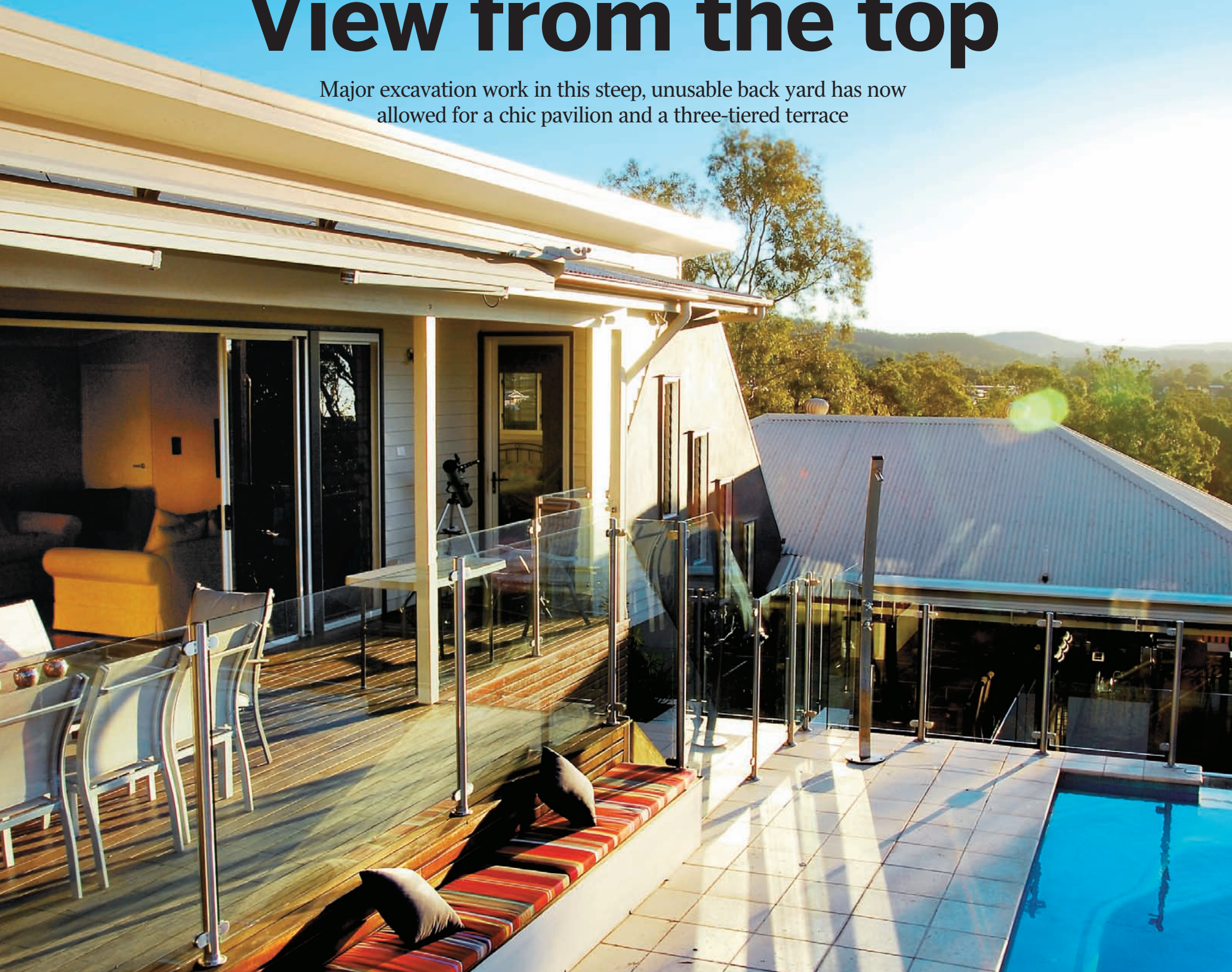


View from the top

Major excavation work in this steep, unusable back yard has now allowed for a chic pavilion and a three-tiered terrace



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NEVER-ENDING STOREY ... latest additions to the Alderley home include a three-tiered terrace and pool with a pavilion wing connected via enclosed stairs to the renovated original house.

Photographs // Jeremy Veitch

The process of restoring this Alderley house had included two refurbishments by the current owners. Architect Charles Howroyd joined the adventure two years ago, adding the final chapters to what has been an extraordinary makeover story for the basic 1940s home sitting on 938sq m.

A large proportion of the block was taken up by a very steep back yard, virtually unusable for the family who couldn't sit on the grass without sliding down the slope. Charles's goal was to turn this area into something functional and integrated with the rest of the home. "My clients' brief was to allow for more living space and to create a flow between entertainment areas," says Charles.

The result is a transformation of the unwieldy back yard with a new pavilion wing down the southern side connected to the main house and a three-tiered terrace with spa, pool and lawn area. Excavating the earth to incorporate these terraces was what Charles describes as an "unreal journey". "We had to move a fair bit of dirt and put a purpose-built road through the neighbour's garden to gain the right access.

"The essence of the home now is this stepping effect in the back garden, the view of angles, and who can see what – the owners needed to be able to see their children in the pool area from the kitchen and also from the pool house pavilion."

To achieve this visibility, Charles and his clients decided to

turn the layout of the upper floor of the original home completely around to provide for a connected kitchen, dining and lounge space. The kitchen now runs down most of the northern side. An original support wall still remains in the lounge area, perfect as a backdrop for the television and to direct traffic flow coming up the stairs from the ground floor main entry. This wall does not interfere with the open-plan arrangement so there is ample room for the large dining table.

Bi-fold doors in the kitchen open to the front veranda, creating an even greater sense of space and movement: "These doors are a fantastic feature," says Charles. With uninterrupted views to the hills from this veranda, no other doors would do.

Through Charles's design, a laundry, toilet and bathroom were also added to the upper level of the original house. The bedrooms were moved to the ground floor in a previous refurbishment.

The upper level opens to a paved patio which is the introduction to the various stages of the back garden. Being able to see and move quickly to the pool from the kitchen was a must for the owners who have two young children. Being able to get away to a quiet space was also a consideration for the owners – they use the pool house now and in the future this wing might be the teenagers' retreat.

In the new pavilion, there is a kitchenette, living room,

bathroom and guest bedroom. Charles and his clients tossed many ideas around about how to connect the new wing with the main house, but one major requirement drove the design to its final stage: to be able to move from the main house to the pavilion in all weather conditions. "We didn't want to have to go outside to go back inside," says the owner.

An interior staircase links the upper level living area of the main house with the lounge room in the pavilion. There is also an exterior entry through the bi-fold doors opening to the pavilion deck from where you can look out over the pool and back down to the main house.

"When we want to entertain in this part of the house, we use the fully equipped kitchenette which means we don't have to take anything back down to the main house," says the owner. "The pavilion is a part of the house and at the same time it feels like we are in a different world."

The pavilion also disguises another world where two rectangular water tanks are housed. "If it rains for a week, the tanks underneath the pool house will be full – a total of 3600 litres," says the owner.

ARCHITECT // CHARLES HOWROYD, CDI ARCHITECTS, PH: 3255 2799.

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