

Fuel for thought

Architect Neil Cownie designed this striking Nedlands home with subtle yet stylish nods to its past

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If the walls of this home could talk, they'd tell the story of once upon a time being the busiest block in Nedlands.

It may not look like it now — the striking Neil Cownie Architect-designed abode looks right at home — but a popular Ampol service station once filled the corner block.

For 30 years, its owners provided more than fuel for the suburb; their business was part of the beating heart of the close-knit community.

When Cownie took on the project to design the couple's (now retired) forever home on their slice of land, which they subdivided, people in the community started sharing their memories of it with him.

He says they were stories of excellent service, with one single mum of four saying that the owners would come to her assistance if she couldn't afford petrol or her car broke down.

With these fond memories in mind, Cownie incorporated subtle yet stylish nods to their past into the home's design.

The Ampol logo that existed when they owned the business was pared back and used in the

concrete at the home's entry to form a pattern-like effect in the concrete. The dining table was custom designed to reflect the logo shape, with its circular legs resembling stacked car tyres.

The facade showcases deep swirly green glass, used to pay homage to petrol, and amber, yellow and red tones to represent petrol.

"They have this great emotional connection to the house that you wouldn't normally have as soon as you move in, but right from the outset they felt connected," Cownie says.

Across the two floors are three bedrooms, several living spaces, an alfresco area and pool. Cownie says it's a sustainable home that makes the most of winter light and has excellent cross-ventilation.

It's also shortlisted in the 2023 WA Architecture Awards as well as Houses Awards and won Best of State Residential Design in the recent Australian Interior Design Awards.

The family's heritage was another vital part of the design, with the lime-green terrazzo flooring as well as the overall textural interiors reflecting their Greek background and upbringing.

"One of the owners was born in Rhodes and tells everyone he's a Rhodes scholar because he went to primary school there," Cownie laughs.

