland, originally part of the Landcox estate owned by former Victorian premier Thomas Bent.

“We had dreamed of living near the park and the kids being able to go there. But when we couldn’t find what we wanted we bought on North Road and found an architect,” Maurice Efron says.

While working on their new home design, a property came up for sale in the street they used to live in. They knew the property was exactly what they wanted; backing on to the park. So their architect put away the North Road plans and designed a double-storey house to optimise park outlooks and space on their new block.

“We felt it was better for us to do our design work independently because we wanted to own our design and have a choice of who to build with,” Maurice says.

By 2012, the Efrons were searching for a builder to realise their dream and attended the Melbourne Home Show. By chance the couple met a representative of custom home builder Carter Grange on a stand for Hebel, an aerated and autoclaved concrete building material popular in Europe.

Started by a group of people with long experience in Victorian home building, Carter Grange uses Hebel power panels as its standard building material as it offers superior acoustic and energy efficiency compared with traditional brickwork, as well as improved construction times.

After that chance meeting, the Efrons visited Carter Grange and some of the houses it had built, and customers who had built with the company.

“The people we spoke to were very satisfied and said they’d be happy to build with Carter Grange again. They had all had good building projects and finished on good terms with their builder,” Maurice says.

“We did a lot of research before we went ahead with Carter Grange. We had a lot of meetings to make certain that they would give us exactly what we wanted and do the right thing. We were looking at other builders but we felt comfortable with Carter Grange.

“By the time we started we were totally confident in the decision we made and our decision turned out to be absolutely correct.”

After working with Carter Grange to fine tune their plans, the Efrons’ build started in January 2013 and the family of four moved into their new home last September. The resulting 51-square double-storey house has large light-filled rooms, with open-plan kitchen, dining and living opening to outdoor living and backyard pool; separate formal living,



main bedroom with walk-in wardrobe and en suite; study, painting studio, gym and powder room on the ground level.

On the upper level the stairs open to a large leisure area with park outlooks and balcony. A length of study desk runs along the side of the stairwell dividing the bedrooms from the living area. There are large bedrooms with walk-in wardrobes for their sons, Brandon and Adam, a spare bedroom and bathroom.

The interiors include square set cornices, high ceilings and limed wide oak floorboards that run through the ground level and the upper level bedrooms. The Efrons chose a laminate timber finish and pale-green splashback for their kitchen with neutral stone benchtops. Detailing includes a study bench at one end of the kitchen looking out to the park and another study nook in the living area.

The house has solar panels for water heating and power, water tanks, extra insulation in internal walls to further increase the home’s energy efficiency, and sound-deadening insulation between levels.

The couple say a big advantage of using Carter Grange was its large showroom, which showcases colours, finishes, fittings and appliances for customers to select from.

“Their ranges were great for us – we wanted contemporary finishes and fittings and liked what they had. It saved us a lot of time,” Fiona Efron says.

The couple say they are very happy with their building experience and with the value for money that Carter Grange offers.

“Carter Grange is highly professional and delivered everything they promised,” Maurice says. “We are happy with the quality of their work, their attention to detail, their team and their communication. Their intent is always to do things correctly and not to take short cuts.

“As a customer you have access to their directors. When I needed to raise issues, things were fixed promptly. Carter Grange has its act together.”

Carter Grange director Gerald Stutterd says the Efrons’ new home is a great example of the Carter Grange philosophy at work. “We say we can build our plans, your plans or anywhere in between. The Efrons brought us their architect’s plans and we worked with them to deliver their dream.” \

[lmclachlan@theweeklyreview.com.au](mailto:lmclachlan@theweeklyreview.com.au)

### Room to move:

Fiona and Maurice Efron in their Brighton East residence. (CHRIS HOPKINS)