

# Inner-city gem on a tiny 6m x 7m block

By real estate writer  
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THIS could be the answer to space-starved Sydney — a home built on a block barely big enough to park two cars.

The house is the brainchild of leading Australian architect Domenic Alvaro, who knew that nifty engineering could turn the 6m x 7m block — about the same size as a studio apartment — into a spacious five-level home in Surry Hills.

The solution was to use pre-fabricated concrete panels which fitted together like Lego. Inside, sliding walls do away with the need for space-consuming doors, fixed corridors and rooms. The internal staircase is the main source of light for the house.

And the five levels add up to a respectable 220sq m of space, complete with three bedrooms,

two bathrooms, living areas and a rooftop garden.

"I usually work on \$100 million projects and then I brought this one down to something the size of a postage stamp," said Mr Alvaro, chief designer at leading architectural firm Woods Bagot.

"With this site I could see what I could more or less get away with," He said it proves a home can be efficiently built with less space.

His inspiration came from Japan where architects have, for decades, been refining the process of building the most compact homes in the world.

Building the home was especially challenging as it involved craning the panels into place.

It will be featured on the Foxtel show, Grand Designs Australia, the first local version of the internationally renowned building show, which premieres on The LifeStyle Channel on October 21.



Smallest block: Architect Domenic Alvaro and owner Sue Bassett inside the Tardis-like three-bedroom Surry Hills house (right)



## Black tie auction

THE Sydney Opera House will for the first time become a property auction venue when Ray White Real Estate places 20 luxury homes under the hammer next month.

The one-off prestige property auction night will see 250 people invited to the black-tie event to be run in the cabaret-style Playhouse venue. Ray White chairman Brian White said the Opera House was chosen to properly showcase Australia's high-end property as well as grab international attention.

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## Outer west proves best

GREATTER western Sydney is proving one of the city's more buoyant spring markets, with more than 15 people bidding on properties and prices fetching five per cent above reserves, data gathered by Starr Partners shows.

"The biggest issue facing the market is finding supply to match the demand," said Starr CEO Douglas Driscoll.

He said the investment market was growing and people were beginning to realise they could get better value for their money in the region.

"They can buy good units for much lower prices than the CBD."