

THOMPSON SUSTAINABLE HOMES - WRIGHT STREET TOWNHOUSES

*Style, privacy and value
on a small lot*



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

PROJECT NAME

Wright Street Townhouses

DEVELOPER

Tiger Developments

ARCHITECT

Myf Zrinski

BUILDER

Thompsons Sustainable Homes

LOCATION

Highgate, Perth, WA

PROJECT TYPE

Inner City Medium Density -
6 x 1 Bedroom Townhouses

JAMES HARDIE PRODUCTS USED

Axon™ 133mm (smooth and wood grain finish), HardieTex™ blue board, HardieSmart™ ZeroLot™ Wall System

FINDING THE MISSING MIDDLE

Myf Zrinski and her Tiger Developments team are on a mission to create new and practical housing options for the WA market. In their search for new approaches to building in small urban lots, Tiger have taken on lightweight frame building as a way to deliver more space, better value and a stylish look for clients seeking affordable dwellings close to the Perth CBD.

In any city, including Perth, there's usually a wide range of housing stock, from freestanding family homes to 60+ apartments in high rise buildings. But for singles or couples seeking a compact, affordable property with a sense of privacy and personality that units can't offer, inner city locations have little to offer.

With her keen awareness of this "missing middle" - a term coined to describe a lack of medium density housing in Australia - Myf was inspired to design and develop six ultra-compact townhouses in the desirable suburb of Highgate, just two kilometres from Perth CBD. "Highgate has plenty of heritage buildings so council aren't keen on high density developments in the area," says Myf. "There are many lovely freestanding homes, but you won't have a hope of owning one unless you've already climbed a fair way up the property ladder. My aim was to create an opportunity for first-time buyers to make a home in Highgate by introducing an affordable low-rise housing option to the area."

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ALL ABOUT SPACE AND TIME

With a 550m² block to work with and a sewer line running right through it, there were plenty of challenges to overcome with the design and construction of this development. Myf estimates that resolving the issue of the sewer added around six months to the entire build time. It made the faster turnaround of a lightweight construction approach even more appealing. "Time is a huge factor in any development," says Myf. "A new building technique like lightweight construction is bound to be a winner when it can help you build in half the time it would take if you were using double-brick."

An even bigger win for the Tiger team was the space they saved using lightweight materials - both during the build and for the finished floor plan. "The site was just so tiny and the space to store materials and equipment was at a premium," says Myf. "Anything that can be stacked on site is much more convenient and James Hardie lightweight materials definitely tick that



box for ease of storage. We did include a recycled brick column in the design as a nod to double brick homes nearby. Trying to find space onsite for even this token amount of bricks was a headache."

"We managed to reduce the internal footprint of the design by about five per cent by using timber framing and lightweight cladding, rather than double brick," says Myf. "It was a gain in space that I made full use of for the outdoor areas. Having a really generous courtyard or terrace to call your own adds to a sense of peace and privacy and it's something you don't get with an apartment. And if they're well-positioned, these larger outdoor spaces can add to the natural light inside the home too."

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BLENDING CONTEMPORARY AND HERITAGE DESIGN

A comfortable outdoor living area is just one of the features that stack up to make these six homes feel as spacious as they are unique and contemporary. "The materials palette is very muted and multi-textured," says Myf. "We've used James Hardie Axon™ grained and stained it grey to match the texture and weathered silver colour of timber fences in the streets nearby. It has the period look without being distressed or shabby and contrasts nicely with the smooth textured Axon™ in white. The multi-coloured bricks and rendered HardieTex™ complete an overall look that's striking without being showy."

Two of the townhouses are on the market, with four available to rent. Potential owners and tenants have made positive remarks about the natural light and ventilation as well as the architectural styling. "In most units, you can't tell the difference between them when they're empty," says Myf. "We've used two slightly different layouts and three colour schemes so each one has its own identity. These townhouses might be space-efficient and compact like apartments are, but they're definitely not a cookie-cutter home."