



# SMALL WONDERS

Although of modest size, the vibrant outdoor spaces that wrap around this quirky home are big on personality





**STEVE WARNER**  
Director & Principal Designer,  
OUTHOUSE design

When outdoor space is in short supply you need considerable creativity to fully maximise every opportunity. These revitalised gardens, designed by Steve Warner and Callum Rhodes of OUTHOUSE design, convey precisely what can be achieved with a hefty application of ingenuity.

"While the internal spaces of this quirky 1990s home functioned well, the landscape was tired and uninspired," says Steve. "What we have created is clean, modern and an extension of the home's interior style. The outdoor spaces now have spirit and a look that is contemporary yet timeless. They're

also 'lock up and go' to suit the time-poor homeowner who travels frequently.

"With any small garden it's critical to over-scale and create a sense of space. Here we have done this by laying the random-length limestone paving on an angle which visually stretches the space," explains Steve. "Doing this in the side passageway also added a sense of depth.

"Building-in seating is sensible in a small garden but shouldn't be boring," he adds. "The lounge seating in the rear garden is practical and visually engaging, and while it is a stand-alone piece, it has a seamless material connection with the built-in planters and stairwell.

"The barbecue area was created by relocating the outdoor utilities into the garage. This allowed for under-bench and over-head storage, direct gas connection, and a tiled splashback. The cabinetry material and colour matches the seating and boundary to create visual cohesion."

Sculptural elements draw the eye upwards, which is a clever technique in small outdoor spaces. Rather than installing a traditional wall-mounted vertical garden, the side passageway features a vertical "living sculpture" comprised of pots placed at different heights and angles. This references the directional pavers and adds visual interest at various levels.

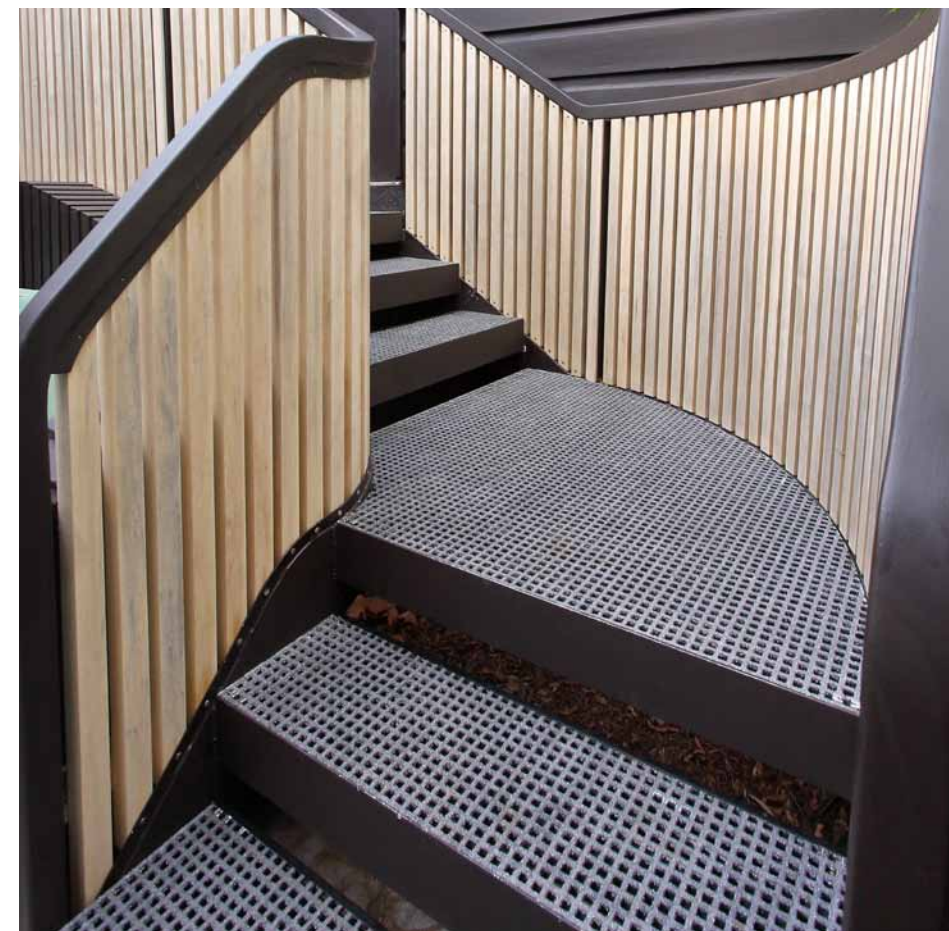
The unique curved staircase is another inspired touch. "The original access steps directed you to the side boundary but by creating a twist in the stairwell's shape we've ensured easier access and created a practical garden sculpture," says Steve.

The carefully curated rear-garden planting palette is lush and features *Betula pendula* 'Alba' (silver birch) for foliage interest and leafy side screening. Shrubs include *Strobilanthes gossypinus* (pewter plant), *Arthropodium cirratum* (New Zealand rock lily), and *Anemone x hybrida* 'Honorine Jobert' (windflower); groundcovers include *Thymus serpyllum alba* (white creeping thyme), *Ajuga reptans* 'Catlins Giant' (jungle beauty), and *Viola hederacea* (native violet).

In the side passageway and gracing the vertical sculpture you'll spy *Sansevieria trifasciata* 'Moonshine' (silver snake plant), *Cordyline glauca* (good luck plant), *Peperomia obtusifolia* (baby rubber plant), *Anthurium*, and *Epipremnum pinnatum* (dragon-tail plant).

An oversized water feature enhances the aura of tranquillity in the rear garden. This is uplit at night and there is strip lighting under the seating and barbecue kickboard for added ambience.

In creating this remarkable project, which was constructed by Urban Garden Enrichment, Steve states with pride: "We refused to allow a single precious square metre of space to go to waste." And the homeowner couldn't be more grateful.



**NSW**

## CONTACT DETAILS

Landscape design  
**OUTHOUSE DESIGN**  
Mobile 0415 764 775  
Website [outhousedesign.com.au](http://outhousedesign.com.au)