



Photographer: Paul McCredie

STEPPING UP

They say a lawyer who represents himself has a fool for a client, so what of an architect who designs his own house? Architect Paul Barry's self-designed house on a Wellington hillside certainly dispels any similar notions with its clever layout and considered design.

Wellington, 18 August – After returning with his family from Latin America, architect Paul Barry began looking for a site to build a home. It was just before Christmas – not usually the best time to be looking for property – when he came across a Wellington housing development in receivership.

The developer's misfortune became the family's gain as they snapped up two small, vertiginous sites. With an abundance of tui and kereru from the local nature reserves, the site's beauty enticed the Barrys, but Paul says *"the difficulty of building on it and the 3.5-metre retaining wall had placed it in many people's too-hard basket."* Add to that the stringent Wellington City Council Building Regulations and it looked like a task of Everestian proportions.

Always up for a challenge, Paul weighed up all the variables and began sketching his family home – a three-level home with 3 double bedrooms and two-car garaging. The house is laid out according to the activities that take place in each section. The

ground floor is all about arriving, the first floor is for sleeping and the third floor, with the best views, is for living. As Paul tells Houses NZ, which featured the house in its autumn edition, *"you don't need a view of the sun to go to sleep."*

Once Paul had a design he thought might work he began punching it into ArchiCAD, utilising the building envelope tool to adhere to the dramatic changes in site elevation. Paul says he likes the way ArchiCAD puts 'creating' and 'documenting' in the right order. *"I feel like I can actually design in ArchiCAD, rather than just manage information – the documentation is really just a by-product of the design process. I can also take 3D tours as the building evolves helping me get a feel for the spaces, which, as an architect, is essentially what I do,"* he says.