

Halls' House project rationale

Rika Jammer

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Halls' house is a project I pursued independently, and completed in June 2023. Although the brief is made up, I always aimed to use the site and its unique heritage as the main inspiration for my design. I live close to the actual site, off Shakespeare crescent in Fraser's west (ACT), I often go for walks around the area and have always been intrigued by the cluster of huge, old, Oak trees and the Osage orange trees in the area. They look out of place in the dry Australian landscape and so, after some research I discovered the story behind the gardens and the Charnwood homestead, the home of the Hall family in the 1820s.

I started by visiting the site officially to record the tree types, wind direction, where views and where noise is coming from. I took photos and began to envision a building through sketches and observations of the environment, like how the sunlight falls through the tree line, and how bricks lined through the grass show hints of the floorplan of the original homestead house. I was inspired by the environment of the homestead site to include several specific design elements. The floor coming up from the living room and entryway is completely level with the naturally growing grass lawn, so that kids don't have to go far to play outside and so they can be watched from the kitchen and dining area. The gap separating the living room and master bedroom from the rest of the house (connected by two foot bridges) serves as a window to allow natural sunlight to fall through the house unobstructed, while also serving as the open and light-filled entryway.

The final floor plans and exterior elevations are products of multiple drafts and revisions where I changed positioning of windows, doors and rooms/staircases to improve movement through the house and to minimise the ground footprint of the house (so as to minimally interfere with the existing environment). I used Sketchup for the first few models and floor plans, but moved on to try Autocad once I was comfortable with the design and could challenge myself to learn a new and more exhaustive software. The renders were created with a combination of Blender and Autocad, these also required multiple revisions to change camera angles, lighting and to position furniture & tree strategically as to not obstruct the showing of the raw design of the house. I researched methods of 'off-the-grid' living and tried to logically implement some into the working of the design, with appropriate calculations and visions for the energy efficiency and sustainability of the houses materials and domestic use.

I continue to work on more renders and will finish a complete folio of the sustainability strategies for the house in coming weeks. For now, this is one of my completed 2023 projects and I hope it accurately expresses my passion for the field of architecture.